**Group 7 Focus Group Interviews**

**Interviewer:**

What is the project about that you are doing?

**Interviewee 1:**

We're creating our VR application for Intel to simulate the daily tasks of our storage worker.

**Interviewee 2:**

This project has been going for a couple of years, we're making our warehouse worker simulation this year. It's also in cooperation with them as well.

**Interviewee 3:**

So, each year, there's a new job, which are implementing sort of, so we have the warehouse earlier, there are mechanics and we most...

**Interviewer:**

Okay, that sounds interesting, do you have any motivation for being in the course or is it like obligatory but if it wasn't, what motivations would there be?

**Interviewee 2:**

I'll be completely honest, myself; I will probably take other electives if it was cool because most of us already feel that we sort of have gotten this experience already through summer internships. So, you know, the whole scrum process and it's a lot of industry, you know, these consulting firms and everything they're basically doing this sort, of course, in the summer in the summer job. So, you basically get the same experience. I did, basically sort of the same thing in the summer, just more relevant for my field of study.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, that sounds...

**Interviewee 2:**

So, you know because I'm doing artificial intelligence, you're doing databases and you're doing databases as well. So, especially considering we have such, you know, I don't really have the motivation to work with games, I'm sort of I would like to work with machine learning and artificial intelligence and they would probably like to do some data analysis, some big data.

**Interviewee 3:**

This subject, customer JIRA project, I see that the appeal, if you go have a summer job, I can see that's nice to have but when we can choose what we can do, I don't really relevance...

**Interviewer:**

Did you have any technical challenges?

**Interviewee 1:**

A lot, this entire project has been just consisting of technical challenges. So, that makes it even less motivating and all the more frustrating.

**Interviewer:**

I understand but did you learn anything from those challenges at least?

**Interviewee 3:**

I think we learned more that when working with costuming, you have to set specific deadlines and you can't expect them to just do something you have to do it on that time because unless it won't be done.

**Interviewee 2:**

And a lot of the issues we met were really domain specific; they're specific for game development. So, you wouldn't really have the same sort of problems in whatever else kind of setting you're working in. It's like, highly specific to unity, which we're using for game development and it's, most of the issues actually are because of the game engine we're using. I don't feel we have had any sort of other issues except for the ones we've had with unity...

**Interviewer:**

Fair enough, technology might be challenging, I understand that, coding skills, any problems with that or what's it like?

**Interviewee 2:**

Well, I'll speak for myself and a lecture in Atlanta new in programming. So, I should have like, an optimal, it shouldn't have any problem with this course actually, I feel based on my experience, but I've had a lot of problems, specifically because of the game engine we're using. It's not really, there's no really no use of using good coding practices in Unity. It's just a mishmash of different sorts of techniques they're using. So, I sort of feel that I'm become a worst coder, actually, from taking this course because you can't use like object oriented programming. It's like, we tried and it sort of sort of worked, but then it didn't work because unity is difficult to work with. So, you sort of have to like it's this mishmash, so it's really pragmatical it's not scientific at all, I can't really say that the discourse has given me anything in that regard. I have a focus on reading, writing clean code, writing good code and I feel like that's totally wasted in this project, actually. So, it's more game development is good coders don't usually work with game development. It's usually people that are more into arts and stuff that worked with them the game development and then they learn coding through game development, that's my impression, at least. So, it feels like, it feels overkill to protect a bunch of computer science students on breaking with game development.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, maybe, I don't know.

**Interviewee 2:**

Just my impression of this whole course...

**Interviewer:**

How about soft skills, communication skills? How are they? Did you fight a lot? Did you have a lot of challenges with the customer or between yourselves? It seems like the project has had challenges from technical aspects.

**Interviewee 1:**

Not much fighting, at least not within the group fighting.

**Interviewer:**

But I mean, did you have of...

**Interviewee 3:**

I think I've had some challenges and I've learned from as well, but there is some soft skills issues like expectations, just knowing what to expect from each other.

**Interviewee 1:**

We tried not fighting with the customer initially, when we asked for call deliveries on time but now I feel like we should have been harsher and started the fight to actually make sure they gave us the call deliveries on time.

**Interviewee 3:**

No use to being nice.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, maybe that's true.

**Interviewee 2:**

The thing because I feel we've been working so, it's been working so good in between each other. We're communicating clearly, we don't feel like we had an issues really. But obviously we have issues, but it was in between each other. With everyone was like on the same side. But still, the communication with the customer just doesn't work. It's like talking to a wall sometimes. It's like, you get no response, it's like, no positive responses...

**Interviewer:**

What project management did you use? Like, since there were challenges with communication, then what was the project management use, Scrum? You mentioned Scrum, I think, anything else?

**Interviewee 3:**

Yes, we have some...

**Interviewer:**

What methodology, what challenges again, it's the same context, like, did you have any challenges in project manage because I hear there were problems with deliveries from the customer, then this impacts the whole project somehow, so project management wise, how did you solve these things?

**Interviewee 2:**

So, we had some sort of issues, I guess, in the beginning because we tried doing scrum, very strictly because we felt that was sort of the right way to do this academically to do like scrum the right way. But when did we realize that we shouldn't be more pragmatic because you know, we didn't have time for it and since we were getting all this late deliveries, there was like, no time to basically do scrum. So, we ended up just sort of throwing most of the Scrabble stuff away, just doing it really pragmatically doing like short, super short reviews. But in like, if this course had been longer, if we had been doing timed, I think it would have been the right approach and also for that, if you haven't had more background. So, the main issue here is that we had no domain knowledge of game development. Nobody knew the programming language, nobody like we had nowhere to start basically, we're expected to plan this perfectly. So, I guess if you had more experience with game development, then it would have been sort of the right approach, I think, but not asserting for us...

**Interviewee 3:**

Because of the background, we have requirements given by the customer but those were not specific to our project and we will take time and so like when not when we reviewed the old issues we had, they're just like, they make no sense at all, we know what to write down so we wrote down their requirements and then they're working on us. So, we did we make that bathroom and because of this, but that was like further into the project and we should...

**Interviewer:**

And I know I will shift a bit on this, but my question would be like, if you were to create a start up with this project, do you feel that would happen and what would be the motivations? I understand the project might not fit everybody but you have created a product now I think and the minimum viable product, do you feel there is a potential to create a startup with a product?

**Interviewee 2:**

I don't think that's appropriate in Norway kind of because there's no market for it.

**Interviewer:**

I thought you when you said it's not appropriate, maybe it's not a world or something but yeah, I understand...

**Interviewee 2:**

I really see the market for it, seems to me that this product is funded through novelties like it based on like an individual based, it's like one person that has sort of made the initiative and I guess there's some people doing this in the US and Canada, I think we saw someone in Canada, but I don't know. There's no bill of money doing sort of game development at all in Norway. It's not a lot of like, you can't there's not a money study programs that teach it and I feel like sort of the economical airlock, there's no not enough, like funding in at all from the government on that. So, I read a lot of negative stuff about game development in Norway, like which and everything and my impression is that it works really bad so I would never consider doing a game startup in Norway, I'm absolutely positive of that.

**Interviewee 1:**

I don't think any of the other group members either would be motivated to work with this as a startup, I think nobody has any intention of continuing working with this domain after it's done.

**Interviewer:**

So, you put it on the project but let me ask the question, a little bit another question, which is connected like, if you were to create a startup with each other, would you do that, like in the future with the skills you have gained from the course with what you have done? How we have worked, cooperated and so on, just be honest, I know, it's an awkward question.

**Interviewee 1:**

Yeah, it's nothing related to the project,

**Interviewee 2:**

I guess we do if we have been given a good project...

**Interviewer:**

Victor, you have to separate course and project because are two different things, the project I understood is no, no startup out of that but in the context of the course...

**Interviewee 2:**

To know if we had gotten back project that was relevant for us, if we learn something that we were interested in, something that we ourselves had, like priorities, prioritize that I want one of these five options, you care if I get the most the best, but one of the choices, I sort of feel like I've gotten the worst, actually, I think all of us feel that the least appropriate, we've gotten something I was motivated to work with, that's the essence, you have to be motivated. You have to like to domain, you have to and I’m interested in cyber-security and artificial intelligence. So, if I'm not working with that, then I'm not interested in law, given like a cyber-security project and I had been working with that through customer during project that will be absolutely interested in doing like a startup or starting working for us.

**Interviewee 3:**

And we have different qualities for each other and, of course, there are some problems occurring that…

**Interviewee 2:**

I think it was really reasonable and easy to work with. Sort of none of us take ourselves too seriously; we just go very well together. So, I think sort of in that sense pretty good group of people is really helped, you know, as well, during the corona epidemic, having someone work with like, I would say, first recurring basis, having like a group to work it, I think that's really positive not only because of like you're doing our startup, but just being keeping your hand in the right space like as it was really helped in that sense.

**Interviewer:**

But if we had this boot camp activity, at the very beginning of the course, boot camp, Hackathon is something that you work three days intensively with the customer and you explore ideas, you explore, brainstorm and also you have the opportunity to see the market value, perhaps of the product you are going to develop, would that be helpful? It's also about creating the team, but it's also about connecting with the customer understanding things...

**Interviewee 1:**

If it would be helpful for the intent of this project or in the startup

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, both actually, not this project in particular Victor because this project I understood, you don't like it, it's not really fair, etc. but let's say next year, new students same course, they do a three day boot camp at the beginning of the course and then during this time, they can have this project explored not this particular project, but another project, in boot camp a little bit more.

**Interviewee 1:**

I think I understand what you mean, that would probably help a lot to gather domain knowledge and to understand the problem, because especially with this project and I guess, with a lot of other projects as well, is initially you don't know what you don't know and you don't know what that was for and when we found that information, it feels like, why did you just tell us this right away, like we have spent a month not knowing what to do and if you just gave us this simple information easily, we can start much earlier. So, boot camp will probably strengthen the course as a whole.

**Interviewee 2:**

So, the problem, especially with this project specifically is because none of us know, C sharp coding, which is the language you use in your domain, just getting used to sort of the quirks with game development, especially new there for this course, that would like a world of difference, I think. But also, I think, sort of the focus should be that people need to be motivated, again, for the project, you know, you can't just throw a group of people that have like, wildly varying interests at a specific project, like the game development and expect like a boot camp to solo everything, it still needs to be like some sort of, I have to, like, be motivated to work with this and boot camp won't necessarily change that, it likely might help but I'm still sort of going to be from the get go, I'm going to be like, I don't want to do this, I have no reason to do this. So, it's not because I don't want to be like, there are so many other interesting projects and there's so many projects...

**Interviewer:**

To give some space to you to explore the opportunities of the project and to find the solutions a little bit yourself, not just to be told what to do.

**Interviewee 2:**

Yeah, that's sort of the result a lot actually, just being able to see some of the products just make sort of a quick judgment, okay, so I have like, these five, sort of products and you're given like a day just to, explore the customer see what sort of product they can offer and then you can make like a right choice afterwards and then you just place people like,

**Interviewer:**

Because team will be random anyways

**Interviewee 2:**

So, the thing is, we don't really care what sort of people we're working with, none of us really care about that. I think it seems to me like that's sort of the motivation for doing teams randomly. It's because you want people to be random the positives, but I don't think I don't think too many people really care about that project, you have to be able to have some sort of say in the project because this is such an outlier like compared to everything else like it would be a perfect project for someone who's doing game development or is interested in that sort of stuff. They're not giving the chance to actually choose the product; they're forced to work with AI and they're not interested at all, but I'm interested in am Bill up? No, I'm not given the chance to work with us and it's like none of us will realistically end up working with VR in the future or...

**Interviewer:**

Have you participated in Hackathons and boot camps before; was it like an experience you have from before or...?

**Interviewee 2:**

Just little bit, but I know a lot of people who like it, we think it's like really interesting, especially with ones like start as like brain AI has done...

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, the idea is to compete with teams, also with teams around the world, let's see how we can...

**Interviewee 2:**

You know, just being able to do some sort of competing, I think that will motivate a lot...

**Interviewer:**

Okay, yeah, that's good we have some plans for next, I will not spoil them. I will send an email after all the interviews, so sometimes are outside of this course scope. So, anyways, you can still attend this initiatives. But what I'm trying to say is that I'm bringing up to see how much students really like to be involved in the projects really care about the projects and they really do something that you deem of because even when you search for a summer job, you have to like the job I'm pretty sure about that, otherwise, you don't go there.

**Interviewee 2:**

I'm very selective when it comes to jobs. Myself, I've turned around lots of job offers, it's just because I'm...

**Interviewer:**

A lucky guy.

**Interviewee 2:**

No, like looking for the perfect project, I think that means a lot. I think that's sort of a change. Actually, that's happened the last couple of years; people are more specific what they want to work with. I'm just doing, I'm going up in structure, but I think that sort of might be the case. People know earlier what they want to work with you remember, so I'm just guessing...

**Interviewer:**

Anything else you want to add something that you feel you should say about the course or about what you have done and so on?

**Interviewee 1:**

Well, it's really specific to dislike now this as a customer because it seems that Intel is getting sort of specialized treatment for being selected for this project to being a part of interview and even though how bad our experiences was this year and the project last year, I assume they're probably going to be given a chance next year and it seems like they are using this core sort of as our recruitment arena to kind of get people interested in VR and maybe start working, which I think has the opposite effect. None of us have any positive experience from the customer in particular and it also feels like they by doing it this way, the project, how will they not, it's not being done in a good way each job is being made by an entirely new group and an entirely new way. Instead of having just a few full time employees, doing all the game development, both benefit Intel and research and the final product, which end users are actually utilizing; so it just seems strange to have this customer.

**Interviewee 3:**

Like this year, we have incurred, like some of the problems that the last we've had because we're starting from scratch, we don't know anything and we think we can reuse some of their Prefabs, which they have used that becomes we have to like scratch that and start from the beginning and they also had to do that because of the different technology and so it's like all the same problems coming in again.

**Interviewee 2:**

We looked at last year's report and it was like word for word, verbatim, the same stuff that we have problems with and these are like serious problems like that didn't get the core components before like the end of October and that's like a couple of weeks ago. So, we basically could start a couple of weeks ago and it's insane that that's sort of happening twice, like two years in a row and it's like, literally word for word, the same stuff they had problems with. So, it seems like it's just been made an exception for this customer. We had a lot of bad experience with, you know, the developers here and people that use not cooperating.

**Interviewee 1:**

And also the special requirement that you need special equipment and no good hardware to be able to develop the VR application so we have to come up here to campus, just to use computers here, which is not beneficial while all the other projects can still work, remote from home.

**Interviewee 2:**

Especially considering the COVID-19, we didn't have a choice to like, okay, we're going to start working from home, that's not an option. We have to come up there and that's sort of, I don't think that's right.

**Interviewee 3:**

Week or two ago, like when can we try to like, not have everyone coming up to the island, but that's just limiting our development massively.

**Interviewer:**

I understand but, last thing is that you need to send me an email with some pizza preference for the three of you, how many seats in the team?

**Interviewee 2:**

Eight.

**Interviewer:**

So, I'm gonna stand for even one for those that didn't come. So, you can share the pizza at least and you are a scrum almost scrum team, so you can manage that, I'm pretty sure. Just tell me about a small list, then the date and time you can pick them up from shelters, does it make sense?

**Interviewee 3:**

I have another point for the feedback it's because of the different customers because like we've been mostly talking to Intel, while it's like the end customer like they will actually use the product and so when we are utilizing the previous apps and asking users about it, we see some things that can be improved but because they want consistency and they have like a very specific way they want to do things. We cannot differ from that and I don't think that's how consultants should be working. I think you hire consultants because you want another objective and you want someone else's perspective and we are not given the opportunity to do that.

**Interviewee 1:**

Yeah, it's been declined.