G52RP Interim Group Report

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**GP12axc**

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Discussion of problems

During the course of this project so far, we have encountered a number of problems. As we started the project, we immediately had a few technical issues – since our project was to incorporate a database of some sort, we had envisioned that we would use MySQL, since we had used it on a course last year and knew it was installed on the server already. However, when we first tried to login to the accounts we had set up last year we found that we could not access those accounts – this was resolved by e-mailing the module convenor and getting IS to allow us back into the MySQL accounts.

A problem with regards to our group appeared at this point – task scheduling. Since we could not feasibly all work on all sections at the same time, it became necessary for us to divide out the workload. This was resolved by having each member of the group state what their strengths were (coding in specific languages, writing skills etc). We then all sat down and discussed how the workload should be divided by splitting it into certain skill areas, and then attributing those skills to team members who felt strong in that area. Another minor problem was that whilst there was an algorithm necessary to be built, it was only needed near the end. This was resolved by having the team member set to work on that temporarily re-assigned to help out in the database.

Another technical issue we encountered was the fact that whilst we were using MySQL for the database. This became problematic in the development stage because we each had a MySQL account linked to our Computer Science usernames – this meant that each person’s MySQL was different. This meant that to resolve this issue, the team member that was responsible for creating the database had to export it from his MySQL account and then upload it to the repository – this meant that each of the other members had to import that file into their MySQL so they could work with the current database. This could have been resolved better if there was a shared MySQL account for the group that the team could have logged into.

A more general issue with the group was the amount of time they could work on the project at times. Due to increasing workload throughout the year, progress slowed as deadlines for other modules approached and the amount of time available to work on the project was diminished. Due to this, there were times where self-set deadlines were missed because there was not enough time to fully complete it on top of the rest of their work.

After starting the project there were a number of problems regarding trying to recreate the wireframes into actual PHP – since UCD, also known as human-centred design process, was an approach we used to as a model for how to do our project. Since it was largely to do with users, and would involve being accessed by a number of people, it had to be user-friendly and intuitive. For this, UCD was suitable since we focussed our goals around the users and the tasks they would do. Using Iterative design as a template, we allowed the designs to be modified after initial testing, as they have to be modified to reflect the usability changes. We also agreed with UCD in that we needed a focus on making it so that the users could very easily see the product and understand how to use it intuitively without having anyone explain it to them. To ensure that we achieve this, once a working prototype is developed then it will be tested with actual users.

Before starting the development of any of the software, we conducted a little bit of market research to see what the general view of the current paper-based Peer Assessment was. We used a website that allows you to host your own surveys on to create and publicise our survey. The following graphs are representations of the data we received. The survey was taken by 19 Computer Science students.

For this question in the survey you had the capability of choosing ‘other’ and specifiying what that problem would have been, but it was never chosen. This graph is quite fairly split in the given sections, leaning towards the lack of quick feedback. All of these problems are easy to resolve using a web based version of a peer assessment.

The results of this graph are fairly self-explanatory; it shows that an online version of a peer assessment would be more appealing for a large majority.

This graph shows that there is room for improvement with the current system. Although most consider it ‘acceptable’, they wouldn’t have had anything to compare it to.

Overall the results of the survey show an online peer assessment could make for a better system than the one currently in place.