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CS-250 Final Project

**Sprint Review and Restrospective**

The SNHU Travel Team has done a remarkable job of making this transition to Agile and adjusting to the new tools and principles that came with it. This retrospective will reflect back on the past few weeks working on completing the user stories for this project. We will highlight the roles that helped make this possible including the Developers, Testers, Product Owner and Scrum Master as well as assess the effectiveness of this new Scrum-Agile approach.

First things first, we’ll discuss the roles each team member played and acknowledge the contributions they brought to the sprint completion. A Product Owner’s job is to be an advocate for the client’s vision of the product as well as the users’ representative and a part of that is to act as a middleman between the client and the Scrum Team. Our Product Owner did a great job of facilitating the conversations with the stakeholders to provide direction for the team on what will need to be built. They also did a great job of managing our product backlog with user stories. Having user stories helps capture requirements from the business side and the Scrum Team can then divide up the work the project will take into Sprints and organize the work in a way that solves the functionality desired from each story. Our Product Owner has been working closely with our Scrum Master, in order to set a Scrum team up for success, you need a Scrum Master to facilitate those agile values and coach the team through the agile development process. The Scrum Master has done a great job of facilitating key Scrum events for the team including our daily standup meeting, weekly sprint planning meetings, backlog refinement meetings with the Product Owner and of course this Sprint Retrospective. We also must acknowledge our Testing team who have helped design and execute the acceptance tests and criteria. They’ve also been working closely with our Product Owner and the development team to ensure any issues/defects are resolved and any ambiguity is clarified. Last but certainly not least, is our Development team who have had a lot of changes thrown at them during this sprint and really had to test the adaptable nature of Agile methodologies. They’ve done an excellent job of effectively communicating with the rest of the team and efficiently updating the software despite the big circumstances. Once again, all of these roles were important for implementing the new Scrum-agile process and it’s important we acknowledge the contributions they had to the success of the SNHU Travel project so far.

One very important Scrum-agile approach is the user story. Having user stories helps capture requirements from the business side to build a backlog for the technical side, bridging the gap in a way that’s understandable for both sides. For the Scrum Team, this helps them divide up the work the project will take into sprints and organize the work in a way that solves the functionality desired from each story. These user stories are added to a Product Backlog, another Scrum-agile approach that helps organize and prioritize user stories for a large project. The Scrum Team will then kick off a Sprint, one more Scrum-agile approach, to time-box the team on a set amount of user stories to complete within that time period.

There were also many Scrum events added to the team’s slate to help each of the user stories come to completion. With the pressure of tight and specific deadlines looming over many development projects, it’s important to regularly have Scrum Meetings to keep the entire team on the same page as well as approach and overcome obstacles as fast as possible. This was especially helpful when the team needed to be informed of changes to the product requirements and clarifications on next steps that could be made. The Product Owner was able to relay the client’s ideas for changes to the application and the other team members were able to ask clarifying questions to figure out what they would need to do to adjust the trajectory of the sprint. The Scrum Master was able to make sure there were no schedule changes, the Tester now knew the test cases needed to be updated and the developer was able to take on the task of analyzing where the feature production was at to give a better idea to the Product Owner about what work would be okay to keep and what work would need refactoring due to the new requirements. Agile methodologies were built to be flexible, so the changing requirements can be handled without affecting the initial estimations too much.

Better communication is one of the biggest advantages of adopting the Scrum-agile approach. As mentioned before, having these team meetings helped keep the team informed on the trajectory of the project and any changes required from the client-side. These team meetings are only an initial relay of information, certain team members may need to branch off and reach out to each other outside of the scheduled team meetings to further clarify on things mentioned during the meeting. One of the most notable ways to do this is of course through emails. For instance, the email correspondence between our Developer and the Product Owner after being notified of the changing requirements, the Developer had more specific questions about the effects this has on the scope of the Sprint and what user stories they were currently working on would need to be scrapped or finished with a new user story added to the backlog to iterate upon what work was completed. The important thing is that the initial Sprint Meeting relaying the info is what was able to help the other team members know what to do next and if there is still confusion, they would have more specific questions about it.

Since this Scrum-agile approach requires the team to complete the project in stages, it’s incredibly helpful to have a tool to keep track of that. In Sprint Planning, you’ll want to organize user stories into tickets so that they can be individually assigned and more specifically described for the development and testing team. A tool like Azure Boards allows us to do that with ease. We also want to track which tickets are being worked on in a sprint and what stage are they at during the sprint, the Azure Boards are able to provide a digital Kanban board to organize the stages of development a ticket goes through, like backlog, in development, in QA, in Peer Review, etc. This is useful for the Product Owner and Scrum Master to keep track of the workflow of tickets and see how many are able to be completed within a sprint. This also helps the Testers know when a ticket is finished by a Developer and ready for QA, and of course the Developers can visualize what work they’ve been assigned for the sprint and be able to find to the ticket description easily if need be.

Overall, I think the Scrum-agile approach has had a positive effect so far, of course as the project gets further into development the team may run into some of the disadvantages of the Scrum-agile approach. There are a lot of pros though, as mentioned earlier, the flexibility of this approach is advantageous for a project that is not clearly defined and may require changes throughout the development process. We saw this with our project when the client decided to change some of the requirements. If the team were still following the Waterfall methodology, it would not have been possible to adapt to this change as most of the development process would have already been planned with what the initial requirements were. Another pro is the increased communication between team members. The Scrum Master facilitating daily standups and sprint planning meetings has helped the team stay in constant contact so everyone can be up to date on the status of the project regularly. One of the biggest cons of the Scrum-agile approach we could have run into is if all team members weren’t onboard with the switch to agile, that could have a negative effect on the project. For instance, if the developers weren’t open to going to the meetings, then they may not have gotten the updates about the requirements changes for a substantial amount of time. Luckily, we have a very cooperative team and for that reason as well as the other advantages I mentioned, I think the Scrum-agile approach was the best approach for the SNHU Travel project.