

Overall Reflection

Overall, the team worked reasonably well together and was able to successfully complete the project according to plan, even implementing a few extra features beyond the original plan such as subscriptions, texting and integration with whereis.mit.edu. The team was particularly adept at parallelizing when developing key features and communicating when changes were made that would affect other aspects of the project. After agreeing on which person owned which features, we did not end up needing to meet in-person an excessive number of times because we were able to work in parallel and build on top of each other's code using version control. Our ability to work in parallel minimized the amount of wait time and dependencies that might typically emerge in a group project and enabled everyone to work at a time and pace that was most productive for them. This also made team meetings especially productive, as we would often discuss important, higher-level concerns together and leave implementation to be done independently.

As a side effect of being accustomed to working well in parallel on the code base, we inevitably encountered some challenges on the team documents and critiques, which required more coordination and group discussion. Because we had not determined at the start who would send out the critiques or who would finalize the slides, we sometimes scrambled soon before the deadline to find out whether anybody had submitted the assignment, experiencing a 'tragedy of the commons' effect. However, on the documents for which we had pre-planned an internal deadline for completing the assignment, we were able to complete and submit those much more smoothly. Overall, even with such problems we were able to complete all of our required tasks on time, and with high quality results.

Our experience working as a team on this project has taught us how to maintain a balance between working in parallel and coordinating as a group, both of which can ultimately help minimize unnecessary overhead. In addition, we learned how to better plan our development cycles, how to carefully design our product and features so we would not have to go back and change our implementation, and how to examine work that was done by others and critique it and learn from it.

Individual Reflections

Carrie's Reflections

Cynthia:

Cynthia often took care of team logistics (i.e. pushing to heroku or taking notes during TA meetings) without being asked, which was great because it off-loaded some burden from the rest of the team. She was always very quick to understand how to overcome technical hurdles, so it would be even better if she could be more patient in explaining complicated points to the other teammates.

Ido:

Ido did a good job of keeping the team together and making sure we were on track on rolling out features. He frequently had thought provoking questions for the team at decision-making points, but it would be helpful if he saved up his questions to ask in chunks rather than right as they came up so that it would be less likely to interrupt another person's workflow.

Nitya:

Nitya was adept at implementing key features and working independently to overcome obstacles without too much help from the rest of us. She was also very helpful whenever we worked in person, though when we group-chatted remotely, it would've helped if she were slightly more responsive.

Ido's Reflections

Carrie:

Carrie was able to implement complex features that required integration with external sources. For example the AJAX calls to whereis.mit.edu. Her implementation was done quickly and professionally. Sometimes, she consulted with the person who developed whereis.mit.edu and implemented useful capabilities without coordinating with the team. All of her implementations were great, but it would have been helpful to ask the group about them.

Cynthia:

Cynthia did a great job with implementing complex features such as the incoming emails features. She was able to figure out hard problems and solve them quickly while maintaining great coding practice. She always took the initiative to submit team's documents and to take minutes at our weekly meetings. She gave good comments in our meeting, but it would have been better if she expressed herself more.

Nitya:

Nitya implemented several key features (for example users and passwords) and was able to overcome problems independently and quickly. We also worked together on unit testing, and she gave useful and critical feedback. As Carrie also mentioned it would've helped if she were slightly more responsive to emails.

Nitya's Reflections

Carrie:

Carrie was very adept at implementing features that involved linking with external API's, and actively contributed during design and brainstorming discussions. At times, it was unclear how she certain features were implemented and how they linked to other components of the project, so slightly clearer communication would have been helpful.

Cynthia:

Cynthia did a great job with implementing the email parsing and linking emails to heroku. She also took the initiative to submit most of our team documents to github and our site to heroku once completed. She was very agreeable and easy to work with throughout the design and brainstorming processes, but it would have been helpful if she was a little more active in group discussions.

Ido:

Ido had a great work ethic and took on challenging features, such as the subscriptions feature. He worked very independently and skillfully, and did a great job of keeping everyone on track. However, he was occasionally a little too involved in the workflow of other team members, and could have been a little more flexible in this regard.

Cynthia's Reflections

Nitya:

Nitya worked well with all the rest of the team members. She took on a good amount of work and delivered well. Nitya took comments on her work well and integrated the changes quickly and efficiently. While Nitya understood the overall goal of our project, it would have been nice for her to understand some of the other details so that she could have worked a bit more independently and with a bit more initiative.

Ido:

Ido probably put in the most effort in our project. He implemented a large part of the map and texting services. He understood the goal of what we were trying to accomplish well and had a lot of initiative. However, this lead to certain points during the project when he would get frustrated at the workflow of the other teammates. It would have been less stressful for him and better for the team if he could discuss these issues more openly and sooner.

Carrie:

Carrie took on some of the more interesting integrations on our site (ie the whereis calls and integration). She was very good at asking questions to us and the TAs that helped her solve her piece of the problem. Sometimes she implemented things that were a bit redundant or non-cohesive with the rest of the project, which would have been overcome by a bit more communication with others in the team.