SAE Institute London.

Reflective Report

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Introduction

My journey in Riff Raff Studios. This common project consisted in developing an indie game and a website to host it. As a web developer, in this reflective report the process and development of the website will be observed, with respect to its art and creativity, giving way to the various aspects integrated in the project and its management. Basically, we represent our website as a visual container to be able to play a video game on it, being its main purpose and main objective.

In this opportunity the final product was designed and developed by me, my web developer colleague and web leader Nataly Angulo. Through the process of development, we had individual and cooperative tasks.

Reflection

The thoughts on the first weeks were to create an indie game studio, and what kind of game we would like to present. Thanks to the group commitment Riff Raff Studios was born, and even though at the beginning, I was not really convinced with the name because of what it refers to, my colleagues explained their way to see it and finally persuaded me.

The first task was to design a logo for our company, and after researching, we got inspiration and started logo sketches as you can see below.

Figure 1: Logo sketches.

Once the designs were done, on our weekly meeting I shared my sketches with my colleagues:
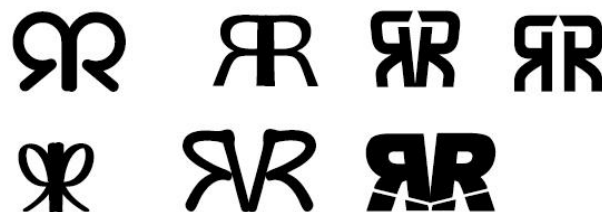

Figure 2: Logo Designs.

Figure 2,1: The reverse R refers to a small version of the logo.

I received positive feedback on my designs, which made me happy as I normally do not take feedback for something I have done as it is personal. Altogether with Nataly's designs we combined them together and created three final designs for our company logo.

Figure 3: Option 1.

Figure 3,1: Option 2.

Figure 3,2: Option 3 - Winner.

In order to keep on track with our tasks, Nataly created a google document in order to follow week by week the different tasks that needed to be done. Once we were introduced to project management tools, we chose Trello because of the organisation of cards and implements that offers.
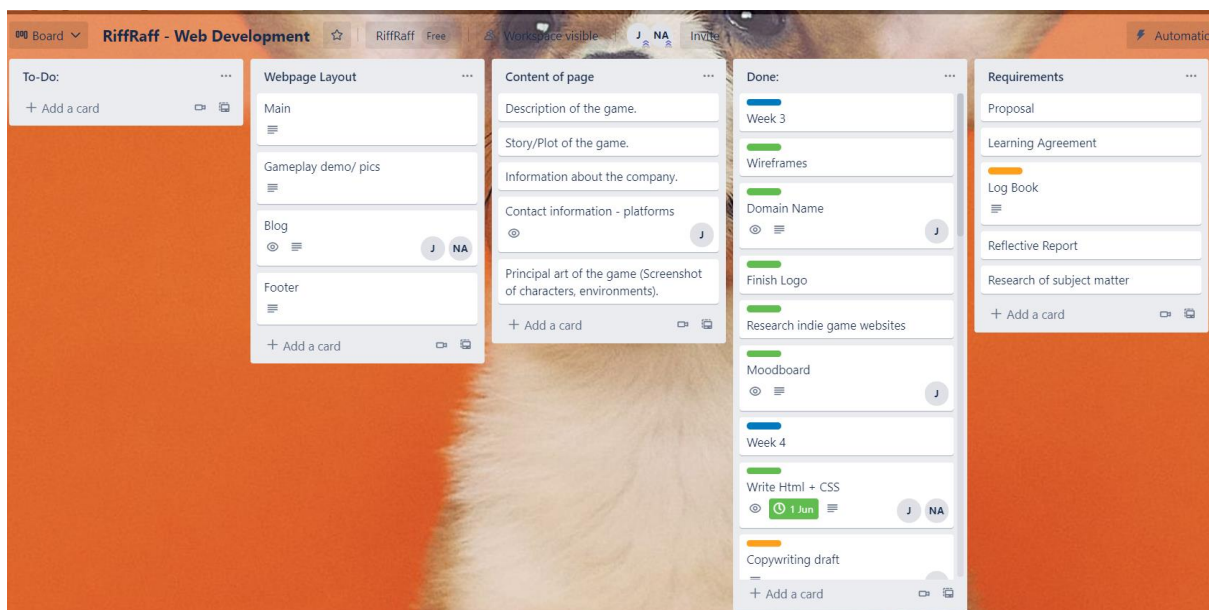

Figure 4: This is how our project management tool looks by week 13 with all the tasks done.

Additionally, we started developing the wireframes for the website, we researched different game websites in order to get inspiration. The majority of the websites we looked over had in common their one single page design, and we thought it was perfect as we did not want to take so much user attention from the game.
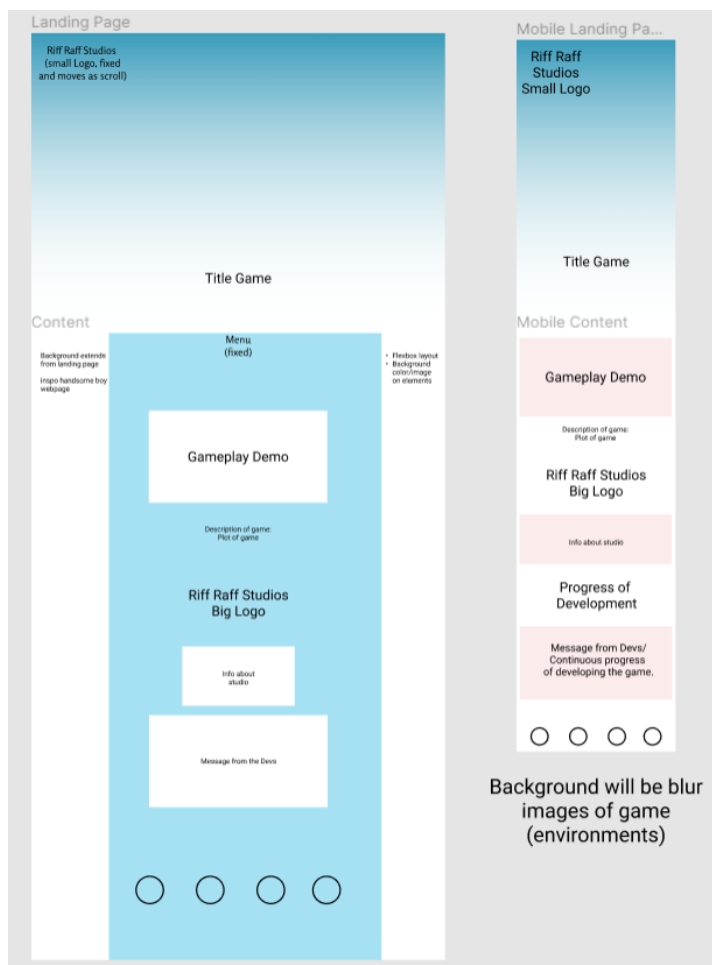

Figure 5: While designing the wireframes, Nataly focused on the desktop version while I focused on the mobile version.

In the third week of development, we succeeded in presenting the principles of our logo and wireframes. The first constructive feedback received from our tutors was to work in writing an engaging narrative for the game, and for this, the team discussed different ideas until we chose the final and actual narrative.

Once the wireframes were approved, we started coding them on live HTML, adding content and image placeholders. The first pieces of content I implemented were the big version logo of the studio and an email subscription form provided by mail chimp, an email marketing service to start working on our marketing strategy.

Around the fifth week I could not contact with Nataly as she got sick, however, we split tasks and mainly focused in adding more content onto the website, such as a placeholder for the main header illustration and the developer logbooks in form of a timeline.

Throughout the week we were entitled to present our learner contract agreement, which at first was quite complicated to write, as I was unsure of what I was expecting of me and the project to be at the end. However, I managed to assign me realistic goals to be met.

Once we finished coding, it was time to start designing. I was assigned to design the game logo and implementing animation to the studio's logo. At first, I thought this was going to be the week with the most struggle because I am not so confident on my creative skills.
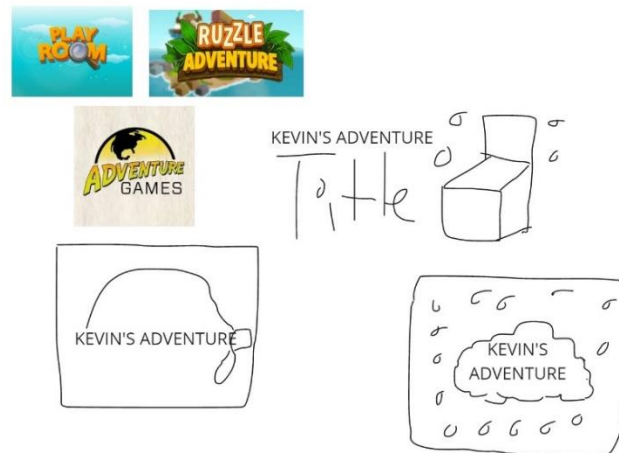

Figure 6: Game Logo Ideas.

However, the week came along pretty well, and both studios and games logo were presented. I coded the studio's logo into the website and gave a simple bouncy animation to the icon when the user hovers it and the game logo was approved by my teammates.

Figure 7: Kevin's Adventure Logo.

Around the seventh week we had a decent amount of content on the website. I had the idea of asking to our team leader if he could provide one of his previous game projects so I can start testing the game on the website so it could be playable WebGL. The first implementation of JavaScript on the website comes with two buttons in order to play and hide the demo-game was added.

The feedback received from this was to add more development content into the website, screenshots of the game and gifs. Also, even better to implement an actual original demo or playable version of Kevin's Adventure instead of an old project.

In addition, our tutors recommended us to add a comment box for us to get feedback from our users. My assigned tasks through this week were the writing and publishing of three blog posts, and the implementation of the comments box on the website for when playing the game.

Both elements were successfully implemented, including a section with the itch.io icon to redirect our users to our blogsite. The comment box section below the game and, last but not least, the developer log books with different perspectives from the members of the studio.

Figure 8: Timeline Logbooks.

Through this week while we were implementing our modal developer logbooks, I was having a bug that it did not matter what logbook I clicked, it will always open the first logbook and once I close that logbook, it will display the one that I clicked – This moment I felt frustrated because I could not see where the error came from, then Nataly started to look at the piece of code and found that I was missing a div closure tag, once it was added, it worked as planned.

By the nineth week we were invited to participate in a demo day event to showcase our game. First of all, we started working on our topics to speak on our presentation, setting points such as company information, game narrative, website design and inspiration. We had two group meetings where we rehearsed our presentation.

On the 7th of July, we had a Demo – Demo Day, Nataly and I had the opportunity of sharing our scripts to our tutor Dominic and he gave us a good thumbs up for 3 slides (game narrative, website aesthetics, where to find the game), but for the slide of information about our studio, he commented that the way I was saying it as I was reading the script it sounded like a robot and was not giving the relaxed image that riff-raff gives, thanks to this we improved that part of the script for the presentation later on.

The presentation went pretty well, and the feedback received was positive with not many changes to make. As Demo Day was coming along on the 14th of July, we focused on recording our presentation until we liked the result.

For the day of the presentation, we had a video recorded but when sharing it into zoom the quality went incredibly low, so we decided to add our audio into our presentation instead. Despite all the nervous and the technical issues as the audio suddenly stopped, we pulled it off greatly and the feedback we received was positive.

After demo day our website did not have many changes to be made, the playable demo was the unique element constantly updating, and for the eleventh week whereas part of our marketing we implemented the scavenger hunt webpage into the website. I was assigned to hide a letter when popping the biggest bubble and Nataly was in charge of when clicking the statue.

As of today, 5th of August 2021, on Riff Raff Studios website we have a live demo game of Kevin's Adventure, website is responsive and has different elements for the user to interact with.

Conclusion

The process of making a website on your own is considerably different from doing so with the assistance of another person; you do not just use their abilities and skills, but also their creativity and the ideas they can bring to the project. In my opinion, is what I liked the most about working with Nataly.

With this project I have learnt when designing, showcase more than one option, it is the best for both clients and you as it awakes your creativity. Thanks to this I feel my creative skills have improved. More improvements with debugging skills which were low, as I was constantly reviewing and modifying a code that I did not write.

I am confident with the skills that I have improved through these weeks and the new ones obtained. Getting ready to make a good use of them in my future and personal projects.