Practicum 2.4 Playtest research plan

Team 10 – Mojo Jojo Studios

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# Research questions

## Main research question

How is the intended experience (as described in P2.1) realized in the player?

## Intended experience summary

Vilom Chronicles is a *world altering action-packed skill-testing perception-based combat-platformer*. Vilom Chonicles is a challenging game, that wants to create a great amount of satisfaction/pleasure for the player by challenging the player to use his/her own skills to overcome obstacles in the game. This challenge mainly comes from the combat and platforming aspects, in which the player’s capabilities to analyze, anticipate and react are being tested. Since the gameplay tests these skills in the smallest of situations, it will quickly trigger a sense of achievement. The analyzing aspect of the challenge consists of the need for the player to examine his enemies. The anticipation aspect of the challenge is formed by combining the learned behavior of the enemy in the analyzing aspect and give a clear view of the current situation. The reaction aspect of the challenge will test the player’s capability to react on time in the anticipated situation. Thus the player must understand the enemies capabilities and abilities, and react accordingly.

The changing of characters and the corruption mechanic will create an extra level of depth to the challenge of the game, while the game is staying the same at its core, it will keep providing new challenges to the player.

## Sub research questions

1. Is the player able to analyze and gain knowledge about the enemies in the game?

In Vilom Chronicles the combat is designed in such a way that tests multiple skills of the player, one of which is the ability to analyze and gain knowledge about the situation. A player should be able to do this to a certain degree depending on his/her analytical skill. The player’s ability to analyze should not be hindered by the game design.

1. Does the player feel like he has influence on the game world?

In our vision statement we made clear that it is important that the player has to be able to alter the game world and that should thus be experienced by the player in the game.

1. Does the player experience the character controls as responsive during gameplay?

In the game the player needs to be able to respond to the enemies movement, this requires a responsive control system as otherwise the game would feel unfair for the player.

1. Does the player feels like he/she needs to actively use his abilities(human abilities like reaction, observation etc.) to defeat the enemies in the game?

The main experience from Vilom Chronicles originates from the player using it’s skills, creating satisfaction by challenging the player. Even though the game might be fun, the player should feel like he/she is challenged during gameplay.

1. Does the player experience satisfaction when completing objectives in the game?

The main experience from Vilom Chronicles originates from the player using it’s skills, which should create satisfaction for the player. Even though the game might be challenging, the player should experience satisfaction from this challenge.

Write down 3-5 research questions. For each question, shortly describe how it is related to the intended experience.

# Method

Note that you should use at least one qualitative and one quantitative method.

## Research method for question 1

For question 1 we will use observation, questionnaire and interview. With observation we see if the player learns/adapts during gameplay. With a questionnaire we can test the knowledge the player has learned throughout gameplay. With an interview we can learn how the player experienced the learning.

## Research method for question 2

For question 2 we will use questionnaire and interview. With questionnaire we can measure if the question is true in a quantitative way. With an interview we can learn in a qualitative way if the question is true and get more information why it is true or false.

## Research method for question 3

For question 3 we will use a questionnaire and an interview. With a questionnaire the player can give the controls a score. With an interview we can get a score and an explanation why with the ability to get more detailed information.

## Research method for question 4

For question 4 we will use a questionnaire and an interview. With a questionnaire the player can rate the challenge of the game. With an interview we can get a more detailed explanation why the player feels like why certain aspects feel (not) challenging.

## Research method for question 5

For question 5 we will use a questionnaire, an interview and an observation. With a questionnaire the player can give the satisfaction experienced a score. With an interview we can get an explanation from the player why he thinks the game gives satisfaction. With an observation we can see the player’s emotional response to certain events in the game.

# Method details

For each method you will use, describe in detail how the method will be executed. Also describe what data the method will yield and how it will be processed.

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire will consist of two main parts a Likert scale with 5 options: Completely disagree, partially disagree, no opinion, partially agree, completely agree, and a multiple-choice questions.

In the Likert scale questions we will ask the playtester’s opinion on the following statements:

1. I could recognize the movements of the enemy.
2. I could recognize, which enemy movement corresponded with a certain attack.
3. I could correctly respond to the attack of the enemy.
4. I felt like I could influence the game world.
5. The effects of corruption were clear in the game.
6. The controls in the game where unresponsive.
7. I needed to use a high amount of my abilities to be able to defeat enemies.
8. The difficulty of the game was too low.
9. Defeating an enemy gave me little satisfaction.
10. The game felt fair, the mistakes I made were due to my own skill.

The other question’s will be about game knowledge the playtester acquired during the test.

1. Which of the following attacks are used by the ninja(Multiple answers can be correct)?
   1. Knife throw
   2. Drill
   3. Kick
   4. Gun shot
   5. None of the above
   6. Never encountered one
2. Which of the following attacks were used by Ky, the boss at the end of the first part of the game?
   1. Teleporting foot
   2. Kick
   3. Stab attack
   4. Gun Shot
   5. None of the above
   6. Never encountered him

Describe at least which questions will be in the questionnaire, when the questionnaire will be given to the playtesters, and how the data of the questionnaire will be processed.

## Observation

With the observation we focus on seeing if the player adapts to the enemy’s attacks(learning how to counter the attacks after multiple encounters), in other words we will look at the player and judge to what degree a player learns the moves of the enemies and possible reasons for this, a second focus will be the emotional reactions of the player after completing small objectives in the game, such as defeating an enemy and reaching checkpoints, we do this to determine the (dis)satisfaction the player receives from the game. The observation must be conducted in such a way that the observer does not influence the player, i.e. he cannot help the player out in difficult situation, the observer should also ask the playtester to think out loud as much as possible, the observer should use the extra information to get more detailed data about the playtester’s way of playing and possible issues with the game. The observation should be noted down on several sheets of paper, each focus point having a different sheet, this is to not limit the observer in the size of his notes. There should also be a section for any special notes for any unusual circumstances that might arise during playtesting. During data-processing the notes from an observation needs to be broken down to its core parts, what went wrong and caused issues and what was the playtester particularly happy with. When combining all the observations a general conclusion needs to made, taking into account what the playertesters particularly (dis)liked.

Describe at least the focus points of the observation, how the observations will be noted down, and how the data will be processed.

## Interview

The first question of the interview should be: “What was the general feel of the game?”, the interviewer should try to find a more detailed reasoning to why the playtester perceives the game the way the playtester perceives it. The reason why the first question is so generic is to get a good conversation going, and try to make the playtester not feel like it is an interrogation. The interviewer should also touch upon the subjects of difficulty, fairness, controls responsiveness, enemy moves(or more specifically recognizing the moves) and satisfaction after achieving small tasks. The interviewer should always try to keep the conversation as natural as possible as to keep the playtesters as genuine as possible.

The audio of the interview should be recorded and later processed by someone else from the team as to reduce the bias when making notes and should be made by listening to the recording while making notes about the important answers, answers that in any way can help answer a research question. All the notes from the interviews should then be combined and a general conclusion for each of the research questions should be made according to the interview.

Describe at least the starting questions of the interview, how the interviews will be recorded, and how the data will be processed.

# Serendipitous findings

For the questionnaire an open question as final question asking for any special findings the playtester wants to give us. With the interview we can ask in more detail about things we want to know more about and playtesters might mention things on their own and in the end we ask for anything special to note. With an observation we can see the playtester’s reaction to certain unexpected events.