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1 Introduction

This paper will describe the collaboration process between myself, another software engineer, two architectural engineers and one learning and experience engineer. First the collaboration will be described, then an analysis of how that way of collaborating worked out, and lastly some reflection on how it could have been improved.

2 Collaboration

The project was founded on an already established idea. To not rush it, or just settle before having a discussion on the alternatives, we had a two day process of brainstorm and with a following idea elimination process. Our process has been planned from meeting to meeting. We made a schedule of the different deadlines, and after each meeting we planned what we were supposed to do at the next meeting, based on the deadlines, by which was most pressing. It was an exciting challenge to be introduced to people from other professions, and having to look for a way to benefit from their knowledge, and creating some sort of routine drawing benefit from all three disciplines. This was especially a challenge since I find great satisfaction in managing team efforts.

2.1 How it worked out

We never made any formal decision on who should manage the process. Neither settling on one, or passing the responsibility each time. This meant that each meeting would start with a "staring contest", waiting for someone to take responsibility for the work that should be done that day.

From previous group work experiences I have noticed a tendency in myself to bossing around the rest of the group. The past semesters I have been in a very homogeneous group, and the problem with making too many of the decisions on my own, was not a problem in this context. This was something I had to keep my focus on again, since being introduced to a new group.

This vice collided with the fact that we had to spend so much time on each meeting, but was also part of the reason. One of the things I was testing during this collaboration, was my ability to let someone else take the lead in managing the tasks. After this had happened 3-4 times, and we sometimes spend an hour

before starting work, I started delegating tasks in the beginning of each group session. So the new challenge was to still keep an opening for inputs, while taking the lead on managing the group tasks.

Still, in the end it worked out since everybody in some way got filled into a role that fit their professional capabilities. The two architectural engineers did the research talking to architects, and wrote the requirements to the system out, since they understand the business and the terms used. The learning and experience engineer was mostly in charge of the graphical parts (the posters and diagrams), and the software engineers was planning how it could be executed and which resources were needed to build the program.

2.2 How it could be improved

From this collaboration process I have learned several things. The first is that it is okay to take the managing role, if uncontested. The second thing is that I have to be more explicit about it. For example it would have been prudent, during some of the first meetings, to mention that I have an appetite for management, instead of it just being left to random and then slowly fitting into the role during the project development. If I had taken this approach instead, maybe we would have gotten a lot more work done in the first half of the development, instead of spending the first hour of the meeting each time, waiting for someone to take lead. Secondly, if I had the management role, I would have spend more time on creating idea elimination processes, to make a more structured approach on what actually got implemented into the project, and not just handling whatever need arised during the process.

3 Conclusion

It was very exciting to be able to test your ability to communicate what it is you actually do, to someone who does not speak in the same professional terms as you, and to try and couple that with understanding other collaborators profession. It showed how used I have become to the language of my profession, and how hard it can be to actually use it in a context with other professions. I picked up on some skills of translation from software engineering terms to a common understanding.

I experienced that it can be challenging to begin a management process with a new group, since I have been used to the same group. I learned that we have to be more explicit early on, on how the work should be managed, either by one manager or sharing the responsibility. But if no means of management is introduced, it is very hard to plan a days work, since there is no one that is expected to take responsibility.