

Web Games

Week 7 - Prototyping



Objectives



- Get peer feedback on playable prototype ideas
- Rapid prototype core loop / key features of playable prototype
- User test initial prototypes



1. Power of Prototypes

What is Game Prototyping?



- **Purpose of Prototyping**

- Game prototyping tests core concepts, mechanics, and user experience before full development begins

- **Types of Prototyping**

- Prototypes include paper sketches, digital mockups, grey-box models, and slices to explore ideas effectively.

- **Benefits of Prototyping**

- Iterative prototyping saves resources and enhances creativity by refining gameplay and identifying issues early.



Why Prototype



- **Early Idea Validation**

- Prototyping helps developers quickly validate game ideas to ensure gameplay is enjoyable and feasible early on.

- **Risk Reduction**

- Identifying design flaws and technical issues early reduces risk and avoids costly mistakes later in development.

- **Improved Communication**

- Prototyping provides a tangible model that enhances team and stakeholder communication about the game vision.

- **Enhanced Gameplay Refinement**

- Iterative prototyping allows refinement of mechanics, controls, and pacing for a polished, engaging game experience.

Stages of Prototyping



- **Concept Design**

- Developers outline the game's core idea and objectives to establish a clear vision for the project.

- **Paper Prototype**

- A simple, hand-drawn prototype is created to map out mechanics and game flow using basic materials.

- **Digital Prototype**

- An interactive digital version is built to test gameplay elements and user experience early on.

- **Playtesting and Iteration**

- Feedback is gathered through playtesting to refine mechanics and improve the gameplay experience.

Pitfalls & Best Practice



- **Avoid Over-Polishing Early**
 - Over-polishing prototypes too soon distracts from testing core mechanics and delays valuable feedback.
- **Importance of Feedback and Playtesting**
 - Ignoring feedback and skipping playtesting hinders issue identification and improvement opportunities.
- **Embrace Flexibility and Iteration**
 - Being open to changes and pivoting based on insights enhances creativity and leads to better game outcomes.
- **Keep Prototypes Simple and Focused**
 - Prototyping early and often with simple designs ensures focus on core gameplay mechanics.



2. Peer Feedback

Rapid Feedback Circles



In your groups, each member will present their prototype idea and receive initial feedback. You'll have **5 minutes** per person.

- **2 min:** Pitch your game concept (core idea, intended experience, key mechanics)
- **3 mins:** Peer feedback and questions
 - When giving feedback consider:
 - *"I like..."* (what excites or intrigues you about the concept)
 - *"I wonder..."* (what's unclear or needs more explanation)
 - *"What if..."* (suggestions for features, mechanics or improvements)



3. Rapid Prototyping

Rapid Prototyping



Create a testable prototype that explores a key question about your game concept—such as player engagement, clarity of mechanics, or usability.

- **Choose a Format:** Decide whether to build a paper prototype or a digital mockup.
- **Focus on the Core Loop:** Your prototype should demonstrate the main player action or interaction cycle.
- **Design for Testing:** Ensure another student can playtest your prototype in 5–10 minutes.
- **Define Your Question:** What are you trying to learn from this prototype? Examples:
 - "Is this mechanic intuitive?"
 - "Does this loop feel rewarding?"
 - "Can players understand the goal?"

4. Prototyping Testing

Peer Playtesting



In small groups of 2-3 playtest each others prototype.

- **When giving feedback consider:**
 - *"I like..."* (what excites or intrigues you about the concept)
 - *"I wonder..."* (what's unclear or needs more explanation)
 - *"What if..."* (suggestions for features, mechanics or improvements)
- **When observing:**
 - Observe how testers interact with your prototype
 - Take notes on what works and what doesn't

Up Next...

Mobile Controls & Families

