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AME 394- Daragh Byrne

### **The Digital Culture Experience**

It's strange to look back at a time when computers were first built to the time we are at now where our computers basically run the world. In my experience I have never known a time when computers didn't exist and I appreciate them even more with that known fact. For me technology plays such a huge part in my life and not exactly in the material aspect as most people. But rather the experience of the digital culture, where people and technology interact to improve, entertain or simply for art. I wasn't necessarily an expert in the culture portion of the digital world but after taking this class I feel that I have more of a grasp in the technological age rather than just understanding the technology we use but to use it in so many ways. Overall everything I have learned within this semester, I feel have truly benefited me for much greater things in the future.

This class was called How To Build A Digital Physical System, in my case everything in this class was all new material. I'll admit that I had my doubts about taking a class on a subject I knew very little about but I was determined to make the best out of it and strive to learn as much as I could. Switching to an entirely different major than my previous I choose to immerge myself into as much of the digital culture as to get a feel for what this class may expect from me. Through the lectures I was introduced to many new things, ambient systems, how to fabricate, the arduino, and how beautifully technology can be used to inspire. So many things I have never heard of before but yet existed was quite an experience for me. Seeing how the world interacts with ambient systems and learning how to build some of my own. Reading studies on the different ideas and systems that were being developed to solve the problems of everyone around the globe. Not only were the lectures amazing, but it was also a very hands on considering the couple of projects we had to do.

Our projects in this class were insightful and definitely something I had not done before. We worked with arduinos, motherboards, LEDs and everything in between, it was fun but at the same time a challenge. I enjoyed working with the different sensors throughout this class, being able to receive data and knowing how to read the data. Through the light and pressure sensors, seeing the finished product always gave me the sense of accomplishment. Along with the hardware of the systems, there was also the coding side of the projects. With an arduino the coding was based off of java which for me was a great way for me to get some practice in. The coding portion of our assignments were what I was most interested in because I helped write the code that told the system what to do. Not only that but being able to experiment with what commands did to what part of the system made it all worth while in the end when it all came together.

During our final project we had the idea to base a music application to play music based on your mood. Our group was pretty well rounded with each of us bringing a skill that would benefit this project, not to mention being able to dedicate our time to this project. The three of us came up with a prototype that took much time to work out the bugs in order for it to work properly and through all the challenges that we face we were very proud of our final product. This project marked the last of the projects we would be doing for this class and to me we ended with a bang of success. It was this project that had gave me the idea of continuing to stay in touch with the digital culture and continue to strive to learn as much as I can with everything that we learned in class. It was decided that we as a group would continue this product individually and perhaps taking it farther than the classroom and introducing it to the real world now that we believe it seems like more of a feasible feat than how we felt about it in the beginning of the semester.

Looking back on this semester, in AME 394 I made friends, learned new things and came out with a better understanding the world we live in through the eyes of the digital culture age. I not only learned a lot from the professor, Daragh Byrne but from the other students as well. Some like me who knew a bit from here and there and those who were more advanced and skilled in the media side of the class. To me what makes a classroom something much more is the environment and in this class I found it to be exactly that. It wasn't your typical textbook class but more of a hands on experience, what to expect when working with digital physical

systems. After reflecting on all the projects that we had to put together it made me think about how much work goes into building an ambient system. That's what inspired me to not only appreciate our technological advances we have now but to embrace it and hopefully one day create my own that would change the world.

Throughout this class everyday it seemed like I learned something new, not only was it invigorating but something that I potentially saw as something I would like to work with in the future. Despite the hard times of trying to figure out why my system wasn't working, or spending long nights in the lab trying to figure out why your code isn't working, it all seemed relevant to what the message of the class was. Not only making technology for our needs but making the digital culture inspire, and have the end product speak for itself. I thought that all in all this class has very much inspired me to continue working with media, arduinos and improve my coding.