Game Design Document:

Social Commentary

Design History

0.0-Original Design

0.1- Implemented a PvP LARP-styled system in which players would take the role of a pre-created character and attempt to act like them to portray the main message.

0.2- Added a “privilege” counter

1.0- Scrapped previous system- redesigned into a Player vs. Game-styled system.

1.1- Implemented group-focused win condition reliant on communication between players

Vision Statement

Game Pitch:

Social Commentary is a game is designed to draw attention to the presence of male privilege in the game design industry, especially within social media platforms, and have players be able to recognize and critique privilege found within any social media platforms.

Gameplay Synopsis:

This card game has the players facing the difficulties of being a woman in the game design industry dealing with privilege and prejudice on social media. The game does this by forcing players to communicate and pick the most effective way to

Learning Objectives:

By the end of Social Commentary, players will understand how much male privilege affects women in the game design industry. Players will understand how to approach these situations online, as well as how much influence they can have as a bystander to these situations. Players will also find that communicating and working together is a much more effective tool when working in these conditions.

Research:

For this project we focused on Social Justice and based the majority of our research on social justice and privilege. Our research left us to defining social justice as “Privilege can be defined as an special advantage offered only to a select person or group of people because of their position, gender, race or sexual orientation. While privilege does benefit that select group of people, it causes disadvantages towards anyone who does not fit the schemata set for that form of privilege.”

We also researched an article to help us narrow down our idea for the game and what we really want the player to learn throughout the game. The article we chose introduced the ways that those in Australia confronted racism through social media, namely Twitter, using the hashtag “#WhiteProverbs”. The article explains the differences between intentional racism and being privileged, and makes clear that, because white privilege has the outcome of the marginalization of non-white people, the outcomes are the same as intentional racism. It goes on to explain what the intention of #WhiteProverbs does. The tweets are usually written by people who are illustrating their experiences as non-white, in a situation that involved some sort of marginalization from a white person, whether it be intentional or unintentional, at both a micro- and macro- level.

With our research of social justice, privilege, and going into privilege on social medias we believe that our game will accurately teach out players what we want them to learn after they play our game.

Values

Discovery:

When in the Discovery phase of determining what values were present in the game we discovered that the main values present were the values of Communication and Teamwork. The original design of the game had players playing against each other to see who would be the last one standing, but after analyzing the game we made we determined that this did not support the learning objectives the game was supposed to portray. After removing the original gameplay method, we decided to make the game more in tune with the values we discovered.

Implementation:

The main focus of Implementing the values we had discovered, Communication and Teamwork, was in recreating the main gameplay method so it would more suit the chosen values. As stated in the previous paragraph we had taken out the old method entirely as it was focused too much on solidarity and every person for themselves. Instead of using the player vs. player method, we decided to change the main gameplay mechanic to players vs. deck and altered the win condition so that the players need to work and communicate with each other throughout the entirety of the game. The new win condition requires players to all have a remainder of the resource, “Credibility”, at the end of the game. In other words if one player loses the game, everyone will lose. Both the main gameplay mechanic and the win conditions helps implement the values of Communication and Teamwork within our game.

Verification:

After our initial round or playtesting, we learned that our game does not quite portray the learning objectives that we set and that the game is not developed enough yet to portray the values we hoped to implement. We aim to develop more game mechanics to help support the values in the game. For example, we want to add a game mechanic that allows players to create combinations with other players cards to create a greater effect against the “Tweet” card. We believe this would help encourage players to communicate openly with each other throughout the game. We are also going to try and model the mechanics and cards available in the game to match a more serious tone that would better portray the learning objectives of the game.

Gameplay

Overview:

Social Commentary is a game where players must use their replies to social media posts to bring awareness to male privilege present in these posts.

Gameplay Description:

The game consists of players communicating and planning how to reply to privilege-laden posts on the social media **“Tweeter”**. Players will each have a hand of cards, or replies, and must use them on a “post”--- to remove it from the table. Each reply has a different cost, called “credibility”, and the only way to get credibility is by taking these posts. Players will be attempting to balance spending and saving credibility to defeat these posts and and gain enough credibility to stay relevant and continue your quest to lessen the effect of male privilege..

Interactions:

Game actions that will occur throughout our game for the players are playing cards which allow them to takes actions of certain tweets by replying with either attack, being constructive or making jokes. Players will be working with the energy resource in order to reply and use your other resources to end up winning the game. The actions of throughout the game of the players are tied into the narrative of the game and the interactions you make will impact the playing experience each time you play the game. As well as the amount of actions and which kind of actions you choose affect how well the player is doing.

Interfaces:

Pieces:

* 5 “Post” Cards
* 30 “Reply” Cards
  + 15 Joke Cards
  + 10 Calm response cards
  + 5 Attack Cards
* Credibility Tokens

Our players will be using and seeing cards, tokens, and notepads throughout our game. They will be experiencing an interaction between the players around them as well as the cards and replies of others throughout play. Each card will have a similar appearance to a tweet and is designed to act as such for the player to read and interact with that tweet/card.

Setup: Place the two decks, the post deck and the reply deck, beside each other. Hand each player 10 credibility tokens, and shuffle and deal out 3 Reply cards to each player. When ready to start, shuffle the post deck and reveal the top card.

Rules:

To play, the start player will choose a single card from their hand to play. To successfully play that card, the player must spend the “cost” amount in Credibility.

If the card is successfully played, the post will lose that much privilege, and the player receives Credibility equal to the “gain” amount listed on the card they played.  
If a card cannot be played, the card is discarded and the player replenishes their hand from the Reply deck.

Once the damage played is equal to, or exceeds the privilege on the post card, that post is removed, and the reply cards played are discarded. The players will reveal the next post and continue play.

If the reply deck ever empties, shuffle the discard pile. This will be the new Reply pile.

Gameplay continues clockwise, with each player taking the actions listed above, until a player runs out of Credibility, or there are no more cards in the post deck.

Scoring/Winning Conditions:

Each and every player will have a single resource while playing, called “Credibility” which will help determine if the players will win the game. To win the game, all 4 players must finish the game by removing all 5 post cards with some of their “Credibility” left. If any player runs out of “Credibility” before the game finishes, everyone will lose instantly.