CSCI 5193 Assignment: Workshop Retrospective 2
Workshop by Ubisoft & ShiftKey Labs: Intro to Unity and Shader Graph
Winter 2022

The Workshops: Intro to Unity and Shader Graph Workshop

As a part of the Game Jam hackathon, all participants could attend workshops on game development technologies such as Unity and Shader Graph. Coming from a backend development background and having almost no experience in game development, these workshops made the base for participating in the hackathon.

Rose Dufresne, or should I say Captain Haddock handled most of the game jam, including the workshops. The workshop on Unity covered starting from installation on the local machine, visualization of the game scene, basic animations, conventions, and tips on testing and debugging issues from the console.

My goal was to try an open-source game (of course, a simple version of Mario) and get the set-up working on the local machine and understand the different components explained in the workshop, which was the quickest way to get started.

The favorite part of the development was working with the player controller, deciding how to handle the input vector to translate to an output, which determines the whole concept of gameplay and, finally, the visuals. Starting with a sketch and translating it to a game gave a good sense of satisfaction.

Collaboration and End Result

After the introduction to Game Jam, the theme was "With great power comes great responsibility," and the workshops on game development, we were set to start collaborating within the team. However, while the team I was in started as a team of seven, it eventually was dismantled and became a team of two. Translating to more work between the two of us, the game we built was Mario-themed spider-man who travels inter-dimension and has to fight the enemies across dimensions within a lifeline in each of them. After a few hours of sketching and designing the gameplay, we developed a reasonably simplistic Mario kart with spider-man as the main character and a controller to change screens, i.e., switch between dimensions.

Conclusion

Overall, it was worth the time and a fun experience; being absolutely new to game development, participating in Game Jam did change my perspective of game development, and I indeed plan on participating again next time and being equipped with the use of game technologies, I hope to go big with the end game.

Lastly, the entire game jam was online on Twitch, conversations over Discord, which is without a doubt the convention among the gamers for streaming and discussions. Along with game development, the hackathon tests other crucial soft skills such as time management, teamwork, presentation skills, and managing the plan for the end result, all of this within hours of time.