**Game Usability Heuristics**

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

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**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 1: Game Play |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **A. Heuristic: Enduring Play** | Hard to play no tutorial or explanation of controls. |
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| **B. Challenge, Strategy and Pace** | Got hard Quickly |
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| **C. Consistency in Game**  **World** | Consistent, same art `style |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **D. Goals** | Reach the end, |
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| **E: Variety of Players and Game Styles** | none |
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| **F. Players Perception of Control** | Trial and error to find the controls |
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| Category 2: Coolness/Entertainment/Humour/Emotional Immersion |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **A. Emotional Connection** | None it’s a black hole |
| **B: Coolness/Entertainment** | Challenging entertainment |
| **C: Humour** | None |
| **D. Immersion** | Was immersed in the puzzle, finding what to do |

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| Category 3: Usability & Game Mechanics |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **A. Documentation/Tutorial** | No documentation |
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| **B: Status and Score** | Light meter, death. |
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| **C. Game Provides Feedback** | Doesn’t provide feedback |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **D. Terminology** | Easy enough to understand |
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| **E: Burden On Player** | Double jump when you get all the light |
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| **F. Screen Layout** | Camera could be zoomed out more |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **G. Navigation** | Easy , basic menus |
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| **H: Error Prevention** | You could restart |
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| **I. Game Story Immersion** | No immersion in story |
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