

Project One

Reflections

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Mid-Project Reflection

I would like to note that I'm writing this reflection far later than I should! With that in mind, I had already completed some of this subject before withdrawing last trimester. The first project had already been submitted and marked, so I needed to do something slightly different and thankfully my lecturer gave me the approval to proceed with this game submission. I became aware of a game jam that was starting the week that school came back, and it was a 10-day jam from Game Dev TV with the theme The Last Stand. This has been the first game jam I've ever entered, and I found it to be both very stressful and also really enjoyable.

I've since realised that planning what can be achieved in the time frame is critical, and although there are things that you may want to put in a game, it's not the wisest idea to put in a bunch of stuff when you have no idea how to do it. In other words, prepare what you can make in less time to account for the inevitable mistakes!

There were a few challenges, but I've written those up in the post-reflection. I found that the videos from class helped during production, and also, over the break, I worked through one of the GameDev.tv 2D courses, so I went back through all of those tutorials as a refresher on different aspects. For example, implementing Cinemachine properly and using Tilemaps, as well as numerous YouTube videos including some from Code Monkey.

I've come across some interesting research about 'serious' games and programming. Essentially collections of exercises organised into categories that each student chooses and completes based on his or her preferences (Hijon-Neira et al., 2015). The study took computer science undergrads who were learning Java and got them to play these games as a method to teach them programming, and they compared the results to traditional teaching methods. The students who were learning through the games had dramatically better results in comprehension. Perhaps there's a future SAE project there?!

Post-project Reflection

Appraisal: Overall, I believe the project was successful. The game was fully functional and submitted on time for the game jam, which was a positive outcome. However, the original plan to have multiple levels was not achieved due to time constraints from figuring out new programming tasks.

Challenges: included mastering the spawning of enemy waves, a new concept that involved a fair bit of trial and error, as well as coordinating multiple scripts effectively. Due to the jam's time pressure, I decided to only make rough drafts of the flowchart and pseudo code - my reasoning was that I would need the maximum amount of time to work out how to actually do the programming part. Whilst I did actually need every bit of that time, and looking back, I think that still is the way that I would have needed to do it at that stage of my understanding. In the future, I would never do the paperwork in that order under ideal circumstances. The reason was that once everything was finished in the game, it was more complicated and time-consuming to go back and do that side of it than I believe it would have been in reverse. In saying that, because I had no idea how to implement certain things like the spawning, I didn't know where it would fit/did it need it's own script / what other things would rely on it. So I think it would have been difficult to get it right in the beginning regardless. However if the processes are familiar, I would definitely complete the paperwork fully first!

Future goals: I would like to implement a home screen and some kind of interactive UI elements. I didn't get the chance on this one, as it was just a few too many things to try to work out at once.

When I withdrew from class last trimester, I was having a lot of trouble understanding the material. Considering where my knowledge was at the time, and the work put in over the break and since returning, I'm happy with what I was able to achieve and how it turned out. I found that making this type of working game project a lot of fun and it helped me understand concepts better and kept my motivation up. Although it's quite simple, I wanted to create something that people could enjoy playing. I'm excited to continue learning and to make a better game in the near future. I'm grateful for the opportunity to have worked on this for my project submission.

Reference List

GameDev.tv. (2023). *Unity 2D Developer Course*. Gamedev.tv.

<https://www.gamedev.tv/courses/unity-complete-2d>

Hijon-Neira, R., Velazquez-Iturbide, A., Pizarro-Romero, C., & Carrico, L. (2015). Serious games for motivating into programming. *2015 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE)*

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