



Rationale and outcomes for prototype 1:

The design questions we sought to answer in this prototype were more high level general questions. Questions like: Does the core gameplay get the player thinking about strategy and tactics? Is it frustrating or challenging?

To answer these questions we built a digital prototype. This was done for time saving as well as to create as complete a version of the game that can still be changed. We had most core mechanics in place such as repairing and bombardment. The current prototype seems to answer questions about level design and the balance of positive and negative feedback the game gives to the player. The playtesters didn't have anything to say about the core mechanics themselves other than the amount the game punishes the player. It isn't clear if this is because the core mechanics are fine or our prototype just doesn't show them off well.

We may have plans to introduce more mechanics into the next prototype, so testing should be centred around those mechanics. We also will have more levels and level variety, so we will be able to test level design further as well, beyond a simple demo level.

Design Refinements as per internal review

We have reflected on the game's current implementation and mechanics in our own playing, and we find that the game is rather difficult. It punishes the player for not doing things in a specific way, so it seems to lack freedom. We would also like to implement more level-based mechanics, such as ice rivers that cause the player to slide.

Design Refinements based on playtesting and feedback.

Players corroborated our concerns about difficulty, so it's important to test the game more with unaffiliated players so that we can tune difficulty appropriately. Players were frustrated with certain bugs in the game, so the movement mechanics were difficult to nail down. That said, players seem to like the movement system. We will probably tune it further around the size of the levels, since our level was so big that we had to speed up the player.

The core complaint was the lack of a pressing reason to maintain the catapult, and a general overuse of punishing game mechanics. The game doesn't make it obvious that the catapults need to be maintained, and the game doesn't offer any "feel good" moments to break up all the punishment. We haven't come to a consensus yet, but we will likely offer some new mechanics that empower the player and positively reinforce them. We will also implement more gradual tutorial levels to introduce mechanics, explaining them in detail, and making them obvious in the UI and sound design.



