CS250 Final Project

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CS250: Software Development Life Cycle

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This sprint saw to the fruition the SNHU travel website and its functionalities using an agile development approach. Historically, Chada Tech has implemented a waterfall development process, but has decided to experiment with a new and exciting methodology. While such a big change can be challenging, the team and I felt that the benefits far outweighed the obstacles faced. With the help of the product owner, testers, developers, and scrum master, the team was able to produce a deliverable to the client. Now that our work has been presented and the client has been delivered the product, it is time to review our process and reflect on what went well, as well as what needs a little more work.

To begin, I want to highlight the work of the product owner. Throughout this sprint it was the product owner’s job to communicate with the client, set up and conduct user focus groups, and to help construct and clarify any discrepancies with user stories. This sprint began with the scrum master and product owner meeting with our client, SNHU Travel, which propelled us into beginning the development process of the SNHU Travel website and its first feature. Following the meeting with the client, the product owner conducted a focus group which led to our first set of user stories. These user stories give the development team direction along with requirements on what is expected of their work. These user stories sometimes can come with a little ambiguity, which the product owner can help clear up. An example of this process was documented with an email from the testers to the product owner in which they needed some clarification on the work, to which the product owner was able to respond and guide the group.

Next to be highlighted are the development team and testers which oversaw the designing, developing, and ensuring the quality of the product. The development team’s involvement was highlighted when asked to change directions with the product and focus on implementing detox/wellness vacations on the website. With the direction of the product owner and an adjusted product backlog, the development team successfully produced this new feature by the end of the sprint. The testers efforts were displayed with the production of their test cases and communication with the product owner regarding them. During this sprint, the testers were able to produce test cases for all user stories, as well as successfully communicate with the product owner to receive all clarity necessary to ensure their work would be up to standard.

Lastly, the work that the scrum master did during this sprint must be highlighted. The scrum master attended the initial client meeting with the product owner to help develop a plan for the development of the product. In addition, it was the task of the scrum master to lead the daily stand up which helped keep everyone on the same page, as well as construct an agile team charter which gave the team direction throughout the sprint.

The change from a waterfall to an agile development process can be challenging, but the advantages that came from it were unmistakable. At the heart of it all was communication. Both throughout the team but also with the client. The agile methodology allowed us to capitalize on the power of communication which benefitted the team immensely. This was especially true with the development and maintenance of user stories. The creation of the user stories stemmed from communication between the client and the product owner leading to their original generation. From here the communication shifted from client to product owner to development team and testers to product owner. These entities were able to adjust the user stories along the way due to the communication channels provided by an agile environment to produce deliverables. An example of this type of communication that I thought was personally strong was in an email from the developers to the testers and the product owner. A strong line from it I found was, “If you cannot email them to the team by the end of the workday, let’s set something up for tomorrow just following the daily standup at the latest”. This was following a concise numbered list of what they needed clarifications on to begin developing. The reason why I found this to be a great example was because it set a timeline following an event where all team members can be present, and it can be announced to the team then putting everyone on the same page.

Another excellent example of how an agile development environment benefitted the project was in the handling of the change in product direction. When faced with a new direction of the product from the client, the team was able to quickly turn around and prioritize and produce a deliverable by the end of the sprint. This would not have been the case in a waterfall development environment. From the constant communication between the product owner and client, to the fast turnaround time to start developing the product, user stories, and test cases, the agile methodology showed its efficiency and effectiveness. Within the confines of a short meeting with the product owner, developers, and testers, the team was able to pivot quickly into a new direction.

Written in the agile team charter lies all the rules and guidelines set for our team by me at the beginning of the sprint. There we will find the expectations of the team and myself as we progress forward in the development of the product. In the charter the team agreed to daily scrums and the use of a Kanban board. The board shows the status of the team on certain things such as user stories. The expectation with the Kanban board is that they are updated regularly and especially before scrum meetings. This step is critical so that the team goes into the daily scrum with an accurate Kanban board and there is no confusion or delays during the short fifteen minutes that the team has together. The combination of the Kanban board and the daily scrum has been potent in keeping everyone informed and moving in the correct direction.

Overall, a scrum-agile approach was the correct decision for the development process of the SNHU Travel website. This approach allowed the team to deliver a usable product to the client in a short period of time that has been tested and reviewed rigorously. With the client having more of a voice in the product that they desire, the team can hand over something that is closer to what was envisioned during their inception. Paired with a strong level of communication between team members, the scrum-agile approach aided the team greatly throughout development. Although, as effective as this was, there was a slight drawback to this approach. Instances such as the project direction shifting are less likely to happen during the waterfall development. This is something that the waterfall method does well with helping keep expensive direction shifts in the project to a minimum. Beyond that, the agile-scrum approach facilitated the smooth development and direction pivot for the SNHU Travel website at a high level.