**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** | Yes, took a while to get a ghrasp of it |
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| **B. Challenge, Strategy and Pace** | Challenging, didn’t get the mechanics |
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| **C. Consistency in Game**  **World** | Consistent progression |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **D. Goals** | To get to the blue coil exit |
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| **E: Variety of Players and Game Styles** | none |
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| **F. Players Perception of Control** | Awkward to handle the player, difficult to understand the controls |
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| Category 2: Coolness/Entertainment/Humour/Emotional Immersion |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **A. Emotional Connection** | no |
| **B: Coolness/Entertainment** | Liked the look of the world |
| **C: Humour** | no |
| **D. Immersion** | Slightly, story told through progression |

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| Category 3: Usability & Game Mechanics |

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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **A. Documentation/Tutorial** | No tutorial |
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| **B: Status and Score** | Stars as rewards |
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| **C. Game Provides Feedback** | Score at the end |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **D. Terminology** | No |
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| **E: Burden On Player** | Level 4 got stuck on , didn’t understand the jump, explain the light mechanic, wasn’t sure if the light was a power up |
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| **F. Screen Layout** | Neatly organised |
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| **Heuristic** | Notes |
| **G. Navigation** | Simple UI. neat |
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| **H: Error Prevention** | With trial and error because the controls where not explained |
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| **I. Game Story Immersion** | No idea what was going on |
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