**Game Usability Heuristics**

**Based on a paper co-authored by Heather Desurvire & Charlotte Wiberg**

Published in the proceedings of the 3d International Conference on Online Communities and Social Computing: Held as Part of HCI International 2009

Pages 557-566

**Abstract:**

Game developers have begun applying formal human-computer interaction (HCI) principles in design. Desurvire et al [2] adapted a set of Heuristics for productivity software to games. The resulting set, presented at CHI 2004, was Heuristics to Evaluate Playability (HEP). Generalization of these heuristics is required to make them applicable to a multiple of game genres and game deliveries. This follow-up study focused on the refined list, Heuristics of Playability (PLAY), that can be applied earlier in game development as well as aiding developers between formal usability/playability research during the development cycle. Heuristics were formed based on their efficacious scores on the popular game review website, metacritic.com. Fiftyfour gamers rated High and Low ranked games on 116 potential heuristics. Implications for how these Heuristics will help developers improve game quality are discussed. PLAY has been found useful in design evaluation and elfreport survey format

Heather Desurvire and Charlotte Wiberg. 2009. Game Usability Heuristics (PLAY) for Evaluating and Designing Better Games: The Next Iteration. In *Proceedings of the 3d International Conference on Online Communities and Social Computing: Held as Part of HCI International 2009*(OCSC '09), A. Ant Ozok and Panayiotis Zaphiris (Eds.). Springer-Verlag, Berlin, Heidelberg, 557-566. DOI=http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.falmouth.ac.uk/10.1007/978-3-642-02774-1\_60

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.588.2260&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

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| Category 3: Usability & Game Mechanics |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| 1. **Challenge, Strategy and Pace**   Easy to learn, harder to master?  Challenge, strategy and pace are in balance? | I like the simplicity and the increase in speed and introduction of black and white colours later on makes for a balanced increase in challenge. |
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| **B: Status and Score**  Status score Indicators are seamless, obvious, available and do not interfere with game play? | This is hard to judge given the simplicity of the game. The score is shown at the end which is obvious to the player but the score has nothing to judge it against so it’s difficult to know how well you did. |
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| 1. **Game Provides Feedback**   Game provides feedback and reacts in a consistent, immediate, challenging and exciting way to the players’ actions? | Covering the controller light sensors give instant feedback to the player on the screen. |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| 1. **Goals**   The game goals are clear? | It’s clear what the controller does after you start using it. The LED’s are particularly good at highlighting where to place your fingers. |
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| **E: Burden On Player**  The game does not put an unnecessary burden on the player? | The ergonomics of the controller could be improved to fit your hand better. |
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| **F. Coolness/Entertainment**  The game offers something different in terms of attracting and retaining the players’ interest? | The use of light sensors is different and unique and if the game had more content and the controller ergonomics was improved to encourage sustained play then I can see myself playing with the controller for a long time. |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **G. Players Perception of Control**  The players have a sense of control and influence onto the game world? |  |
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