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Final Project Update

Decision Helper!

The following is a real account of what motivated this project:

\*Best friend (BFF)and boyfriend (BF) enter apartment\*

BFF: My day was long, I don’t want to talk about it. Let’s go eat.

BF: Same here!

Me: Same! Wow, we’re so healthy (sarcasm)

BFF: where do you want to go?

BF: I could go for anything right now

Me: Ok, does anyone have any cravings?

BFF & BF: NOPE!

Me: ok..what souds good? American, Italian, Chinese, sanwhiches, salads…?

BFF: I don’t know, I’m just hungry

BF: ya, everything sounds good

ME: What about one of our usuals?

BFF & BF: ehh…sure…which one?

Me: I don’t know…I’m took hungry to remember all of our places.

BFF & BF: well come on…we’re hungry

Me: ok, let’s walk around and stop wherever sounds good

All 3 of us 10 minutes later: UGHHHHH!! WHYYY!!! SO!! HUNGRY!!! CANT!!! CHOOSE!!!

Me: \*inner monologue\* if only we had a way that something or someone can choose between all of our options

---- End Scene---

As you can see above, we tend to get emotional when we cannot figure out what to eat and yet we’re so hungry. We as a group are pretty tranquil people, but the second we’re hungry…all chaos breaks loose! So when it came down to what project I should try, this was the first thing that came to mind. Of course, that could have been because I had not eaten breakfast, but maybe that’s half the point. Either way, I wanted to have and provide an easy way for people, including myself and my friends, to choose between options – whether those options were restaurants, or places to visit, or even what college to go to (not advised, but they could). And I wanted to have them choose in some sort of fun interaction, but where they do not have to think too hard about it; that is where the inspiration to user the “Random” library came from. I wanted the users to be able to play, but in the end, I wanted the program to basically randomly choose for them. Since we had used some of the function from the Random library before, I knew that I could at least leverage random.choice(List).

My initial vision to execute said Decision Helper (DH) was to simply create a python program that had a main class and different sub class functions that it could use, whil leveraging many of the different functions included in the Random library. I wanted to make sure that every decision that was made, by the user or DH, was easy to make and fast to execute. I know that python interaction through terminals is not the ideal for users, but I also knew that if I could make the words and DH’s guidance easy enough, that people could still use the program just the same. I wanted to make sure that everything that was printed to the terminal, truly meant something to the reader and helped guide them through the process.

With this initial vision of interaction, I then came up with some of the basic functions/games that could be used in the program. I figured if I divided the types of games by how many choices there were, that each game could be specific enough for the users’ list of choices. I immediately decided to split it between: two choices, three choices, and more than three choices. I knew that I wanted to use games like “Rock, Paper, Scissors”, and coin flipping, and shuffling around a list and choosing one randomly among the shuffled list. But I knew I had to leverage them the correct way. Again, using the “guiding” UI in the terminal, I believed that these functions/games could become real life fairly easy.

As I sit here reflecting on this final project, I realize that the initial vision and the final product line up pretty well. I believe I was able to bring my idea to life and I feel that I was able to make it even more user friendly than I initially believed. It evolved into a slightly more sophisticated piece of code (with 1000+ lines, one would hope so) that had more functions than I originally imagined and that hopefully people can use on their local machines quite easily.

The final list of functions for this project resulted in the following menus:

def kindOfDecisionsTwoChoices():

""" a function that simply prints the menu for the types of decisions that can be made """

print()

print("Please choose what type of Decision Helper function you would like to use:")

print("(1) Flip a Coin")

print("(2) Rock, Paper, Scissors")

print("(3) Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock")

print("(4) Random among random")

print("(9) Quit")

print()

def kindOfDecisionsThreeChoices():

""" a function that simply prints the menu for the types of decisions that can be made """

print()

print("Please choose what type of Decision Helper function you would like to use:")

print("(1) Random")

print("(2) Coin Flips")

print("(3) Shuffle among choices") # shuffle and designate what place in the list and that's the choice

print("(4) Random among random")

print("(9) Quit")

print()

def kindOfDecisionMoreThanThreeChoices():

""" a function that simply prints the menu for the types of decisions that can be made """

print()

print("(1) Random")

print("(2) Shuffle among choices") #similar to 3 choices

print("(3) Random among random")

print("(9) Quit")

print()

Although I did not create *all* the functions/games that I thought would be fun and helpful, I believe this is a fairly good list of final products. My approach was pretty chronological – I would start with how many choices the user had and then create each function in order. The decision options for 2 choices definitely took the longest because it had the most possibilities. I added Rock, Paper, Lizard, Spock and Random among random as I was actively writing the other functions. The overall list of functions/games may not seem long, but each one has it’s own uniqueness about it simply because of how many choices were involved.

Brief summaries of each:

* Flip a coin – randomly choose between Heads and Tails. Or for 3 choices, a complicated scheme for whoever wins using at least 2 coin tosses (hardest functions of them all)
* Rock, Paper, Scissors – play between the user and DH and whoever wins, their choice also wins
* Rock, Paper, Scissors, Lizard, Spock – similar to above, just with a more complicated winning scheme
* Random – randomly choose any choice given by the user
* Shuffle among choices – take the list of choices, shuffle them, choose one randomly (as decided by user or DH) and that choice wins
* Random among random – given a list of choices, the DH will choose how many representations they will have in a list and then randomly choose between that list what choice wins

Overall, I’m pretty satisfied with how I approached this project. I delivered the functions that I really wanted first and I was able to use them in real life (yes, I used them to pick a restaurant just the other day! Sushi won!). The one thing I think I would like to have done different is to have added several more functions/games. I like the list I have, but I think it would have been nicer to have more options. I think I should have also split up the functions a little more – there was a lot of repetition that came into play, and it would’ve been nicer just to use the same functions instead of writing them out every single time. I was able to consolidate several, but not all of these instances.

If I had more time/opportunity to expand my project, I would add a couple more functions. For example, I think it would have been to play a round of tic tac toe or checkers to determine who won. And if I had even more time, I would have built a better GUI for this program. It would be nice not to have to stare at such small letters and read so many instructions. A cleaner look, I believe, would help achieve this. And of course, I would try to find all the bugs and fix them…as every software developer would tell you.

Overall, I had a lot of fun creating this project. I know I will be using it in the future and I’m hoping some others get some use out of it. I have the program itself in the .zip file I’m turning in, but just for quick reference, I also put it on github: <https://github.com/mypiette/ISTFinalProject>

It’s called “decisionHelper.py”. I highly recommend playing Flip coins with 3 choices (simply because this was the most painstaking) and Random among random (because it was the most fun, creatively) for any number of choices. I urge you to give the decisionHelper.py program a real try because who knew deciding could be so fun!