Sprint Retrospective:

Each role in the Scrum team contributes in its own unique way, but every role has the key duty of proper and constant communication regarding progress on the project. The Testers have the unique job of running step by step through a test case and reporting on functionality and other general questions and feedback that may come up. The Developers have to sort through the information provided in the user story and create a feature or function that accomplishes the goal described in the user story. This is then handed off to the Testers. The Product Owner has the impossible task of discerning what exactly the end-users and client want from the product and then translating that into material for the development team to work with. They also have to decide which user stories are more important than others. The Scrum Master acts as the intermediary between the Product Owner and the Developers. They facilitate the process of developers adopting tasks to complete, as well as receiving feedback from the developers regarding prior tasks or current ones being assigned. Where the Product Owner gets the ball rolling, the Scrum Master must keep that ball rolling and keep developers invested in the tasks and product.

The Scrum-agile approach helped the user stories come to completion by giving easy bite sized tasks, and then allowing for changes mid-way through development. During the SNHU Travel project, the developer was first tasked with creating a top 5 destinations page, with some new features to improve the project overall. The user stories made it easy for the developers to focus on each task as its own project. Later on, during development, the top 5 destinations page needed to be changed into a slideshow. This once again was much easier thanks to the focus that a user story provides the developer.

I wrote a few communications as various roles on the Scrum team during the SNHU Travel project. The following excerpt from an email sent as a developer I believe captures why my communication is so effective. “My name is Peter Krentz, and I am part of the development team. I am currently working on user story #1, slide show. I have some concerns regarding the readability given the current color scheme, and would like to know if there are further guidelines or specifications regarding the color scheme that I can implement with my current sprint goals. If not, then perhaps we can await feedback from the testing team or end-users.” I immediately state who I am, what I’m working on, and then identify why my communication is necessary.

The tools that make the scrum so successful are the sprint planning, the daily sprint, and the user stories. The sprint planning sets the expectations for the work that each team member will be responsible for. The daily sprint allows us to keep leadership up to speed, as well as address possible shifts in our planned sprint. The user stories provide a way for end-user feedback (as well as other feedback) to be processed and presented in a way that allows developers to focus their efforts on one feature at a time.

The pros of the Scrum-Agile approach during the SNHU Travel project was the ability to change the project halfway through development from a web page to a slideshow. I think the cons of the Agile approach were in the inability to combine features and feedback into broader stroke tasks. While it can be nice to have a singular focused task as a developer, it can also present many issues when you have three separate developers working on features that all work off the same core. In this scenario it would be more effective to have those features and tasks combined so that no rework needs to be done later on. Given the way the project turned out, I would say the Agile approach suited it well enough, as it allowed for the rapid changes during the SDLC that a new website attempting to cater to a large client base needs. If I were personally responsible for the project as the Product Owner, I would have chosen to use a waterfall approach to the core features, and then once that core set is finished, branch out to the Agile approach as we fill out client features and launch the website.