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Individual Reflective Journal

- The Dydd Bin Project –

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Introduction

This journal covers my experience working on the Dydd Bin project for the UWTSD Emerging Trands hackathon. As part of "The Poubelles" team, I worked within the app development side (Team A) with Sarah and Maéva, focusing on designing the app, search for its features, developing and prototyping. In this journal, I will share my thoughts on working in our team, evaluate everyone's performance, and look at our solution's limitations.

Team Experience

Working in our international team (three French students and three British ones) revealed big differences in how we approached the project. For this project, we split into two teams: the app development one (where I worked) and the bin redesign one. But this split created a disconnect that affected our overall project...

The biggest challenge was communication between the two teams. Us French members (me, Maéva, and Sarah) focused on app design, while the British teammates seemed more interested in the physical bin designs when first discussing the idea. Afterwards, the two ideas were then kept because of this. However, this choice later felt like having "two projects in one," making it hard to make decisions together. For example, Ava created typography and logo designs without checking with our app team, so they didn't match the application interface Sarah and I had designed.

I noticed big differences in how French and British students work together. In France, we emphasize teamwork with phrases like "we did this," while the British students used more "I did this" language. We often had to edit our presentations to make the project seem more unified.

Another frustrating issue was the last-minute work style of our British teammates. As French students, we liked planning ahead and finishing work early. But Sharmaine often finished her work at 3 AM and was frequently late to class, which meant our team presented near the end of the final lineup.

There were also differences in presentation styles. In France, we use Canva for presentations and really focus on making slides look good while keeping text minimal. The British girls would start with PowerPoint templates that weren't visually appealing and had too much text. Sarah and I often had to rework these slides to make them more professional and visually consistent.

Team Performance Evaluation

Ava (Project Manager) - 4.5/5

Ava was essential in leading the group - without her, the project would have been much harder to manage. She set clear deadlines and kept everyone on track. Though she sometimes made design decisions without consulting our app team, her leadership held the group together despite our different visions. She handled pressure well and pushed us to deliver on time, even if her last-minute work style differed from our French approach of planning ahead.

Becky (Market Researcher) - 4.5/5

Becky's work was excellent. Despite her tendency to use "I" statements rather than team-oriented language, her market research was thorough and valuable. Her surveys provided critical insights for our app features. The quality of her research significantly strengthened our project.

Maéva (App Team Member) - 4/5

Maéva worked hard despite language barriers. Her input on the app design was good, and she persevered through communication challenges. She did well to understand complex waste management rules and helping create user-friendly interface concepts, though sometimes struggled with expressing her ideas clearly in English.

Sarah (App Designer) - 4.5/5

Sarah worked closely with me on the app design, producing really good work. Her interface designs effectively communicated complex information visually. Our partnership was one of the most productive parts of the project, as we communicated well and shared the same design vision throughout the process.

Sharmaine (3D Lead Designer) - 3.5/5

While Sharmaine's 3D models showed skill, her work habits stressed out the team. She often finished work late in the night and arrived late to class, which pushed our team's presentation toward the end of the schedule. The quality of her work was undermined by last-minute execution and lack of coordination with our app design vision.

Myself - 4.5/5

I focused mainly on app design with Sarah, where we worked really well together. I met all deadlines and communicated clearly within the app team. I tried to bridge the gap between the two sub-teams, with limited success due to different project priorities. I'm proud of the interface design work Sarah and I accomplished despite the communication challenges.

Design Solution Limitations and Risk Factors

Our Dydd Bin solution has several limitations we need to consider:

If implemented, the app would need internet access to work properly, which might exclude people without reliable connections. Our design was created with time constraints, meaning a real implementation would require significant additional technical development. Connecting with Swansea Council's existing systems would require permissions and integration that might be complicated.

Many older residents in Wales don't use smartphones, so they'd be left out of using our proposed solution. Changing people's recycling habits is tough - even a well-designed app helps but doesn't solve everything.

The disconnect between our app team and the bin design team might confuse users if the app interface and physical bins don't look like they're part of the same system. The estimated yearly maintenance cost for the app (£430) seems manageable for implementation, but unexpected issues could increase this - and this doesn't even include costs related to the physical bin designs, which were hardly addressed in our presentations. Welsh recycling rules keep changing, so our digital solution would need regular updates to stay relevant.

Conclusion

Working on the Dydd Bin project taught me a lot about working in international teams. The cultural differences between French and British approaches to teamwork were challenging but educational. Having separate sub-teams for the app design and physical bins wasn't ideal and it would have been better to integrate these components from the start.

Despite these challenges, Sarah and I created a good app design based on Becky's solid market research. The concept would be more effective with better integration between the physical bins and digital interface designs, but I'm still proud of what our team accomplished.