TC6 - Productlab

Manual for students and faculty

Versio 0.3

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Introduction

Ticorporate business simulation is based on "Information systems project" course, which has been part of Business Information Technologies degree programme from the start. Its purpose was to teach how to build information systems and how to do it as a part of a project group working towards a common goal. In the autumn of 2013 Information systems project course extended to include theory studies when "Software production", "project management", and "modeling information systems" courses were integrated into it. The newly founded course was named Ticorporate and its first iteration was called "Ticorporate MXIII". After the first Ticorporate the name was shortened to "Ticorporate" plus a rolling number. We use the name TC and Ticorporate interchangeably. At this point in time we are at TC6.

After few yearly incremental upgrades it was decided that Ticorporate as it was is at its end. The course was split in half and that process gave birth to Ticorporate Demo Lab and Ticorporate Product Lab. Year after that, the course was pushed forwards half a year, causing Demo Lab to start on 2nd year BIT students spring semester and Product Lab to start on 3rd year students autumn semester.

Demo Lab is mandatory for all BIT students and Product Lab is a part of elective professional studies. Demo Labs purpose is basically the same as it was in every other year, to teach students how software projects and its roles work and to build a strictly defined game or software in a group setting. Product Labs purpose is to give students a chance to prove their worth and teach them how to create financially responsible product.

This document is created to describe objectives and activities of Product Lab.

Production process

The course is divided in four separate phases. These are concepting, pre-production, production and post-production.

Concepting and grouping up

The course starts with concepting and "mingling" part. Since we have groups with ready made concepts, people with ideas and people without ideas the first weeks purpose is to try and match all those people into a group and get them a productive role in the grand scheme of things.

This week will be quite open ended and the execution will depend on which kind of students are attending the course.

During the week Labmaster and lecturers will be around to assist and give opinions when announced. Labmaster will be there every day at least for few hours.

When all the formalities are done it's time to start working. During the first day the students which have a certain ready made idea in mind and those who don't have any definitive idea. Those who would like to make a concept for completely new game or application/service are allowed to do so.

Monday

The day starts at 08:30 EEST (Finnish time) at AP05 in Rajakatu campus. The Lecturer in Charge (or Labmaster) will say a few words an go through the structure, assessment, deliverables and anything else about the course. We will also have two lectures from industry specialists from game and software companies.

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Thursday

08:45 EEST we will all gather to AP05 to hear the first product ideas. We will have something from the outside world, and everything from inside of Ticorporate. At this point everyone should have some kind of concept and idea what kind of product they would like to work on and in what role they would do the said work.

Presentations will happen in no particular order and they will be assessed by the labmaster and peers. The concepts will be assessed by 5 criterias. The labmaster will provide further instructions at the start of the meeting.

- Can you make money out of the concept
- How interesting the concept is
- How much would you want to work on the concept/project
- Scope and feasibility of the concept
- How "new" and innovative the concept/idea is

Friday or Thursday

If this happens on Friday, we will gather 12:45 EEST o'clock at Rajakatu, room AP05

We will discuss the concepts and assessments together and decide which concepts are the ones we are going forwards with. After this discussion, we should have X amount of projects which have defined groups. People can work crisscross and do the work on multiple projects but the working hours must be marked clearly and understandably for each and every project since those hours are the amount of ECTS given to each person.

Pre-production

Pre-production starts when the teams are ready. Groups will get to know eachother better and arranges a workspace to their needs and wants. Roles are selected based on the production model choosed. Chosen roles should include at least a Scrum Master, Product Owner and [a person in charge of Business side of things]. However, these roles should be discussed together with the team before starting pre-production.

When the roles and workstations are clear the groups will move on to the pre-production tasks. Pre-production can take as long as the group needs, but it shouldn't take too much time. Usually a full week

should be enough. Labmaster (or Lecturer in Charge) will go through the pre-production material and discuss with the team about their findings.

The items that should be delivered during pre-production

- Project plan
- Business plan
- Either/both
    - Game Design Document
    - Feasibility Study

Note that these documents are almost in a state of change.

It's also recommended to use the document templates in the provided GitHub repository.

Production

Will happen in a chosen manner by the group and it will start when the group is ready. During this production phase there will be two meetings with the team. These meetings are designed to help and guide the team to right direction by BIT lecturers and relevant industry members. The schedule and date of these meetings will be announced at a later date by the labmaster. During production the teams will be able to co-operate with Digi & Game centre project. During production phase the team should focus on efficiently and methodically building new features and planning business opportunies.

The goal of production phase is to build a product or a service which has business prerequisities. During Product Lab production phase the teams will have visits and lecturers from industry members to help them develope their project and business plan towards release.

Brand packages

During the Product Lab the teams will make brand packages for their products. Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences will provide the necessary resources for it. The package includes at least a t-shirt, hoodie, some flyers and a roll up. Some of the design elements will be mandated by JAMK.

The Life and Times of ~~Scrooge McDuck~~ the Product Owner

Ticorporate Demo Lab focuses on Scrum Masters, testers and business people and let the Product Owners to their own devices. In Product Lab, this is no longer the case. In here we want to give the PO role the guidance and counseling it needs since its the most important one when it comes down to business decisions. You could say that the PO is kinda like the "main customer" of the product.

You can read more about the role and its responsibilities in the dedicated guide.

Post-production

At this stage, project implementation and best practices are collected and reported alongside with the lessons learned from the project for future use. At least the following operations shall be carried out during post-production.

- Pitching competition

- Project closing report
    - Including contingency plans
        - Pre-incubator, incubator, etc
- Release if applicable
- Creation of personal career portfolio and demonstrations during demonstration day

Pitching competition, career portfolio and demonstration day

Pitching competition

The project grade of this Ticorporate Product Lab comes wholly from the pitching competition. It will be judged by BIT lecturers and industry specialists. Time, date and place will be announced at a later date.

Assessment criteria and guidelines

To be decided before the course starts, preliminary thoughts:

TL;DR

- Liiketoimintaedellytykset
    - Asiakaskunta
    - Liiketoimintamalli
    - Rahaa?
- Tuote itsessään
    - Toimiva, hyvä, huono, vakuuttava?
    - Demo
- Esitys?
    - Hyvä, huono, vakuuttava, jne?

1. The Problem And Solution

The first thing we look at when evaluating an investment (but not necessarily the most important thing), is the idea and the product. What problem does this product aim to solve? Or what value does it add? Does the product or solution proposed solve that problem and to what degree? Would there be a big market for this product or idea?

2. The Business Model And Strategy

If an entrepreneur is able to present a good product or solution, it is important to be able to present a well thought-out strategy and roadmap for execution and achieving growth. Which markets are to be targeted? What is the business model? How would we sign up customers? How would we monetize the product? What distribution channels are to be used?

3. The Entrepreneur And The Team

This is for sure the most important criteria; ideas and products can change, but the abilities of the entrepreneur to execute and lead is most important. We usually like to invest in projects that have more than one co-founder. We look for things like energy level, motivation and passion for the product. We favor

entrepreneurs that take the bootstrapping route and [who] are willing to go through difficulties in the short-term in order to build a long-term business.

4. The Preparation

When we are presented with a pitch we assess the level of preparation and effort that has been put into the pitch, and this includes the presentation itself and the research done in the background.

5. The Financials

It’s very important for us that the entrepreneur presents and fully understands his financial numbers and projections, and is able to defend their assumptions of the business model presented.

Career portfolio

The aim of the career portfolio is to show acquired skills with a view to applying for jobs in the field. In practice, there should be two parts one's own skills and a self-assessment. A comprehensive and representative collection of samples of the work done during the course is selected for the career portfolio. The career portfolio is compiled from the base portfolio. During the course, the student collects all the material related to their know-how: essays, abstracts, reports, drafts and intermediate work, in addition to the actual work. In addition, it is a good idea to store all feedback and evaluations, self-assessments and analyzes, notes, concept maps, pictures and photos, learning diaries, or other logs of this kind in your basic portfolio. Although the evaluation only measures the implementation and presentation of the career portfolio, the basic portfolio is a good tool and it describes the development of individual skills over time. If the basic portfolio is done well and carefully, it can be used to assess and analyze the development of one's own skills.

In the career portfolio, the student tells about their own skills and it describes the student's strengths, views and areas for further study. As an appendix to this analysis, the student attaches samples of the best work (and/or what they are the proudest of) they have done for the project. What is noteworthy, especially for game content creators, is the fact that employers often want to see the workflow and intermediate results in career portfolios, not just the end results.

It is a good idea to start the portfolio building with a learning plan. **What can I do now** and **what will I learn** during the course? This plan will make your work goal-oriented and help you critically examine your own work. After that, the student should actively collect material for their basic portfolio according to their own plan. It is also advisable to maintain active self-evaluation (similar to a learning diary), where the student is an active participant in the development of their own skills. Towards the end of the course, the student builds their own career portfolio and builds it on the basis of the final presentation day. The demonstration and the career portfolio will look different for every student. However, the following questions should be considered when preparing your presentation:

- What have I learned and realized?
- What goals were achieved and which were not achieved?
- What did I learn outside the learning plan?
- How do I see my future
    - What kind of job do I want to get into?
    - How did the course support those goals?
    - What other know-how do I need to acquire to reach my goal?

- What are my strengths and have they been clarified?
- Why did I choose these documents / works for my career portfolio?

There are many ways to build a career portfolio. It can be a standard directory and is intended to be used, for example, in a job interview to support the display of one's skills. However, it is often the case in the digital field that the career portfolio is available in the internet. This often involves using services such as LinkedIn or GitHub Pages to publish information or building a website to support your expertise. Video services like YouTube have also gained popularity as a channel for sharing expertise. Whatever the technical implementation, you should reassure the assessors on the day of your demonstration of your expertise and its development during the course.

Demonstration day

The career portfolios will be presented on the demonstration day. The goal of the day is to make everyone's skills and their development are visible and assessed. There are three main areas in which the students are assessed. Technology, content production and business. Each student participates in only one depending on the subject in which they have mainly done their work in. Each student has 30min to convince the panel of their expertise. 20min for portfolio presentation and 10min for discussion and questions. The jury consist of relevant BIT staff.

Exeution of demonstration day

Implementation proceeds according to the following process

1. The student uploads their portfolio (.zip or a document with a link to a public portfolio) to the workspace return folder
2. The student picks the best time for their presentation from a list of time in the workspace.
3. The student will arrive at the room listed on the booking list with the work and presentation tools required to present the portfolio (including a computer if the presentation is digital). The student will have access to a video projector or a large display.
4. The student presents their portfolio as described in the previous subchapter and agreed upon with the teacher/labmaster/coach.
5. The jury will make an assessment decision and write the feedback in the return folder.

Assesment criteria for career portfolio

Subject of assessment	Sufficient	Good	Excellent
Contents and execution of portfolio	Has way too much (or too little) content and is a confusing pile of work. Doesn't convince.	Quite ok! Brings out the students know-how through selected work. Presentation type is ordinary.	Interesting and displays the students know-how excellently. Appears to possible employer in a positive and exemplary way.

Subject of assessment	Sufficient	Good	Excellent
Know-how	Demonstration shows that the students know-how is only a little bit better than at the start of the course, or from a very narrow field. Development of the students know-how is only barely visible. Challenges in achieving set targets.	Evolution of the students know-how and investment in learning can be seen from the portfolio. The student has managed to achieve most of the set targets.	The learning curve of the students know-how is clearly visible from the presentation. The student is proud of their achievements and displays exemplary exhibition of conquering achievements.
Self evaluation and analysis	The student has challenges to show reflective standpoint to their own learning and know-how.	Reflection of know-how is good. The student recognizes their know-hows development points and those sections which are still shallow.	The students analysis is convincing and deep. The student can look and assess their own work from an objective standpoint. The student sees their own potential in the field and can recognize the needs of their know-how for future workplaces and assignments.
Presentation and extra value for the discussion	The presentation is an ordinary list of work. The student can't hold a constructive and analytic discussion with their peers about the presentation.	The student presents their work in organized and analyzed manner. The presentation is interesting and well defined. The student provides extra value for the conversation and brings new points of view to it.	The presentation is captivating and really interesting. The structure of the presentation is clear and its technologically exemplary. The students know-how and pride in the done work shows in exemplary through the presented material. The student is active in the discussion and brings new points of view and elevates the discussion to a higher level.

Timetable and resources

You will find a detailed calendar with all the communal lectures and events from the TC6 workspace in Optima and from Microsoft Teams. New events will appear as soon as they are arranged and we will try and give enough time to plan the production around these events.

During the Product Lab the students will work between 270h and 540h based on their own wishes. The amount of hours you are planning to do must be communicated to the group before the production starts. This should also be written into the project plan document. Learning and working will happen at the JAMK main campus (Rajakatu 35) at room AP05. The group will plan and decide their working hours together and arrange it so that most people are attending all times.

- 10 ECTS = ~15h/week
- 20 ECTS = ~30h/week
- First day 9.9.
- Week 42 - Autumn break
- Last day 20.12.