

# **Individual Reflection Report**

## **My contributions:**

My role was to design, create and collect all of the art for our game, for the menu system, the world, the creatures, the battle system and the background images for the building's interiors. The formats in which the art was created for these aspects differed greatly, for example: The world was created using 64x64 pixel tiles and compiled into a tile sheet, the player was made up of a sprite sheet and the battle system was a mixture of small images for the creatures and large 1280x720 images for the backgrounds depending on the area that the fight was started i.e. the arena or the world.

I also designed the world in which our game was based, which included the terrain type, what objects were there, such as trees, meadows, hills, paths, water etc. and what buildings were on the map. Designing the world also lead into gameplay aspects, for example making the game world a collection of islands meant that the player would need a way of moving from one island to another so I designed a dock to allow this.

## **Management skills:**

### **Mine:**

Since I was doing all of the art and design for our game, I made sure to continually get feedback from and update each member of the group on my work. Since I wanted to guide the art direction myself, but I also wanted to get input from the other members and create what they needed. A good example of this was designing and creating the creatures. Initially the group wanted to show off the stats of the creature through the design of the creature, for example giving an aggressive creature large claws and a defensive creature small claws. As time went on though, this seemed less and less feasible so I designed a new way of doing the same job, which was changing the colour of the creature to correspond to the creature's dominant stat i.e. green for high health, red for aggressive, blue for defensive and yellow for fast, this way everyone benefitted.

Another management skill I applied was making sure that all of the art assets that I shared were organised correctly in appropriate folders such as menu, battle, world etc. This proved to be very useful because I shared a lot of art assets and if they were all in one folder it would have been very difficult for the group to find the asset that they needed.

### **Within the group:**

In order to help us manage our project we made sure to have meetings at least twice every week, once with our supervisor and once without. Having these regular meetings allowed us to keep on track with the allocation and completion of our tasks. As well getting constant feedback from the other members of the group on the work we had done over the past week, so no one strayed too much from what the group wanted. It also meant we could discuss any bugs that we found in our game and correct them quickly before they became a problem.

A good example of the benefit of regular meetings was when John McDonagh and I designed and created the world for our game. John was creating the tile engine for the world and I was designing it and creating the art for it. As John was learning about and creating the engine, he was discovering new and better ways to incorporate the art every week. This meant that I needed to change the format of how I was creating the art so that it would all fit together correctly.

For example I began creating the world as a few large images that I thought could be displayed on the screen. I thought this since this is what is normally done with XNA (which was the development environment we were using) and I would have carried on like this making it difficult to integrate the art into the tile engine. Since we had the group meetings, he was able to tell me exactly how he needed the art, which in the end was in separate tiles arranged on a grid; this was done by assigning a unique number to each tile and writing that onto a grid.

So I started creating the grid on Microsoft Excel (since it already has a grid set up) which was still difficult because all I could see was the number of each tile and not the tile itself. Again I could have carried on like this making it difficult for myself, but in a group meeting, John told me about a program called Tiled, that made it extremely easy for me to design the world because I could see exactly what tiles I was placing and it could export the map in an XML format that John could easily use to incorporate the art into the tile engine to create the world. The constant meetings made this collaboration much more straight forward than it otherwise would have been.

Feedback: As we were creating our game, we were getting feedback from our supervisor, other members of the course and our friends. They would tell us what they liked about our game and what they didn't, allowing us to add to the things they liked and improve or change the things that they didn't.

### **My perspectives:**

#### **Processes:**

Overall I think the processes that we took for this project were appropriate and useful, since we spent a good amount of time designing and planning our game, so we had a clear idea of what we wanted to create, making the creation process easier. Even when we were creating the different components of our game, we still thought about the design direction that we were taking. One example of this was when we were designing the world, since there was some concern that the player would get tired of having to walk through the world whenever they wanted to get to another area, such as the arena or training. So we designed a fast travel system that the player could use to teleport to key areas of the map if they didn't wish to trek through the world.

The final process was the testing process; this was mainly used in testing the balance of creature stats and the battle system. While the battle system was running it was difficult to see what was happening and which creature was winning each time, so we outputted all the details of the battles to text files. This included the battle start and end, what move was being used, what each creature's current health was and which creature won the battle. This greatly helped us see what was going on in the battle and allowed us to balance the creature stats accordingly.

#### **Dynamics:**

Overall I think that we worked well as a group since we were all open to other member's ideas and thoughts, and we tried to incorporate them if we all thought that they would improve the overall quality of our game. Although there were some cases that group members would implement things that they didn't clear with the group first and in some cases the group felt that they weren't beneficial to the gameplay and wanted them to be removed.

One example of this was the stats of the creatures, in that we all agreed on having a few very important stats such as amount of health, strength, defence etc. But one member added more without clearing it with the group first. This made it more difficult to get the breeding

and combat systems working correctly and since we didn't feel like they added much to the game, we attempted to address this. We listened to this member's explanations of all the new stats, we still wanted to remove a lot of them, but we agreed that some were indeed worth keeping once we understood more about them. If we weren't open to this member's ideas then we would have removed all of the new stats and lost some very useful ones in the process.

### **Interaction:**

In our meetings we tried to keep each other updated on how we were progressing and whether we needed more help or more time to complete our work. We also tried to get to know each other on a personal level, since we didn't really know each other that well when we first started the project. I definitely believe that this helped us to work better together because we weren't afraid of letting each other know how we felt about the work each member was doing. This allowed us to point out flaws or weaknesses in our game and correct them appropriately. If we weren't comfortable in expressing our opinions, then we wouldn't have addressed some of the problems that arose in the design and creation processes.

This being said the interaction in the group did suffer during holidays, since we all went home during these times, which meant we couldn't meet. This was where Skype came in handy because it allowed use to communicate very easily through instant messaging and that everyone could be in the conversation.

### **Skills:**

In terms of our skills, I believe that our group had a pretty well balanced skill set, because we all have past experience with coding and we were all able to add to and work on the code for our game. We also all enjoy playing games and have knowledge and ideas on what makes a good game, so we could all contribute to the design and gameplay of our game.

We also all had our own skills and strengths that we could bring to our project, some were very good at coding, but not very good at designing and vice versa. Having this balance allowed us to create a game that both looked good and played well. For example we were able to create a good tile engine with good art, to make a good looking world, along with creating a complex battle system with nice art.

### **Tools used**

#### **Project management tools:**

**Google Docs:** Google docs was the main management tool that I used to share the art with the rest of my group, this meant that whenever someone needed a piece of art, it was available to them. Google docs was used because it was extremely quick and easy to upload files to it. In some cases I actually saved files in the Google drive folder while I was working on them, which meant that it was constantly syncing to Google docs and uploading my progress. This was a way to make sure that the latest version of the art was available.

We also used it to collaborate on design documents since multiple people could work on the same document at the same time, meaning that when a document was being altered no one had to wait for that person to finish altering it.

#### **Design tools:**

**Gimp 2.0:** I used Gimp to design and create all of the tiles that were used in the game world, along with the creatures and title and menu screens. I used gimp because it was the best choice out of all the art manipulation programs available, because I have previous experience with using it, it's free, it's already installed on the computers in the campus labs and it covers

a wide range of image types. Another feature that was extremely useful, especially for creating the tiles, was the ability to display a grid onto the screen that could be snapped to, to perfectly position the tiles. Aligning the tiles perfectly was essential since when it came to creating the world, there couldn't be any overlaps, otherwise it wouldn't look correct, for example if a water tile was overlapping a path tile, then there would be water on the all the paths.

**Tiled:** Tiled was the program that I used to design and create the game. It was perfect for this since I was able to import the custom tile set that I created, create a grid of tiles at any size and modify it very easily. All I needed to do was click on a single tile or multiple tiles, from the tile set and click on the grid, where I wanted them to be placed. The left mouse button can also be held down and as the cursor is dragged across the grid, to paint the tiles onto it, which was very handy for the water and grass.

### **Communication tools**

Skype: Skype was our go to tool when we needed to discuss anything to do with the project, from design ideas to coding collaboration. It was an easy tool to use, allowing us to quickly communicate with each other. We mainly used the instant messaging aspect of Skype, but on occasion we did use audio chat to make communication even easier.