

Edith Visual Editor

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This document describes how a user of Edith, an educational software designed to teach young computer scientists the basics of programming, will be able to interact with the program by developing a story. The visual interface of Edith is designed to graphically represent bits of code and let the user manipulate physical objects instead of using text. Edith should effectively teach young programmers some of the building blocks of programming. The visual interface will support the user creating new methods, control structures, and conditional statements by dragging and dropping graphic representations of code together. The Visual Editor must interact directly with the Object and Story creators in order to implement the user's visual abstraction of code. When the user completes the story, the visual interface will be able to convert the shapes and symbols into JavaScript. This visual representation will give young coders instant gratification, encouraging them to progress to text-based programming.

Introduction

Edith is educational software designed to introduce new computer science students to programming. New students of any age can learn basic object-oriented programming concepts prior to learning a particular programming language in detail (syntax, data types and structures, etc.). Edith provides a graphical user interface through which users can create a "script" that animates a 2-D character, or sprite, provided by the program. The user creates the script by piecing together provided blocks of program structure in a functional way. Users may create games and share their creations with others. Similar programs (e.g., Alice) have been shown to increase the interest level and retention of students taking their first programming classes. Edith will be written primarily in JavaScript and will be available over the internet. After initial development, the software will be open-source to allow further development and additional educational opportunities.

The Visual Editor (VE) module will provide a visual programming language editor (in essence, an integrated development environment(IDE)). The VE will allow users to arrange programming elements to create an animation sequence; programming elements will include methods, variables, control statements, etc. The VE will, while enforcing syntax rules, convert the program into JavaScript, which will be used by other modules. The VE aims to create an interface that it is easy to use, and following its name, will create a view that is always immediately ready to be seen. Since it will be using JavaScript, there will be no wait for compiling to see if the code "works," on the view of the Programmer. Rather, the code, or sequence of events defined by the user, will be always ready to run unless a script notifies the user otherwise.

The VE will be able to directly interact with two other Edith modules, Object Creator and Story Creator, while still being able to run independently. It will provide the Object Creator an interface for defining objects, and the Story Creator an interface for defining animations. In short, the VE will be able to run its own display view and integrate into the views of other Edith modules. The VE will provide not only an interface for the Programmer to create his own code, but also for the other modules to implement code provided by the visual editor.

The user will be able to export his program in JavaScript/JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) format. JSON is an efficient data interchange text format that is language independent. The purpose of this is to again encourage learning of coding to our target users – young students who wish to learn more about what they are doing as far as coding, what their changes look like from a lower level than the visual editing.

Use Case 1	Edit variable
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<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
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<i>Preconditions:</i>	Method exists which has a variable parameter.
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<i>Postconditions:</i>	Variable is assigned value given by user.
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Main Success Scenario:

1. User selects variable
2. User changes the parameter
3. Check variable type to make sure it is compatible with method
4. Variable is saved in method

Extensions:

3.a Invalid type data:

1. Incorrect input.
 - 1.a Boundary warning.
 - 1.b Wrong type.
2. User returns to step 1 or exits.

3.b Compatible type:

1. System accepts input and saves parameter.

Non-Functional Requirements Needed:

1. Learning Experience.
 2. Usability.
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Use Case 2	Dragging and dropping functionality for methods
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<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
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<i>Preconditions:</i>	There is a method for which it is possible to be selected.
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<i>Postconditions:</i>	Method is now ready to be used.
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Main Success Scenario:

1. User creates new variable and selects it.
2. They can now drag and drop the variable in the boundaries provided.

Extensions:

1. Invalid drop location:
 - 1.a. The user attempts to drag the variable outside of acceptable boundaries, the variable will now be "locked" inside of acceptable boundary.

Non-Functional Requirements Needed:

1. Learning Experience.
 2. Usability.
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Use Case 3	Instantiating a conditional statement
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<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Postconditions:</i>	A conditional is instantiated.
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A user drags and drops a conditional statement 2. They change the parameter (e.g. if this) 3. The inside of the conditional is then dragged and dropped (e.g. then that). 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements Needed:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience. • Usability.
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Use Case 4 Instantiating a Boolean Operator	
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Postconditions:</i>	A boolean operator is instantiated
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A user drags and drops an operation (e.g. and, or, not) 2. the user sets the two variables or expressions 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements Needed:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Experience. 2. Usability. 	
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Use Case 5 Connecting actions	
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Preconditions:</i>	There are two or more actions on the development board.
<i>Postconditions:</i>	The methods are connected.
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The method is dragged and dropped by the user above or below the action they want to connect to 2. The user releases the method 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements Needed:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience. • Usability.
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Use Case 6	Delete a method
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Preconditions:</i>	There are methods on the development board
<i>Postconditions:</i>	Selected methods are deleted
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The user selects a method or group of methods 2. The user selects to delete the selected items 	
<i>Extensions:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.a Invalid type data: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorrect input 2. User returns to step 1 or exits 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements Needed:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience. • Usability.
Use Case 7	Delete a method
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Preconditions:</i>	There are methods on the development board
<i>Postconditions:</i>	Selected methods are deleted
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The user selects a method or group of methods 2. The user selects to delete the selected items 	
<i>Extensions:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.a Invalid type data: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorrect input 2. User returns to step 1 or exits 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements Needed:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience. • Usability.
Use Case 8	Instantiating a Loop
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer

<i>Preconditions:</i>	Add method which does have a variable parameter.
<i>Postconditions:</i>	A loop is instantiated
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The user drags and drop a loop to the development board 2. The user then inputs the conditionals for the loop and its exit conditions. 	
<i>Extensions:</i>	
2.a Invalid input: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. User returns to step 1 or exits 	
<i>Non-Functional Requirements</i>	<i>Re-Needed:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Experience. • Usability.
Use Case 9 Creating a new Action	
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Preconditions:</i>	None.
<i>Postconditions:</i>	If first method, the box is made, if attaching to another method, the boxes are connected
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The user selects the new method button 2. Drags the method into the workbox 3. then the method prompts the user to give arguments for that specific action 4. If arguments are compatible, the method is created 	
<i>Extensions:</i>	
2.a Invalid input: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. User prompted to re-enter arguments 	
Use Case 10 Add Sprite Object	
<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
<i>Preconditions:</i>	None.
<i>Postconditions:</i>	New Sprite Object has been added to the visual editor and methods/actions can be added to it.
<i>Main Success Scenario:</i>	

1. The user selects the New Sprite button
2. The user fills in basic details of the Sprite
3. The editor updates with the ability to add new methods/actions to the Sprite.

Extensions:

- 1 None.

Non-Functional Requirements Needed:

- Usability
 - Learning Experience
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Use Case 10	Delete Sprite Object
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<i>Primary Actor:</i>	Programmer
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<i>Preconditions:</i>	The selected Sprite object exists
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<i>Postconditions:</i>	Selected Sprite object has been removed from visual editor.
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Main Success Scenario:

1. The user selects a Sprite from the visual editor.
 2. The user clicks on the Remove Sprite button
 3. System throws a confirmation box to make sure removal was triggered on purpose
 4. The sprite and its associated methods/actions are removed from the visual editor
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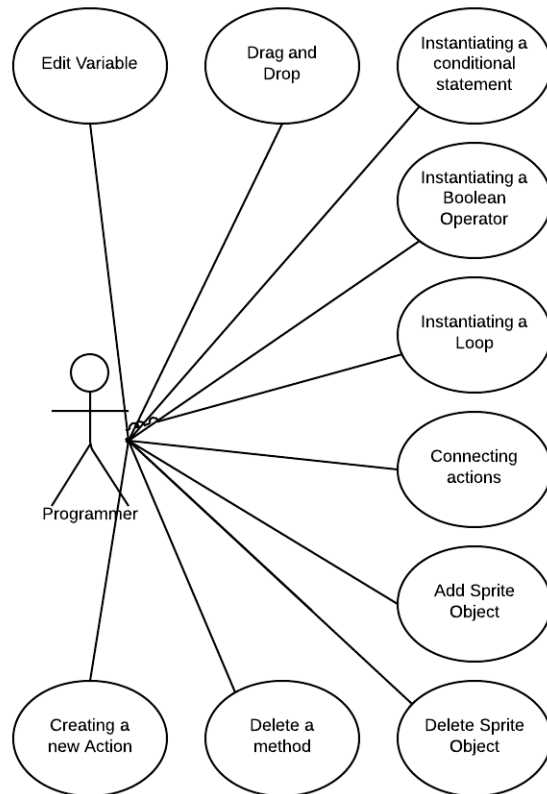
Extensions:

- 1 User selects 'Remove Sprite' when none exists
 - 1.a. System tells user that a Sprite must be first created to remove it.
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Non-Functional Requirements Needed:

- Usability
 - Learning Experience
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Use Case Diagram



Non-Functional Requirements

Usability

Training should not be required for users to effectively use the module. Module documentation and basic age-specific computer knowledge should provide sufficient guidance. The module should allow the user to recover from errors with informative and understandable error messages.

Documentation

The module will provide documentation that allows users to easily begin using the system.

Modifiability

The module will have the flexibility to allow feature expansion over time.

Privacy

The user's work will remain private/secure unless the user chooses to share it.

Student Learning Experience

In order to support the learning of young computing students, the module will provide an engaging interest that increases their interest in the subject. Effectiveness may be measured by student retention rates and self-reported interest levels.

Platform

Users will be able to run the module from Windows or Mac

Open Source

After initial development, the source code will be open and redistributed with improvements by anyone.

Glossary and References

Glossary

Sprite – A term borrowed from another visual programming editor "Scratch" (found here: <http://scratch.mit.edu/>). A sprite is like an instantiation of a class in that it is a character with actions (methods) that the programmer might define via the drag and drop IDE.

Development Board – Or the "working area." This is the area of the IDE that the programmer drags the graphic representations of code to in order to develop programs. Not to be confused with the canvas where the actions specified by the code take place (much like the console of a more typical IDE).

References

ALICE – ALICE is a 3D visual programming editor which allows student to drag and drop pieces to create a program. The program, as well as more information on the nature of the program, can be found at alice.org.

LaTeX Template – This use cases template was created by Tom Desair and can be downloaded at <http://www.tomdesair.com/downloads/use-case-latex-template.zip>
