Gordon Heil
Fall 2013
Dr. Benton

Coming into this 348 I had some very high explanations due to the fact that I knew that my good friend Ben would be in the class and we have similar interests and decided in advanced that we could create something that would be useful in JMU students' life. The following were ideas that we had in the beginning of the semester:

- Alcohol application to benefit the underage students
- SharePoint migration for JMU organizations
- Application to show happy hours that could be added onto JMU afterdark

After consulting with Morgan, we decided that the alcohol application would not go well with the program due to the fact that it is contributing to the delinquency of minors we decided to veto that idea.

SharePoint was a great idea for the following reasons, it first could turn a profit by selling our services to JMU, plus I have experience using sharepoint from my job this summer where I was consulting. After working to set up the environment for a few weeks we decided to call it quits on the project despite Morgan disagreeing with our decision. The reasons that we dropped the project was because first it didn't have any of the aspects that we were looking for in a project. These aspects included being able to create something from scratch and use our coding knowledge to develop a web application. We decided that the frustrations of trying to create a platform that would cater to the 32 bit or 64 bit operating system was creating more anger than spending our time on something that we could see our results in a realistic time frame.

The third idea that we had was to create an add on to Jame's JMU afterdark application did not hold our attentions. The reason being is that James had already pretty much created the app and would be working all semester on the application customizing it to his own specifications.

Learning goals are very important in this class due to the relax teaching style that Morgan has. Although, I did not fill out many of the surveys that were sent out weekly, I had an idea what I wanted from the beginning of the semester. The following goals were sent both before and during this semester:

- Create an application/website
- Set up a localhost
- Use html/css to design the website
- Gain client experience
- Use word press plug ins
- Create a site that could go live at the end of the semester

As stated in above the goals that we originally had changed over the semester. Starting with getting rid of the Sharepoint idea and getting rid of the other ideas were a big goal change. Once we began talking to our client about the possible idea of creating a website for his start up company we put forth all of our effort towards this site. This is when we changed our goals to learning all about setting up wordpress and the plug ins that are associated with it.

I feel that Ben and I were very successful in setting up the skeleton for the site that our client wants. To begin with we successfully created an wordpress website that is functional as well as ascetically pleasing. There are various parts of the website that still needs to be tweaked and changed to make the users experience easier and does not waste their time (such as having the checkout page all on the same page and not on 5 different pages).

The failures of the semester would have to be that we didn't continue with the sharepoint idea. The environmental issues could have been fixed if we had sought Morgan's help to overcome this issue it could have been resolved. This could have been resolved by proposing multiple project ideas in the beginning of the year and making sure that we understand the pros and cons of each project. This could be determined whether or not the project will fulfill the things that we want to achieve.

When we decide to change our project we wrote a 5 page proposal in order to not only show to Morgan to that we have put some serious thought into our project and we weren't just going into this new project blind; it was also used as a product backlog in order to spread out what we want to accomplish through this website.

As JMU's mission statement states "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives" I do feel more enlightened in the sense that I tried something new and have new experience that will one day prove to be useful. I have had a stressful semester in both academic and personal aspects. Although I am stating this now I still feel that I dedicated enough time to my schoolwork to be successful in all of my classes.

I have pros and cons for this class. First off I do like the relaxed atmosphere where I don't have the pressures of trying to stress out over a due date or anxiety of getting a bad grade on a test that I have been studying for 2 days for. On the other hand, I do feel that there needs to be more hands of activities such have us program with you, instead of you just writing code every class. I sometimes felt that I was lost in what you were doing and a simple question wouldn't answer my curiosity. I feel that a point system such a what Nicole does would be more helpful/ or to have us present more than just once at the end of the semester.

I feel that I have accomplished everything that I wanted to accomplish in this course. We had a bump in the road when we decided to change projects but it was well justified what the reason for changing was. Ben and I have explored and gained knowledge in an area that neither of us had before and turned out a clean, customizable wordpress. This is the reason why I am asking for an A in the class.

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations coming into this course were high. I knew, being a "multimedia" industry course that we would be working with media relating to either web applications, phone applications, or anything multimedia related. As to what specifically we were going to be doing in the class, I had no clue. I expected that we would be doing more hands on applications, where we would be able to code along or do something similar. I also anticipated that we would be learning more about database systems in terms of how they related to multimedia sites, such as e-commerce and login features (so pretty much the backbone to the sites).

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

At the beginning of the semester my learning goals for myself consisted of simple things I could accomplish quickly throughout the week. These goals were:

1. **Learning more about website structures:** I wanted to learn more about website structures because I knew in my mind already that I wanted to create a website. Whether it be for my mom's bakery where it would be more of an ecommerce online store, where orders can be placed and payments could be made; or for my senior project, which will act like an informational website where we can display our workings with the drone, inform people about potential uses for UAVs, etc.
2. **Learning about the HTML language:** Since I only knew briefly about HTML I wanted to learn more. I felt as if it would be both beneficial to this course and to my future if I decide to continue to work with online material, such as webpages.
3. **Learning how to code in HTML:** like mentioned before, my knowledge on HTML was slim. Being able to code HTML would be helpful it I wanted to know HTML and how to create a basic website using HTML. Therefore one of my learning goals for myself consisted of watching tutorials, reading forums and understand the way websites were coded and why they are coded a certain way.
4. **Getting more familiar with CSS coding:** I was already exposed to some CSS coding with a previous project in another class, where we developed a mobile application (which started as a web application first) for the JMU jacCard. Since I had some experience I wanted to get more proficient in the language and understand, again as to what all the coding meant and when and where to use it.
5. **Learning formatting styles:** Since a website is first judged by the way it looks (well that is what I first do when I go onto a website), it was important for me to get to know and learn more about formatting styles. Whether it be to make columns, place an object or text in a particular position or simply put a horizontal line on the page, I knew that I wanted to make the website or whatever I was going to be doing for my semester project look good.
6. **Learning common CSS and HTML code needed for a basic website:** In order to get the hang of using CSS and HTML I needed to know how they came

together. What connected them and how. Knowing the basics was to essential start.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

Over the course of the semester my goals evolved from being broad and easy goals to becoming more specific and difficult. Instead of being able to complete a specific goal in a week, they became goals that went on into the next week and then the next. They were more challenging as well. One of the goals I had for myself this semester was figuring out what application to use for live video streaming. This within itself was hard enough. Me and Jason went through a lot of different sites and paths in order to come across one application that "Might" work. Other goals involved getting specific portions of the website completed. Page by page became an individual goal themselves until they were complete. These goals were no longer one-dayers they became goals that required me to do some digging in terms of knowing how exactly I wanted to do a certain task and required planning before I actually started the task.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

I felt that I was successful in a couple of different events. I felt that the entire project was in itself was a successful accomplishment. Being able to develop a website that is user-friendly, easy on the eyes, and easy to navigate was pretty good task for me. I feel as if being able to figure out the video feed issues we were having with our transmitter and receiver kit was also a success. I give credit to Jason for helping with both these successes since I would not have been able to complete this project without him. I also felt as though I meet all of my goals that I had set for myself. Being able to obtain live video feed was also a success on my part and on the team. We were able to rule out Red5 and with the help of Morgan, be able to find our way to using VLC in order to obtain live feed through our website.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I think that I may have failed in terms of difficulty of the project. I feel as if we could have done more on this project if there were more time to implement things like, GPS capabilities of the website (such like a tracking device for the drone) and creating an intelligent agent to search news worthy articles on the topic of drones and have it update on a specific time requirement. What I have learned from these failures are to create a small scope when starting the project, instead of starting with a big scope and having to reduce it because of time constraint. This way I wouldn't be disappointed in anything that I didn't accomplish because I have not yet thought to tackle the task just yet. In the future when doing projects I think I will have to take that lesson learned and apply the theory conservatively. That way I am not under estimating my ability to do great things but I am also not setting the bar too high to the point where it may be unreachable in a given amount of time.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I do feel more educated and more enlightened. I feel as though my actions of being able to find a solution on my own to problems that I've encountered will take me far in terms of being able to be a self-thinker. Thus, not always having to go to someone when a problem happens, although this is not always a bad thing. When a problem occurs and you cannot find a solution, I have found that it is best to ask someone. Whether it be one of your peers, a professor or someone whom may know the answer or a path that may lead you to the answer. I feel that my activities of self-learning and learning from others through the semester will help me in the near and distant future. I have come to learn that I probably do not want to do web development as a career but maybe as a hobby. Though if the time occurs that my occupation requires or wants me to do any type of web development, I will have the skills to do so without hesitation and turning down the offer to a great opportunity to show my skills that I can give to the company.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?

I really enjoy this style of course work. You allow for the students to be able to learn what they would like to learn instead of feeding us with information we would find boring or useless to what we would like to do in life, or with our time spent during the course. If I were to take this course again, I would maybe recommend allotting some of class time for group work in order for teams to work on their semester projects. I know with myself I have a lot on my plate when it comes to schedule wise. With working 2 jobs and all of my other classes, most of my free time to work on group projects are limited. Using class time which is already allocated for the course would be beneficial to getting more work done and possibly even more progress on projects.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like for you to report an "A" to the registrar for me. I feel as if I tried my best to accomplish all the goals I had set for myself. I spent a lot of time learning more about HTML coding tags and CSS formatting in order to incorporate all that I would like to in the website me and Jason were developing. I also feel as if the website we developed was worthy of a good grade, even though it was not physically live on a server for others to access without the code.

Jason Whetzel
ISAT 348 Narrative
12/10/2013

Expectations

Based on previous classes, I expected this course to be conducted the same was as ISAT 252 and ISAT 340. With a course title of "The Multimedia Industry", it was difficult to tell what the focus of this class would be exactly, so I did not really know what to expect. After learning that this class would be focused on web development, my expectation was that I would come out of this class being able to build better websites in terms of aesthetics and functionality than I could after ISAT 340.
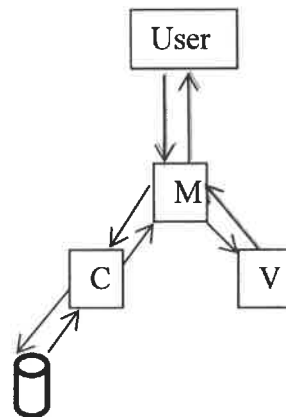
Goals, Successes, and Failures

Before selecting a project, the goal I set for myself was to provide proof that I could build better websites than I could after 340. After deciding which project I would be working on during the semester, my initial goal become more specific to include learning how to stream live video on a website and how to show the location of a moving object on a map for GPS tracking. While these goals largely remained the same throughout the entire semester, being able to stream live video became a larger focus than GPS tracking. Every week, my goal to be able to stream live video was defined by where I was stuck at from the previous week. Ultimately, I accomplished the goal of being able to stream live video from a video file, capture device (in our case a webcam), and a GoPro camera via VLC media player which was demonstrated in our weekly meetings and a class presentation.

Many failures accompanied the implementation of the media server Red5 for video streaming. After being unsuccessful for many weeks, we finally found out that the Red5 server was no longer being maintained and the last update was almost one year ago. In this industry, one year can make a technology outdated. These failures taught the very important lesson of documentation and maintainability.

Much like previous classes, I knew that there would also be lectures that were not necessarily related to the project I was pursuing. In the case of this semester, the focus was on the model-view-controller (MVC) framework. Knowing that this is a widely used architecture for web applications, the goals I set for myself was to be able to understand and explain how this architecture works and to be able to build a web application that uses this architecture. Over time, these goals remained the same; however, I did not fully accomplish them as I spent a lot of time on the video streaming portion of our website. Due to me somewhat blowing off this goal during the semester, I intend to continue working with it in the future since the MVC architecture is so widely used for web applications. What I did accomplish was being able to describe the way this architecture

works and getting Laravel running on my own machine.

- The user makes a request
- The router determines where the request will go
- The model is the data/application.
- The controller takes the user's requests and manipulates the model.
- The model then updates the view which is what the user will see.

Personal Impact

This course has had a huge impact on me personally. Being able to lead a meaningful and productive life, as JMU hopes will come from an education here, can stem from doing something that you love both professionally and personally. I look back at myself when I took ISAT 252 and remember having no interest in programming. Almost two years later, here I am pursuing an IKM concentration. While this course, and previous courses I have taken with you, have not given me a concrete idea of what I hope to do in the future, they have given me concrete skills that I can use professionally. Despite these skills, it is the intangible benefits that will stay with me. Outside of programming, what this course really teaches is self-motivation, doing what you love, and taking risks. These intangibles are what will ultimately allow me to lead the meaningful and productive life that JMU hopes I will both professionally and personally.

Course Style

This style of course has worked really well for me. When I took ISAT 252, I initially hated the way it. I hated being in a course where I had no idea what I should be learning. I wanted more formal instruction, but that changed about halfway through. I began to understand that my education was in my own hands. I was free to do whatever I wanted without fear of failure. Eventually, I began to enjoy the freedom of being able to find a topic I'm interested in and pursue it without having to worry about the consequence of failing, and I believe that was a huge factor in me choosing to pursue the IKM concentration. While I may have been successful in a traditional class, I do not believe I would have been nearly as interested in this material as I am now. In more traditional classes, I find myself doing work for the class because I have to do it. In a class like this, I find myself doing work for it because it's something I want to do.

Education comes from learning the course material so that one can recall it when needed—not just for the exams. In traditional classes where grades are the measure of success, memorizing is the dominant method of learning, but is it really learning? Some

classes we take because we they are required. We may learn bits and pieces from these classes from specific topics that spark our interest and receive a grade that says we were successful, but were we? In a class of this nature where the pressure of receiving a passing grade is removed, we can immerse ourselves in a topic that we find interesting and that is what true education is all about.

The way this course is conducted is very well done. I like that we are able to work on projects that we are interested in and that class time is spent teaching topics that are of relevance to all in the class. This can understandably be difficult given the variety of projects students are working on, so I would like to commend you for a job well done of this over the three courses I have taken with you. Keep it up!

Desired Grade

The knowledge and skills that I have gained from this class include:

- Build functional, aesthetically pleasing websites
- Stream live video to a website from a video file, capture device, or network stream
- Describe how the MVC architecture is constructed and how it works
- Implement a MVC framework such as Laravel

I plan to continue working in the field of web development to further my knowledge and skills since there is always more to learn in this ever-changing industry. Given the tremendous amount of information in this discipline, I cannot leave this class saying that I have fully mastered the material; however, I feel that the things I learned this semester are reflective of an A.

Dan Silvernail

ISAT 348

- What were your expectations coming into this class?
  - I didn't have a whole lot of expectations. I knew how the class was organized and how grading was done so I knew if I was having troubles with other classes or personal things getting me down I could use this class time however I needed.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?
  - Since I got work on my senior project my goals were very much related to that. I wanted to become familiar with the MVC framework, laravel, and webservices. This involved in learning programming languages such as HTML, Javascript, and PHP.

- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?
  - They evolved in the way these goals would be completed as I have better taught myself how to teach myself things such as programming throughout this semester which is something I greatly value.

- In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.
  - I was able to use an CSS and HTML template to create the views of the web application being created for the senior project. I have even create my own CSS classes and HTML pages from scratch. I have been able to achieve my end goals of the semester with this project based on the skills ISAT has taught in relation to being a problem solver.

- In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.
  - I hoped to be more fluent in Javascript and PHP than I currently am. This will hopefully change one I dive in to adding more functionality to the web application being designed. I have even asked for some books on amazon for

christmas to help me with these languages and the laravel framework. Also I am going to spend a significant amount of time over break further addressing these programming and conceptual learning curves.

- JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?
  - o I do feel more educated and slightly more enlightened. While I do not believe I have gone through some vast change of mental enlightenment, I have continued to evolve and better myself as an individual. I believe in constant improvement and that there's no such thing as a peak in an individual so I will continue to push myself to be successful in all facets of life.

- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?
  - o It was difficult to be motivated. Psychology states that when a person is given a hard path or and easy path they often choose the easy way and many times I did this with the 348 class. I'm not a very motivated person unless I have a reward or a goal that I see valuable and often a person to push me. I do have a lot of self-motivation once I take ownership of a project and responsibility but sometimes it is a slow process especially if it's something I have trouble wanting to learn and execute. Being able to work on my senior project as my project for this class was the big motivator for me to work and attend class when I did attend class.

- What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.
  - o I would like an A because I put a lot of work into the project that I was allowed to work on for 348 and the rules are that I can choose an A if I would like. While I agree GPA often doesn't always correspond to individual success, having an A in this class and increasing my GPA won't hurt me at the same time in my current hunt for a job and a life after college.

ISAT 348

Logan Herr

Personal Growth Through Web Industry

At the start of the course, my objective was to apply the knowledge I already knew about web design and programming to the actual creation of web sites. I already had an understanding of many of the concepts discussed in class, like MVC, but I had no technical hands on experience with using software packages and frameworks that would get me started. With this in mind I set goals to get some sort of walkthrough in creating a web application from the ground up and to develop a mental library of different resources that would assist me in my future projects.

I felt that I was successful in reaching these goals. I now know the thought process that goes in to the creation of an application for the client, starting with the design and requirements discussions to the end goal of publishing a product. I also got a refresher in the concepts involved with web development, most specifically with following the MVC framework. Following along with the billiards application in class was helpful in giving a live example for learning the ins and outs of where to start and where to look for help when stuck, both of which satisfy the goals I set for myself.

Looking at my goals at the end of the year, I feel that I may have wasted my time in the course in some ways. I wanted this to be an easy A but I wanted to gain a more hands on knowledge of web development. From this perspective, my group project did not contribute to meeting my goals. I enjoyed the work I did and that's what I wanted, but there was a lack of motivation to complete work. There is not much to learn from my decisions in this course since I went in to this course with the objective of a stress-free course. I normally have a solid work ethic and strive to produce quality end results, but I am glad I chose to focus more on enjoying my last semester with a course and subject matter that interests me. The results of my time spent in this class didn't make me more enlightened or educated, but that was not my personal goal. I wanted to be able to go to a class and refresh my thoughts on a subject I had studied previously and not worry about additional assignments to compete with other work. So in analysis of the JMU Mission Statement, I learned that it is important to not accept more work or labor than you can successfully and sufficiently complete.

The style of this course was great; I enjoy the absence of graded assignments and the stress that goes along with them. I agree that it can hinder the actual learning and understanding of the course material. However, I feel that giving assignments would still be beneficial. They provide an opportunity to apply what was taught in class and practice the skills. I suggest getting a list of potential web apps that students may be interested in creating and to have the development of the projects be done in stages for assignments. They don't need to be graded.

As for my grade in the course, I would like an A. Thank you for the great class!

ISAT 348 Reflection Paper
Benjamin Micucci

- **What were your expectations coming into this class?**

  I was expecting to learn about Web Development Industry, and I did. I learned about how websites were developed in two different ways: programming, and using WordPress. In the programming method, I learned from you about how Laravel works with various templating engines to create a clean, yet elegant website. I already knew about Model-View-Controller design pattern from previous Computer Science courses so that got a little redundant, but it was a nice refresher from working with it this past summer. On the WordPress route, I got to learn about interaction with only one other group member (typically groups I have been in had more than two of us), which was interesting especially from already knowing him in the past. We worked well together and deligiently (for the most part). I also got to learn about client interaction and see first hand on much of a pain in the ass it can be. The client wasn't always responsive in a timely manner, so my partner and I had to figure out various ways of keeping ourselves occupied while waiting for our client to get back to us. I also got to learn about the struggles some projects can be, and when it is a good idea to go back to the design boards. I'm referencing the SharePoint migration my group was going to work on. Although we gave up on it, we didn't give up on it right away. It would have been awesome to do a project like that, however with the lack of tools, made it improbable.

- **What learning goals did you set for yourself?**

  I really just wanted to make a functional website and try something new. I've never worked with WordPress or SharePoint before, so it was cool learning new things such as how various plugins worked, and the vast differences between 32-bit and 64-bit architecture. I also wanted to stick out of the class and actually learn something new and fun, rather that surf reddit/facebook like majority of the class liked to do during lectures (at least the ones I attended). I've heard things about the course from fellow students and wanted to ensure that even though I get to pick my grade, I still got something out of the course and learned something new from someone with a different style.

- **How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?**

  Honestly, they didn't. I kept to the same goals throughout the course of the semester once we decided on our project for the course. My main goal was to learn, I'm not particular on what I learn, but I always try to learn something new every day. Specifically, I just wanted to keep increasing my knowledge of web design and working with WordPress because that is complete opposite of what I'll be doing late January. In January I'll be working primarily with C# and the .Net framework.

- **In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.**

  Well, I got to learn about client interaction and deal with handling a client's needs/desires and learning to tell the client 'No' when their needs/desires do not meet expectations or are just a bad   idea. Actually writing out the Requirements Analysis Document was very helpful too, I haven't written one of those since CS345 (Software Engineering), so it was a great refresher on documenting requirements, both functional and non-functional. We also had an actual product to show the class so I'm proud of that. Even though it is not complete yet, I still plan on working on it over Winter Break and when I start my job as a side project. I also got to learn from my failures, in this case trying to run a 64-bit VM on a 32-bit machine, so this made me feel successful because I still learned something new although I didn't meet expectations.

- **In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.**

  I do not feel like I failed any of my goals, but I feel like I hindered the progress on my learning and progress on the project in two ways. The first way had to do with my attendance. I typically did not attend class most Fridays. There wasn't an attendance policy so I enjoyed a few too many Thursday nights with friends. So that put a damper on my learning. The second way I hindered the project was by taking too much on my plate at one time. Although I only took four classes this semester, one of them was CS450 (operating systems) and another was CS460 (Networking), I knew those would be tough. I also decided to stay active in my Fraternity, and to continue to be a TA for Dr. Teate (ISAT 340), in this case I ended up TAing two sections. I also decided to take on a research project with Dr. Teate. Finally I decided to better my health by attending various weekly (sometimes twice a week) classes to learn about healthy living. This was far too much for me to take on, on top of wanted to complete this website by the end of the semester. So I think biting off way too much than I could chew hindered me from achieving the goal of completing a website.

- **JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?**

  I definitely feel more educated, I'm not sure about more enlightened. But I think that my activities for myself throughout this semester, both inside and outside of this class allowed my to better myself. I already know what I want to do in the near future and that is write code & continue learning. I do both of those pretty much every day so I'm very content on where my future is headed.

- **How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?**

  I enjoyed the style of this course, but there is one thing that really made me mad and would have stopped me from taking another of your courses (if I didn't graduate). I absolutely despised the fact that more than half of the class would be on their laptops and/or cell phones the whole class, if I was ever on my phone, I sent a text to my friend checking to see if we were getting lunch right after, which took a total of 30 seconds. As for other students, they would be working on other assignments or browsing reddit/Facebook. This really took a lot of away from my learning, as it was very distracting. I also hated the fact that students and the professor were on their laptops while my partner and I gave our presentation. I did not attend the following days presentation because of the lack-of-respect given by my peers. So I would just stop allowing students to use their laptops during class and tell students that you have an attendance policy so they attend more. Majority of professors at JMU don't allow students to use laptops for this very reason, besides students will get more of out of class. I've never worked with Laravel before, and I definitely could figure my way around after paying attention in class.

- **What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.**

  I would like a 100% (or an +A) if you do pluses. I achieved my goals, and continued to progress my learning throughout the course, I also actively participated in class, unlike many students. Thank you for this semester, I did enjoy having you as a professor for my final semester.

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations for this course were that I would learn something along the lines of web development technologies. I expected that for the most part, my learning in this course would be self-guided, and that was something that excited me about the course.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

My main goal of this course was to develop a photography website for my friend. I found out that this was something that wasn't going to take me through the whole semester pretty quickly. As opposed to doing the website for my friend, I decided that instead I would work on my senior project for the class, which involved creating a mobile application. Within that large overarching goal, I defined smaller goals for myself along the way that would enable me to better do what I needed for my project, and overcome obstacles in the future.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

My goals started to shift towards developing my skills that I would need to work on my project. I wanted to work on my project, but we were trying to move the backend of my senior project to an MVC, Laravel from Wordpress, which turned out to be solution that wasn't in harmony with the amount of data we were using. I initially started learning Django when we first started talking about MVCs in the class. I chose Django because I'm a big fan of Python, the programming language that it is built on and uses. Upon learning that our project was going to

be using Laravel, I started to phase out my learning of Django, and switched from trying to learn Django, to trying to learn Laravel. To do this I had to learn PHP, so I set a goal to do a codecademy course on PHP. As the semester went on, the club that I'm the president of, IEEE, started to take on some projects. In order to facilitate them, I started to learn front-end programming technologies, namely HTML, CSS and JQuery Mobile. I felt this was a good choice for me because I was planning on utilizing the same technologies for my mobile application in my senior project.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

I felt that I was successful in adapting to what my projects what wound up requiring of me. For instance, I really didn't have a clue on how to make recreate a data model in Laravel from existing information. As of how, I have four tables up with all of their relationship information in a MySQL database. This database was created using migrations from Laravel, something else I had to learn about. I also adapted quickly to learning JQuery Mobile and utilizing it for the mobile application for IEEE. Ultimately, I think good documentation played a large role in this, but knowing where to find the specific information was something that I got to be pretty good at towards the end of the semester.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I feel that my biggest failure in the course was that I didn't complete what I originally set out to do: create a website to showcase my friend's photography. I think in the future, I'll take what I view to be a side project a little more seriously. However, overall I think that I balanced my time the best that I could and did a fairly good job at it.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

Assuming that this isn't some bulls*** quote that's floating around on the Internet these days, Einstein said, "Education is what remains when one has forgotten what one has learned in school." I feel that this quote is particularly applicable in the field that we work in. Technology moves so fast that what you learned at the beginning of your college career is sometimes no long relevant towards the end. So while a teacher can hold your hand through a class and tell you these things about how to program in Visual Basic, and how MVCs work, it's probably not going to matter in a few years. The most important skill that I've learned I've needed to have is something that a teacher can't teach, and are as follows: adaptation, improvisation, and persistence. I believe these abilities to be the core of what makes someone who is effective in the field of technology. Ultimately I feel more enlightened than I used to. You and I got together one Saturday and

went to a bar to talk about SpotterCharts and its future, and wound up having a conversation about how our education system is broken. It was particularly enlightening to me. You could have lectured about it in class and made the same points, but there's something about sitting down with someone and having a conversation with someone about something you want to learn about, something that they're passionate about, that a classroom will never be able to replace.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?

I really enjoyed the style of the course. I feel like I thrive in that kind of structure-less environment where I can do what I want to do and not what a teacher tells me I should be doing.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

A. In terms of traditional grading, I think I missed one or two classes and showed up for a meeting once with little or nothing to show you as far as progress was concerned for my project. I learned about web technologies like HTML, CSS, JQuery, and mobile technologies like PhoneGap, which is what I set out to do.

Reflection on ISAT 348

Since I have had prior experience with your style of teaching in two other classes, I had a very good idea of what to expect going into this class. However, there were some variations that I noticed in this class. I expected that there were going to be more lab assignments that groups would work together to complete but the majority of the class consisted of a walkthrough of the BCA League Manager using Laravel. I found that it gave a good introduction into a framework that I was unfamiliar with.

In order to do well in this course, I set goals pertaining to going to class, arranging meetings with my project partner, keeping up with the online surveys, and maintaining communication with Angler's Choice. The original plan according to the company was to build a website from scratch using a programming language that was yet to be determined. Since the process of building a website has been done many times and there are many resources available to learn how to do so, the project seemed as though it was going to be rather straightforward. I found, however, that a company has many reasons that would cause it to hesitate in making decisions such as this one. First, the company already has a website that is very popular in the Google PageRank system and decisions to make a new one may not end well in this case. Second, it can cost a considerable amount of resources to implement a new system and get employees acquainted with new functionalities. Third, the team assembled consisted of myself, my project partner, and one IT person at Angler's Choice. There is a very good chance that this fact played a major factor in their decision making.

This changed our strategy considerably when it came to setting goals for the semester. The project was no longer deeply involved in the programming aspect like I had expected but required a heavier emphasis on planning. Much of our semester activities included using the information we had compiled from our talked with the IT person and the company owners in order to mark up a thorough schedule that would allow the project to move forward. This information included a summary of the features that the old website supported and some parts of it that were deemed to be necessary to keep or popular. Then, ways were discussed to either improve the site or build a new one. Site improvement included such things as implementing an online store that would go along with the catalog and a shipping system that would deliver the product to the customer. Though I believe that the most likely scenario will be an improvement of the site, the other option had some strong key points as well. One was that the old website was highly concerned with the make and models of boats that the company possesses rather than including any references to parts. A parts store may be much easier to implement in a new website that is more closely related to the manufacturers with which the company is closely involved with. Currently, the company has a complete list of its products that is stored on a CD. More than likely, the store would pull its item descriptions directly from this. This is rather strong evidence that supports that the company was seriously considering a framework that is custom tailored toward online stores even before we began working. Eventually, my project partner and I learned about NopCommerce, an open source service that promised a free and easy ecommerce solution that could be used alongside Visual Studio which would mean the use of ASP.NET.

I believe that we were successful in adapting to the circumstances that were placed before us and we were able to deliver some valuable information about companies to the class. One of my concerns was that we would not have much to deliver to the table but I was assured by a

classmate that he had, in fact, found our experiences with the company to be very interesting and that it changed his view on how software solutions are implemented in real settings. I feel as though hearing this, above all, made our project worth doing in the end. Our most concrete artifact which documents our learning over the semester can be seen in our schedule that my project partner and I had put together under the guidance of the IT department. We also created a quick template of a website using NopCommerce but this only consisted of a website heading, some sections, and a register and login system.

As stated earlier, constraints prevented us from building a fully functional online store. Besides this, there were some points in the semester where I felt that I could have done more to get the most out of the class. I could follow the Laravel lectures to some degree but I feel as though not being able to set it up for myself on one of the lab computers caused me to be pretty disenchanted with it. Also, pressures from my other classes and my senior project stopped me from pursuing Laravel in more depth. There was also a situation in my Interaction Design class where the professor became ill and a new professor had to take over. I feel as though the class had much adapting to do in order to satisfy the new expectations that were set for us. I also spent a majority of my time preparing for Software Engineering project "checkpoints" and exams. However, I did learn that time management was the real issue at the center of the problem. About half way through the semester, I began to write all of my goals and assignments down on paper so that I wouldn't have to hold all the information in my head. This way, I had a clear understanding of what I needed to do and always felt a degree of satisfaction when I was able to mark something off of my checklist. It was at this point that I had a stronger sense of urgency toward the projects in all my classes, including Multimedia Industry. I feel as though I had greatly underestimated the benefits of this method prior to this and I would have had a much easier time if I had done it this way from the start.

Because of these experiences, I can honestly say that I do feel more educated and enlightened. Two of my most valuable contributions toward this were most likely this course and my senior project because both had given me a degree of real world experience. I feel as though I am no longer thinking in the context of how my grades will shape my future but rather how my experiences in these courses benefitted me as an individual or as a future member of a business team. I was also very surprised to see how much ISAT has prepared me for group settings and teamwork. One of the things I noticed when I took some Computer Science courses was that students in that major lacked the knack for teamwork despite their advanced skill sets in programming. I found it was of great benefit to blend ISAT majors with CS majors in teams. Teams with this mixture seemed to be the most productive. I believe this observation can applied easily to any business setting. It makes sense that a team with diverse skill sets and a recognizable leader to hone these skills would have the highest probability of success on projects.

I believe that this fact was the premise behind this course. Each member of a team will have varying skills. It is sometimes very surprising to find out all the contributions individuals can make to the team. In a way, their exposure to unique knowledge gives everyone else some exposure to it as well. This can get more interesting when the members of the team are from separate courses. Though this was encouraged at the beginning of the semester, I think that an improvement in the course would be to promote the connection between this course and others of this format. A possible way to do this could be to schedule a day in the week where the two classes meet outside of the regularly scheduled class to complete a lab that requires two types of

expertise. Students from one course could focus their learning toward being able to supplement the projects of students from another course. Another way to do handle this is a method similar to my Software Engineering course which uses the agile method, Scrum, in order to complete a software product. A student in the group could be designated the task of a product owner in which he or she develops and keeps track of project requirements for the team. The primary goal of the rest of the team members would be to adhere to the product owner's "product backlog" which contains a list of these project requirements. A plan or goals could be made for each quarter of the course and summarized in the "sprint backlog". At the end of each quarter or sprint, the team demos the product as is and reflects on the work that was done prior to the sprint meeting and improvements are decided on. I found that this bears some resemblance to completing weekly surveys in the sense that there are goals to be made for the next week, the hours that are expected to be worked are written down, and there is a reflection of the work that had been done for the week. The only true difference is that Scrum is steeped into a more expansive methodology. An interesting way to incorporate this could also be to have groups decide on different methods of creating a software product. This way, students can see how the look and feel of projects differ from one another based on how project requirements were established and worked on. I would say that one of the most appealing aspects of having a class where students can choose their own grade is that factors such as grade stress can be removed and they can be more open to trying new course approaches.

If I was to take this course again, I would like to see changes like these as a personal preference. I find that I usually work my best when the atmosphere is somewhere between relaxed and stressful. Also, I would like to see an ambitious project like the ISAT 101 video game that was developed in the class again. There were points in the semester where I felt like I was far more interested in something like that than my own project. I inquired about that project quite often and offered feedback that my classmates seemed to be quite appreciative of. In return, they gave me some feedback about our project as well.

In conclusion, I would like to ask for an A in the course. I believe that our project was unique in the sense that it employed a real world application and that our classmates were benefited with some insight in how a software project is handled in a company.

Blake Richardson
Class Reflection

- What were your expectations coming into this class?

When I came into the class I had no idea what a class called Multimedia Industry would cover or what we would be learning. about in this class. My expectation was that we might be covering more along the lines of how video and music developed on and around the internet and computers.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?

Once I figured out that the class was mostly project based and based off our individual interests I decided to group with the video game group. I have always enjoyed playing video games and i knew they were programming based, but I always assumed that the skills required to create a game however basic were more advanced than anything I had learned about. I did not think we would be able to get very far, but since I had the opportunity to research into it as school work I was onboard. Some of my first learning goals were to try out some different video game development platforms based in JavaScript because Jamie and Logan had experience with JavaScript.

- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

Over the course of the semester as I continued to learn about video game design and how simple games are made I began evolving my goals to include more and more. The learning and getting the hang of the basics was a fairly large challenge for me since it was a new environment and learning what it was capable wasn't easy from some of the tutorials. Many video tutorials of the Unity assumed you had more of a background or experience with game software than I did. I then started focusing on just creating models in blender. Then finally i used models that our team created to help populate the ISAT building.

- In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

When we were first testing video game creation engines I tested MelonJS and Quintus. I first created a very small 2 dimensional demo with both based on tutorials on their websites. These were both useful game engines, but we were more interested in creating a three dimensional environment model of ISAT. Once I got Blender and Unity on my home computer I began creating small objects to test its capabilities. I created a cup a pear and a chair in blender to play with creation software. Then finally with Unity I was in charge of taking models that we had created and populating our ISAT map with them. This involved making them in game, sizing them, and then making them fit and lineup with the floor.

- In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

When we were first working on deciding which game engine to create in we had a hard time deciding on a specific engine and then a harder time picking what we were going to try and make. I think the problem was we were not having meetings about it. We would meet long enough to see if anyone had any idea's and then break up. Everyone was supposed to brainstorm while at home. This plan didn't work because I either didn't do it or i would get caught up in other work and forget all about it. In the future and in other groups I've had this semester I have been forcing everyone to meet up and work on idea's and issues until they are done rather than splitting up and trusting people to work on it from home. Another issue we had once we got our minds made up about what we wanted to do was sharing the files and project. For a few weeks just one person had the actual project file and everyone else had to work on a blank slate in unity and try to incorporate what they had done later. This was fixed using Dropbox to share the files. Dropbox led to more problems or uploading the most recent files and who was working on it at a time since if two people worked on the same file at the same time one person would just be overwritten when they both updated the files. A final issue I had was creating a plan for the game that was too large for what we had the time and knowledge to complete in one semester. We had a game plan for including all the sectors of ISAT in a zombie style game. We ended up only getting one mission into the game and it was just moving from point A to B without really explaining any part of the ISAT curriculum to the player. We may have been able to make more progress on this front if we had a file sharing system set up earlier in the semester, but a smaller scope for the amount of time we had might have been better as well.

- JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I feel more educated after this semester than I did before. I've seen a lot of the work that goes into creating a website and database that I didn't know about before and I've gotten to explore one form of video game creation. I had very little interaction with both of these fronts before so anything I learned from both projects made me more educated. I think these activities this semester especially the video game work has sparked an interest in me that I will continue to explore. I do not know if it is something I would be able to pursue as a career, but if nothing else then it will be a hobby and interest of mine now that I know some of the basics and can learn from there.

- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?

I found the lack of graded work as a stress relief from all my other classes. That being said I think that had there been like a midterm presentation of our projects, or possibly doing the weekly meetings as standup discussions in class on Friday's would give students a little more pressure to get work done on their projects. I know it took my group a while to really get substantial work done on the game. As for in class I don't know how to fix it but as for following along with your website most people either missed a day or a few steps and then were lost and had to just watch and follow along with you programmed rather than being able to type and create their own version of the website along with you. I don't know if you could send out updates to what you had done each day because that would be a lot of extra work for you and changing the settings on the computers couldn't be done by this method.

- What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like you to report an A for me. I learned about website and video game productions as well as the difficulties of programming in groups larger than 2 people while working on the same code or game environment.