December 12, 2014 ISSUE 14

SKYLIGHT OPENING REMARKS

Hello again everyone! We hope you had a lovely Thanksgiving holiday. Now, a few weeks later, it seems we've reached the end of our journey for this project. Last week we delivered our products to the Elizabeth Forward School's SMALLab. This week we gave our final presentation on our process and deliverables during the development of Natural Rhythm and Music in Motion. Please feel free to watch the presentation at your leisure. It can be found online at http://stream.etc.cmu.edu/ projects/2014-semester-3/finals/day1/. We hope you've enjoyed the weekly looks into our development process. We've learned a lot this semester and we will use our experiences as we go forward into our future projects and careers. This is the end of our time together as Team Skylight. So let's wrap up with one final newsletter and a wish to you, our readers, for a happy holiday season!

BREAKDOWN

At the time of publication of our previous newsletter, we were heading into our soft opening. We were able to use an overhead projector in conjunction with Makey-Makey input to simulate the SMALLab experience for faculty. They suggested features we could implement to make the game more intuitive to new players and we integrated them in time for our deployment last week.

For deployment, we delivered Natural Rhythm with 1 song and 4 tracks intended to help students practice the individual note values of eighth, quarter, half, and whole notes. We delivered Music in Motion with 3 songs of varying notes and speeds. For both games we provided the spreadsheet templates for custom song input. And for both games we provided comprehensive instruction manuals detailing installation, operation, gameplay, and customization. Teachers will be trying out both games and we look forward to hearing results from them next semester!

REFLECTION

This project presented us with a great many challenges. We faced design challenges of trying to teach an aural topic on a visual learning platform, i.e. how to communicate timing and rhythm visually. Rather than using only the abstract note symbols themselves, we used the simpler shape of a circle to represent beats. In addition, attempting to synthesize music to within the Unity development platform proved to be a challenge that we did not have time to create an adequate solution for. We also faced technical challenges with our platform. Latency and erratic wand tracking made for some memorable playtests, to say the least.

But despite the challenges, we feel that we created beneficial products with a lot of potential for expansion. Teachers were with us every step of the way and they are very excited to try out our games in their classes. So at the conclusion of development, we are proud to have stood at the forefront of education.

