Hunt

Hunt is a turn based game made for 2-4 players and is targeted at people aged 10+. The game takes around 30 minutes to complete, whoever reaches the finish box first wins the game.

Using spinners and cards, the players must work their way through the board playing as a fox parent who needs to care for their pups. The players need to collect 2x big meat and 1x small meat for each individual pup to progress. The type of meat will be in a pile next to the board, shuffled so the player won’t pick up the same meat every time. Each player will have 10 hearts representing health, extra hearts will also be in a pile next to the board.

On the board, there are four spinners, two explain the foxes encounters on their journey and the other two explains the fox’s actions, it can either attack the encounter or hide from it.

The encounter wheel must be spun first as the action wheel follows. Once the player spins the spinner it will either land on a positive encounter with a plus sign (e.g. Rabbit) or it will land on a negative encounter with a subtract sign (e.g. Badger). the player then needs to spin the action spinner with attack or hide.

On the encounter spinners, it says how many hearts and how much meat should be collected. If the player lands on "attack", the player can then receive the hearts and meat from the encounter but if the player lands on hide from, they avoid picking up the hearts and meat.

Negative encounters don’t have any meat to collect so if the player lands on “attack” while on a negative encounter, the encounter attacks the fox and takes the players hearts. Negative encounters act as a ‘*drain’* function which takes the cards out of the player’s hand.

Once players have spun the wheel and it has landed on the 'Feed pups' section, players can then convert the meat they have already collected, leaving them in a pile next to the objective. Once the player has collected enough meat cards to complete the objective of " 2x large meat, 1x small meat" the player may then proceed onto the other half of the board. The same requirement will be next to the finish, as the players continue, the number of foxes increase and the damage of each drain encounter increases making the game more complex.

Researching the fox's food chain inspired me to make a game about how a fox hunts and what meat it eats to survive. The encounters on the board are animals from the fox’s food chain and predators within the wild which would attack a fox to steal food. The fox’s habitat made a great background theme, using greens and browns for the forest background with brightly coloured animals contrasting to make the board look bright and fun. Using multi-coloured spinners and wheels attracted the attention of the target audience 10+ as it instantly attracted their eyes to the board.

The main mechanic in my game is the spinner. The spinner is spun around clockwise or anti-clockwise over an 8-piece wheel. While reading ‘***E Adams + J Dorman (2012) Game Mechanics: Advanced Games Design***’ it says "*a simple way of creating unpredictable outcomes is to include an element of chance, such as a throw of the dice or the twirl of a spinner*” This helped me choose a turn taking mechanic which allowed me to create chance without using a dice. Each piece has two outcomes, a positive outcome and a negative outcome. There are 4 positive and 3 negative sections of the wheel, having more positive than negative creates a ‘*stochastic process’* and a higher chance to succeed in the game.

Another mechanic is my progression mechanism, while reading ‘***Jesper Juul: "The Open and the Closed: Game of emergence and games of progression". In Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference Proceedings, edited by Frans Mäyrä, 323-329. Tampere: Tampere University Press, 2002’*** it says “*In progression games, the player has to perform a predefined set of actions in order to complete the game*”.I used the key and lock system to help the players proceed throughout the game. Collecting food for the pups acts as a key and converting them to the pups to feed them acts as a lock. Once the players convert the source cards to the pups, the players may then proceed to the next challenge.

The collectives in the game works as an Internal economy. At the start of the game the players are given ten heart cards each making it fair, these cards act as the player’s health. Health can be gained when landing on a positive encounter. The meat cards can also be collected, the big meat and small meat cards are shuffled into a pile, once the players have enough to clear the objective they can convert the meat into food for the pups. Each player has a coloured counter, the counters are needed to see where the player has progressed to. Once the player has passed the objective they may then use their counter to show other players where they stand this increases the competition.

Play testing outcomes:

Before finalizing my rules i asked two people to play test my game. I used to have the rules as; If someone lands on a harmful encounter it will make you lose your hearts, if someone lands on a prey encounter you must spin the action wheel on the left to see if you "attack" it or "hide from" it. At the beginning of playing the game players who landed on a harmful encounter instantly lost their hearts, punishing them for taking the first spin. After a few turns of the spinner one of my players went out of the game, they didn’t get the chance to collect meat for the objective. We restarted the game two - three times to see if the error still occurred and it didn’t change. To improve gameplay i changed the rules to "after each encounter you must spin the action wheel”, this changed game play as there was a higher chance to not get attacked by the encounter, instead people were hiding from them.

Healthy animal and weak animal were placed inside the action circle at first which determined the type of meat the players collected. Once the game had started to play the players had no way to total how much meat they were collecting, i thought making the meat into cards as a collective would be more effective as you need to collect the meat to feed the pups. The players liked the idea of having cards as health and meat so they have two things to focus on at once. Collecting hearts for their own health and collecting meat to complete the objective.

Once the game was in flow, players had already grasped the rules and were half way into completing the first objective when we ran out of meat and heart cards. This was an issue as we couldn’t continue playing the game. The fox cubs at the first objective said "each pup requires 2x big meat and 1x small meat" and there were 4 pups, this means there had to be 12 meat cards each to continue, collecting so many cards lead to us running out. To solve this issue, I dropped the number of pups to 3, letting the players collect 9 cards each to continue. I also created more meat and heart cards. My play testers found it challenging when trying to collect the requirements, one of the testers said "this is too hard”, "we have run out of cards" and "damn I don’t have enough”.

For my second test, I used four play testers aged 12, 29 ,19 and 32. All of them had no experience of playing a game with spinners. At the start, only two of four players understood the game rules clearly, the other two asked me questions; “which way does the board face?” and “what spinner do I spin first?” To stop the confusion, I edited my rules to make they clearer as the players should know how to use the mechanics before playing the game. During the game, they all grasped the games objective, two players were in the lead and two were losing, I could see that the game creates two emotions (frustration and fiero) from looking at their body language.

Word count: 1413.

References

E Adams + J Dorman (2012) Game Mechanics: Advanced Games Design. (2012). 1st ed. E Adams + J Dorman.

"*a simple way of creating unpredictable outcomes is to include an element of chance, such as a throw of the dice or the twirl of a spinner*”

“*drain*”

*“stochastic process”*

Jesperjuul.net. (2012). *Jesper Juul: The Open and the Closed - Games of Emergence and Games of Progression*. *In Computer Games and Digital Cultures Conference Proceedings, edited by Frans Mäyrä, 323-329. Tampere: Tampere University Press, (2002)* [online] Available at: http://www.jesperjuul.net/text/openandtheclosed.html [Accessed 3 Jan. 2017].

*“In progression games, the player has to perform a predefined set of actions in order to complete the game”*