

Assignment 2 Part 2 – Documentation

Identifying the Challenge

For our final sprint, our team decided to choose the “dress-up” archetype for our design challenge. As we found all challenges given to us this time to be relatively heavy from a programming perspective, we chose the dress-up archetype in part so we could make use of code we had already written from the previous part, which included a lot of customization and permutation work.

Due to the rather esoteric game type, we had a lot of questions immediately:

- What is the player dressing up?
- What does the archetype mean by “Dress-up?”
- What constitutes as dressing something up?
- How do we make this feel like an engaging toy?

While discussing these questions, one of the games that came to mind was Purple Place. Purple place was a game included with Windows XP, and one of the minigames involves decorating a cake while it passes through an assembly line. While not conventionally “Dress-up”, it’s game-like take on the formula was appealing to us. It’s simple and repetitive gameplay fit the scope for what we believed could be created.

Ultimately, the question we chose to move forward into the rest of our sprint with was “How will the player engage in customization, and with what?”. A broad question will help us hone in on the specifics of the design, following the general formula from Purple Place’s cake minigame.



Figure 1: A gameplay screenshot from Purple Place. Cakes must be created with perfect accuracy.

The game started to become clearer to us after further discussion and prototyping of an experience map. Knowing this time that the experience map should contain most if not all the player experience, we tried to flesh out this prototype's experience map:

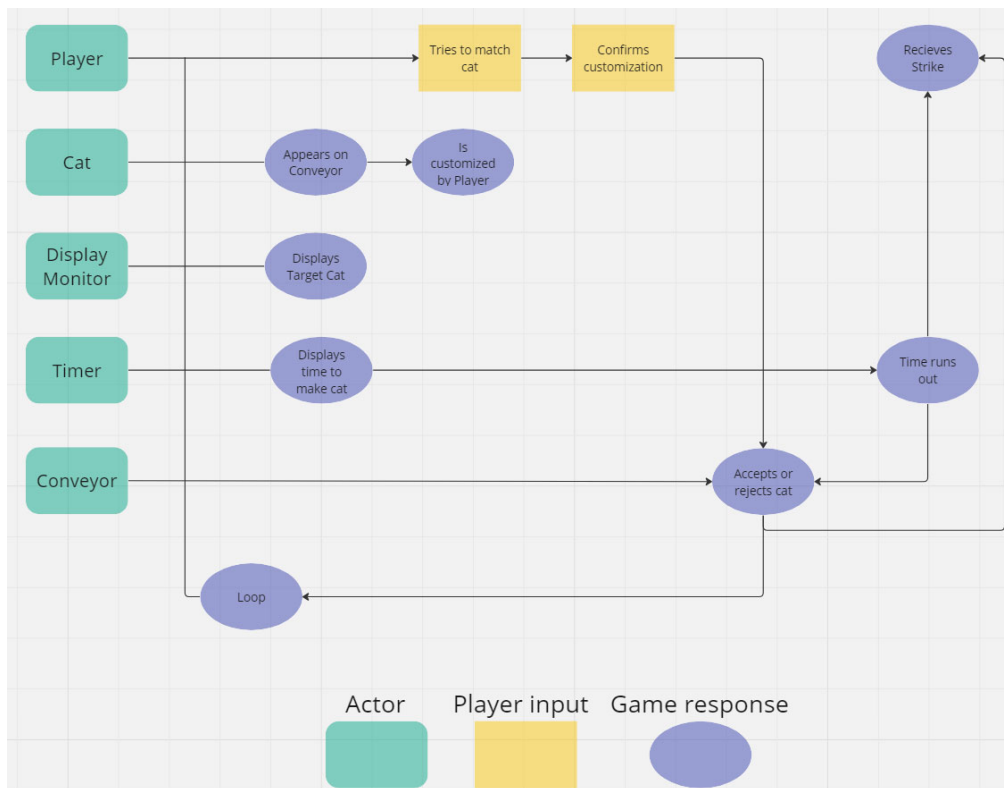


Figure 2: Our experience map. If the player receives 3 strikes, they lose.

The primary unknown on this map is how to increase the difficulty of the experience. If the player gets skilled enough at our game to complete each cat before the time runs out, it would never end and become repetitive. We took note of this while continuing with development. Once again, our target surrounds our original design question:

We believe that the core experience of most dress-up games are the combination of matching outfits/accessories, which served as more justification for our sprint target.

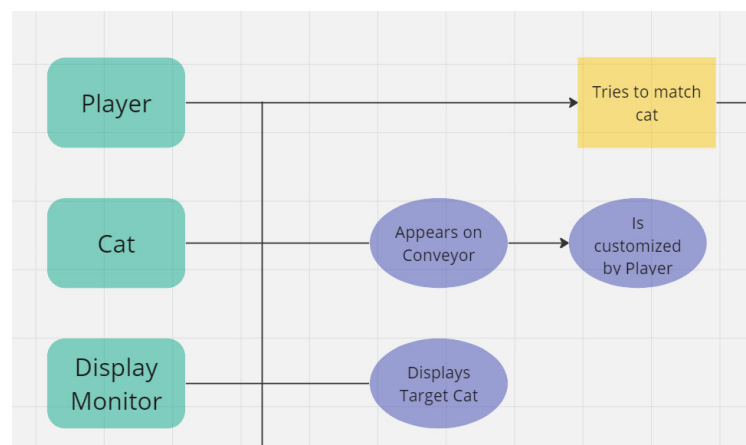


Figure 3: Our sprint target. How will the player engage in customization, and with what?

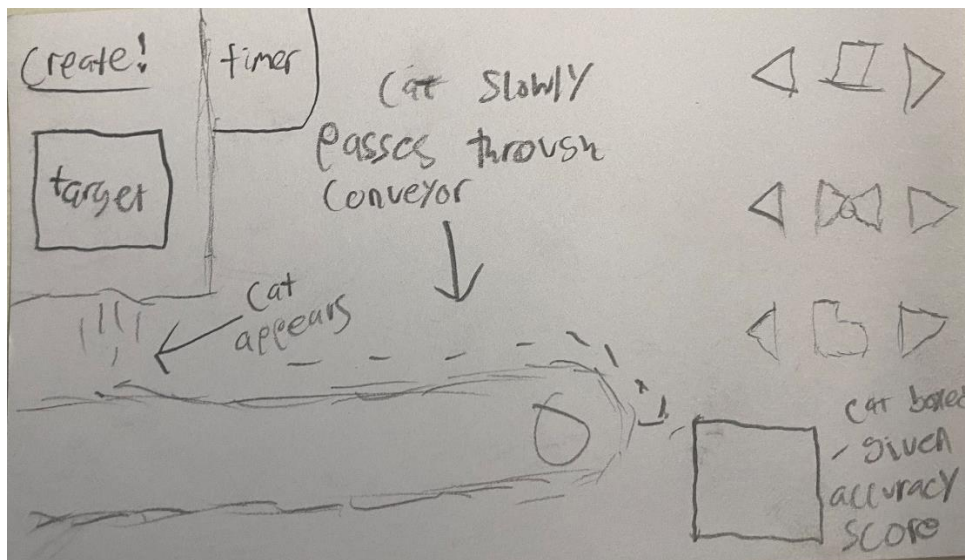
Planning a Solution

Taking advantage of the time we had in person, we repeated the entire crazy-8's formula to devise a final solution sketch for each member in our group. Seeing everyone's interpretation of our design idea was very interesting, as it led to multiple unique solutions for the unknowns mentioned prior.

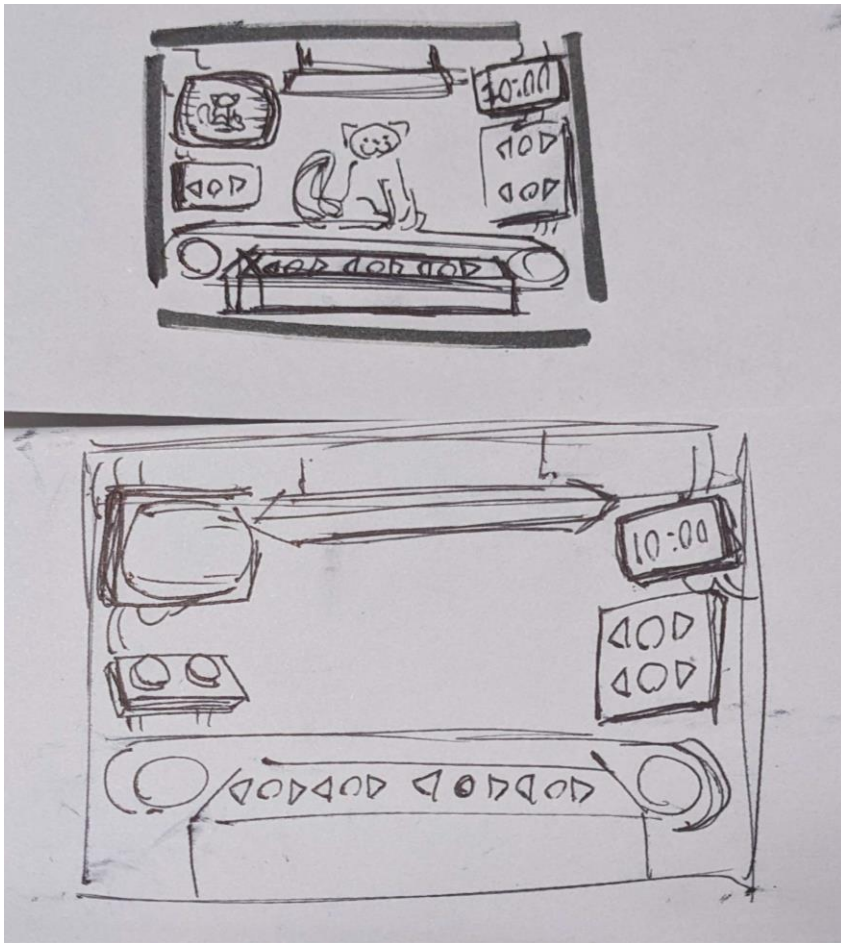
Eva:



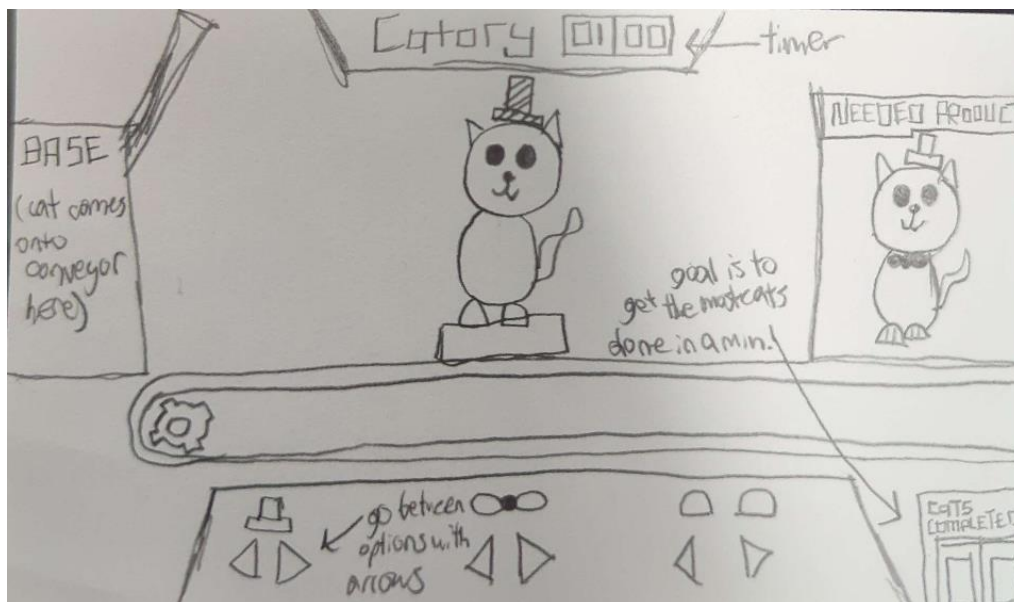
Justin:



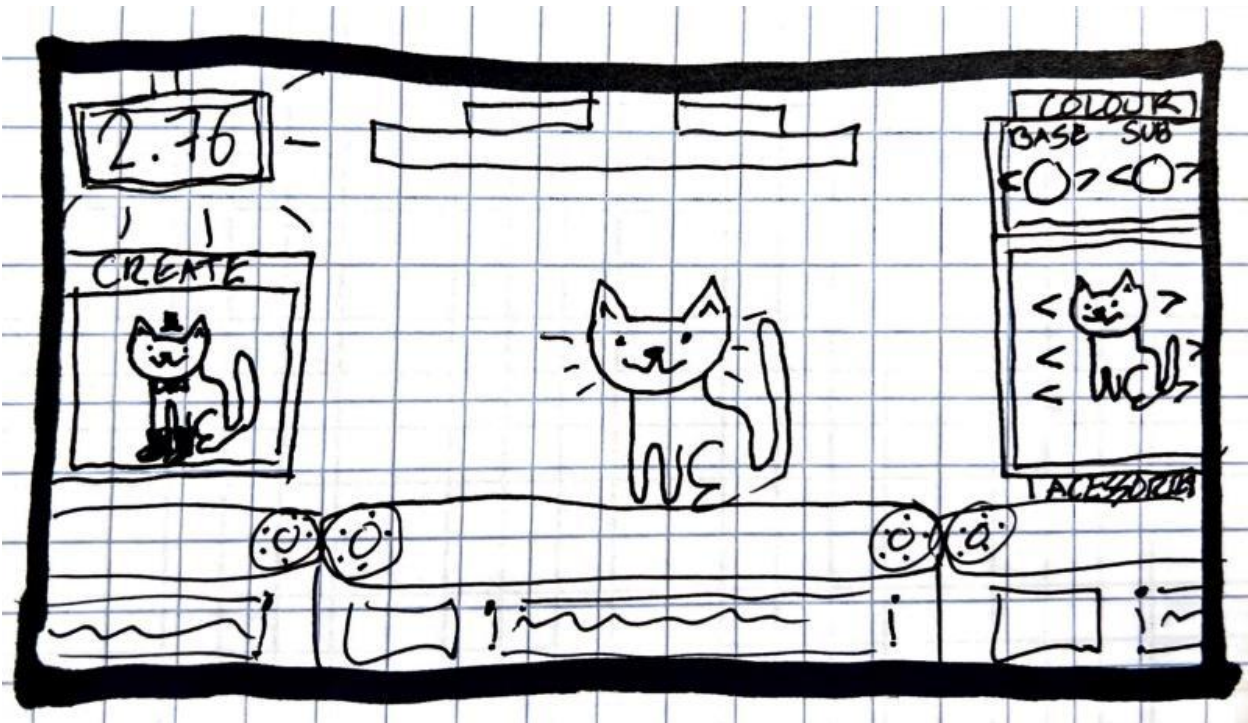
Marco:



Sadira:



Sydney:



While the general formula of the game for all the crazy 8 sketches lined up, what we found the most important was in the details. Framing, location of elements, and how the game creates challenge. It was ultimately Marco's design that we ended up going with.

We felt that Marco's concept (figure 4) was not only well designed visually, but had the most interesting variant of the gameplay loop and control scheme. The visually separated accessory sliders felt to us like a fun skill check in the form of speed and precision.

Furthermore, Marco is the team's primary programmer, making it easy for him to bring life to his design. It's important when participating in projects like these to understand what is reasonably achievable. By nominating this sketch, we were able to reduce time that would otherwise be spent simply working to understand the chosen sketch from an implementation perspective.

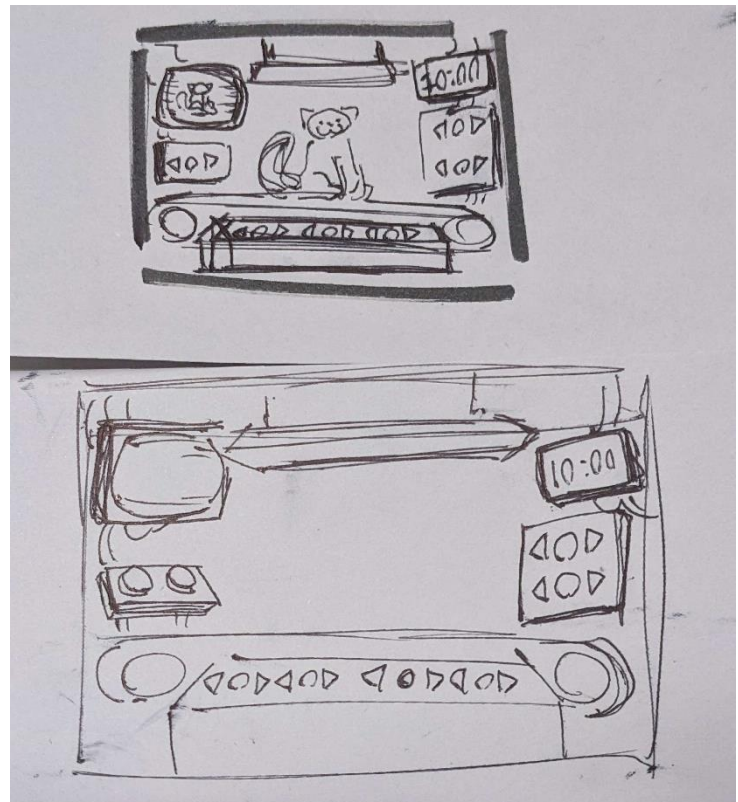


Figure 4: The winning design.

Assessment

Driven by the success of our last sprint, we followed a similar development formula as implementation began. We all contributed to the project and updated each other as we went closely according to our team values.

After completing the prototype, we asked ourselves

-Was what we made in line with our original concept?

-Did we follow the restrictions we set on ourselves in previous sprints to limit overscoping?

Our original question, “How will the player engage in customization, and with what?” came to life through accessories. A cat is displayed, and the player must match the design within the timeframe. Cats have 5 top, 5 middle, and 5 bottom accessories, as well as 5 fur colors and 5 splotch colors. That leaves 3125 possible permutations for cats. The time required to match the displayed cat lessens over time on a declining curve, only allowing for 3 mistakes before the game is over. This game was more code-heavy than last time, but we think any of the archetypes for this sprint require more attention than the archetypes found in our previous sprints. Overall, we’re confident in our implementation.

In terms of following our restrictions, we think we went too far above what we should have. While we got it done, it was more last-minute than our last sprint. This was in part due to not verifying assets were properly integrated until the last day in which we originally planned to just apply them over the placeholders. For next time, we’re making a point to ensure all imported game elements are functioning as intended far before development begins. We had similar

poor communication during last sprint, but this time we didn’t get as lucky; We had no established buffer in case something went wrong. This problem and lack of buffer led to a minor scramble on the last day, with the assignment ultimately turning up late.

Some key knowledge we gained from this experience is that we almost always have less time than we think we do. We still struggled with communication, and assumed everything would go as planned. Two of the same mistake serves as a wakeup call to start taking proper action in mitigating this problem, as the issue appears to be consistent unless we start doing something different.



Figure 4: A screenshot from our game. Customize the cat using the sliders to match the target cat!

We believe that the key takeaways from this sprint surround not letting problems sit. Last time, we had minor communication issues, but we still ultimately delivered on time. On this sprint, we watched them manifest in full display. We recall being warned to tackle problems as soon as they arise, and not letting them fester. Having watched this sprint unfold, we truly understand what that now means. This will *not* happen a third time.