CS307 Sprint 1 Retrospective

Team 2 - Anant Goel, Don Phan, Jason Rahman, Jon Egeland, Josh Selbo, Levi Linville

Group Reflection

We found that our version control and task management systems were effective at organizing our development. Waffle.io was used as a task board integrated with GitHub's issue tracker. This combination of tools and features allowed us to quickly create issues, assign them to a developer, and then visually see which areas of work were not started, ongoing, and completed. A minor improvement moving forward would be increasing use of feature branches for individual components and features.

Next sprint we will often be working in pairs on certain tasks. With this format, one person can have the role of software tester and give feedback on the other's work. We will also define more complete and stricter acceptance criteria for user stories. This will provide more clarity when organizing effort toward tasks.

The "daily" standup meetings were effective at communicating progress within the group and sharing concerns and feedback. They were also effective at motivating progress, because it requires each developer to share progress since the last meeting.

Story Reflection

Successful User Stories (examples)

As a site administrator I want the site written in Ruby, HAML, SASS, and jQuery for ease of development and maintenance.

Overall, we found these frameworks to be highly effective in development. While a fair amount of time was spent learning the different technologies, we were eventually able to expand the site's functionality rapidly and with relative ease. The next sprint will benefit greatly from the progress made here, as we already understand each of the components involved in the site, and will be able to start development immediately, rather than having to go through another learning process.

As a student, I want to see high-quality graphics in the game.

It was determined that OpenGameArt.org would be the primary resource for assets used in the game. As a treasure trove of open source audio and graphics, the website allowed us to find all the assets we needed for the first sprint, and we will be able to find all assets from OpenGameArt moving forward. Only simple modifications were needed from the downloaded sprites - e.g. changing colors, cropping, resizing, and exporting.

Failed User Stories

As an instructor, I want to approve students' enrollments in my classes.

   While we were able to implement the first half of this process, the enrollment process for students, we were unable to implement the second - the approval process for instructors. The approval functionality required more work than we had originally planned, including modifying some of the gems that the site is using and developing multiple views for different users, to the point that we felt it best to change it to a Sprint 2 story. A key takeaway here is to not underestimate the complexity that results when integrating multiple frameworks and components.

As a student, I want game logic to run inside a contained environment.

   We encountered more problems than expected during this task. Several seemingly simple tasks took an inordinate amount of time. In retrospect, solutions for those problems were found, but only after the original approach was challenged and overturned. It would have been useful for a second team member to have been heavily involved in the initial planning so more questions could have been asked regarding the original approach.

Individual Reflection

Anant Goel

   I personally feel the first Sprint went off very well. Everyone was comfortable with the roles they were given. The regular stand up meetings were helpful in addressing any issues that might have come up during the time spent working on the Sprint. The regular sharing of information between group members helped the group develop as a unit and it helped us tackle any issues that came up. Personally, I feel the tasks I was assigned went well. I was able to finish all but 1 task for the Sprint, while learning a new language (Ruby) and framework (Ruby on Rails). I was able to allot an appropriate amount of time to each task which allowed me to complete them without getting overwhelmed.

   An area that did not go well was implementing logic within Ruby on Rails as I am not completely familiar with the framework as yet. The areas I can improve are definitely directly related to my knowledge about the framework we are using. I need to assign more time to get a greater understanding of Ruby on Rails. I will also have to balance my time spent on this project with my other duties in order to have a smooth transition throughout Sprint 2.

Don Phan

   Since it was the beginning of a new project there was a huge learning curve for me. There were plenty of obstacles like trying to get the database to work properly on my end to get certain views to show up. One the other hand, I did learn a lot about Ruby on Rails and how MVCs work. I did feel like I spent an appropriate amount of time with this project, but I know that this will not be enough with the upcoming sprint. I think I will have to allocate a lot more time to this project if I want to be able to keep up with my peers and get my part of the project finished.

Jason Rahman

I feel like I was able to spend more than a sufficient amount of time on the project, although more time than expected was spent learning Scala, Akka, and Spray. Now that I have a solid understanding regarding most of the technologies in use, I expect my velocity to be much better this sprint. One area for improvement could have been to seek more second opinions regarding design decisions on various features.

Jon Egeland

I felt comfortable in this first Sprint. It took a while to ramp up, but I generally felt that I was well engaged in the project without being overwhelmed. The project has made a decent amount of progress, and though we were unable to complete all of the tasks in Sprint 1, I feel that we are still on schedule.

I feel like I could spend more time working on the project in the Sprint. For Sprint 1, most of my development time was either in the hours before or after our team meetings. For this Sprint, I would like to spread out my time more evenly, which will hopefully allow me to be more relaxed while developing and work through bugs more successfully.

Josh Selbo

Overall I'm pleased with the progress I made throughout the first sprint. I was worried that I would not be able to find assets with a compatible, consistent art style. I was also concerned that defining a tilemap format and extracting each frame from animated sprites would be a manual, tedious task. But after researching different technologies I was pleased to find an open source tilemap editor whose exported format was compatible with Phaser, the Javascript game library. I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of configuration and setup that is *not* required with Phaser. I am confident that we will be able to leverage the power of Phaser and integrate the functionality we need.

I can improve on my planning and time spent working on the project. Many of the tasks I completed were done without planning or communication with other team members. I can also dedicate more time to working on the project now that my schedule has become more flexible since the beginning of sprint 1.

Levi Linville

I was pleased with my individual progress and that of the group as a whole. I learned about a few new technologies and methodologies, such as creating RESTful services in Python, and code execution within contained environments. I think that I have room to improve, as far as communication with those team members who can help with my blocking issues. I feel I will be better at this now that I have a good idea of where each of us fits into the overall workflow. As we have better defined tasks and requirements, I will be able to spend more time on coding and be more productive overall.