

Assignments

Developer's Journal:

The Developer's Journal is a way for you to communicate personally with us about anything you like—the work you have done, your goals for the semester, interesting (or boring) reading or field trips, the group dynamics of your development team, etc. It should be viewed as an individual assignment, written by you alone. Unless we have specific permission from you, we will not share your Journal entries with your teammates, your UTF or other students in the class. The primary goal of the Journals, other than communication, is to give you a structured setting in which to reflect on the design/development/teamwork process and any lessons you have learned from it.

Your Journal will consist of weekly entries, which you will submit to us electronically. Entries are due every Wednesday at 9:00 PM. Each entry should be about a page long, written in paragraph form (that is, like a very short paper, rather than a list or outline). Most weeks, your Journal should be a personal reflection on what you and your team have done that week. You may describe any progress you have made, goals you have set, bumps in the road, examples of the team working well or poorly together, etc.

Please name each journal entry with your last name and first initial as well as the date of submission. So if I were submitting a journal on February 15, I would call it: epstein-a-0215.doc. Submit journals via the class stellar site, available at: <<http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/1/sp09/1.016/>>. From there click on "Homework," and look for the current Journal assignment. Journals should be in Word or .txt or .rtf format.

Preliminary Proposal:

The Preliminary Proposal is essentially the output of the conceptual phase of exhibit development. You needn't be very specific—it's too early for that now—but there are some topics you should be sure to cover:

What is the central idea of your exhibit—what do you want your visitors to come away with? Roughly how do you hope to communicate that idea? What kinds of interactives, immersive elements, artifacts, animals, graphic panels, etc., do you hope to use? Do you have a specific floor plan in mind? What materials do you plan to use? Do you have any idea how much they will cost? How do you plan to structure your team? Do you have a rough timetable for design and construction? What do you hope to get out of the Spring Break trip?

Certainly some of your proposal should be typed out in paragraph form, but you may also find it useful to include lists, outlines, pictures, drawings, etc. The idea is to communicate, as effectively as possible, where your team thinks it is headed and how you hope to get there. In addition to the written proposal, your team will make a short (about 5 minutes) presentation to the class, outlining the proposal.

First Prototype:

The First Prototype is a simple mock-up of one or several interactive elements. You will use it to see whether visitors do what you expect them to do, and to learn what they get out of the experience. Your prototype should be functional, but it need not include all the functionality you plan to incorporate into the finished interactive. It is best to make your prototypes out of cheap materials (cardboard, duct tape, etc.), and to build them so that they can easily be torn apart and modified as you see how visitors actually interact with them. Don't make this a glossy, finished product. It's best not to get too attached to your early prototypes, because you will probably have to take them apart and start over. **Be sure to prototype text and instructions, along with interactives.** You should also produce an observation/interview form, on which you will record (A) what visitors do with your interactive, and (B) what visitors say about it when you interview them afterwards. We will see some examples of these in class.

Final Proposal:

We will provide more detail about the Final Proposal later in the semester. Roughly, though, you should view this as a formal description of exactly what you plan to do, when you will do it, who will do which parts of it, what you will need to buy, how much it will cost, etc. Your proposal should describe the main ideas you hope to get across, along with any supporting ideas. It would not be a bad idea to include a bibliography in the proposal; you will need to be able to cite your sources for any factual material in your exhibit. You should list the exhibit elements you plan to build, and ideally you should include design drawings of the most important elements. Proposals should also include scale models (nothing fancy—cardboard models are OK) of the final exhibit, as you envision it.

Due Dates:

February:

11(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM). In addition to whatever else you wish to discuss, please compare the exhibits, approach, etc., at two interactive museums (e.g. Museum of Science, Aquarium, MIT Museum, EcoTarium, Children's Museum) that you have visited in the past week.

18(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

20(F) **Class assignment: Survey questions to be distributed to high-school students** (due at noon).

25(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

March

2(M) **Teams: Preliminary Proposal.** In written form and presented to the class (due at beginning of class).

4(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

11(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

18(W) **Teams: Prototype of at least one interactive element.** You should also produce an observation/interview sheet that you will use in evaluating your prototype (due at beginning of class).
Individuals: Developer's Journal (due at 9:00 PM).

20(F) **Teams: List of specific objectives for Spring Break trip** (due at beginning of recitation)

April:

1(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

6(M) **Teams: Final Proposal,** in written form with accompanying scale model, and presented to the class (due at beginning of class).

8(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

15(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

22(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

25(F) **Teams: Draft of final text, with citations and bibliography** (due at end of recitation).

29(W) **Developer's Journal** (due at 9:00 PM).

May:

6(W) **Teams: Pre-opening.** Exhibits up at beginning of class for classmates and instructors to view and critique (informally). Changes can still be made after this date, if necessary.
Individuals: Developer's Journal (due at 9:00 PM).

11(M) **Opening.** Exhibits completed, open for viewing by outside visitors.