

## **Playtest Report – A Day at the Cincinnati Zoo**

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### **Overview**

The purpose of our playtest session is to ensure that the mechanics of the game flow in a logical progression that allow the user to easily understand how to play the game. Furthermore, we would like to ensure that the storyline of the game is enticing enough to rope the player in while providing a fun and enjoyable experience. Through the feedback provided on these elements we hope to improve our game for future users.

### **Introduction/Setup**

“Hello, thank you for agreeing to play our game today. We appreciate you taking the time out of your day to help us improve upon our game. This game is based around a day at the Cincinnati Zoo. Without giving too much information, you will have the choice to play either as a gorilla or child. Upon your selection of a certain individual, you will progress through the day at the Zoo through the perspective of the individual you have selected. You will be presented with options during each passage of the game. Based upon certain decisions in the game, you will be lead to a unique ending. Any more questions? Enjoy playing our game.”

### **User Overview**

For our playtesting, we decided to recruit 3 unique individuals that satisfied the specified requirements needed for accurate playtesting.

- User 1 – “Gamer, Not in class. No prior knowledge of the game”
- User 2 – “Non-Gamer, In-class, No prior knowledge of the game”
- User 3 – “Gamer, Not in class, No prior knowledge of the game”

### **Play Test Sessions**

Since we were concerned with how enticing our storyline was, we focused our notes on the player reactions to the game. In order to determine if our mechanics were up to par, we asked the user questions once they reached the end of the game. The purpose of this order was to prevent interrupting the playing experience for each user.

A similar initial reaction shared by all three players was the unique selection presented at the beginning of the game. None of the players were able to pick up that the story-line would pertain

to Harambe. Each player's reaction was basically how the game was very obscure as to what was happening when you choose to play as a child or gorilla.

Another interesting opinion shared by the individuals in the "gamer" category was the choice of images that were used within each passage. These players found the images comical and eventually detracting from one of the potential serious endings of the game.

The non-gamer raised an interesting point when they described how all caps on certain passages raised a sense of alarm and added to the intensity within the game.

At the end of the playing session, we decided to ask the players how the mechanics of the game were and if they were intuitive enough to allow for smooth, progressive gameplay. The general consensus was that the mechanics made sense and that the sense of uncertainty associated with each choice added to the suspense of the game.

### **Questions**

1. What was your initial reaction to the game when you had to choose to play as a gorilla or child?
  - a. This question proved useful in the sense that it allowed us to capture the player's initial reaction. The player's initial reaction to the game is crucial in the sense that it indicates if the player is being enticed to play the game.
2. Was the storyline of the game exciting? Did you not knowing that the game pertained to Harambe add any added emotion?
  - a. This question would prove useful in determining if the obscurity of the game in the initial stages was useful. The obscure element could be used as a technique to rope the player in further by exploiting their curiosity.
3. Which portion of the story was more intriguing: child or gorilla?
  - a. The purpose of this question was to determine which portion of our story was lacking. This would allow us to add exciting content in the lacking portion until the two story lines intertwined.
4. How did the visuals utilized throughout the game lend to the overall game?
  - a. The purpose of this question was to determine if the images were relevant to the story. This would allow us to determine if the images added or detracted to the overall story.
5. Were the mechanics of the game intuitive?
  - a. The purpose of this game was to determine the playability of our game. We wanted our game to be playable with minimalistic directions.
6. Overall rate the game on a scale of 1-10.
  - a. The purpose of this questions was to get a general opinion of the game that would determine where our game currently stood in terms of overall product.

### **Answers**

1. User 1 found the initial selection quite interesting. They were specifically intrigued by why we would choose to play as a gorilla out of all of the animals in the zoo. They were

not able to pick up on the story pertained to Harambe until towards the end of the game. User 1 says they were enticed by the progressing storyline to continue playing the game. User 2 had their suspicions that the game pertained to Harambe based upon the child and gorilla options. However, they said they were enticed enough by the initial engagement to continue playing to see how the story unraveled. User 3 shared a similar experience with User 1. Overall, we realized interesting choice presented in the beginning of the game was doing well in terms of roping in the player and getting their attention.

2. User 1 and User 3 were not able to pick up on the fact that the game pertained to Harambe. User 2 had their suspicions early on in the game that the game pertained to Harambe. However, a unanimous consensus among all players was that the obscurity of the actual storyline added a sense of intrigue to the game that wanted the player to keep playing. While all players were indifferent that the game was about Harambe, they found it interesting that they were able to view that day's events through Harambe's eyes. Upon analysis, we determined that the obscurity/unraveling storyline played to our benefit. It was able to retain the player's attention and have them wanting to continue to play the game.
3. The general consensus was that the gorilla storyline was more intriguing than the child story line. This is understandable. Basically each user stated, that identifying with the child in terms of those day's events was a lot easier than identifying with the gorilla's perspectives. Through news articles and news stories users pretty much already knew the child half of the story. Users stated that it was refreshing and interesting to see that day's events unfold from Harambe's eyes. Upon analysis of this question, our group determined we should probably add some passages to the child portion that would render it more interesting. However, we also determined that our gorilla portion of our story was interesting and unique.
4. Users 1 and 3 found the visuals throughout the game effective and lent to the overall progression of the story. User 2 said it would have been cool to have actual images from the Harambe incident towards the end of game. Unfortunately, due to the copyright restriction on this project, we were only able to use certain images throughout the course of the game. However, this feedback did cause us to re-evaluate our image selection and go back and make some of the images more relevant to the best of our ability.
5. The general consensus that the game play was relatively straight-forward. In fact, all of the users liked the obscurity of the gameplay as it allowed the different endings of the game to be hidden and discoverable based upon different user input. Upon analysis, our group determined it was not worth adding directions to the game.
6. The average rating of the game was 7-8. This told us that with some refinement we could have an exceptional game that users would enjoy playing. Based upon feedback in other categories, we were able to determine what it was that we needed to tweak to have an exceptional game.

## **Conclusion**

The playtesting was an interesting way to receive feedback on our game. By players being able to actively play our game we determined that overall we had a pretty strong game. However,

with some refinement, we could build an exceptional product. We were interested to see how many people were not able to pick up on the fact the game pertained to Harambe and what happened that day at the Cincinnati zoo. Overall, we realized that in terms of mechanics and gameplay our game was up to par. However, the child side of the story line and some of the images used in our game, with a bit of refinement, would allow us to create stronger and more enticing narrative for our users. We plan on updating various images and portions of the child narrative throughout the game.