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ICS 4U

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Personal Experiences

Over the last month or so, I was given the opportunity to create a game using NetBeans 7.3. After finishing this summative project, I can say that I enjoyed this project very much, despite all of the problems I ran into. I enjoyed having the option to be creative to do what I wanted, and to be able to change aspects of my project based on how it was going. In some ways, this option for creativity was almost too much, because I could come up with so many things that I wanted to implement, that I wasn't sure what to do first. The game of my choice was Brick Breaker, which is a game that originates from the game created by Blackberry. The player must use a ball to break a wall of bricks that change in colour as the stages progress.

I experienced one problem related to classes and inheritance when randomly generating different hit point values for each brick in a wall. This was done by using the stages function to call the map generating class that uses the parameter to assign values to all the bricks in the wall. The problem was that the array would be reset every time the function was called, which resulted in some parts of the map missing bricks, due to them having a value of 0. After lots of troubleshooting, I was successful in randomly generating the hit point values of all the bricks in the map, which corresponds to a different colour. As a brick is hit, the colour and hit point value decreases by 1 step.

Another problem that I experienced was creating a graphical user interface that rendered a play button that would start the game loop. There were series of problems that presented themselves in the following order:  button wouldn’t appear, button wouldn’t call paint function, and the main problem that the button would trigger a nullpointerexception in the array even though, the array works fine without the button. Therefore, I have successful in creating a GUI, however, the game would crash after the first stage, due to program being unable to read that the user is pressing the enter keyboard button to start the next stage.

Other than all the problems that I run into, there were a lot of features that I didn’t have enough time to add including power ups where when the player breaks a high hit point brick, a power up brick starts sliding down towards the player. If the player touches the brick, they will be given a power up such as, extra life, laser ball, gun ball, flip, multi balls, wrap, slow ball, catch ball, long paddle, and bomb ball. In contrast to the power ups, I would also have tried to implement power downs like slow paddle, life minus, short paddle, bouncy paddle.

Although creating the GUI was extremely frustrating, I learned a lot about NetBeans and java. This entire experience was very enjoyable and I may consider adding to the game, over the summer after getting the GUI to work.