Results chapter

5400 – 6600 words

600 words per full section

160 per small objective

Introduction to Results chapter:

How was the methodology?

The build plan? Good time estimations? Delays?

For each major objective:

How did I get on?

Better ways of implementing?

What have I learned?

**Stealth AI**

The first major objective was Stealth AI. This was supposed to be completed over the course of two weeks. However, there was a misestimation of the time it would take to set up the basics of the project. This included making a basic level. Implementing a basic player controller and having them walk, run and jump around the map. And having guards who shoot at the enemy and take damage when they are shot at by the player. This caused some significant delays.

*Objective 1C*

The first part of the AI implementation involved having a Guard detecting the player slowly over time and having the detection be slower or faster based on where the player was in the Guard’s vision cone. The implementation was relatively simple. The detection was based on a timer that would start when the Player was within a vision zone. If the vision zone was closer to the Guard, the timer would run quicker. To define the vision zone, a simple algorithm was implemented. The algorithm would first check if there was an object in between the Player and the Guard. If there was not, the algorithm would check how close the Player was to the Guard. If the player was within one of three viewing distances, the algorithm would then check the angle between the Player and the Guard. There were three separate angles defined, one to represent the Guard`s periphery, one to represent a direct eye line (straight ahead) and one to represent the middle ground between the two angles. The combinations of the angle and distance created 15 vision zones that the Player could be in relative to a Guard. An improvement could be made, however. Currently, there are no visual elements/gizmos (the name for these kinds of visual help elements in Unity) to represent the different zones. This would be quite useful for debugging as it allows the developer to quickly see which zone the Player is in compared to which zone the Guard thinks the Player is in.

*Objective 1B*

Objective 1B was fraught with difficulties. Firstly, the objective suffered from some scope creep. The patrol paths were not strictly part of the initial definition of the project but before implementation, they looked quick and easy to implement. Even though they were easy to implement it soon became clear that they kept getting in the way of other parts of the code which were part of the definition, specifically the pathfinding algorithm. A workaround to this problem set the project back by a few days. The pathfinding algorithm itself however worked excellently. Unity uses the A\* algorithm, which is a common pathfinding algorithm. Implementing this was as simple as adding some pre-existing code into a C# script and using it for a game object, specifically a Guard. After implementing this, there was a realisation that the AI did not look very realistic as they would not work together. Thanks to the agile methodology, I slightly tweaked the design to have an overarching BTGuardGroup class which controlled when the Guards would search and when they would attack. The pseudo-code for this class is as follows:

This pseudo-code algorithm is for setting the guards into a search pattern

LOOP through all of the Guards

IF a Guard has seen the Player AND cannot currently see the Player

LOOP through all of the guards

Set all Guards into a Search Pattern

END LOOP

END IF

END LOOP

This pseudo-code algorithm defines the search pattern

Start a Timer

LOOP through all Guards

IF the Timer is between 10 and 15 seconds

Set the Guards to go to a random location on the map

ELSE IF the Timer is between 25 and 40 seconds

Set the Guards to go to another random location on the map

ELSE IF the Timer is above 40 seconds

Set the Guards to go back to patrolling

Set the timer to 0

END IF

END LOOP

This pseudo-code algorithm defines the attack coordination between the Guards

LOOP through all Guards

IF a Guard can currently see the Player

Set all Guards to move to the Player’s location

END IF

END LOOP

Objective 1A

The Behaviour Tree architecture was implemented successfully and quickly. However, I soon realised a major error in the layout of the project development when attempting to create a specific Behaviour Tree for the Guard AI. Before starting the project, it seemed wise to develop Objective 1C and 1B first as this would provide the base classes that could then be inserted straight into the Behaviour Tree for the Guard. However, this is not how it worked out. The implementations of the previous two objectives had to be adapted to fit within the Behaviour Tree architecture. This took a considerable portion of time. Added to that, I had to re-perform tests I had previously completed, to ensure that the classes were still working as they should but now within a Behaviour Tree architecture. If the project was to be done again, the start would entail making a simple Behaviour Tree with a single action and then adding to it slowly as more of the project was completed rather than making the classes first and trying to shoehorn the logic into a Behaviour Tree. Regardless of this, the implementation did end up working well.

To understand what the Guard Behaviour Tree does, some knowledge of Behaviour Trees, in general, is required. The Behaviour Tree architecture had 4 nodes. The first was a root node at the top of a Behaviour Tree. The second and third were Selector and Sequence nodes respectively. A Selector node works like an OR logic gate (If any child node returns SUCCESS, then return SUCCESS). A Sequence node works like an AND logic gate (if all child nodes return SUCCESS, then return SUCCESS). The final node type is a Leaf node where all of the classes/actions will be housed. A Behaviour Tree node has 3 possible states. The first is FAILURE and when this is returned the tree continues traversing. The second is SUCCESS which either continues traversing the tree if it is a child of a Sequence node or simply returns SUCCESS if it is a child of a Selector node. This state will perform the action of the class that returns SUCCESS and the Behaviour Tree will loop from the start again on the next game loop. The last state is RUNNING. This state does not perform an action, but it does stop the tree from traversing further. What this is useful for is for a class which is still performing an action and does not want the tree to skip over it. The tree, therefore, stops traversing and goes back to the beginning and checks this node again to see if it has returned SUCCESS or FAILURE. The Behaviour Tree worked in order from left to right. This is important as it allowed priority to be given to the left-most nodes since they would be the first to return.

The Guard Behaviour Tree specifically is set up as follows.

The first node after the root node is a Selector node (So the first action to return SUCCESS will be the one committed).

From this node, we go to its leftmost child, a Sequence node(all children must return SUCCESS for an action to be committed). This Sequence node has 2 children which are both Leaf nodes. The left-most child checks to see if the Guard should currently be attacking the player with the other Guards by checking a Boolean value in its definition. If the Guard should be attacking, the node returns SUCCESS.

If the node does return SUCCESS the tree looks at the next child. The Group Attack class simply tells the Guard to go to the Player’s current location and then return a FAILURE. To break this down, first, we know the Guard should be attacking, so we tell it to go to the Player’s location. However, we do not want to return SUCCESS at this point as that will cause the tree to keep telling the Guard to go to the Player`s location. What would be better, is for the guard to only be told once to go to the Player`s location but continue down the tree to allow the Guard to spot the Player when the Player is nearby and perform an attack when in range.

Since that last Sequence node returns a FAILURE to the top Selector node, we move on to the next left-most child. This is also a Sequence node. The left-most child of this Sequence node is the Check Enemy Zone class. This class checks to see if the Player is within any vision zone of the Guard. This class returns SUCCESS regardless of the zone the Player is in and even returns SUCCESS if the Player is not currently in a zone.

The next left-most child is the Check Enemy Spotted class. This class checks which zone the Player is in and either increments the timer if they are in the Guard`s vision zone or decrements the timer if they are outside of the vision zone. If the Player is within the Guard’s vision zone for long enough, the class will set the Guard to go to the Player’s position. This class is also responsible for setting the Guard`s attack Boolean to true or false based on how far the Guard is from the Player. This class will only return SUCCESS if the Player has been in the Guard’s vision zone long enough to be detected. The class will return FAILURE if the Player is not in the Guard`s vision zone and the timer to spot the Player is at zero.

The next left-most node is a Selector node. This Selector node has two children. The first child is a Sequence node which also has two children. The left-most child of this Sequence node is the class called Check Enemy in Attack Range. This class return SUCCESS if the player has been spotted nearby the guard and FAILURE otherwise.

The next child of the same Sequence node is a class called Guard Attack. This class simply gets the Guard to perform an attack on the Player and returns SUCCESS.

If the Guard is not close enough to the Player to attack but the Guard has spotted the Player, the tree goes back to the Selector node after Check Enemy Spotted and traverses down the right child which is the Guard Chase class. This class sets the Guard to go to the Player’s location, imitating the Guard chasing the Player to get within attack range. This class also returns SUCCESS every time it is called.

If none of these actions returns SUCCESS, the third child left-most of the top-most Selector node is then called. This child is another Sequence node. The left-most child of this Sequence node is a class called Check Search. This class queries the Guard`s Booleans to see if this particular Guard should be searching for the Player. This Boolean value is set to true or false in the overarching BTGuardGroup class. All that is important at this stage is to understand that if one of the other Guards starts searching for the player, this Guard will also go searching for the player. Making it seem as if the Guards have communicated and are working together.

If the Check Search class returns SUCCESS, then the next class to be checked is the Group Search class. This class performs no action but only returns SUCCESS. This is because every Guard’s searching pattern is being handled by an aforementioned overarching BTGuardGroup class. All that is required is that the Behaviour Tree does nothing else while this BTGuardGroup class is being executed to coordinate the Guards` search. Therefore, this class returns SUCCESS and performs no actions.

Lastly, if none of the first 3 children of the top-most Selector node returns a successful action, the Guard Patrol class is called. This class firstly ensures that the Guard should not be currently attacking. The reason for this is that in the Group Attack class at the beginning, the class returned failure, even if the Guard should be attacking with all of the other Guards. This was done to allow for the rest of the tree to be run and for the Guards to still be able to perform individual actions such as actually attacking or chasing the player. However, at this stage, the class ensures that the Guard isn’t coordinating an attack on the Player with the other Guards. And only sets the Guard to his patrolling route if this is the case. The patrolling class itself is relatively simple. It takes in a set of waypoints which are just empty game objects placed around the map. And sets the Guard to go to one of the waypoints and wait for a set amount of time. Then, after waiting, the Guard proceeds to the next waypoint and so on, continuously looping while the class is run. This class always returns RUNNING.