***Please find the module ePortfolio under***
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The Software Engineering Project Management (SEPM) module was quite different from previous modules on the course: while individual tasks in the module units required some programming, the bigger graded assignments were focused on preparing project plans. This has continued a trend set by the previous modules of emphasising the importance of a holistic approach to computer science, where both technical and social aspects of a project are taken into account. This reflection will follow the Rolfe at al.'s reflective cycle to facilitate structured review of the experiences (The University of Edinburgh, 2024). It is centred on the two main assignments of the module as well as my overall impressions.

## Project Context and Deliverables

The first of two major assignments was a group project where I worked in a group of four students. We had to go through the vital steps of project work and develop a comprehensive project plan for the development of hardware and software for a personal computer. However, it is worth mentioning that the specific domain of the project is less important here than the tasks required by the assignment. The project encompassed analysing a transcript of a meeting to elicit requirements for the developed product, prioritising them and developing a product design while also accounting for constraints such as budget and component availability. The final artefacts were the choice of the life-cycle methodology, Gantt charts for the project stages, cost tables for components, software, and labour, as well as formalised requirements in the form of Gherkin statements (The Cucumber Open Source Project, no date). Additional tasks included risk analysis and the identification of core assumptions.

One of the crucial parts of the project was the analysis of selling price for the product, a section that I repeatedly insisted on including and which became one of the key parts of the final submission. My other contributions were the initial scope analysis for the assignment, elicitation of the requirements, as well as identifying the core parts of the assignment, which influenced how both our work and the report were structured. In addition, I tried to keep track of the different tasks and reminded my peers of the deadlines we had established.

The second assignment was set in the same base scenario, following up on the initial project approximately a year after the events of the first assignment. However, this

time the task focused on working with conflicting requirements under time pressure: the product did not turn out as expected, an important stakeholder was threatening legal action, and at the same time the production is ongoing in preparation for a product launch in a month. The core task here was to marry the existing design, stakeholder requirements, budget constraints, user expectations, and avoid damage to the brand reputation, while proposing how to address contractual non-compliance. This time, for the first time during the course, the deliverable was a recording of a presentation along with a transcript.

## Experience, Emotions, and Critical Reflection

Working on both assignments was a new experience, even at this late stage of the course. The team project was certainly enjoyable this time, in contrast to a previous module. Everyone on the team was present, engaged, and responsible, which contributed not only to the quality of the deliverables, but also to the team environment. I noticed that the active participation of other team members also influenced me positively and encouraged me to engage more actively. In comparison to the previous experience, our group managed to get in touch and begin our work almost immediately without spending much time on reaching out to team members. One unexpected decision that I personally found amusing is our decision to select the Spiral methodology (Boehm, 1988) for the project, while nowadays Agile approach is widespread.

At the same time, some aspects of teamwork remained frustrating. Some discussions happened repeatedly despite decisions being made previously. In these moments, I tried to be more assertive in steering the conversation towards new topics, reminding the team of our previous conclusions. I believe this was met positively and did not create tension within the team.

Work on the individual presentation turned out to be a diverse experience as well: while it was certainly easier to make decisions without first discussing them with a team, it was not possible to validate the hypotheses with the peers. In addition, the presentation required a similar amount of work as the first assignment, thus making the task more demanding, and even felt almost impossible initially. However, after I divided it into smaller, consecutive units, it turned out to be quite manageable, and I even experienced a few ‘a-ha’ moments while working through the scenario.

As a presentation as a deliverable was a new format for me on this course, I struggled with what to include on the slides and what parts of my initial research to mention. Besides, I generally do not perform well in recorded presentations, especially in a

second language, which is why despite completing the assignment, I am not happy with the results.

## Learning and Application

Working on these assignments highlighted how complex project management can be, requiring multiple, potentially conflicting goals to be considered simultaneously. Furthermore, it was valuable to see how even small changes in one part of the project led to major consequences elsewhere due to the high level of interconnection between individual project components. Formative assignments during the module highlighted that a good project manager should not only have experience and domain knowledge, but also skills to navigate the emotions of the team and stakeholders (Webber and Klimoski, 2004; Sposito *et al.*, 2023).

In my professional work, I have previously encountered project management, if only as a developer. At the same time, for some tasks I already intuitively applied certain elements for project management, such as requirements elicitation, stakeholder handling, and rollout criteria. After completing the module, I now have a more comprehensive view of project management and the instruments to apply these practices more consciously. If I worked on the same project now, I would introduce more structure in how I work with requirements, user scenarios, and stakeholders; and a detailed project plan would help me better understand and communicate the state of a project to colleagues.

## Conclusion

Completing the module provided me with an updated perspective on project management, new tools for my future tasks, as well as validated some approaches I earlier applied instinctively, thus contributing to my growth as a computer science professional.

# References

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