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EECS 494

Change of Fate Justification Document

The title of my video game is "Change of Fate".

In summer 2010, I took a video game class where I learned to use Game Maker. After developing a couple of games, I found myself looking through a compilation of Game Maker games made by other people. One of these seemed interesting, so I played it. It was a puzzle game in which you had to move tiles around to guide a ball to the finish. It was very enjoyable game, so I started to make my own version in Game Maker. Now, flash forward to 2 weeks ago, where we learned how to design good puzzle games in EECS 494 lecture and watched a couple of demonstrations of past EECS 494 individual projects. Some of these were more puzzle-based and some were action-heavy, so that influenced me to try to combine the two. The initial concept for my game was mostly based off the game I had started to make in Game Maker years ago, but because of what I had seen in class, I chose to also incorporate a couple of "action-y" elements into the game so the player could still be an active part of the game as the ball moved through the solved puzzle.

Although I brainstormed most of the game's elements when I had initially written the burndown chart, many mechanics were cut from or added to the final build due to time constraints, peer feedback, my own testing, and game detail brainstorming moments. When implementing the game, I would repeatedly follow the same procedure: design a new mechanic, test the new mechanic in isolation (and fix any problems), design a level with that mechanic, and test the entire new level (fixing any problems). Every couple of

levels, I would present the game to my friend/roommate Justin, and he would play through the recently made levels to find potential bugs that I missed when I solved my own puzzles and show me if there was an unexpected alternate solution in any of the new levels. My friend Khalil did additional play-testing when he visited me a couple days ago. I did not tell my friends to look intently for areas of improvement or devise new features for the game, so most of my feedback came from my EECS 494 peers. The vocal feedback I received was mainly praise instead of suggestions ("The shadows look really cool!" and "I like how this dark blue square shows you where your tile is going to be placed"), but I was able to find some flaws as they were playing my game. For example, multiple people thought that the bouncing arrow showed them where to place the first tile, when instead the arrow was supposed to designate the ball's initial direction. Because of this, I decided to implement a message box that could inform the user of such mechanics. A couple of days ago, Professor Bloch also played my game, and he had a couple of things to say. One of his suggestions was to change some of the aesthetics, because it was difficult to differentiate some objects from others (especially because he's color blind). This caused me to add more pieces to the design of the different blocks. He also suggested adding extra levels to introduce each new mechanic in a relatively simple environment to more effectively teach the player how to use the new mechanic. Although this surprised me given that we are implementing a prototype and not a full game (and only have 2 weeks to do it), I took his suggestion and designed 7 new levels. Another thing he mentioned is that the shadows were too big and in an awkward direction; but because my peers had initially told me they liked the shadows as they were, I decided to make them only slightly smaller. The final product of my game turned out to

be a bit less action-packed than I had originally intended, but I am still satisfied that it is enough to keep the player entertained as the ball traverses the solved puzzle. I ended up creating a lot more levels than I had initially planned so the game took more time to create than I anticipated. Also, I cut a couple features that I had originally planned to include due to time constraints and a loss of interest in those particular features (such as jump tiles, enemy buttons/traps, and teleport click). Overall, the iterative development process has allowed me to improve my game beyond the initial design and take it to the level that it is at currently.