**SWOLE Team 6 Playtesting Reports**

By Mitch Regan

**Test 1**, 10/2/15, Jesse Lozano

* He spent time looking through all of the screens on the main menu before proceeding to gameplay.
* On level select, he jumped straight into more advanced levels rather than the first.
* I noticed that we have a bug in our game where selecting level 3 jumps straight into the gameplay level, bypassing the power select screen. Jesse can’t use any scroll powers right now.
* Took over a minute before Jesse could figure out how to slash, even after looking through the instructions. Not good.
* He’s visibly annoyed by screen shaking from wall collision due to velocity based movement.
* I restarted the game back to the level select screen so that he could see the Power Select screen before going into gameplay.
* He clicked every power slider on the Power Select, even though they did nothing. I clarified that they don’t do anything in game yet.
* He’s having a very hard time building combos on enemies with slash, so he couldn’t use power attacks.
* Doesn’t think to use slashing to get around the level. Stuck trying to jump to a ledge out of reach.
* He found the bug where you can continuously slash without having to land. Fell out of the map. I really need to have a kill zone.
* Took about 5 tries to understand what to do when activating a scroll. After that, he had no problem completing them.
* It really looks like Jesse prefers to use basic attacks over slashing.
* Jesse spent a while looking around for the level objective when there wasn’t one. Not sure if I should have chimed in earlier or not, since we only have a sandbox for testing mechanics at the moment.

General Thoughts:

* “The instructions in the ‘How to Play’ screen need to be a lot better.” As a note, this screen was empty about 5 minutes before I asked Jesse to play. It didn’t need to have anything in it besides the back button for the presentation, so I forgot about it. It only had basic text without images in the version Jesse played. My fault.
* “The buttons need to be responsive when you mouse over them and click. I had no idea if some buttons were responding to the mouse or if they just didn’t do anything.”
* “It took me a while to figure out how to do the slashing mechanic, but once I did, it was a fun way to get around.”
* “I didn’t like how I had to rush around to keep my energy high. I thought it would stop going down when the meter hit one of the bars, but it didn’t.” This is my fault. We were initially going to have our energy bar be divided into segments so that once a player charged a full segment, it remained full until used so that the player wouldn’t be pressured into using all of it. However, this was changed after I met with Prof. Ellinger and he highly suggested that the energy should always be falling so that the game keeps up a fast pace. Since our goal is fast-paced berserker rage hack-n-slash, I made the change, but didn’t update the UI.
* “When I tried using the scrolls, my instinct was to press the buttons from right-to-left, not left-to-right, so it took a bit to work.” I’m not sure why he would think this way, because most people in our target demographic (Jesse included) read from left-to-right, so that’s how I designed the scrolls. The scroll buttons to hit are also all greyed out and unresponsive except for the starting point at the far left which is larger. Unless I see more playtesters respond with this complaint, I’m going to write this critique off to user-error.
* “When I first started using the scrolls, I didn’t know that they had a timer attached to them. There should be some way of conveying that to the player.”
* “Have the camera follow the player without parenting it so that you avoid the screen shaking horribly.”

Thoughts on Slashing Mechanic:

* I asked Jesse if he thought it was a more useful attack than the basic attack: “No, the slashing was pretty much only useful for moving around the level. The basic attack seemed more powerful.”
* “The mouse slash is interesting, but I constantly have to reposition the mouse around the screen. It’s not *that* big of a problem for me, but I think you may want to consider turning it into an optional thing.”

Conclusions and Actions to Take

* I need to change the energy bar UI to not show segments so that players don’t get confused by it. I’ll probably still keep some small tick-marks to give a small reference as to how full it is.
* The “How to Play” screen needs to be worked on so that it’s helpful. It really isn’t at the moment.
* I need to fix the bug where level 3 goes directly into gameplay. It needs to go to power select first.
* The camera should be unparented from the player sprite. I could either just zoom out to show the whole level (probably not), or follow the player whenever they move further than “x” units.
* The buttons in game need to have actions for highlighting and on-click events. They’re very dull and unresponsive at the moment.
* After the presentation and this playtest, I’m starting to get worried that our mouse slashing mechanic might not be all that great. I’m going to keep testing to see what others think, but I might need to alter the prototype so that the mouse just shows the direction you can slash, and the player just presses a button to do it. This would be kind of how Hotline Miami uses the mouse cursor to show where the player’s aiming.

**Test 2**, 10/2/15, Randy Totah

* Immediately clicked on the “How to Play” screen before anything else.
* Didn’t bother with other screens after instructions, just went straight into gameplay.
* On the power select screen, Randy messed around with some of the power sliders until he realized they did nothing, and then only chose 1 scroll to use.
* Once in the gameplay level, he took the time to press every button he could think of. However, he still completely forgot all of the instructions and asked me what the controls were.
* Took a few minutes to figure out how to do slashes before I told him.
* Whenever he slashes, he takes a lot of time to position the mouse on the screen for each and every slash. This isn’t really the fast-paced movement I was hoping for.
* Randy seems to just be focusing on using the basic attack on all enemies. Either he doesn’t know that the slash does damage, or he would rather attack normally.
* Has spent about 5 minutes to try platforming around and trying to reach a specific platform he can’t get to. This whole time, he hasn’t thought of using the slash mechanic for mobility at all, and I didn’t chime in since I wanted him to figure it out on his own.
* At this point in the test, Randy hasn’t used the scroll once, and all of the enemies are dead, so he can’t get energy. I chimed in and used a developer cheat to give him full energy to test it out just for the sake of getting info.
* It took Randy several attempts to figure out what the scroll does and complete it, but he knew exactly where to start, as opposed to Jesse. Once he got everything down, he could complete the scroll easily.
* After trying for a few more minutes to get to the same platform from earlier, I asked him what was going through his mind. “How do I get to that platform? My jump isn’t going high enough, but it seems like I can get some extra height from this ramp tile.” He still isn’t thinking of using the slash at all, so I’m thinking we should highlight this use of the slash in a tutorial level.
* I chimed in that there was no level objective, so there wasn’t anything to complete once Randy started looking around the level.
* He finally figured out that he could slash up to the platform, but he still takes a while to position the mouse perfectly each time.

General Thoughts:

* “I really liked the mechanics and the art you guys have.”
* “I know that it took me a while to figure out how to get to platforms, so you might need some kind of indicator or tutorial for that.”
* “I don’t know what the dragon does when I use my ability.” I clarified that this mechanic isn’t finished, which is why nothing happened upon completion.
* “I don’t think that the ‘How to Play’ screen tells you how to use your powers at all.” It does, but only the bare-bones and absolutely needs a lot more explanation.
* “The pause menu needs a button that goes to the ‘How to Play’ screen.”

Thoughts on Slashing Mechanic:

* “I like the slash a lot, mainly because it’s simple and reminds me of One Finger Death Punch. I can clearly tell that I’m doing a slash, even though there’s no animation to indicate it.”
* I asked him if he would prefer to not have the slash be controlled by moving the mouse, and would rather have a button control it instead. “I’d have to try it out with the other controls first, but I think that the slash lends itself to the mouse movement best.”

Conclusions and Actions to Take:

* Need something in the Power Select screen to tell players that they can pick up to 3 scrolls.
* I really need to fix the pause menu so that players can go back to level select and look at the controls. These are more things that I left out since we didn’t need it for presentation, and it’s now biting me in the butt for tests.
* I’m still very unsure of how to handle the slash mechanic and if it’s the right direction we should be heading for this game.
* Need to make a tutorial level for general use, but also highlight the fact that the slash mechanic is awesome for movement as well as damage.

**Test 3**, 10/2/15, Matt Mulligan

* Checked all of the options in the Main Menu before proceeding to the level select.
* Confused by the incomplete power sliders on the Power Select screen.
* Only chose 1 scroll. I really need to tell players that they can pick 3.
* Seems to only be using basic attacks for everything.
* Focusing on exploring the level instead of using mechanics.
* As of 2 minutes in, Matt still hasn’t done the slash attack at all. I’m worried that he forgot about it, or just skimmed over it in the “How to Play” screen.
* Matt is the only playtester so far that has noticed the level timer, but he said that he only noticed it when it was almost at 0. I clarified that it doesn’t do anything right now, and that there’s no objective he needs to be completing.
* “I really don’t know what the energy bar does at all.” This is a bit problematic.
* “The jumping is very finicky. I’m not liking it much at all.”
* Matt is having the same problem that Randy had, where he keeps trying to out-of-reach platforms and doesn’t think to use the slash mechanic.
* Matt is very visibly annoyed by the camera shaking from velocity collision.
* It took Matt 5 minutes to remember that he has a dash ability. I’m thinking that I should put this on the UI, complete with a recharge time on it.
* I went ahead and flat-out told Matt how to do the slash mechanic so that I could get his input on it.
* Matt eventually realized that he could use the slash for moving, but he doesn’t seem to want to use it for attacking. He keeps using the basic attack, while only slashing to get around.
* Matt fell out of the game as soon as he found out that the slash didn’t really have a cooldown.
* We closed and re-opened the game to go back to the power select screen so that I could show him that he could have more than 1 scroll selected.
* The moment he opened a scroll for the first time, Matt instantly knew how to use it, so that’s a very good sign.
* Matt is frustrated with the short timer on the scroll.
* We found a glitch that I haven’t seen before, where Matt has 2 scrolls that are duplicates.

General Thoughts:

* “Jumping is very weird. I don’t like it at all”
* “The dash mechanic is completely pointless when you could just use the slash mechanic. It not only accomplishes the same thing, but does damage, goes further, and doesn’t have a cooldown.”
* “The ‘How to Play’ screen is horribly incomplete”
* I asked what his thoughts were on the scrolls. “It took a while to figure out how to use them. The time limit needs to be tweaked a lot. I also thought that I needed to keep my mouse within the line that connected the dots at first.”
* I asked if it was clear where to mouse over on the scrolls. “For the most part yes, but the ones on the Crane scroll were hard to see. White-on-white is very bad.”
* “I thought that the basic attack looked like a laser shot with the particle effects that you guys are using, so it was hard to tell if I was hitting an enemy or not. The enemies also need to be a lot more reactive when hit.”
* “You should really zoom the camera out a lot. It’s far too close right now. It also moves too quickly when slashing and is making me a bit motion sick. I’d suggest not parenting to the player and pan out.”

Thoughts on Slash Mechanic:

* “It’s by far the easiest way to maneuver.”
* “I didn’t think of it as an attack at all, just as a way to get around.”
* I asked if the slash would work better without having to move the mouse. “It might work better if you had a mouse reticle which indicated the direction that you’d move to, then have a button that slashes you in that direction. Right now the mouse movement feels like it causes issues. People usually have the idea that moving the mouse faster will make them move faster, but that doesn’t work in your game.”
* I asked if the dash mechanic would be better if the slash had a significantly longer cooldown. “The dodge should only be slightly faster than basic movement with a shorter cooldown and just be used to get out of an attack right on top of you.”