Product Vision

"What is more, each of us who can recall such experiences can also attest to the fact that the waiting-line experience in a service facility significantly affects our overall perceptions of the quality of service provided." (Maister, 2003)
Have you ever been to a lecture in an auditorium and found yourself waiting for it to begin?
Maybe you can talk to a friend that came along or stare at your smartphone for 10 minutes, but rarely are we given any form of real entertainment during those waiting periods. Our game sets to change that. During this project we will develop a game that can be played with the entire audience of an auditorium.

The game consists of two or more team which in turn consist of a group of animal characters, each of which being controlled by a single player in the auditorium. These animals are placed on a boat that will transport across a river. The goal of the game is to reach the end of the track before the other teams do. In order to do so each player must contribute by dodging as much incoming obstacles as they can. Dodging is done through each player's personal smartphone through the accelerometer: Flipping the phone up makes your animal jump, flipping the phone down makes your animal duck down. If a character doesn't manage to dodge an obstacle they fall off the boat, which reduces the boat's speed. That means that the entire team must perform in order to achieve the maximal possible speed.

Our game must be easily playable by everyone and require little startup time for the users. For this purpose we will use a web-app.

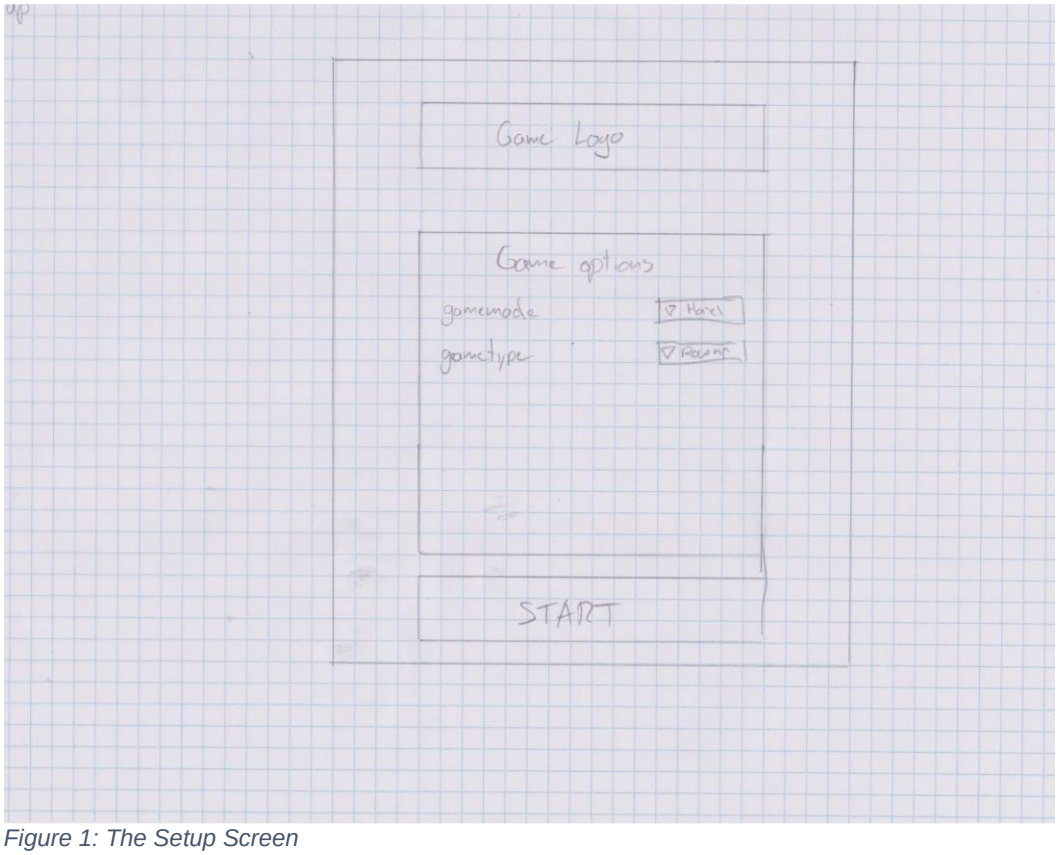

Figure 1: The Setup Screen

When the game first launches the leader of the event will see the first screen. Here he/she will be able to choose the desired difficulty and one of three possible game setups.
When the game starts the screen will show the chosen setup.

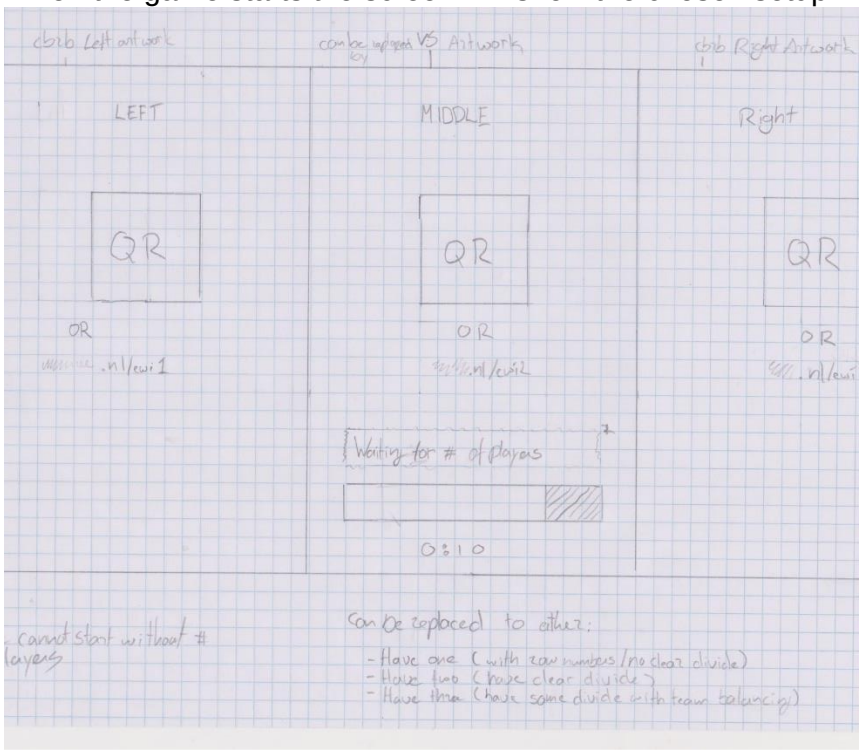

Figure 2: Game Start Screen

The first setup option is to have one link/QR code. This is useful when there is no clear division of teams or when you have row numbers. Only the middle part of the screen will be used. If the auditorium has row numbers the game will ask the players where they are seated and attempt to make equal teams. The second option is to have two QR codes/links. This can be used when there is a clear division in teams. Only the left and right of the screen will be used. The third possibility is to have three links/QR codes. This is useful when the auditorium features a clear division of three sides to facilitate making two balanced teams that fit with the auditorium layout.In this mode all 3 parts of the screen will be used. On this screen there will also be a timer when the game will start and whether enough players have “logged in” as well as show how many more players are needed before the game can start.

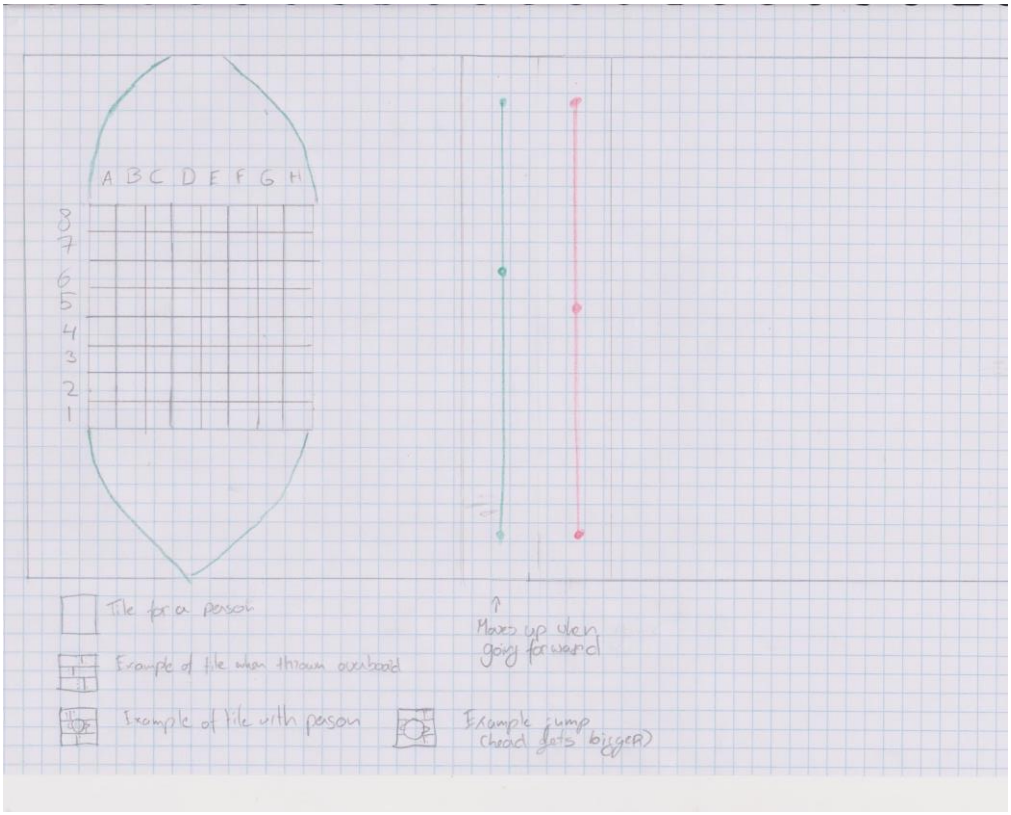

Figure 3: Main Game Screen

After all players have “logged in”, the game will start. On the left and right side of the screen two boats will be displayed on which the player characters will be displayed. A player can find him/herself because everything is displayed like on a checkerboard. Their own position on the checkerboard will be displayed on their own smartphone. In the middle there will be a line based map where you can see the distance left to the finish and your position compared to the other boat.

The goal of this game is to encourage people to interact with each other in a setting that is occupied by people that generally do not know each other. The nature of the game should encourage all attendees to participate. Furthermore our game will address the general need for entertainment during waiting periods, specifically before an event starts or in between talks. When the attendants of the event are part of an already established group (such as for a workshop) this game can also be used to help team building.

Crucial in our game is that it should encourage participation. Our game does so by making all players feel relevant and encouraging participants to move around using motion controls. Furthermore the game encourages the players to be competitive as the entire auditorium will be split into teams. We believe that this split will give players a sense of belonging to a team, even if players are unfamiliar with each other. A study on nurses has described working on a team to be central to their success and results in the creation of close personal and professional bonds (Monique & Yonge, 2008). We aim to replicate this effect through the creation of teams to encourage interaction between the participants. Additionally, because we pit the two teams against each other we create a common objective amongst those in the same team that we believe puts them into a same mindset.

The concept of a game that is played by an auditorium is one that has not yet been explored fully the games industry, but it has been researched before. In new Zealand a

combination of various universities have developed a game called BallBouncer. In their research they've shown the positive reaction the players have shown in response to games of this type: "All of the games met with enthusiasm from each audience, with the strongest positive response". (Sieber, McCallum, & Wyvill, 2008) Our game however allows each player to have a positive or negative impact regardless of how many people are participating. In the aforementioned research all the games were based on bouncing balls around in virtual space. However this creates the complexity that people on the sides of the auditorium are limited in their interaction as they are often not even able to reach the ball. This problem is illustrated in the picture provided in that research, that shows people in the back being overshadowed by those in the front. We set out to solve this problem by not only giving participants exclusive control over their own character but also allow each player equal impact on the outcome of the game.

Our game is specifically targeted at auditorium audiences. Our game should be accessible for all ages, but is most suited for young adults aged ~20-35. The game will be playable in auditoriums consisting of at most 200 people. We do not require any lower bound, but the game is best suited for more than 10 people.

We want to deliver a release version in 10 weeks time. After 5 weeks we want to have a playable version that can be evaluated as an alpha. After 8 weeks we want to deliver a beta version that can be played by members of our target audience.
We intend to use only our own resources; we do not require any additional funding to develop this game.

Bibliography

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Sieber, J., McCallum, S., & Wyvill, G. (2008, December 8). *BallBouncer: Interactive Games for Theater Audiences*. Retrieved from bibsys: http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/134763/1/sieber-mccallum-wyvill.pdf