

Method Selection and Planning

Method Selection

We have identified the Agile method, specifically the Scrum framework, as the most appropriate development method, since it works well in small teams [1, p.59] and suits the needs of a flexible project environment. Additionally, the Agile method aids our lack of experience in software engineering since it focuses on delivering small releases through short iteration cycles which allows us to adapt how we work as we progress and learn. Whereas with a plan-driven method we would struggle to adapt as we are committed to a fixed plan. Our choice of an Agile method promotes cooperation with the customer [1, p.60]. This benefits the project as it allows the customer to evaluate iterations of the product and to check that the system meets the requirements. Another important aspect to consider is that an Agile method grants us greater flexibility and allows us to adapt to any requirement changes [1, p.60], with less of an impact on the project than if an alternative method was used.

We chose the Scrum framework because part of the team have previous experience using it. This will enable them to support the other team members if there are any issues with using the framework. Additionally, Scrum is a very solid and successful approach that is commonly used in many companies, a survey of 120 companies found that 54% of companies using an Agile method used Scrum [2, p.34]. Scrum is also benefits developers as they can see the progress of the product happening quickly during the sprints; reducing the chance of the team feeling like the product is not making any progress and causing people to lose enthusiasm.

In practice such an approach will be carried out by having frequent team meetings, two to three times a week, during which we can review and monitor the state of the current sprint as well as plan future ones. Meeting in person and constantly evaluating our progress is something that is extremely important since we want to make sure we are able to stay on track and push ourselves to increase the team's effectiveness. Additionally, we intend to regularly meet with the client so that he can validate the project's current iteration and check the system is meeting their requirements. The length of the sprints will vary throughout the project, during Assessment 1 the sprints will be shorter, from three to four days, while in the subsequent assessments sprints will last one or two weeks to better fit the nature of longer and more complex tasks such as implementation and testing.

Tools

To support the project we will be using a range of tools. After analysing the brief we found that our team would require tools for: team management, file sharing, version control, code sharing, communication, planning, UML diagram production and Flowchart production. When looking for these tools some of the key criteria we looked for was: free to use and promoted remote collaboration.

Team Management - Jira

For team management we are using Jira, a management tool aimed at Agile teams. The tool allows us to: create a todo list of tasks; set deadlines for when the task must be completed and assign a team member to complete it. These tasks can then be moved between three different sections depending on their progress: in progress if it is currently being worked on; blocked if it cannot be completed due to a prior task being a prerequisite and complete if the task is done. Finally, Jira can produce statistics on the work team members have completed therefore we can review how everyone is working and provide support to any team members that may be falling behind.

File Sharing - Google Drive

Google Drive was chosen for our file sharing tool as it provides comprehensive collaboration support for working on documents within a team. This means that several team members are able to work on and review documents simultaneously. Also, using this cloud based system reduces the risk R13 [3] of losing data if the files were stored on someone's personal device.

Code Sharing and Version Control - GitHub

For managing code sharing and version control we will use GitHub. GitHub was chosen over similar pieces of software, such as Bitbucket, as we are able to get a free private repository because all the team members are students. Furthermore, GitHub uses a decentralised system: meaning that if there was a failure with the server and a data loss each team member would still have a copy of the project data meaning that it could be restored. This is beneficial over a centralised system as a server failure with this type of system could set the project back significantly if there were no recent backups available.

Communication - Facebook Messenger

Our team required a tool that would allow us to communicate with each other quickly and from anywhere. For this we chose Facebook Messenger as the entire team is familiar with it already and it can be accessed from a range of platforms. Additionally, Messenger has event planning and straw poll tools integrated into it. This allows us to quickly create impromptu meetings that everyone will be notified about and people can mark whether they can attend; in contrast to the regular meetings that are scheduled using Google Calendar where attendance is mandatory. The polling system allows us to make democratic team decision.

Planning - ProjectLibre

To plan how we will spend our time during each assessment we will produce Gantt charts using ProjectLibre. This software was chosen, over an alternative like Microsoft Excel, as it produces the chart automatically after inserting the data. Whereas with Excel we would have to manually produce the chart by colouring cells. The Gantt charts will then be used in tandem with Jira by setting tasks, and their deadlines, based on what needs to be completed for when in accordance with the Gantt chart.

UML Diagram Production - StarUML

To create our UML class diagrams, we decided on using StarUML. It's free, and allowed us to quickly and easily create professional looking diagrams that are clear and easy to understand. Furthermore, it allowed for diagrams to be exported to PNG files which we can easily integrate into our documents.

Flowchart Production - LucidChart

LucidChart is an online tool for producing diagrams. We are going to use it as the software supports collaboration between team members, meaning that multiple team members can work on diagrams at once.

Team Roles

After analysing the project brief and researching software engineering roles [4, 5, 6, 7, 8] we identified the main team roles that we would need to deliver a high quality product: Team Leader, Secretary, Head Developer, Web Developer, Test Leader, Client Interface and Risk Manager. In order to meet non-functional requirements NF2 and NF4 [9] it is necessary to have a Graphic Designer and an Audio Producer. In addition to everyone's specialist roles all team members will take part in development and testing the software. Finally, it is important to note that the roles are not fixed and we shall adapt the team's structure where necessary to improve the team's performance.

Team Leader and Graphic Designer - Giovanni Ilacqua

As Team Leader, Giovanni takes on the role of Scrum Master and is therefore responsible for: setting team members tasks; managing sprints and resolving team conflicts. Giovanni was chosen for this position as he has previous experience in leading projects and he would like to improve his team leading skills. Additionally, Giovanni is responsible for producing the art assets for the project. These include: designing the logo; producing images for the website and creating the graphics shall be used in the final game.

Secretary and Audio Producer - Owain King

The Secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of each meeting. The details to be recorded are the location, time, attendance, what was discussed and what needs to be completed before the next meeting. Also, Owain was chosen as the Audio Producer for the project as he has prior experience in using Audio Production tools and is musically talented and is therefore the most fitting candidate in the team.

Head Developer - Dominic Taylor

The role of the Head Developer is to coordinate the team during the implementation and enforcing code standards upon the other developers. Furthermore, he should be checking the code is properly documented so that it may be easily updated and extended in the future. Dominic was chosen for this role as he has previous experience in developing games using Java and the LibGDX framework.

Web Developer - Ryan Laycock

Due to his previous experience in website creation, Ryan was selected as the Web Developer. He is required to initially setup the website and update it as we complete each Assessment with the new deliverables produced.

Test Leader - Jack Radforth

Jack is our Test Leader meaning that he is required to produce a full and comprehensive Test Script which we can use to ensure that the game is running as intended without unexpected bugs and behaviour. This role suits Jack as he has had previous experience producing and running unit tests in Java, using the JUnit testing framework.

Client Interface and Risk Manager - Peter Beckingham

As the Client Interface, Peter must be familiar with the client's needs and requirements to ensure that as development progresses the product is on track to meet them. Furthermore, he must be in frequent contact with the client to ensure that he is satisfied with the progress of the product. Peter is also the Risk Manager and is therefore responsible for keeping a record of what risks have

occurred and manage the respective risk owners during risk mitigation. The roles suit him since he wants to improve his communication skills and he is looking forward to leading a team in the future.

Project Planning

Since we are using the Scrum framework, it is necessary to have a product backlog list [4] outlining all assessment objectives and tasks to be completed throughout the project which, as a team, we assign and manage on Jira.

However Jira alone does not provide a complete overview of the project and does not highlight tasks in respect to a timeline for the entire project. In order to solve this issue we decided to create Gantt charts as they produce a graphical overview of priority and time required for the project as a whole and they also work well in unison with Jira.

Explanation of format

The main tasks are in bold and are made of several sub-tasks, which were identified using a Work Breakdown Structure [10, 11, 12]. Each task is associated with a starting date, a finishing date and a priority, which were all established during several team discussions. Priority is denoted by a 1 to 5 scale where 1 is the lowest priority and 5 is the highest. An additional main task, called Revision of Plan, that covers the entire project has also been added to underline the fact that we will continuously evaluate our plans and methods, with the aim of improving the team's effectiveness and making sure to prevent and address any issues that arise. The revision of plan will also be needed because the established lengths of the tasks are just an estimation of the time needed to complete them, which may not respect the actual time that will be required.

Task dependencies are indicated by black arrows, while the critical path is highlighted in red on the Gantt chart. Non-work time is represented by the greyed out area.

Assessment 2's Gantt chart outlines our plans in far more detail than for subsequent assessments. If we produced a highly detailed plan for Assessment 3 and 4 now it would likely need to be rewritten at a later date. This is in accordance with the principles set out in the Agile Manifesto [13].

Assessment 2

The chart [14] covers a time span of approximately 10 weeks, starting on the deadline of Assessment 1 (08/11/2017) and finishing on the deadline of Assessment 2 (22/01/2018).

Since all team members are planning on going on holiday during Christmas we have decided to allocate two weeks, from the 21st of December to the 3rd of January, as non-work time.

Assessment 3

The chart [15] covers a time span of 4 weeks, starting on the deadline of Assessment 2 (22/01/2018) and finishing on the deadline of Assessment 3 (19/02/2018).

Assessment 4

The chart [16] covers a time span of 6 weeks, starting on the deadline of Assessment 3 (19/02/2018) and finishing on the deadline of Assessment 4 (2/05/2018).

The period of eight days, from the 26th of March to the 2nd of April, has been allocated as non-work time, because most team members will be on holiday and to take a break from the project.

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