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CART263

Reflective Essay

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I dove into this course after having taken its prerequisite CART253 the semester prior. I was familiar with the p5.js library and knew a bit of HTML and CSS but I still considered myself new to programming. I remember having looked over the syllabus and feeling slightly scared after seeing “A.I.” and “Game Engine” jams because those were areas I had absolutely no knowledge in and did not know what to expect. However, those were the topics I actually enjoyed most. I knew of face meshes but I had thought of them as a tool for advanced programmers. I was pleasantly surprised and proud of myself that I was able to program a simple bear game where the user controls the cursor with their nose by using a face mesh with ML5.js library. This alone has opened up a pool of small project ideas I would like to make come to life. Having made a game prototype using a face mesh, I now have the confidence to explore PoseNet and HandPose. What appeals to me is making visually appealing yet simple designs with out of the box mechanics. Specifically strategy games with minimalistic and clean visuals. By exploring the hands free gaming methods such as audio input and object recognition, I am familiar enough to implement them within my strategy games. For my end of year project, my goal was to finalize my game prototype using the Phaser 3 game engine. Although I felt more comfortable using p5.js’ library at the time, I wanted to challenge myself and to further explore

Phaser's features. What I found fascinating was the physics properties I could assign to objects, which really helped with my platformer game.

Throughout the semester, and especially during the making of my final project, I noticed that I came across so many fewer bugs that I could not fix. Of course I encountered many problems but most of them I was able to solve on my own by going through my work or looking at similar examples. That is another skill I have improved on. I often surfed the web for similar problems and was able to adapt the given solution within my unique code. I found myself asking many fewer questions, which is not a bad thing, I am just very proud to see that I am becoming more independent when it comes to programming. This gets me more motivated and confident to participate in the next Game Jam event. The previous time I was the graphic artist of my group, where I drew all the assets of our game because I had very little experience and confidence with code. I am aware I will still run into many bugs but I am willing to give programming a try next time.

On another note, outside of class I feel inspired to start programming a personal project in a team. I have a close friend in Software Engineering at Concordia who has been working on coding her own organization app. We briefly talked about working on a project together in the future, and after looking back at my final project I think I am ready to start planning some ideas. Perhaps a more intricate game or I am even open to learning how to develop an app. Either way, I would like to work on a group project, which is not something I have done when coding. It would be interesting the different methods and styles we could learn from one another and what the finalized product comes to be with our combined ideas. Another project I have planned might be taking place next year. During the winter break, I reached out to a few non-profit organizations to work as a volunteer on a project for the BMO Internship Award, and Foulab

offered me a huge project to work on. Their idea is to recreate their office space in a VR environment, but have trackers on the physical furniture so that if it is moved, it will move in the VR world as well. At the moment I have no experience with VR but I do plan on attending Foulab's future workshops to get more familiar with it. At the time I had a project proposal written up for another organization, so I did not go through with this project but I will re-apply for the following summer. This would be a huge learning opportunity for me that I am looking forward to!

When it comes to the far future, I am still not sure where programming will take me. I initially applied to the Computational Arts program thinking I would like to pursue a 3D modeling or animation career. However, as I began to code, I have become more open to perhaps front-end developer positions, game programming, working with AR/VR, and being a UI/UX designer. I do not want to lose sight of the artistic side of coding. Even though I find code frustrating at times, I have come around to enjoy it more than last semester and it is something I can see myself doing on a larger scale.