# Hot Brass UX review

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Non-commercial portfolio work; unaffiliated with Fellow Traveller/Hot Brass

# Overview

- Summary
- Analysis focus and methods
- Prioritization structure
- Stand-out issues (with priority)
  - Suggestions for improvement
- High-level suggestions

# Summary

- I evaluated the available content of the Hot Brass alpha release for usability and learnability
  - I paid particular attention to the user interface and how information is organized for players, as well as the tutorial section and how players could learn the game
- The current release is fairly organized and easy to learn, but players may potentially have issues processing feedback and remembering the tutorial
  - The most consistent issues I found were related to how players with sensory impairment process information and retaining tutorial knowledge

# Analysis focus and methods

1. Usability - how the important information is presented

METHOD: While trying the game, I paid close attention to the user interface and how the elements are laid out. I also conducted some mini cognitive walkthroughs - I defined a handful of common tasks a player might do, and evaluated how easily that player might carry it out.
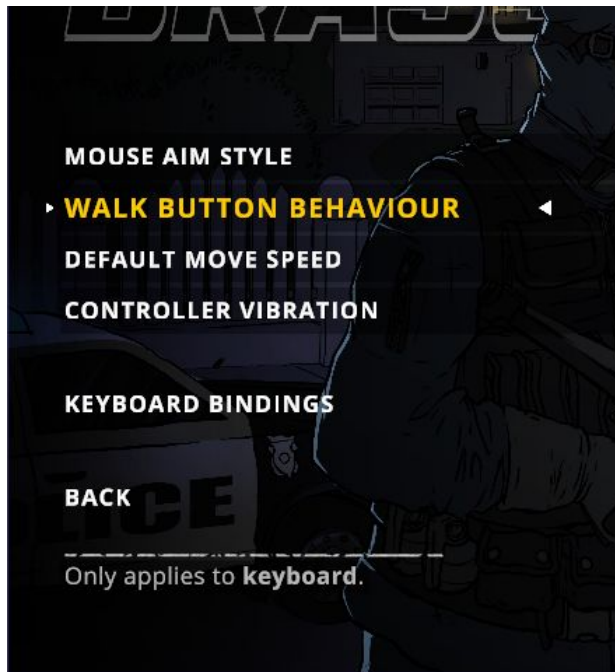
2. Learnability - how a new player can quickly pick up the controls/process feedback

METHOD: I went into the game completely blind, so that I wouldn't be influenced by any outside sources on learning it. I'm a fairly casual gamer, so there might be some niche things I'm unfamiliar with.

# Prioritization structure

I will prioritize issues using this key:

- **URGENT** - the highest priority, potentially a huge issue for players
- **IMPORTANT** - should be fixed, though not necessarily game-breaking
- **MINOR** - not that important, a small bother
- **OF NOTE** - for any comments
- **GOOD** - well-implemented design choice, players will like it

MOUSE AIM STYLE
▸ WALK BUTTON BEHAVIOUR ◂
DEFAULT MOVE SPEED
CONTROLLER VIBRATION

KEYBOARD BINDINGS

BACK

Only applies to **keyboard**.

# GOOD: Selection indicators on the settings screen

- I liked how the game gave two types of visual indicators (color and text size change) as well as an audio indicator (click sound) when mousing over a menu option. Players who are visually impaired will appreciate the multiple cues
- I suggest trying to keep the same standard of inclusion for those with sensory impairment throughout the game

# GOOD: Feedback when certain methods of conflict resolution don't work

- I liked how a "No" indicator showed up on an enemy's circle icon when my preferred method of conflict resolution (shouting) was no longer effective
- Granted, the enemy had opened fire on me, but it's helpful for when a player process information slowly, or is panicking in a stressful situation

# GOOD: Audio indicator that actions are performed

- I like how the player avatar voices certain events happening, such as spotting an NPC or completing an action
- Players who process information slowly will find the audio cue helpful (in my case, the avatar told me an NPC was on screen before I even knew about it

# URGENT: Starting the game
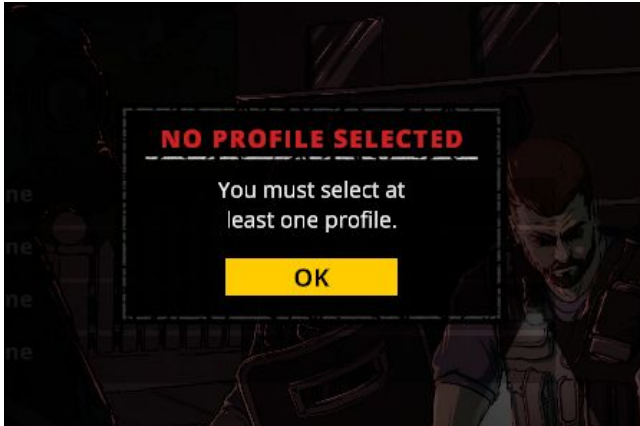


- **CAUSE:** The player has to go to the "Profiles" section and create an operator profile before they can start a new game with "Start"
- **IMPACT:** Players see the error alert shown before even starting the game, which may cause confusion
- Possible fix: Menu tutorial section that automatically has the player create an operator profile

# IMPORTANT: Tutorial retention

- **CAUSE:** The game has many inputs that all do different things, but there's no cue to help players remember all the different actions they can do
- **IMPACT:** Players may feel lost and restricted in their actions, especially in stressful situations like combat
- Possible fix: Include an inventory bar that shows the different weapons/tools, and basic controls for how to equip them
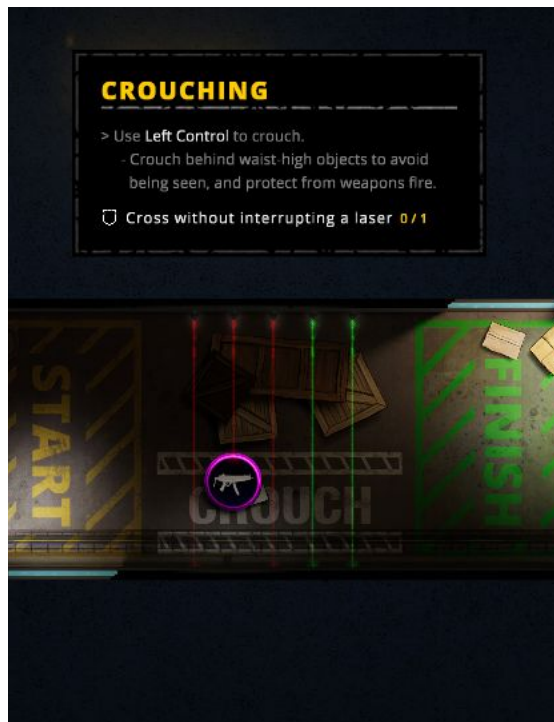
# IMPORTANT: Insufficient environmental feedback

- **CAUSE:** Some environment assets do not provide enough feedback to the player, such as:
  - Lasers only changing color when they detect a player
  - Indicators for entrances (doors/windows) blending in with walls
  - Breaching charge graphic blending in with door
- **IMPACT:** Players may not realize they have certain options, or receive false negatives after performing an action (they believe they failed, when they actually succeeded)
- Possible fix: More contrasting colors for environmental assets like entrances, and at least two sources of feedback upon completing an action, preferably one non-visual type

# MINOR: Game stats info

- I assumed the top right UI with number information was for stats like FPS and latency, but the ^ > v buttons were very confusing
- Suggestion: add descriptive text that better explains what the numbers mean, like "x fps" for FPS and "x ms" for latency

▼ 72    ▲ 201    ► 178
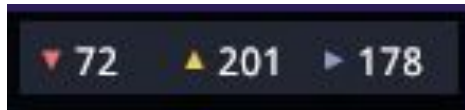
# MINOR: Player icon on minimap

- The player icon on the minimap is a small, unfilled purple circle, which I found difficult to see at first
- Suggestion: change the icon to a filled, translucent circle, so that the player can easily locate themselves without hiding important map elements
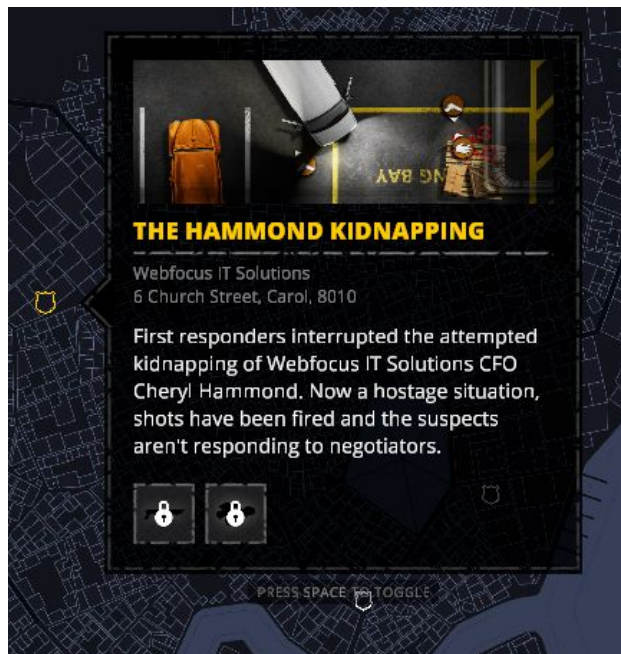
# MINOR: Mission info toggle option on mission selection screen

- I noticed the option to hide the mission info on the mission selection screen, but it was extremely small and easy to miss
- Suggestion: make the button bigger so a player can more easily notice it

# OF NOTE: Locating self in flashbang AOE

- When trying the flashbang during the tutorial section, I was unable to locate the player avatar, which slightly discouraged me from using the tool during normal gameplay
- I'm not sure if this is an intended gameplay feature, but I think it would be helpful to at least be able to locate yourself in the flash

# High-level suggestions for improvement

- I suggest consistently implementing multiple sources of action feedback, not only to satisfy widely accepted accessibility standards, but also to help players better process all the information they receive
- I also suggest adding ways to keep complex controls in players' short-term memories, such as inventory bars and controls reminders, so that players can recognize actions they can perform rather than totally recalling them
- As always, test any changes with real players

# Thank you!

Questions/comments, please email: [alicel11@uci.edu](mailto:alicel11@uci.edu)