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NS-299-12F
Process Documentation

Contents:

Introduction

This document contains a small sampling of process work this semester. Several email messages (from myself) are included, along with summaries of more prominent meetings. In addition to the prominent meetings, my work over the semester included regular attendance at Silicon Frogs Game Development student group meetings and countless discussions with professors, classmates, and club members about the arcade project. From these smaller conversations, we learned that it might be better to use a lightweight PC than a mobile device system on a chip; that a number of individuals would be interested in helping with the arcade once it had a physical product, and that some elements of the design were overthought. This activity was invaluable both for building awareness and solving problems; but it will be for naught if we are unsuccessful in producing a physical machine.

Emails:

Name: COCD email 1
Purpose: Arrange meetings with COCD
Date: 10/3/12

Hello,

My name is Matthew Meneghini. Last spring, my partner - Breton Handy - and I created a proposal for an arcade console which would serve as a gallery space for students interested in Game Development - including artists, voice actors, animators, game designers, musicians, programmers, and writers - to make games publicly and easily available to the general public. This semester, we are continuing our project with a simpler and lower-cost design. We'd like to attend a COCD meeting and discuss any new project proposal procedures and funding opportunities.

Yours,
Matthew Meneghini 10F
Breton Handy 09F

Name: Hampshire College Arcade Generic Email template
Purpose: Generic 'form' email for new offices

Dear <party x>,

My name is <sender>. My partner, <partner>, and I are creating a multiple arcade machine emulator / an old-style arcade terminal as a gallery space for Hampshire College game developers. We currently plan to use a PandaBoard ES ARM development board running GNU/Linux* as well as

custom controls through the MakeyMakey Arduino gamepad. While we have a lot of computer hardware and a degree of computer software skills available, we currently lack a cabinet, coinslot**, and the associated components. We hope to station the arcade machine in the Bridge Cafe, where it will be publicly accessible yet remain secure. We wanted to get in touch with you and hear your thoughts on our project.

We are currently administered under the auspices of the Silicon Frogs Game Development student group, but we have our own charter <link to charter> and sustainable governing model. Any funds or tips collected in the coinslot will be dedicated to maintaining and improving the arcade. We hope to bring artists, voice actors, animators, designers, musicians, programmers, and writers together in making games for the community to enjoy over the long term. Though we are eager for any ideas or suggestions you may have, we are especially interested in your thoughts on <recipient's speciality here>.

Sincerely,
<sender>
Hampshire College <semester of entry>

* We may run a dual-boot setup of a desktop Linux (Debian, Ubuntu, or Angstrom) and a mobile OS such as Android, depending on the software preferences of the game developers at Hampshire.
** Money through a coinslot would either be 'tips' on a free to play machine or would be set by the user in a manner similar to the Humble Indie Bundle.ther in making games for the community to enjoy over the long term. Though we are eager for any ideas or suggestions you may have, we are especially interested in your thoughts on <recipient's speciality here>.

Prominent Meetings:

Meetings with Game Design professor

I discussed the project with my game design professor several times over the semester. He was extremely interested in the project and had useful feedback. The most crucial point he raised was the attention to the User Interface: he pointed out that arcade controls are fun, in part, because they are visceral and durable. He recommended piezoelectric buttons and informed me of the MakeyMakey system used to make simple control interfaces. MakeyMakey remains a prominent likely technology for the project.

Meetings with COCD

Breton and I met twice with the Committee on Community Development. For our first meeting, we gave them our newly signed charter; updated them on our status, and heard their input on the project. They were very receptive and friendly, and recommended that our governing document try to integrate Hampshire's official policies on student life more strongly where possible (both versions of the charter have been included in the portfolio). The biggest outcome of our first meeting with COCD was the removal of a coinslot, tip jar, or other monetary scheme from the project: they felt it would be a deal breaker for CLA that diverted too much of our energy and attention from the actual project. They also stated that the low cost of the total project – by COCD standards - made such a funding mechanism non-necessary: they expected the project to have no difficulty with future budgeting.

For our second meeting, we presented them with our revised charter and with our frustrations at the pace of progress. They were surprised but pleased at the new language, which is actually more accepting of objectionable speech than the previous charter – but now adheres quite strictly to college policies which state that consequences for controversial speech must not prevent publication. They were sympathetic about our concerns and helped recommended we talk to the CLA – an excellent suggestion that will shape the project moving forward.

Meeting with CLA

I met alone with a representative from the CLA in December. She expressed her support and recommended that we remove the lower chassis at make the arcade a table-mounted device, thus removing the need to secure a single space to begin construction. Pursuant to this, I've designed my final product for the semester – a concept model complete with the base exterior wood dimensions. We can now budget and build around some variant of this model, moving the project to the next phase of completion.