Tactical Assault VR

EXPERT EVALUATION REPORT
8.10.2024
REBEKA MIKULASOVA

Tactical Assault VR

Tactical Assault is a VR game where the player takes the place of military agent. It can be played as a solo game or a co-op experience. The game challenges you to think on your feet, make quick decisions, and work with your team, or solo to complete objectives. Objectives conclude rescue missions, bomb defusal or reconnaissance.

Research Objectives

- **Player immersion:** investigate immersion for military style gameplay with interactions with weapons and npcs

- **Multiplayer interactions and cooperation:** investigate how multiplayer changes the pace and overall style of the game

- **Tactical decision making:** investigate how players use real-time strategy, teamwork, and problem solving in fast-paced missions

Procedure

The evaluation was conducted by playing the game for 4.5 hours co-op mode and 1.5 hours solo missions, both played on Oculus meta quest 3 VR headsets. Difficulty cannot be directly set up, but players can choose number of respawns.

Co-op playtime included all of the available maps, missions and modes. The number of respawns was 3 for all missions. Three missions included hostage rescue and two included bomb defusals and one reconnaissance.

For the solo missions I chose solo arcade mode with hard difficulty and the first solo mission called "Void". The number of respawns was 2.

Ranking

Positive

Critical

High

Medium

Low

- Positive issues indicate good practice, where the feature worked as intended.

- Critical: This problem has to be fixed in order to allow for a decent user experience.

- High: This problem has a severe impact on the game and negatively influences the user experience.

- Medium: It has a slight impact on the game and influences the experience a bit.

- Low: It does not have a profound impact on the game.

Findings
Tactical Assault VR

Co-op experience

The co-op experience makes this game fun and immersive

With co-op missions the overall gameplay feels more realistic, the players have to strategize and rely on each other. This quality makes the game more fun and immersive. It also adds new functionality to each mission, player cannot only die, but be rescued by teammate(s).

Category 1: Game Play

A. Heuristic: Enduring Play

Problem:
- The players finds the game fun, with no repetitive or boring tasks

Description:
- When crouching, the player is not able to reload or access anything from their vest. This really damages the immersive experience and overall gameplay

Improvement:
- Fix the player rig when crouching, so that the vest is reachable and player can reload or access anything from the vest

A. Heuristic: Enduring Play

Problem:
- Gameplay is long and enduring and keeps the players' interest

Description:
- When playing co-op mode after healing the downed player, the player has no time to safely compose his weapons back together. So in high stake situations, after one player rescues another, the downed player can be instantly killed again

Improvement:
- Give the rescued player few seconds where they cannot be hit by enemies so they have time to compose the weapons

A. Heuristic: Enduring Play

After playing all missions, the gameplay was always fun without feelings of boredom mainly because of the customizable vest, weapons and missions

B. Heuristic: Challenge, Strategy and Pace

Problem:
- The game is paced to apply pressure without frustrating the players

Description:
- Playing solo bomb defusal missions is nearly impossible, because the game has made it to be a two person job. One player has to communicate the color of the wire which the second player has to cut. This makes it nearly impossible to defuse the bomb by yourself.

Improvement:
- Adjust the bomb defusal for solo missions by adding different type of bomb or setting the display for wire color near the wires so that one person can look and cut the wires at the same time

B. Heuristic: Challenge, Strategy and Pace

Problem:
- The AI is tough enough that the players have to try different tactics against it

Description:
- In some situations the AI npcs act really dumb, not following the player or being close to the player and doing nothing. Or sniper npcs are really not "snipping", only shooting when the player is in close distance

Improvement:
- Make the AI more realistic maybe adding hearing or more perception so that the game will be more immersive

B. Heuristic: Challenge, Strategy and Pace

Problem:
- AI is balanced with the players' play

Description:
- The player cannot really choose the difficulty of the game and the npcs stay the same difficulty for all missions, resulting in more repetitive playthroughs

Improvement:
- Balance the AI with players play, to achieve dynamic difficulty for all types of players

B. Heuristic: Challenge, Strategy and Pace

Even if the AI can sometimes act dumb, it is still really difficult and challenging game, which makes the player(s) want to try different tactics and approaches. The combat is also very realistic, sometimes it takes just one bullet to kill the player and that makes it more immersive and quite fun

C. Heuristic: Consistency in the Game World

Since this is a game with a few missions, this heuristic is not applicable. The game world does not change based on players choices nor does it remember their past choices.

D. Heuristic: Goals

Problem:
- The game goals are clear

Description:
- For missions like reconnaissance, the goals were not clear. I would not say that this is a big issue because it can be more fun if the player has no clear goal and has to find out what exactly are they searching for

Improvement:
- Add some bulletin board or case files for information about the missions to make it more clear what the goals should be

E. Heuristic: Variety of Players and Game Styles

Problem:
- The game supports a variety of game styles

Description:
- The game would benefit from different types of npcs, now it has only one type of enemy and the missions could have some variety of new ones

Improvement:
- Add enemies such as snipers, enemies with hand guns or rifles etc.

F. Heuristic: Variety of Players and Game Styles

The player can completely customize their main weapon, second hand gun, accessories and scopes or silencers. This feature truly adds to the immersion and overall game experience. While playing missions the player can choose any game style they want which makes it more fun and of course immersive in the VR

G. Heuristic: Players Percepsion of Control

The player feels completely in control and all of the available missions feel immersive

Category 2: Coolness/Entertainment/Humor/Emotional

A. Heuristic: Emotional connection

The option to customize your character, weapon and vest can lead to emotional connection. I would say it's the best that a game of this type can do

B. Heuristic: Coolness/Entertainment

The game offers different missions and customizable settings for all types of players which makes it entertaining. The co-op mode also makes the game even more entertaining providing new experiences and tactics

C. Heuristic: Humor

It would be morally wrong if this game had any humor considering the player kills terrorists, so this heuristic is not applicable

D. Heuristic: Immersion

For VR game the immersion is a very important aspect. Tactical assault is a very immersive game, due to the choice of play style and customizable vest and weapons.

Category 3: Usability & Game Mechanics

A. Heuristic: Documentation/Tutorial

Problem:
- Player does not need to access the tutorial in order to play

Description:
- There is no tutorial nor any documentation, this can be very problematic for new VR users that are not familiar with the controls or settings. For more experienced VR players this can cause no significant issues

Improvement:
- Add some optional tutorial or controls documentation

Low

B. Heuristic: Status and Score

Problem:
-    Status score Indicators are available
Description:
-    During missions, the player cant access the status or score indicators, this could be both good or bad depending on the players preference
Improvement:
-    Add optional status indicator

C. Heuristic: Game Provides Feedback

The game provides nice visual, audio and effects feedback. After each mission there is available summary of kills, assists and deaths as well as the accuracy of players aim

D. Heuristic: Terminology

Problem:
- The game gives rewards that immerse the player more deeply

Description:
- Even though killing terrorist is a reward of itself, the game doesn't provide any rewards or new items/collectibles for each mission. This could make a better gaming experience

Improvement:
- Add more customizable attachments and weapons that can be obtained only by playing missions as rewards

D. Heuristic: Terminology

Problem:
- The game provides clear goals

Description:
- For new players there can be a lot of confusion with the terminology of the missions, they are never explained so the player has to find it out for themselves. This can be both good and bad depending on the type of the player

Improvement:
- Add some optional tutorial or documentation

Low

E. Heuristic: Burden on Player

Problem:
- The game does not put an unnecessary burden on the player

Description:
- Tactical Assault puts a lot of burden on new players, players have to learn all controls by playing the game.

Improvement:
- Add some optional tutorial or controls documentation

F. Heuristic: Screen Layout

Problem:
- The player experiences the user interface as consistent

Description:
- The UI uses 2 different fonts and seems really unprofessional

Improvement:
- Use one font and use one standard for the UI layout

Low

F. Heuristic: Screen Layout

Problem:
- The players experience the user interface/HUD as a part of the game

Description:
- The player does not experience HUD as a part of the game, so the player cannot see their health or ammo status. This could be both good and bad depending on the player

Improvement:
- Use optional HUD

G. Heuristic: Navigation

Navigation is consistence and looks nice, it is very intuitive

H. Heuristic: Error Prevention

Problem:
- Upon turning on the game, the player has enough information to begin play

Description:
- New players are not able to get quick into the game

Improvement:
- Add some optional tutorial

I. Heuristic: Game Story Immersion

This heuristic is not applicable because this game does not have any story

Summary

Summary

Co-op Experience:
- Immersive and enjoyable, with players needing to strategize and rely on each other.

Gameplay Issues:
- Vest unreachable while crouching; no respawn time for rescued players; solo bomb defusal nearly impossible.
- AI needs improvement: lacks balance and realism in behavior.

Usability & Mechanics:
- No tutorial/documentation, making it hard for new players.
- Game lacks rewards for completing missions.

Improvements Suggested:
- Fix crouching issue, AI behavior, and solo bomb defusal.
- Add tutorials, better UI, dynamic difficulty, and more NPC variety.