

Agenda for 6.170 Mentor Meeting Thursday, Nov 7

Items to be discussed

- Designing with implementation in mind -- feasibility of our plans as described in the pitch?
- What exactly is required for the critique due Sunday?
 - In particular, are we supposed to have separate concepts/goals slides to be critiqued?
- Identification of MVP: get game working with one player?
- Design docs:
 - Purposes and Goals: create a fun, easy-to-play game
 - Key concepts: table, player/foe, tile, (incoming) tile queue/bag?, unclaimed letters, words; score?; lobby/matchmaking?

Progress report

We're still in the design stage. We have a general idea of how the game itself should work, but are still trying to figure out peripherals, especially scoring and matchmaking. We're also concerned about real-time play; the game is heavily dependent on determining who formed a word first, and there could be timing issues complicating matters.

Minutes

- Designing with implementation in mind
 - Talked about pitch: maybe spend less time describing the actual game?
 - Real-time updates are a difficulty. How difficult is it to revert to a more synchronous approach?
 - Is there some way to design it so that it's quick to find out whether real-time updating will work, and easy to switch back?
 - Leonid's guess is that we'll be fine (use heavy client, thin json packets sent)
 - For us (at least for MVP), we can follow a "your lag is your fault" model
 - Suggestion -- try to make a very simple chat client. For any network-based game (live or not), you'll need 90% of the infrastructure of a chat client for the game anyway.
 - Websocket-Rails gem
- MVP
 - One-player is a workable idea; just make sure
 - You use the same communication mode for one player as you would for multiple (web socket)
 - It's actually a fun game -- in the real world, people need to at least care about your MVP
 - Make sure releasing multi-player version will not look like a new game (we can kind of argue it)

- UI
 - Doesn't need to look gorgeous, but should not look like crap. It should at least be playable.
- Concept of score
 - Could do without a lobby / matchmaking service. Or we could just have a lobby that shows all the players and their high score. This wouldn't be too hard to implement.
 - Is score important enough to be its own concept? If the scoring system is complicated and stand-alone, then yes; or if it's just some total number of letters (property of a word), perhaps not.
 - Whether score is its own concept is not such a crucial question; whether you choose to do it is. And we probably should.
- Goals
 - sound okay -- game sort of defends itself
 - try to think of use cases (mobile is probably not possible, but that seems to be okay)
- Concepts
 - (prelim: Instead of unclaimed tiles / incoming tile queue: tiles available to you / tile source or fountain)
 - Or: maybe the concept is just "tile" ← yeah, this is probably best
- How do you steal words?
 - Click on the word you want to steal, then type the new word (this is nice and unambiguous)
 - Let's not allow combining of multiple words (at least for MVP, but possibly for final)
- Critique assignment
 - Details will be released later (hopefully tonight)
 - A lot of teams are overly ambitious (not us); they might have an easier time looking at other teams' designs and saying wow, these guys are trying to do way too much