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Faction: Elves

GAT 210A—Spring 2014

Instructor: Jeremy Holcomb

Lab Report 2

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Lab Report

**Written Rules**

Game

“Dice, Draw, Flip”

Components

A standard deck of playing cards with two jokers and 2 six-sided dice

Players

2 players

Objective

The objective of “Dice, Draw, Flip” is to be the first player to complete their collection task list.

Setup

Players each take one of the six-sided dice and sit opposite of each other at a table. One of the players shuffles the deck of cards and places the shuffled deck face-down between both players on the table. This deck of cards will serve as the draw pile for both players.

Rules

The turn sequence of the game is all in the name of the game: **Dice**, **Draw**, and **Flip**.

* **Dice Roll**

Both players **roll their die at the same time to determine how many cards they will draw** from the draw pile.

* **Draw Cards**

Players draw cards from the draw pile, followed by the other player. The cards are placed face down on the table.

* **Flip Cards**

**Players** **alternate turns by flipping over their cards one-by-one**. Immediately after the last card is flipped over, the turn is over and the next Dice Roll begins.

**Every round the goal of the players is to complete one of the items on their collection task list**. Jokers are wild cards and can be used in place of any card to help complete an item on the collection task list. Once a player has done so, they declare “Stop” to end the round and check off that item from their collection task list. At the end of a round, the cards are collected, reshuffled and a new round begins.

To win the players must complete their task list in the following order:

* Straight - 5 cards of any suit in a sequence
* Straight Flush - 5 cards of the same suit in a sequence
* Full House - 2 matching cards and 3 matching cards

Victory

Once a player has completed every item on their collection task list, they win the game!

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the GAT210 Section A participated as first-time players for the rules that are written in the previous section of this lab report. There were four students, including myself, who played the game:

**Name: Email:**

* Christopher Christensen [c.christensen@digipen.edu](mailto:c.christensen@digipen.edu)
* Jason Clark nobody@clark.jason.none
* Garrett Huxtable [g.huxtable@digipen.edu](mailto:g.huxtable@digipen.edu)
* Travis Moore [travis.moore@digipen.edu](mailto:travis.moore@digipen.edu)

**Playtesting Results**

For the first playtest of “Dice, Draw, Flip” I participated in the game with Jason Clark. Jason was given the rules to read over and I offered to help him explain the rules to him if he had any questions or was unsure of how I had written something down. Fortunately, after taking about 3 minutes reading over the rules, he explained to me that rules seemed clear enough and we proceeded to play the game without him asking any questions beforehand. Hopefully this is a good sign that my ability to clearly and concisely write rules has gotten better since the last time.

Into the first round there are some problems when trying to figure who goes first throughout the Draw and Flip sequences of the game. In the written rules I had outlined what happens in the Dice, Draw, and Flip sequences of a turn, but I had failed to mention which player goes first in either of these events of the game. This is important to the game because the Flip sequence of a turn reveals cards one-by-one for each player and a player can win during this. After discussing it with Jason we agree that the highest die roll during the Dice sequence should determine who goes first. This decision puts more weight on the die roll and makes sense.

After adding the new rules to the game Jason and I manage to play through a complete game, with Jason completing all three items on his task list to my one item complete on the task list. This means that four rounds of the game were played, with the average time length of a game being roughly a minute. Upon ending the playtest I asked Jason what he thought of the task list before and after playing the game. His response was that he was worried that the task list would be much harder to complete and take a long time per round to do. He was happy that the tasks were not as difficult to complete as he thought. This is probably due to the amount of cards one can draw with a good die throw, and after several turns, each player usually has a large amount of cards. Jason also noted that by taking turns flipping over the cards one-by-one it helped create tension as you eagerly await your next card flip.

The second test I did involved Garrett and Christopher. For this playtest I gave them the rules to look at and verbally explained the updated turn sequence that Jason and I had used in our playtest. Each player took about 4 minutes to read the rules, finishing roughly at the same time as each other. The first round started off well, until the first time the players had to flip over the cards. Initially both players just started to flip cards over without alternating turns. I broke my silence and told them that they must alternate flipping cards over one-by-one. There is a good chance that the players simply forgot this rule when I was explaining the updated turn sequence.

The first, second, and fourth rounds went by quickly, averaging a minute to complete for one of the players. Interestingly, the third round involved both players trying to get a Straight Flush, which proved to be much harder for both players than it had been for Jason in our playtest. This round lasted about 3 to 4 minutes before Garrett had won. After the playtest was complete, both players agreed that the sequence of the task list should probably have the Straight Flush be the last item on the task list, because it was the hardest one to do. This seems like a good idea, as it adds a more natural progression of difficulty to the game, instead of having the hardest thing be in the middle of the task list. Once again, the jokers were never used to win a round in the game, prompting me to reconsider whether or not the wild card joker is even necessary to the game.

Once again, playtesting proved how important it is for the rules to cover every aspect of the game, including the missing player turn sequence which is vital to playing the game. Playtesting also showed that sometimes certain things are not needed, such as the Joker acting as a wild card. My original intention was to have the Joker, a rare card to draw from the deck, help the player win when all they needed was one card. After playtesting I’ve learned that it is not needed and only further complicates the game, so removing it from the rules is probably a better idea.

**Written Rules Rewrite**

Changes to the original rules are shown in red text, with ~~strikethroughs~~ showing a rule being taken out entirely.

Game

“Dice, Draw, Flip”

Components

A standard deck of playing cards ~~with two jokers~~ and 2 six-sided dice

Players

2 players

Objective

The objective of “Dice, Draw, Flip” is to be the first player to complete their collection task list.

Setup

Players each take one of the six-sided dice and sit opposite of each other at a table. One of the players shuffles the deck of cards and places the shuffled deck face-down between both players on the table. This deck of cards will serve as the draw pile for both players.

Rules

The turn sequence of the game is all in the name of the game: **Dice**, **Draw**, and **Flip**.

* **Dice Roll**

Both players **roll their die at the same time to determine how many cards they will draw** from the draw pile.

* **Draw Cards**

The player with the **highest die roll draws their cards first** from the draw pile, followed by the other player. The cards are placed face down on the table.

* **Flip Cards**

**Players take alternate turns flipping over their cards one-by-one, starting with the player with the highest die roll**. Immediately after the last card is flipped over, the turn is over and the next Dice Roll begins.

**Every round the goal of the players is to complete one of the items on their collection task list**. ~~Jokers are wild cards and can be used in place of any card to help complete an item on the collection task list.~~ Once a player has done so, they declare “Stop” to end the round and check off that item from their collection task list. At the end of a round, the cards are collected, reshuffled and a new round begins.

To win the players must complete their task list in the following order:

* Straight - 5 cards of any suit in a sequence
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Victory

Once a player has completed every item on their collection task list, they win the game!

**Observations**

I was a playtester for 3 different games during the lab. The first game I played was “Tornado” by Jason Clark. Jason’s game involved racing against another player around a circular board towards the center before a minute long timer was up. The game did a good job of telling a story and building tension, as you had to wait to roll your die for movement while the other player was rolling and the timer counted down. After playing the game we all concluded that minute long timer would be better cut in half. I played the game with Jason afterwards, and it really improved the challenge and tension of the game.

As a playtester for Christopher’s experimental game, I enjoyed how strange the game was to play. While the game involved two players primarily, it also involved random strangers, effectively making other people into components of the game. This could cause problems, but the game was clearly designed with the lab in mind, so it was fun to play at least one time. Garrett’s “Faction Wars” game was easy to pick up and understand, but perhaps broken. I played several times and we noted that while Elves were delicate, their attack prowess in the game is unmatched, as an elf never lost a game during his playtests. A little bit of stat restructuring would help make his game not so unbalanced.

Characteristics of Games

**Exercise Questions**

**Exercise 5.1: Pick a low-luck game. What sources of luck does it still have? How can you tell it is nevertheless a low-luck game?**

A low-luck game like Chess still has some luck in it, despite not having overt randomness from cards or dice. The biggest source of luck in Chess comes from the human factor, which provides a player a sort of randomness and luck from how the opponent plays the game.

**Exercise 5.2: Choose a high-luck game. What sources of luck does it have? How can you tell it is a high-luck game?**

Blackjack is an example of a high-luck game due to the source of luck provided by using playing cards. You can tell that it is a high luck game because the game depends upon the luck of the draw.

**Exercise 5.3: Estimate the chances of achieving perfect play in checkers by moving randomly.**

I assume that achieving a perfect play in checkers means not losing a single checker to the opponent and making it to the other side of the board during the course of a game. According to research, there are 5 x 1020 possible positions on the board and moving randomly in order to achieve a perfect play, while possible, is highly unlikely. This is especially true if the opponent has control over their pieces and is not moving randomly, as well.

**Exercise 5.4: Estimate the chances of achieving a perfect play in tic-tac-toe by moving randomly.**

Unlike in the checkers example, I imagine that being able to achieve perfect play in tic-tac-toe by moving randomly is more possible than doing so in checkers. Because the grid involves 9 spaces, unlike the checkerboard, there are less possible positions. However, playing against a skilled opponent who is not moving randomly decreases the chances of a perfect play in tic-tac-toe considerably.

**Exercise 5.5: Think of a game you like to play. What is its biggest source of luck? Would you remove or reduce that source of luck if you could? How?**

I enjoy playing DoTA2 (Defense of the Ancients 2), an action real-time strategy game, and would consider its biggest source of luck to be the Fog of War aspect of the game. It is crucial in DoTA2 to have good positioning in relation to where and what your enemy is currently doing, so the Fog of War acts as a randomizer because you do not always know where and what your enemy is up to. I would not choose to eliminate the Fog of War in DoTA2 because it would give players perfect knowledge at all times. This would eliminate sneaking strategies and change the game entirely.

**Exercise 5.6: In general, card games tend to have a lot of luck. Board games may have very large or very small amounts of luck. Sports and computer games tend to have relatively little. Why?**

Card games tend to have a lot of luck because card games generally have the players not knowing what cards each other has or what cards are immediately available in a draw pile. Board games can vary in the amount of luck that they use depending on if they choose to use dice or cards as randomizers, like in Candyland or Sorry!, or none at all, like in checkers or chess. Sports tend to cater towards player skill, so luck is not at the forefront of these games as it would undermine the players of the game. Computer games can vary in the amount of luck depending on the genre of the game. Casual computer games tend to have more luck because they are meant to be friendlier and easy to pick up and enjoy playing. More serious genres like FPS and RTS games tend to have less luck because the gameplay focuses more on the skill of the players, and would undermine of the players if their actions could be undone after they are taken by the luck of a randomizer.