

# Individual Reflective Essay

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## Introduction

As part of the CS3013 course I was a member of Group 8. We were tasked with the project of designing a WordPress plugin for our client Joeran Beel. After discussing our clients desires as a group we realised what he wanted us to design was a plugin that could be installed on a WordPress blog to use his Darwin & Goliath API. This plugin would display recommendations for related blog posts on the users blog. Over the course of the development and management of this project I learned many things in various different areas which I will discuss throughout this report.

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## Introduction

Overall I personally found the experience of working in a collaborative project team highly rewarding. It was the first time I had been part on the managerial side of a structured collaborative project team which was divided into individual areas e.g front-end developers, back-end developers, project managers etc. I found this to be highly beneficial as it allowed the project to be split up and run fairly. I feel this team structure was of benefit to the project as it allowed for efficient communication to flow across all sectors of our team and also allowed myself and the project managers to comfortably oversee the project and monitor progress within the individual sectors respectively.

However, there were some cons of working in a collaborative project team. For example there were occurrences when some deadlines/goals were not being met within the individual sectors - be it through negligence or difficulty. This resulted in members from other sectors having to step in and accommodate for this. While this may be a benefit of working within a collaborative project team I found that it led to certain members having to put in twice the amount of work to accommodate for the slack of others, which put a strain on individual members. From a managerial perspective it proved quite tough to get some of the other members to work as hard as you would have liked or needed them to.

## Individual Instances of Issues or Dilemmas

My role within the project was project lead. I decided to take this role as I felt quite confident I would be good for the position and also quite liked the challenge. However this role proved quite challenging. As the project progressed it became quite clear that certain members of the team were not pulling their weight and leaving the development tasks down to some of the other members. As much as myself and the other project managers tried to relieve this it still remained quite difficult.

This led to situations where myself and another project manager were required to step in on the development side and complete some of the tasks. Whilst neither of us had a problem doing this it was also quite frustrating having members not working as part of the team and refusing to cooperate and assist in meeting deadlines.

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## Contributions

As project lead I feel I made quite an impactful contribution to the overall project. For the most part, we as a team did reach our deadline and met all of our desired deliverables. It was quite enjoyable to be able to mentor the second years and assist them with the development whilst introducing them to new technologies.

Throughout the project I also learned some new technologies, mainly regarding WordPress and how it worked. Working and liaising with our client Joeran Beel was also very enjoyable and gave a feel of how a real-life software development project goes. It also placed an emphasis on how important it was to work progressively and meet intermittent milestones throughout the project.

## Realisations About Working Style

Over the course of the project I learned many things about my working and learning styles. I learned that while I can comfortably work in a team-environment I become extremely frustrated when other members aren't pulling their weight. I also learned that I quite enjoy the task of managing a team and the pressure that comes with it. Learning wise I feel I learn extremely well through putting things into practice and through trial and error, as was the case throughout all of the development and planning stages.

Overall, I feel the course was extremely rewarding and I enjoyed being given the opportunity to work within such an industry relative environment. Getting the opportunity to work and deal with an external client was both enjoyable and informative.

-Brandon Dooley

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