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Game 2: Playtest 1

**Starting Up:**

First, for the first five play-testers, I enter their house, where they are most comfortable. I know the play-tester’s roommate, so I ask my friends to visit their house and ask the roommates to test my game. I tell them to openly talk through their thoughts, emotions, questions, and more. I set up my laptop and turn on the recording device. From there, they play up to the 1st level. After, I ask for any critiques of the game and suggestions that may help the game. With my last player, I sent the executable of the game while they are sitting in the comfort of his home and recorded his face and gameplay.

**Game Description:**

The game is about the player in trouble with the law for using copyrighted items. It is his goal to find all the lawyers in each level and escape. Each lawyer will help his case and ultimately win the battle of fair use. Each lawyer is kidnapped from a company and it is the player’s job to save them all. Defending each lawyer however is a mascot seeking vengeance on the player for using them without permission. In each level, grab the lawyer and exit. This game is a comedic, horror game that is both scary and silly. I want the players to feel a rush of fear yet laugh at the absurdity of the game.

**Hypothesis**

I hypothesize (For the first tester):

* + He will try to test jumping off the platform (and I hope he doesn’t).
    - Well, he did. He wanted to explore. Now I must make a restart button before giving it to other play-testers.
  + He will feel scared and do a double take when Sonic moves. Furthermore, when the door won’t budge initially, he will look back at Sonic’s progress towards him.
    - Success.
  + He will laugh at the title screen.
    - Success.

I hypothesize (for everyone else):

* + The majority will feel scared and do a double take when Sonic moves. Furthermore, when the door won’t budge initially, they will look back at Sonic’s progress towards him.
    - Correct. 5/6 felt scares. 1/6 knew that something was going to come at him, so he braced for it.
  + Everyone will be super confused or just laugh at the absurd title screen.
    - Correct. All six play-testers showed a smile, laughed, and questioned the title screen.
  + The majority will get that they must keep pressing the door to escape.
    - 2/6 failed this.

**Biographies**

I watched six people play, but one player’s video was messed up, so he is not included in the video compilation. All six people were males that vary from levels of “hardcore gamer” and “play anything that they see once” personalities. 2/6 players prefer rhythm games, 2/6 players prefer survival/adventure games, 1/6 prefers arcade-fighting games, and 1/6 has no preference. 5/6 are PC gamers while the last person prefers consoles, specifically Nintendo consoles. 5/6 are 3rd or 4th year university students that attend UCI, and the other person is a full-timer worker. Everyone here was chosen from having a mutual friend, but at most acquaintances between me and the play-tester. Before playing, I gave them about 5 minutes so get ready by testing out my computer and listening to my speech of how to talk out your thoughts.

**Playtest:**

Every play-tester played in their house where they are the most comfortable playing their games. For each play-tester, I told them to play up until they successfully leave the first level. My goal for the playtest was to see the initial impressions of the game and to see if the gameplay was intuitive enough for the players to explore. That means they start their playtest with the menu for their initial impression and mindset of what the game entails. I watch where players examined closely and interacted with. I analyze their habits and record if something is noteworthy.

Observations:

* Despite the jump button being unnecessary for the levels and no instructions were given, two players found out that they can jump in game.
* Alongside that, the players who wanted to play the second test level found out they can pick up and throw the ball without instructions from the game.
* All players chose to use WASD keys and LMB and no one chose the arrow keys and the enter button.
* 3/6 players tried to go around Sonic by hiding where the lawyer was hoping he cannot reach the player. One player tried it multiple times.
* One person completely ignored the conversation and skipped where he was taught to open a door. He later struggled trying to find out how to open the door after he was being chased.

**Results:**

What worked well?

* I succeeded to make everyone at least feel some variance of scaring them.
  + Mostly from the Sonic chase, all players started to run quickly while screaming or eyes-open with adrenaline to escape. Some were too scared to think straight and ran right into the Sonic monster.
* Alongside that, I got a laugh from all six of my play-testers in multiple parts of the game.
* The title screen set the player’s expectation to what I wanted it to be: very low, “meme-y”, and funny.
  + All players knew that this game was not supposed to be taken seriously, although some people were too scared to admit or confess initially. They saw the quick, ugly sketch of Aladdin and the flickering background and inferred that this game will be silly, but scary where they may least expect it.

What didn’t work?

* When the player talks to an NPC while still in motion, the character will still move that direction as if they were sliding with no friction. This also includes talking while jumping, which results in the player floating up into the air until the dialogue is completed.
  + I have fixed it and now the player will stay in their position, but I allow the camera to still look around, so it does not feel too static.
* Some players are too hasty and impatient, so they skip over the dialogue. Sometimes, what the NPC says is very crucial to the game, such as how to open a door.
  + To combat this, I add the controls menu for reference of controls and let some NPCs repeat their dialogue, so they can read through it again if the player chooses to be reminded of their abilities.
* Some players complained about the mouse cursor being distracting and I should take it off.
  + I added a couple lines in applicable scripts, so the cursor only shows up when appropriate.
* 2/6 players took over ten minutes to play because they did not understand or panic enough to spam the open-door button. None of the play-testers understood or remembered the foreshadowing of the first NPC saying that the portals are malfunctioning.
  + To prevent being stuck too long, I lowered the amount of times to spam the door button so the probability of finding the answer goes up and no one quits the game due to being stuck in the first level.
* The sprint button ran out fast, so to players, they did not think that the sprint function (left shift) was working.
  + I gave the players more sprint time, so they can understand the different in speeds. Also, I made stamina recharge faster.
* I am sorry professor that the video’s framerate is bad. The frames froze so either the player’s face was frozen, so you cannot see the rest of the game froze and you cannot see the actual process that the player is going through.
  + I learned to use mp4 and not flv. I cannot replicate initial reactions, so I will learn next time.
* One person closed the recording without my knowledge, so there is no video of his interview postgame.

**Survey Results:**

5/6 play-testers admitted they were truly scared at the Sonic scene.

1/6 know he would pop out and braced for it.

4/6 enjoyed the models, albeit “ironically”.

2/6 appreciated that the models were “meme-y” but they weren’t too much of a fan.

4/6 Enjoyed the experience saying that the game passed their (rather low) expectations.

2/6 Knew the game was low effort and didn’t think too much of the game.

3/6 Had no complaints of the controls

3/6 Didn’t like how “E” was used for interaction. They get confused with both “E” and the LMB to interact.

2/6 Said the controls were floaty and didn’t feel tight enough.

2/6 Enjoyed the characters, although they couldn’t remember how they were.

3/6 Didn’t read the texts but did not care for them.

1/6 Didn’t even read.

2/6 Players needed help after not being able to pass the Sonic level. I gave each player more than 10-15 minutes before they gave up.