Senior Project Reflection

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# Project Description

My project, called Docksushare, helps people involved in the legal system in sharing of important discovery documents dealing with all types of litigation procedures, from court hearings to probation. It uses a full C# asp.net core REST back-end with an API driven design, and an Angular 8 front end.

# Original Expectations

## Where were they met?

I met my expectations in that I was able to continue to develop on a project that I’ve had a lot of fun in. I’ve been able to take the new v2 core build and make it stable, working with/around various issues between the technology stack that I have deployed and built the product on. I was very excited for this class because it would be working on a real project, and it really was a lot of fun. It was really interesting to work on it in a more organized way (before this class it was much more of a quick meeting to demo it with the other guy, and discuss what I should do in the next week). I really enjoy being able to see what I’m going to work on next and base some code off of that.

## Where were they Exceeded?

My expectations were exceeding in just how in the amount of stuff I thought I would learn. I thought this class would be pretty easy, since it was something I was already mostly doing. But, I learned way more then I thought I would. Organizing, and reporting on this project taught me a lot about where my communications with the other guy that I’m working on this project for have been lacking from week to week. IT also taught me that it’s okay to not do everything all at once. If you pace yourself, you’ll be able to avoid burnout much easier then trying to cram everything in each week to get a product to market, or to ‘impress’ the people around you. Hard, steady work pays off more then short spirts of high energy work.

## Where did they Fall Short?

I’d say I feel pretty short in the amount of stuff I thought I should be able to accomplish. It really showed me that I need to pay more attention to how long stuff is going to take and give reasonable estimates. I’ve been really lucky up to this point, since I’ve built the entire product from the ground up, but as I start to forget certain aspects of it it’s going to get harder to give off the cuff estimates. I need to keep this in mind as I go forward, and make sure to really think through timings of things and their impact on the product.

# Lessons Learned about Computer Science Topics

There are so many things I ended up learning this semester that it’s hard to pick just a few. But, one that definitely stands above the rest is how critical it is to have a regular development/release process. I had a few things that I thought I had tested well, and had a couple of ‘testers’ run through that made it all the way to our client that turned out to not work so well. We’re still working on a solid release process, and cycle, but we’re making big steps to get it right, and our product is seeing huge benefits from it in stability.

Another big thing I’ve learned is that staying up on the very latest version of frameworks can be difficult. Between .net core, and angular both being heavily by Microsoft and Google respectively it’s hard to keep up with best practices, and current versions. However, this has also forced me to pay close attention to documentation and not rely on third party sources for the most current information on the versions. Those are still a good help, but it’s more important to stay close to the source of the information.

# Self-Lessons

I learned that it’s hard to strike the correct balance between the various aspects of life that can come up. I’m sure we’ve all had some major life changes with COVID-19, and with change comes lessons. I learned that I have a harder time separating things (work, projects, school) when they all happen in the same place. Without the physical separation I have to focus a lot more on the mental separation, which takes mental work, which then leaves less space for actual mental tasks.

I’ve also learned that administration tasks take up a lot of mental space for me too. When it comes to documentation, paperwork, reports, etc. I have a lot less energy left for programming. It’s something that I have to keep in mind and spend a little time working out a schedule that isn’t going to leave me burned out from documenting and reporting, and then not have space for coding left.

# Final Thoughts

Overall, this has been a pretty interesting blend of a project and school. I have learned a lot, and I appreciated having a structure for building out this project over this last semester. While I’ll likely relax some of the reporting stuff, there is a lot of lessons that I learned from doing this and I plan to continue to use those lessons each week.