Topics

- Playtesting
- Probability

In class work

- Project 1 Playtest

Out of class work

- Project 1: Blogpost #2
- Continue Project 1 work

Required Reading

- PMD Ch. 6 Playtesting (10 pages)
- PMD Ch. 7 Playtesting Methods (7 pages)
- PMD Ch. 11 Randomness (7 pages)
- AGD Ch. 12 Mechanics 184-200 (17 pages)

Optional reading

- Evolution of Magic (PDF)
- PMD Ch. 29 Probability (18 pages)
- AGD Ch. 27 Playtesting (16 pages

yahtzee

1 roll $\frac{1}{1296}$ 0.077%

3 roll 4.6%

Weekend TODO:

① project / playtest

③ project blogpost

② unit 1.1 <7-16>

④ readings

Playtesting

scope / goal / result

subjective / objective

how many coins is it fun

sampling

testing environment

keep playtesters talking

A/B testing

self-playtesting

Good/Bad Playtesting Techniques

GOOD: Ask questions.

BAD: Answer questions.

GOOD: Recruit your target audience.

BAD: Recruit whoever is available.

GOOD: Create a comfortable environment without distractions for the tester.

BAD: Roll with whatever you have.

GOOD: Ask specific questions, such as "How do you unlock the blue door?"

BAD: Ask vague/personal questions, such as "Did you understand how to use keys?"

GOOD: Collect data, such as how many players fail objectives.

BAD: Use anecdotal evidence, such as "My playtester succeeded. It must be easy."

GOOD: Playtest early and often.

BAD: Playtest when you think the game is looking "ready."

GOOD: Elicit problem statements, such as "I don't understand how to beat the boss."

BAD: Elicit solutions, such as "This gun doesn't fire fast enough."

SUMMARY

• Prototypes are quickly assembled subsets of a game that allow designers to test ideas in conditions approximating those that players will be under when playing the released game.

• Playtesting allows for direct, unbiased, and helpful feedback when the playtest session is run deliberately and playtesters are chosen effectively.

• Designers (and people in general) loathe hearing where they have made mistakes and will interpret data in ways favorable to their own opinions. This makes it all the more important to design playtests to eliminate potential sources of bias.

• Playtesters will not always give useful feedback, but it is important to understand why you accept the feedback you accept and reject the feedback you reject. If a player "doesn't get it," is it their fault or can the game do something better to make the player "get it"?

• Iteration is one of the most important keys to successful game design. Scheduling your activities so that you can maximize useful iteration time is crucial.

SUMMARY

• You should take all possible steps to avoid introducing bias. Sometimes this leads to being uncomfortably quiet with your playtesters. However, your job is not to make sure they have fun, but to see where or if they have fun.

• You will not be able to ship a copy of yourself with your game. Therefore, any troubles your playtesters have will likely be mirrored by actual players. Don't dismiss them!

• You can't hear your playtesters' thoughts (yet!), so take steps to make sure that they are verbalizing their processes and evaluations of what is going on in the playtest.

• In an A/B test, players see one of two possible treatments and their behavior is recorded. Designers can then compare the behavior of those who saw the A treatment to those who saw the B treatment to determine which causes different behavioral outputs.

• Self-playtesting allows for quick turnaround times and for testing specialized hypothetical questions, but it does not replace testing with others.

Probability

randomness

- mitigating the impact of differing player skills
- adjust level of overall challenge <potential for player flow>