Group 15 - Everybody's Sick Now

Final Report

1. Playtest Report

1.1 Playtest

Going into MOJO we had a plan for the playtesting sessions we had ahead of us. The flowchart was relatively simple:

1. Introduce people to the game
2. Let them try it out
3. Ask them to fill the questionnaire

We wanted to give the players the least amount of information possible necessary to play the game. This was to find out if the game would speak by itself in terms of tutorial and overall clarity.

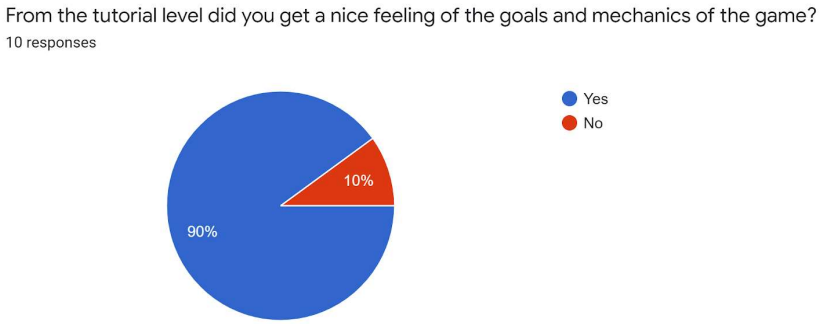
During the playtest phase we also asked the players to talk and explain why they were doing what they were doing. The goal was to keep an active conversation to understand what was going through each player's mind at any moment. This gave us information about what the player was feeling at any moment, any frustrations, excitements and confusions the player experienced were reflected in the conversation.

We had 3 teams playtest our game and a total of 10 people. Before going into our results and findings it's important to understand everyone involved in the playtest were themselves game developers/designers that also participated in MOJO. This can have an effect on statistics about the learning curve of the game as these are not complete beginners and are people with some knowledge about level design and game mechanics.

1.2 Results Analysis

In this section we'll go through the answers to our questionnaire, the conversations we had and other information points we noted during the playtest.

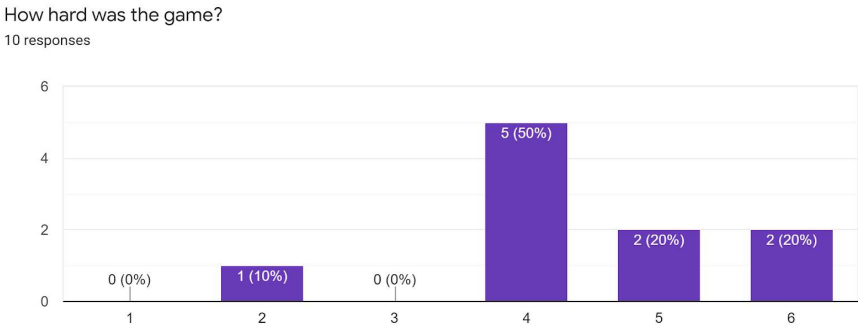
Questionnaire:



Despite our fears players seemed to understand and quickly grasp the mechanics and goals of the game relatively quickly. One tester noted that he had some difficulties but that they mainly came from a lack of understanding of management style games especially those that require fast movements and that require you to keep track of multiple things at once. In fact out of 10 people only 2 stated that they usually play simulation games and 4 said they play Real-time strategy games and 1 said they play City builders (Take into account that players could choose more than 1 game genre in this question and therefore there may exist some overlap between answers).

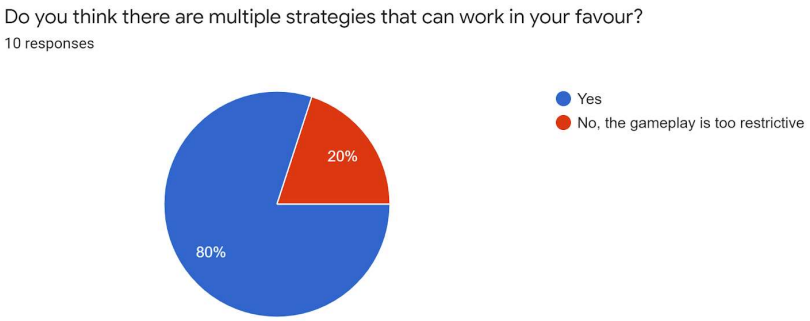
The difficulty of the game was an interesting aspect to keep track of. Our idea was to track the win rate of each player as well as asking them a question about it in the questionnaire. However we noted something interesting. Players were losing a lot but weren't feeling frustrated at all (for the most part, there were 1 or 2 people that showed signs of frustration). Many players even stated that they felt they were very invested in getting the win and showed big progress and learning in between games. The answers we got show that the game is hard (1 being the easiest and 6 the

hardest) but it feels like that isn't a big issue if the game is balanced around that or if it's designed to not frustrate the player after each loss.



One fear we had was that micromanaging the population the whole time could become boring however 80% of people didn't find it boring and when asked what they found the most fun in the game 6 out of 10 people mentioned the micromanagement of the citizens.

The use of RTS style controls seemed to work as 80% of the people answered that they felt the control scheme was easy to use and adequate. 2 of the people mentioned that the selection tool was clunky and could be worked upon.



Overall people felt their actions mattered and there are multiple strategies and approaches for each level.

Even though most people (80%) said the UI provided enough information a common point of discussion was the lack of information regarding upkeeps, costs and an overview of the economy of the game.

1.3 Playtesting Plan

Is the core mechanic fun?
Is micromanaging boring?
Does the movement and control scheme feel right?
Do they understand how the game is meant to be played?
Does the player feel chaos?
Does the player feel like he influences the game?
Do players want to keep playing?
What parts of the game are fun?
What parts are unfun/boring?
How does the player feel when he loses? Does it feel like it was his fault?
Is it too hard/easy?
Is the economic aspect something that the player enjoys playing around?
Is the Hospital too strong?
Is the Lab too strong?
Are Scientists too strong?
How does the player feel about perks?
Are perks too strong?
Do different strategies work?
How does the in-game progression feel?
Can the player understand what's going on?
Is it easy to understand how to play?

1.4 Conclusion

Between the questionnaire, the talks and our observations most of our questions were answered. The results show the game's potential but also mention its downfalls. There are several problems that need solving and the answers provided by the testers will be a good guide for the road the game should follow.

People suggested a more dynamic event system, more clarity towards the economy aspect as well as a rebalancing of the economy as it can either feel too strong or too weak. We should also focus on the movement and control of the game to be as smooth as possible as these are tools the players will have to use a lot.

2. Development and Exploitation Report

If the game were to be continued to be developed our plan would involve an increase in team members (both in the art department and in the programming department). The game code would need to be refactored and reorganized. It would have to be almost rebuilt from scratch with the new ideas in mind.

2.1 Scheduling

Our goal would be to develop the game over the span of 10 weeks:

1. First week would correspond to a brainstorm of ideas taking into account the feedback from the playtest.
2. The second week would see the beginning of the set up of the base game. A lot of work would go into the base mechanics (Infection, Movement and Events)
3. The third week until the fifth week would be spent on the development of simple levels with those simple mechanics. There should also be work done on the UI and clarity of the game.
4. In the sixth week some testing should be performed to see the state of the movement, clarity and balance of the game.
5. From the seventh to the ninth week there would be work done on the levels, new diseases, levels and the addition of more characters/departments. Art is implemented into the game.
6. From the ninth week to the tenth testing is performed again and in parallel programmers should improve and answer to the feedback provided.
7. Finally, if everything goes according to plan, the game is ready.

There are always unseen circumstances so this 10 week plan could also become a 12 week plan if needed.

2.2 Team

For this project to be completed in 10 weeks more team members should be added to work full time. In 3 months a team of 3 programmers plus an

artist managed to produce 3 levels (1 tutorial, 2 regular) working with very harsh time constraints. We believe that with a team of 5 programmers and 2 artists this project could be completed and be polished in a few weeks.

Programmers:
1 lead programmer in charge of managing the team of programmers as well as working in pair with the arts team.
2 programmers dedicated to level design and balancing.
2 programmers dedicated to mechanics, clarity, controls.

Artists:
1 lead artist also dedicated to UI.
2 artists dedicated to buildings, characters and overall look of the map.

2.3 Budget

There are 2 components in our budget. Marketing and development costs.

To finance the team for 10 weeks it could go from 8.500€ to 11.000€. This would depend on the salaries of our freelancers.

For marketing we would need about 5.000 to 7.000€ to spend on advertising, sponsored content with content creators as well as spending some in market search and investigating our competition.

2.4 Profits

Our main profit source from this game would come from one-time sales. With some signs of success would come the idea of merch and possibly of dlc packs with new levels, diseases and characters.

A second source of revenue could come from a mobile port of the game. This could bring microtransactions to the game and even have weekly content being added much like Candy Crush does with new levels.

3. Postmortem

These 14 weeks have been enlightening about the process of the development of a game. It requires coordination, creativity, endurance, testing (lots of testing and feedback) and above all time.

The biggest issue to be fixed would be a more organized schedule. Unfortunately being a student at Técnico is never synonymous with free time and therefore a lot of mistakes were made and decisions postponed. Working with an artist was fun and added an important and different pair of eyes to the team. Besides helping with art they can also help with ideas over the development of the game, specifically the work in level design.

With more time and resources we should have invested towards a more complex game, a game with more managing and economic significance, more departments and mechanics, more diseases and levels. All of these would significantly improve our current game. A lot of these lessons are a product of many interactions with the public, be it in MOJO or in earlier stages of development with our focus groups.

Reporting every move and decision we made also gave a new perspective and a different way to approach each problem, instead of settling for the first seemingly good suggestion we would keep searching and gathering options for a more optimal decision. The downside is the time consumption it took to brainstorm as well as write many reports.

Our team had a very big disadvantage from the start. We were only 2 in the beginning, we had to miss some classes, we had a late addition and we even had a case of corona in the group (allegedly). Despite all these troubles the group always tried to perform and develop the best game we could. We were all passionate about our idea and confident in its potential.