# Introduction

**Design Goals/Patterns/Inspiration:**

With this iteration of the prototype, our goals shifted from adding new content to refining our existing content, bringing it to a higher level of fidelity. We felt this was the best route, seeing as Axure is the most powerful tool we've used yet. It allows for greater control over visual elements as well as more ability to prototype interaction design elements. We wanted to utilize these tools in order to develop the product we had and make the prototype as professional and sleek as possible.

We referred to other applications for design ideas. We noticed how many games utilize textured backgrounds in order to make their minimal design have depth and control the 'white space'. We decided to implement this idea. We thought that a textured background would make the interactive, editorial, and other visual elements pop. We also noticed that in-game leaderboards often give players statistical information other than their rank, such as win percentages and time spent in-game. After reviewing these other examples, we felt that our leaderboard needed to be improved. By implementing some or all of these ideas, we would give the player more information about the status of the game, one of our original design goals.



*Screenshot of new Leaderboard*

**Changes from previous iterations:**

While the prototype does not include any new features, it is still quite different than the last iteration. Axure allowed us to implement interactions that had to be simulated in previous iterations, such as drag-and-drop and clickable boxes. This made the design feel more complete, and testers will now have a more complete experience when using our design. Axure made it easy to prototype interaction elements, giving us more time to analyze and critique these elements, changing them if need be. However, Axure is not geared towards visual design. We found it difficult to arrange elements and to refine the 'look' of our design. The result is that we weren't able to enhance the visual elements as much as we had hoped.

**What we were/weren't able to include:**

Although Axure allowed us to implement more interactivity than any of the previous programs, we still were unable to prototype gameplay elements that we know are crucial to the final design. The most important one is voice-chat. The in-game chat function of the game is what makes our game social, and social interaction is at the core of the game's design goal. With more time, we would figure out how to prototype this idea and test it. We also weren't able to prototype player profiles and customization.

In a final design, players would be able to customize their profile, such as giving themselves a new avatar. This would allow players to express their individuality, giving them more control over their experience and enhancing the social elements of the game.
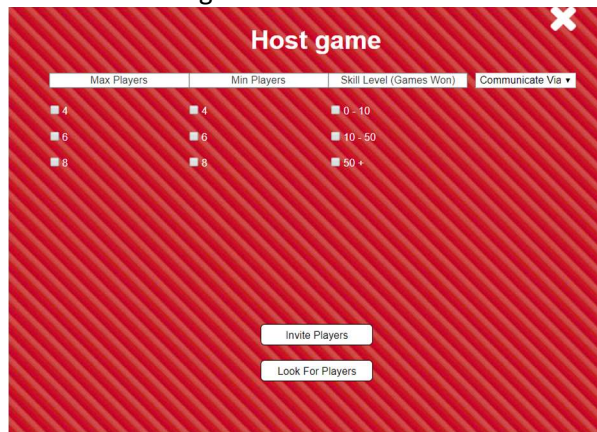
**Masters used:**

We used a master slide to create the drag-and-drop card. We needed to have the ability to move the card, as well as more options for customization such as color, size, and name. We also needed to be sure that the text overlay that we used to label the card moved with the card when the user dragged it to the game table.

**Instructions for Use:**

1. **User starts at Main Menu**
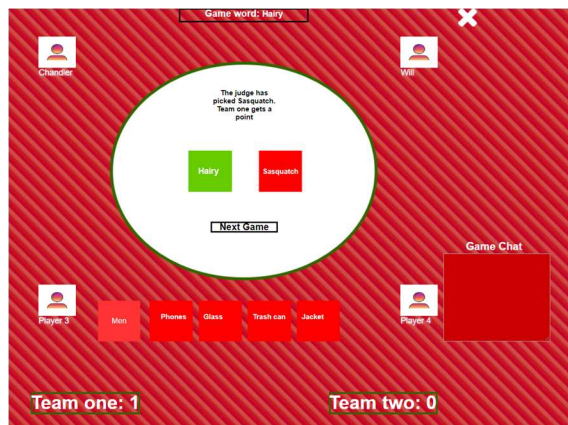   a. **Host Game**
      i. User clicks host game



         1. User can pick # of max/min players as well as skill level and communication type within the game
         2. User can invite players or look for players as well
         3. User clicks to go to the next screen
         4. User asked to click to deal the cards
         5. User takes there turn by drag-in-dropping the card of their choice and then clicking end turn
         6. Next player takes their turn
         7. Judge picks the card
         8. A team is given a point based on the Judge's selection
         9. User then can choose to play another game
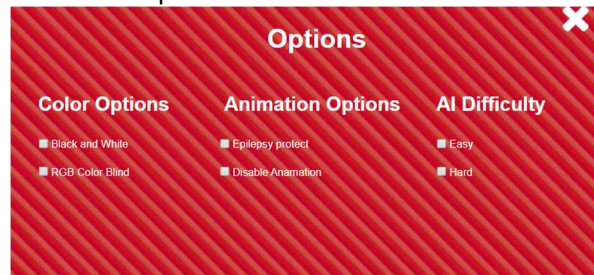         10. Provided a way to exit the game anytime during gameplay

**b. Find Game**

    i. User clicks find game

        1. Can click team play to invite players

        2. Players are found, and user clicks to continue

        3. Once user continues by clicking, essentially the same steps above on host game for playing the game

**c. Options**

    i. User clicks options



        1. User is displayed with options to suit to their needs

            a. Checkboxes provided to pick their selection

        2. Provided a way to go back to the main menu

**d. Leaderboard**

    i. User clicks leaderboard

        1. Shows current standings as well as win percent and against friends

        2. Provided a way to go back to the main menu

**e. Friends**



    i. User clicks friends

1. Shows yours friends, as well as who is online
2. Provided a way to go back to the main menu

**f.  Store**



i.  User clicks store
1. User is shown what additions can be purchased for the application
2. Provided a way to go back to the main menu

## Content Fidelity Matrix

| Content | Very Low Fidelity | Low Fidelity | Medium Fidelity | High Fidelity | Very High Fidelity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Information Design | | | | | X |
| Interaction Design | | | | | X |
| Visual Design & Branding | | | | x | |
| Editorial Content | | | | | X |

**Information Design:**

Our interactive Axure application is described as very high fidelity in information design because of the organization of all the elements within the interactive space. Each option on the screen/page is spaced out evenly and visible for the user to explore. Our goal is to keep a consistent flow/layout throughout the game making it easy for the user to follow. We used whitespace and boxes to provide the labeling for the options and gameplay help making it understandable and visually appealing for the user. We tried to make the game easy to navigate for the user by keeping the menu options simple to understand and to follow by an easy click.

**Interaction Design:**

Our interactive Axure application is perceived as very high fidelity in interaction design because of the ways the user can interact with the game as well as other users/friends. We allow the user to interact with the game through checking leaderboards, inviting friends, sending invites, customizing options for the game, as well as hosting and finding games. We allow the users to complete their task during the game by allowing the user to pick their card as well view other profiles of users within the game. We also allow the user to interact with a store that they can buy items to help them in the game or make the game more customizable. A lot of the options are clickable for the user as well as including drag-in-drop, checkboxes, etc. within the interactive Axure application.

**Visual Design & Branding:**

Our interactive Axure application is perceived as high fidelity in visual design because we provide a simple color design and show the graphical elements in one way. Our interactive Axure application is based around one color but provide a consistent layout for each screen. We show simple white font with a red background throughout the different screens/pages. This interactive Axure application has a unique design/texture background as well as a consistent color through the application to make the options stand out. We provide graphical elements/visual imagery by showing icons on user profiles.

**Editorial Content:**

Our interactive Axure application is perceived as very high fidelity in editorial content because of the information that is shown and how it is presented. We wanted to present our writing in a way that it makes welcoming for the user as well as easy to understand. We focused our editorial content around our information design by making sure we followed the layout that we wanted and providing accurate information to the user. The content within the application is simple to follow and provides a good representation/accuracy of the game.

**Prototyping Process Critique**

Axure is a powerful tool. However, with that power comes complexity, and the process of using Axure to create our prototype was difficult. No one in the group had experience with the software coming into the course, and while we did have class time/assignments devoted to learning and exploring the program, we felt that an entire semester could be devoted to learning to use the software to its full potential.

**What was easy:**

When we reflected on the process, we couldn't think of anything that was 'easy.' Axure has a steep learning curve, and the pace of the course meant that we did not have time to completely overcome that. Instead, we found that certain processes, while not easy, were *possible*. In previous applications, we were unable to implement many of our design ideas. These were usually interaction elements, such as drop-down menus and drag-and-drop elements. Axure made it possible for us to implement these elements, giving us the ability to test and refine these ideas for the first time. While

not geared towards visual design, master templates allowed us to maintain continuity throughout the design. We feel that by utilizing this function, the overall fidelity of our visual design was increased.

**What was hard:**

The hardest part of Axure was learning to navigate its interface. As stated above, the software is complex, so finding the functions we needed, and learning how to properly implement them took time. Often, this meant that mistakes were made, and work had to undone and re-done. Much of our time was spent going back over previous work, correcting mistakes such as bad links and broken functionality. One of the most difficult parts of the process was getting the drag-and-drop card to function properly. After learning how to implement the dynamic panel, we could not figure out how to put text over it and have the text move with the card when the player dragged the object. This took time to research, and trail-and-error to implement.

Visually organizing the design was a major difficulty as well. Although using a master template helped, many of our screens do not have the same layout/format as the others, making a master template impossible to use. We had to build these screens from scratch. One of the major difficulties of this process was learning how to align the text so that it would be centered on the page. We spent a lot of time troubleshooting this issue, sometimes finding a fix that would work on some pages, but not on others.  In the end, we were able to solve the issue, but we had lost time we were hoping to spend on other elements of the game.

Using Axure to link pages to one another is a delicate process. We have many different screens and pages, some linking to several others, while some only link to one. We had to be careful when linking screens, because one wrong click would result in the wrong pages appearing or breaking some of the interactivity. When a mistake was made, we had to delete the widget and restart. This became frustrating over time. We decided to slow down, making careful, deliberate decisions when linking pages.

**Conclusion:**

All-in-all, using Axure required more time and effort than previous programs. Learning to use the various functions available took time and effort, both through research and through trial-and-error. However, the resulting product was a prototype that looked and played much better than our previous iterations.

## Self-Critique

With this final submission, we looked back over the entire course-worth of work we put into this design, as well as the work we did in Axure. We made mistakes along the way, both in terms of design and execution, but overall, we felt proud of the product we created.

**Positives:**

With this iteration, we were pleased with how much we were able to improve the functionality and interaction design of the game. We were able to refine our Options and Leaderboards pages with new content and interaction, giving the player more information and control over the design. We felt that this improvement not only made the game seem more professional, it also brought us closer to achieving our initial design goals.

We were also able to refine the two core gameplay elements that had yet to be fully implemented: drag-and-drop cards and text-chat. While our previous iterations had a semblance of these elements, they were simulated and thus we weren't able to fully test our ideas to see if they were working. With this iteration, we implemented these elements and tested them. The drag-and-drop cards worked as we expected, but, through our own testing, we decided that the text-chat function needed some tweaking. Rather than have the messages be private, forcing players to move through multiple screens to read them, we made the messages public. This decreases the time spent navigating to messages. We feel that this change in design greatly improves the interaction, making the social aspects of the game more fluid and integrated with the mechanics of playing the game.
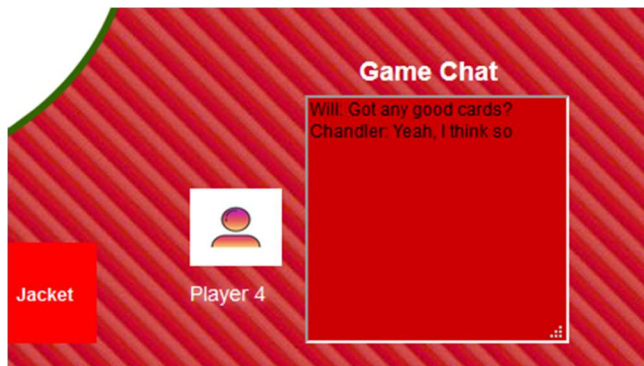


*Screenshot of new Game Chat function*

**Negatives:**

As with previous iterations, this design still has flaws. We feel that most of the flaws have to do with the visual design of the project. With the time we had, we focused on refining our interactive elements, bringing that area up to a higher level of fidelity. Our visual design did not get as much attention. Although we did seek to improve the design by adding textured backgrounds, grids, and other visual design patterns, we do not feel like the visual design is up to the professional standard that we had hoped to achieve. We also feel that the visual elements to not match the interactive elements in terms of depth and quality, and this might hurt the overall appeal of our design. Going forward, we would make it a priority to raise the quality of the visual design before refining or adding to the interaction further.

Another missing element from the game is the audio-chat. This is a major feature of our game, perhaps the largest feature.

**Conclusion:**

Although there are still some areas of the design that need to be addressed, we feel that this iteration of our prototype is a significant step forward in terms of quality and depth. We were able to implement most of the remaining functionality, including two key elements of the game, and test them. This testing led us to believe that some changes needed to be made, and we executed the changes. If we had more time to work on the prototype, we would first focus on developing and refining the visual design of the game before moving on to adding more interactive elements/functionality.