Digital Penguins

GAM150S19-A

Spring 2019

Playtest Report

# Digital Penguins Team:

## Arthur Bouvier – Technical Director

Responsible for writing the technical design document and functional specs, creating a basic framework, proposing the project’s file hierarchy, determining naming conventions and formats, preparing and administrating source control software, and writing core systems.

## Connor Meyers – Design Director

Responsible for writing the game design document, tweaking levels and gameplay settings, making design changes, adjusting the game’s pacing and balancing the gameplay.

## Brand Knutson – Producer

Responsible for creating weakly status reports, tracking the project’s progress, resolving team conflicts, directing other team members’ attention to the most important aspects of the project, and managing the schedule and task backlog.

## Parker Friedland – Test Manager

Responsible for writing the playtest report, writing questions for play testers, collecting and evaluating feedback, testing the game on a variety of platforms, and tracking bugs, memory leaks, and performance issues.

## Richard Folorunso – Content Manager

Responsible for writing the asset list, creating and/or finding textures, sprite sheets, audio, and other assets for the game, creating the game’s installer, as well as creating screenshots, video captures, DVD case art, etc.

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# Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to summarize the manner in which our playtesting sessions were conducted, the feedback we have collected from them, and what our team has done to address that feedback. This document provides an updated summary of the game in it’s current form, the environment to which playtesting sessions were conducted, an outline of how the sessions were conducted, the age, gender, and game preferences of the play testers, and most importantly, what modifications to the game have been made in made to address the input from our play testers.

# High concept:

Digital Penguin is a top down racing game similar to Mario cart, but in a much more chaotic environment.

# Game summary:

In single player mode, the objective of Digital Penguins is for players to complete thee laps of a customizable race track in the fastest possible amount of time and earn their spot on the game’s competitive leaderboard. In multiplayer mode, two players compete against each other to be the first one to complete all three laps of the track. In each of these modes, players must weave through a chaotic race track with obstacles ranging from boulders to polar bears.

Digital Penguins also has a level editor that allows players to construct their own obstacle ridden race track. In level editor mode, players can make slight modifications to the last race track or create a new track from scratch. Players are given the freedom to add as many obstacles to the track as they want and can set the size of obstacles to any size they want.

# Playtest Environment:

All playtesting sessions were hosted at Digipen and held on either Digipen’s desktop PCs, my Alienware PC, or Arthur’s mac. The only software used was an executable of the game itself. Game controllers were used for some but not all of the playtesting sessions and not all of Digipen’s desktop PCs used for playtesting had sound.

# Playtest Outline:

The objective of the playtesting session was to get feedback on what game aspects of the game players enjoyed and what aspects of the game could be improved and if so, how they could be improved. Play testers either tested the game individually or in pairs of 2. Play testers testing the game individually were instructed to first play the game once on single player mode, then race one of the members of our team in multiplayer mode, and finally create or edit the game’s level using the level editor. Play testers testing the game in pairs were instructed to play the game in multiplayer mode, and then create or edit the game’s level using the level editor. Once the play test session was complete, play testers were given a questionnaire asking them various questions about their demographics and their thoughts on the game. The questionnaire asked play testers what their age and gender were, and asked them to circle which of the fallowing games they preferred: Action, adventure, fighting, racing, role-rlaying, shooter, sports, strategy. This was a multiple choice question so play testers had the freedom to circle as many genres as they wanted.

# Play-tester Demographics:

# Playtest Summary:

The multiplayer mode was the game’s biggest success. While play testers gave the game over all an average rating of 2.87 out of 5 on a 0 to 5 scale, play testers gave the multiplayer element of the game an average rating of 3.29 stars. When asked about why play testers rated this element the way they did, most play testers listed the multiplayer mode’s competitiveness as one of the aspects of the multiplayer mode that they enjoyed.

The aspect of the game that faced the most criticism was the game’s level editor. This feature of the game was also the most polarizing: it was the only feature in the game any tester rated as a 5, and the only feature that any player rated as a zero. Most of the criticism of the level editor was directed at it’s lack of instructions and difficulty to use.

Players were also critical of the game’s camera movements, punishment system, and the game’s abrupt stop to gameplay when a player finishes the track. The way the camera moved to fallow the player when he/she traversed many sharp corners made some players feel motion sick. When play testers got stuck in obstacles in multiplayer mode, they had little to no chance of ever catching up to their opponents in multiplayer mode, which made the game feel less competitive and many players felt that this was too harsh. Some players also felt that the games music didn’t match the environment of the game, and thus was too distracting from the gameplay.

To improve the game, a play tester suggested adding more fitting music to the game, replacing the polar bear image with an image of a polar bear from a top down perspective rather then a side angle perspective. Some of the testers who felt that the game was too punitive when a player crashed into an obstacle also suggested implementing a form of rubber-banding (i.e. a mechanism to allow players who fall to far behind an edge so they can still remain competitive).

# Work Items:

To prevent the camera’s movements from giving the players motion sickness, Arthur made it so

that the camera’s movements feel smoother when it moves around the sharp corners in the track.

Brand implemented a form of rubber-banding by allowing a player who is really far behind his opponent to phase through obstacles, thus allowing them to remain competitive in the race.

I (Parker) smoothed transitions between screens so that the game didn’t abruptly stop whenever a player completes the track. Instead, a leaderboard is overplayed onto the screens of each player that completes the race, as well as a button that takes the player back to the main menu. The player(s) can chose to continue racing on the track forever if they choose to.

Connor added detailed instructions to the level editor that made it much easier to use. He also made it so the game gave the user more feedback as events occurred. An example of this is that immediately after completing a lap, the player’s current lap is now briefly displayed in the center of the screen.

Richard added music that better matches the environment of the game and thus is less of a distraction. He also created new polar bear art in which the polar bears are drawn from a top down perspective rather than a side angle perspective.