Physical Play: Group Appraisal Reports

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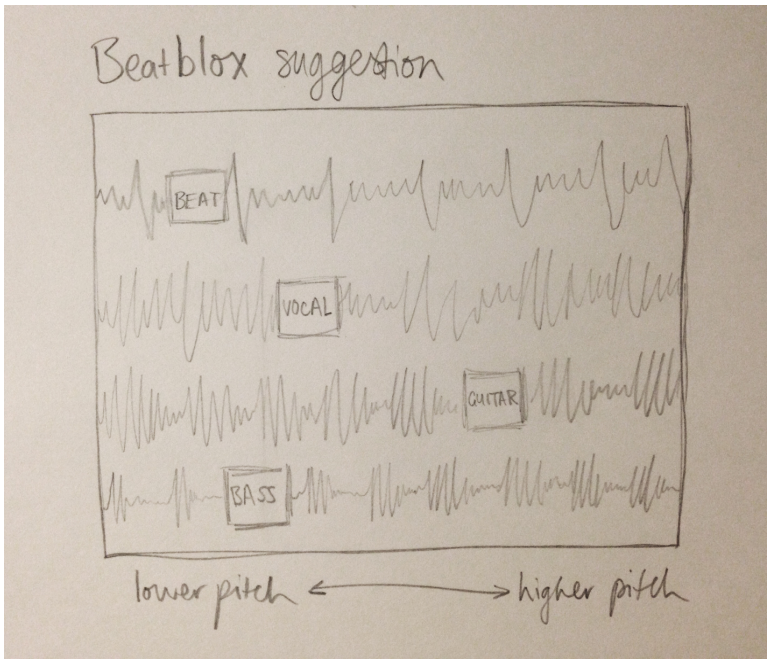
Floor Nav

The Floor Nav group is making an interactive floor map for navigation through certain public areas, such as shopping malls. As a concept this idea is already great, a quick survey of shoppers in a large mall would inform you that the static grid-based maps that are used in most centres now are useable but not incredibly easy or fun to use. Sometimes it is hard to get your bearings or to work out which direction you should be heading and you need to rely on a bit of guesswork. The floor nav would make a more accessible and intuitive system. So far the team seems to be on track towards making a better system that would give a more comprehensive experience for the user. As it stands, the system will be effective, but there are a couple of improvements that they could work towards; notably adding multi-user support so that more people can find their way at the same time, possibly by colour coding routes that the users need to take to get to their destination. Another suggestion that comes to mind is the addition of an animated walkthrough that shows the path needed to be taken via a virtual 3D representation of the shopping mall.

Digital Blocks (Beatblox)

Good working prototype so far, positioning the camera underneath the table is a great idea. The main problem I see is that there aren't a lot of different interactions users can do with it, and I'm not sure if it's very educational at the moment. Think about what exactly you are trying to teach with your project. At the moment it seems that it's teaching how music can have different tracks that combine to sound good when they're played at the same time. This is really good, but there is a lot more that could be taught in music, and there's more variations users could be in control of making. For example, if a block is closer to the left side of the table it could make the tone of the track lower, and moving it to the right could cause it to be higher (see drawing below). Also, visuals could be used very effectively in this project. It would look great if each block had a projection of the moving sound wave displayed on top of it and extending horizontally across the table. Then the users will be more likely to move the block along that line, adjusting the pitch, and they can 'see' the sound as well as hear it. Also it would be good if the blocks displayed some indication of what sort of sound they will play (vocals, drums, harmony etc).



iRing (NORDZ)

iRing did a great presentation and delivered the concept across clearly in an attractive manner. The design of the ring was good but in terms of feasibility I think that the group should think bigger, a finger sized ring is not very feasible therefore I think they should consider enlarging the design and make it a wrist band or maybe have a secondary device that does all the processing such as a phone or a pocket piece that connects to the ring/wristband, this way the ring will be a delivery method only rather than the main device.

Another idea that could easily be implemented into the ring for the interactive experience is to have a “mood ring future” with a live update on the screen, for example, the ring would change color and that data will be explained on the screen as soon as the ring detects what color to show. The mood ring is actually a stone with liquid crystals that reacts to the change of temperature, but with current technology the liquid isn’t necessary for understanding the temperature responsible for each color.

Haptic Feedback (Pulse)

The haptic feedback system is currently a physical glove that provides virtual interactions with a physical feel. So far the team has made a glove that adds resistance to an action which commands a simple game. One of their biggest issues is that they need to focus upon an attainable and exciting goal. At the moment the game is not very well defined; they have a base created but no further goals and they seem to be heading towards a rather specific fighting/combat scenario. In my opinion this will limit their project from what they could achieve. With the technology they are making, they could develop a very interesting physics-based world that lets you create and manipulate objects that you wouldn’t usually be able to. Something along the lines of a minecraft world with a fun physical interaction. This would make a more intuitive program as it allows everyone to get involved and create something fun, with a lasting impression. Apart from focusing the project the team needs to work out how characters will move in the 3D world, either via another controller or a gesture based system.

SkyHigh

Nice work on the presentation and graphics. The demonstration went well and gesture control seems to be coming along nicely. Since the swimming one seems to be working the best, maybe your tag-line should be, “swim in the city, fly in the sky”. Based on the class reviews, the flying in the sky option is still popular and especially due to your project name I think this is an important feature to include, even if you don’t think the birds-eye view is particularly attractive. I would suggest spending some time finding places that do look fun to fly over on google earth, for example the pyramids, Eiffel Tower, Sahara desert, Amazon etc. Same with the street view mode.
Making the project into a game would be a good thing to work on now, as well as making the navigation smoother if possible. It would be great if you had two people race to a destination, with a pre-determined start and finish place. You could even test their geography knowledge by making them select the right country and state that their destination is in first.
Another thing that was suggested in a few of the reviews was changing the view of the screen based on the gesture they are using (eg showing superman’s arms when they are superman, or showing a cockpit if they are flying a plane). Focus on the experience you want to create and don’t make the gestures too complicated or unnatural. Overall though, great job so far!

Maze

The Maze group created a fun interactive game, the game applies the idea of teamwork which is a great aspect for games to have. However, I think it took a bit too long to play which might cause a long line that people might not be bothered to wait in. To resolve this problem, I would suggest adding a time limit to the game or a fear aspect to it. By fear I do not mean fear of monsters but fear of losing. For example, it would be fun to have lava flowing towards the player if they were to take a wrong turn, thus forcing them to react quickly in order to retrace their steps. This should show how well the players work as a team and how fast they can react in a short time.
Another aspect that might be fun to add to the game is having a sound effect console controlled by a third player whose job it is to create the atmosphere of the game. The player could decide to either scare them off course or in the right direction. This adds another dimension to the game and the extra player will act as either an obstacle or an aid.

'Sup

The idea of creating a different user experience with social networking services is interesting. The Ça Va wristband uses a proximity feature that informs the user another Ça Va wristband user is nearby. I would suggest that the wristband should glow according to the user that is nearby. E.g. If my friend wearing the wristband is nearby, my wristband will glow green. However, if an unknown user wearing a wristband is nearby, my wristband will glow yellow, which will allow a different interaction. It can be as simple as pressing a button to send a greeting message or a friend request.

In addition, Team 'Sup has introduced an interaction where a user posts a status using a fiducial marker. In this case, usability in the real world is something your team should focus on. How would users use the fiducial markers on an everyday basis?

ARC

ARC is one of the more interesting projects going around at the moment, enabling the quick sharing of information in a 3D space through augmentation. They had an excellent and fun video and a good concept. Despite this I feel the presentation finished before I knew what was going on. I still don't have a clear idea of how the ARC system works or what it does in particular. On the other hand the possibilities of the system are numerous. If the receivers for the display could be made small enough, the ARC prototype could become a very useful device. It will be able to transfer a section of code or information to a friend on a second screen without forcing them to close their work or open another screen, while at the same time not interrupting your own work while you show them what you are doing. Further to this I wonder if you have considered displaying a live stream to the ARC device, this would be extremely useful in a multitude of scenarios, such as teaching, where the students could have a close and personal look at the material as opposed to having to look up at a projector on the wall. Further to this you could use the marker as a expanded display for a mobile phone if you are looking at a picture or watching a video. The idea is brilliant you just need to present it in a way the makes people understand in what situations it would be more viable than sharing a link via a message or something of that sort.

Food (Digital Dining)

Great work so far, the prototype is coming along really well. It was really good how you researched and showed digital menus being used in the real world. Try to focus on how to make the menu more fun and social to use. The current design with four separate menus for customers is good, but it could be better. I think it would be more fun for customers to work together on which meals they want. All the icons could be displayed and browsed through in the middle of the table (in a fluid way sort of way with icons floating around a bit), then customers could drag the meals and drinks they want to order to their side of the table. This will encourage users to chat about the different meals available together.

The graphics are also very important, as they will provide the wow factor to customers if they are professional and interesting enough. I understand this is difficult to do however.

Also, the 3D food part does make the project more interesting (especially to customers who have never seen that before) but as your group said, it seems to be quite difficult to find 3D models of food on the internet. I'm not sure how you will get around this, but I wish you all the best with it!

Slappy Puppy

Slappy puppy had a practical idea as their game is built to help children with an effective approach, I believe they are doing well in terms of what they have initially presented. I hope that the user's avatar will have a more child-friendly look rather than the stick man that was presented during the lecture. It would be good to make it work for two players because since it is designed for children, it will help them understand how they have to work together to collect the animals. The objects are large in order to force users to carry a limited number of objects so they have to and try to choose smartly, so why not add a second player that could help collect as much as they can as a team? This will encourage team-work and make the game more social and strategy-oriented since it is a learning experience.

Omniscience

The video included in the presentation was great for showing what your team is aiming to achieve with the haptic feedback technology. It is great to see the progress of the hardware in your project. I would suggest some user testing should be conducted with the current prototype in order to collect feedback regarding user experience. With the feedback, your team will be able to narrow down what features users will be expecting and what can be improved. Apart from user experience, the game aspect plays a significant role in your project, your team might want to do more research on games that allow co-operation and multiple users. How would the user outside interact with the user inside the space?