ST10075891

Essay, web development project.

Section 2:

Introduction

According to my understanding we were tasked to build a mockup of a website where buyers can be linked by the administrator to a seller of the book. In this project the user is able login, choose the items they want to buy and add them to cart, and increase the quantity of said products in cart. In all this we must use PHP and MySQL to achieve said build. Easy on the eyes User interface and navigation that is easy. It has been a rough, rocky road indeed. (More on that later)

Contribution and Role

Certainly, it was not easy to play the role of an architect, designer and developer all at once. Like 90s action movies, one man army handling a monumental task. Working with my partner on part one, professionalism and fun to work with, all the works. But herein lies the problem: it was too soon for teamwork, and working with a foreign language like PHP, it was foolish to jump in a project not knowing your own depths of your ignorance and inexperience. Like a marriage when one is too young, divorce or a fallout is bound to happen. This project has certainly become a hellish experience, there was a mountain to climb learning its fundamentals (PHP), trial and error developing the code which was a pain to refactor because it was handled by someone inexperienced in the language, mostly mediocre code because it was hastily assembled. Also, I'm so tired of reaching for the dollar sign using this language.

The biggest thing about group work is communication. And in ours very little. And dividing the tasks within us when both of us are inexperienced in PHP and at first had trouble knowing how the system would work together. I thought it was best to work on it alone and figure out the major parts of it. I think it would have been disastrous if both we are working on certain features and committing to branches on GitHub, the code most likely would have been mismatched when put together, thus creating more bugs, and wasting time on them.

On part one, we worked together nicely and galvanized into action and communication of the vision was excellent as we were both on board. It was easy, designing the user interface and diagrams with research. However, it was much more difficult to communicate when most of the learning was done as we went on along doing the project.

The concern and source of conflict is the standard and design of the code, people have different mental models for problem solving, one might prefer a procedural style of the code another object oriented, also most tutorials on YouTube use echo to display HTML elements, and I Hate that ;its utterly unreadable and ugly, with a lot of IF statements . Decisions like that are a source of conflict. And the exclusion of design patterns to properly control the code. Architectural patterns and ambiguity in selecting them is a nightmare in working in group projects.

The conflict in groups is when you need a feature done in a specific time frame and your partner takes longer to do a feature and the one, you’re working on depends on the other, while you wait, later you discover that it totally does not work that is the nightmare in working in groups

Research, technology, and the presentation of information

In part one I was tasked to design the User Interface, for all our pages on the website and my partner kept showing me snippets of very fancy user interface components, professionally styled. I thought it was utterly insane and discarded those designs because if we went through with them, we would have been punished, by the hour. All of them would have taken too long to develop when we were working on a tight deadline and multiple subjects and everything else. So, we settled for simplicity.

How excited our classmates were when they had to choose features for their bookstore website. And were choosing designs and features to research that were above their experience and paygrade.

A WhatsApp like feature for communication between the buyer and seller; or a design matching Facebook. We knew then and there that we had to be pragmatic, realistic in choosing these features or you’ll wind up a regular on Stack overflow, and that is the worst kind of experience to work on with a tight deadline. Simple practical features, and a minimal design not too hard on the eyes and your good to go. Even the professional website I researched for this POE had some bugs and bug tracking feature to it, where users can point out the flaws improvementing in the system . So I guess any bugs found on our Project either can be considered a feature (accidental) or a stepping stone to improvement.

Personal strengths (strong points) and weaknesses (areas to do better in)

The personal strengths I exhibited on this project are in line with my values, and virtues mainly driven by ambition to see things through; and the sleepless nights debugging simple code. If my disdain for PHP is not clear yet, using it is like chewing broken glass with your moms' dentures, choking back tears in the process.

The resilience I showed in the face of adversity, and architecting this project, the patience I showed is that of a Tibetan monk; painstakingly writing every line –testing, rewriting and the unceremoniously starting all over again. It was hell --I was also humbled in the process in appreciating smaller languages like PHP, if this project was done in Java or C# --I'd have torn, balled my hair on my palm –its stress.

I learnt that I have it in me to be mindful enough to be weary of change in requirements and remain calm and optimistic when the vision in my head does not translate fully with the one in reality.

Self-motivating when times are dark, and powering though database functionality and administration I really liked working with the database tables. I also did well the writing of the business logic present in the application and managing the files of the project minimizing clutter.

In my opinion if there is a thing, I did not do well it is, designing the user interface and coding it. Why this is: because I don’t have that much patience for trial-and-error checking, running and testing the user interface checking if the div is centered, checking if it has hover effect, if it is purple, the text color white. It is repetition like that that makes me wish A.I takes all our jobs. Communicating the code structure with my partner, naturally I am introverted so having to communicate like that to a partner I barely know, just thrown together by circumstance it’s a pain.

There is no way for me to love the process of coding the user interface, most of its pulling someone else's code on the internet, that to me is off-putting and dishonorable and shameful. I am not a robot, too, patience wears thinner when the heat of pressure is tuned up.

Perhaps this can be remedied if I partner with someone I know, and know how they code, because I'm not in a position yet to partner with a stranger.

Conclusion

Without being too hyperbolic, this project was difficult in the sense that upon starting the project I only knew up to arrays in working with PHP. Gradually, my knowledge grew with sleepless nights practicing simple things with tutorials until I got my style in coding with PHP. It was fantastic in my opinion as we got a glimpse in working in real-world projects and it was interactive not console based; so, we got to think broadly so that it is easier for someone else to work on the project and build on it.

I liked the aspect of having a real user interacting on the system, and the feeling of making something that is useful to users. That I liked a lot, that it tied with the other subjects we are doing, database, SQL,

Project management etc. That felt great.