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User Manual

Introduction and Problem Statement

There's a notable lack of games that effectively cater to a wide range of players while maintaining simplicity and accessibility. For instance, some games like *Mario Kart* prioritize fast-paced gameplay and competition, appealing to players who enjoy speed challenges. Others such as *Ori and the Blind Forest* and *Abzu* focus more of their computing power on delivering visually captivating experiences that appeal to those interested in aesthetics. There are also games that emphasize exploration, achievements, and uncovering hidden elements, catered to users who enjoy experiencing everything in a game. These tend to be open world games like *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* and *Grand Theft Auto*. On the other hand, there are also "casual games" like *Candy Crush* or *Angry Birds* that are geared toward low-stress gameplay and toward users who do not play many games. Our game, *Slay the Chamber* attempts to address all of these players' interests, as it contains strategic depth, is simple to understand, and contains beautiful graphics and easter eggs.

Slay the Chamber, based off of the game *Slay the Spire* is a turn-based strategy game where your character faces off against a monster. The basic implementation of a game in *Slay the Spire* includes the player and the monster alternating turns and playing actions against each other. Every turn, the player starts with a given amount of energy and a fresh hand of usually 5 cards costing various amounts of energy where you would perform your actions from a small deck of cards. Next the enemy/enemies would take their turn either attacking or defending. The game ends when either side runs out of hit points (HP) or health. Lastly, when the game ends, it prompts the user to play again.

Background and Research

In the analysis phase of creating *Slay the Chamber*, we started by playing the game multiple times and by watching game play videos in order to identify the different components of the base functionality of the game, which includes the user playing cards against the one monster. Early on in the design process, we decided to focus on the core game play of *Slay the Spire* as the process of playing cards against an enemy is a simple game structure that is appealing and accessible to both novices and experienced players. Beginners are able to play any card and enjoy the battle against the monster, while experienced players are able to play the game in completely different ways based on whether they want to win quickly or optimize their score.

As we designed the features of our game, we kept in mind the aspects that would appeal to each of our user personas. During our research phase, we gained an appreciation for the graphics and style of the game, so we wanted to recreate the visual aesthetics of *Slay The Spire* such as the detailed characters and the interactive visuals in order to appeal to Jean ("Aesthetics" user persona), who appreciates the visuals and artistry in game play. So in the design phase, we researched similar strategy games that involve decks in order to create aesthetic cards that also are easy to read and use. We designed different card layouts based on cards from *Slay the Spire*, as well as *Pokemon*, which have a hierarchy of: the card name and metrics at the top, a corresponding image, and details at the bottom half of the card. The clarity

of the card layout would appeal to Jorg (“Newbie” user persona), who isn’t as familiar with how the cards work. We also incorporated a constant, repetitive move set for the monster. This design allows for players such as Justine (“Expert Nerd” user persona) and Jimothy (“Achiever” user persona) to learn the attack pattern so that they can develop the best strategy to defeat the monster and optimize their score.

Additionally, the reset button is optimal for the “Killer” user persona player, Janet, who wants to “speed run” the game meaning that they want to beat the game as quickly as possible. They can use the button to keep restarting the game so that they can start up with an optimized hand of cards.

After achieving the base functionality of the game, we added additional features to further appeal to our user personas. For instance, we made the attack and the defend animations faster so that Janet could speedrun the game more efficiently. Furthermore, we added specialty cards such as the “Gamble” and “Heal” cards which helps players, like Jimothy, the “Achiever” user persona, to get the highest score possible. The “Gamble” card allows the player to draw a new hand whereas the “Heal” card increases the player’s HP and ultimately leads towards a higher score. Also, the end screen of the game has a customized message depending on the player’s final score. Achieving a high score would print out “Flawless victory!”, which the user personas, Justine (“Expert Nerd”) and Jimothy (“Achiever”) would love, but there are also hidden messages for people like Justine and Jimothy to discover!

We accomplished all of the core functionalities of the game that we set out to achieve, but if given more time, we would add extra features to our game. Future considerations include adding easter eggs throughout the game, such as changing the character image if a certain key is pressed. This hidden feature would appeal to Justine (“Expert Nerd”), who wants to know every aspect of the game. Additionally, having a welcome screen with instructions would be helpful for the “Newbie”, Jorg, who may need to refer back to the instructions as he plays the game. And since our inspiration, *Slay The Spire*, is very complex and involves intense strategy, we could add more types of cards, enemies with different attack patterns, and various characters with different strengths and abilities. These added components would increase the amount of complexity and strategy involved in the game; they appeal most to Justine (“Expert Nerd” user persona”), who wants to learn everything about the game, and Jimothy (“Achiever”), who both want to totally complete the game. So the added complexity would excite these players to delve into the game more in order to master it in totality.

Overview of Use Case Diagram:

Upon entering the game, the main objective is to defeat a monster by playing various cards. The two main kinds of cards are attack cards and defense cards. Attack cards deal damage to the opponent, while defense cards add shield points to the player. There are also some specialty cards that were added later in development. The gamble card discards the hand of 5 and redraws 5 new cards, and the heal card restores some of the player's HP and adds to the player's shield points. Outside of playing cards, the player can end their turn at any point, or restart the game. Once the game ends, they also have the option to play again. These various actions are represented in the use case diagram in Figure 1.

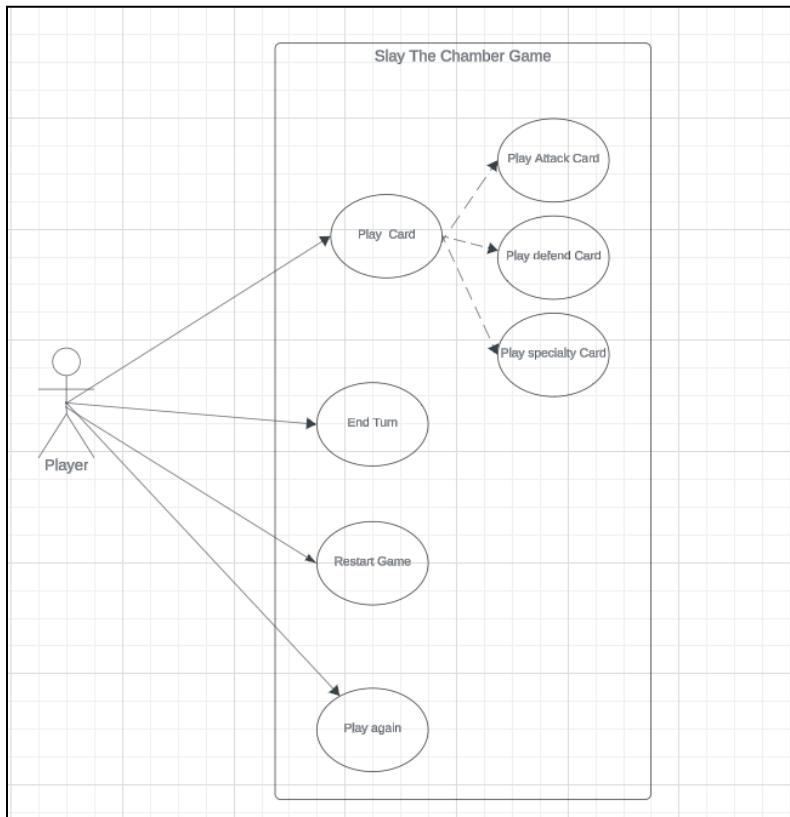


Figure 1: Use Case Diagram

Instructions for playing the game:

In the beginning of our development, we wrote and sketched out step-by-step instructions for each action that the user would have to take to play *Slay the Chamber*. These characteristics include viewing the game on the screen (step 1), selecting a valid card (step 2 and 3), playing the card (step 4), ending the player's turn (step 5), watching the enemy's turn (step 6), and choosing to play again once the game is over (step 7).

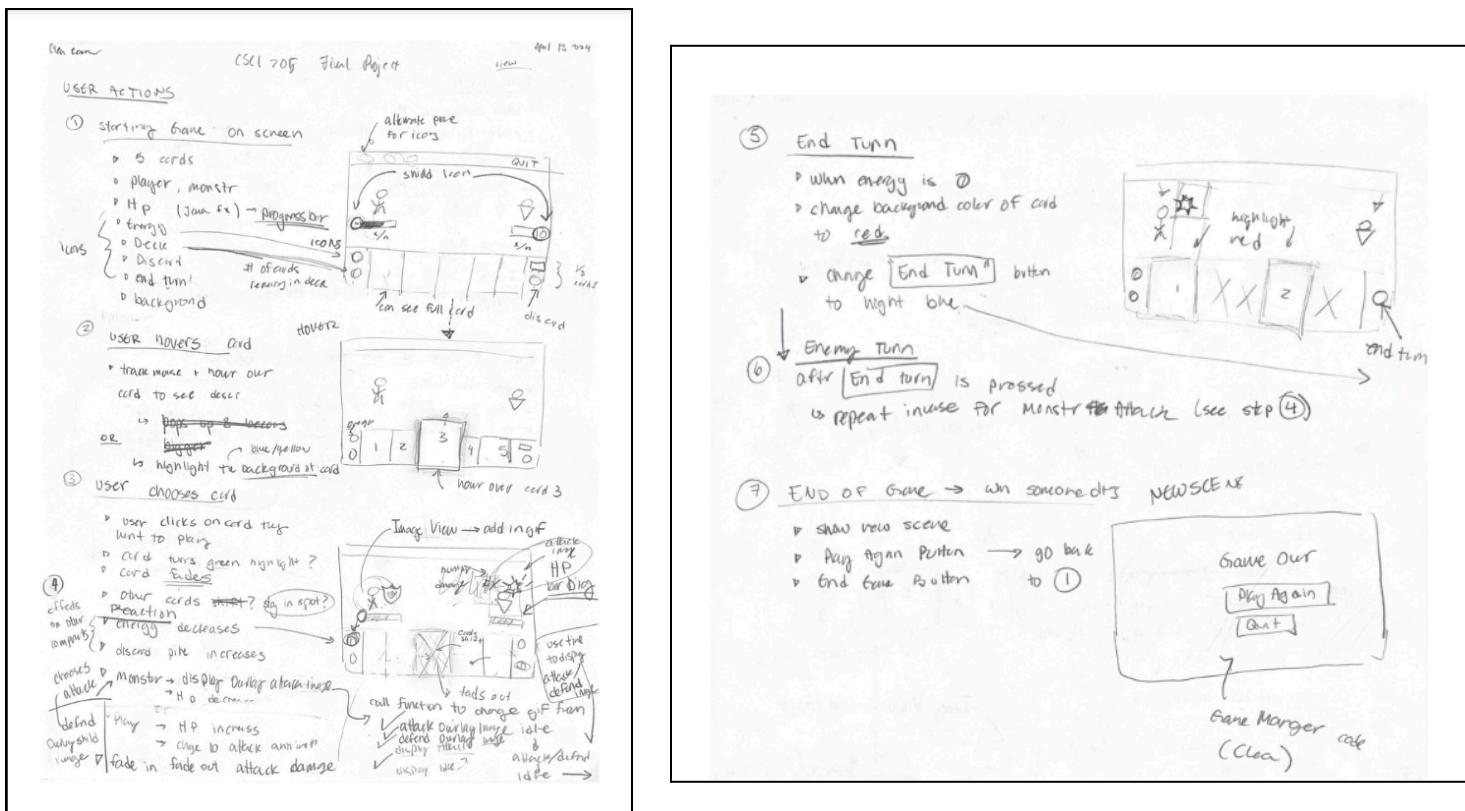


Figure 2: Wireframe for *Slay the Chamber Game*

When the user opens the game, they see all the characteristics needed to play the game (refer to step 1 in figure 2). The player's character is represented on the left, and the monster is shown on the right. Below each character is a health bar which indicates total and remaining health, and a shield icon, indicating their shield points. Positioned above the monster is its intent for its upcoming turn. In the example figure below, the monster intends to deal 6 damage, and add 8 shield points.

Below the characters is the user hand. Each hand contains 5 cards and with a random assortment of attack, defense, and skill cards. To the left of the cards includes icons that indicate how many cards are in the deck, and current energy number, which defaults to 3 in the beginning of each round. To the right of the cards includes an end turn button and an icon to indicate how many cards are in the discard pile. There is also a reset button on the upper right hand corner, that allows the user to completely restart the game if they wish.



Figure 3: Opening Screen for *Slay the Chamber*

It is the user's turn upon starting the program. To begin, the user has to select a card by clicking on it (refer to steps 2, 3, and 4 in figure 2). Every card contains an energy cost that is displayed on its upper left corner. Say the user wants to select the "Slash" card (refer to figure 4). Upon selection, it will deduct 1 energy from the player's total energy, leaving 2 energy remaining. The card will then deal 6 HP damage to the monster, and be added to the discard pile. Suppose the user now wants to play the "Crush" card. The card costs 3 energy, but the user possesses only 2 energy. Therefore, this card cannot be played. In such cases, the card's border will turn red and will remain in the user's hand. Any shield card will increase their shield points as indicated on the shield icon next to the health bar. Any attacks on the player will first decrease from the shield points, and then from the HP points once there are no shield points remaining.



Figure 4: Slash Card, Crush Card, and Shield Points

Once the user runs out of energy or chooses to end their turn early, they can click on the "end turn" button on the right side of the screen to trigger the monster's turn (refer to step 5 and 6 in figure 2). Once the

monster completes its turn, the user will draw 5 new cards from the deck, and their energy will be reset to 3. If all of the user's cards are in the discard pile, the discard pile will be automatically shuffled back into the deck. The game continues until either the player or the monster runs out of HP. Once the game is finished, an end of game screen will appear (refer to step 7 of figure 2). The end screen will display the user score and a play again button.

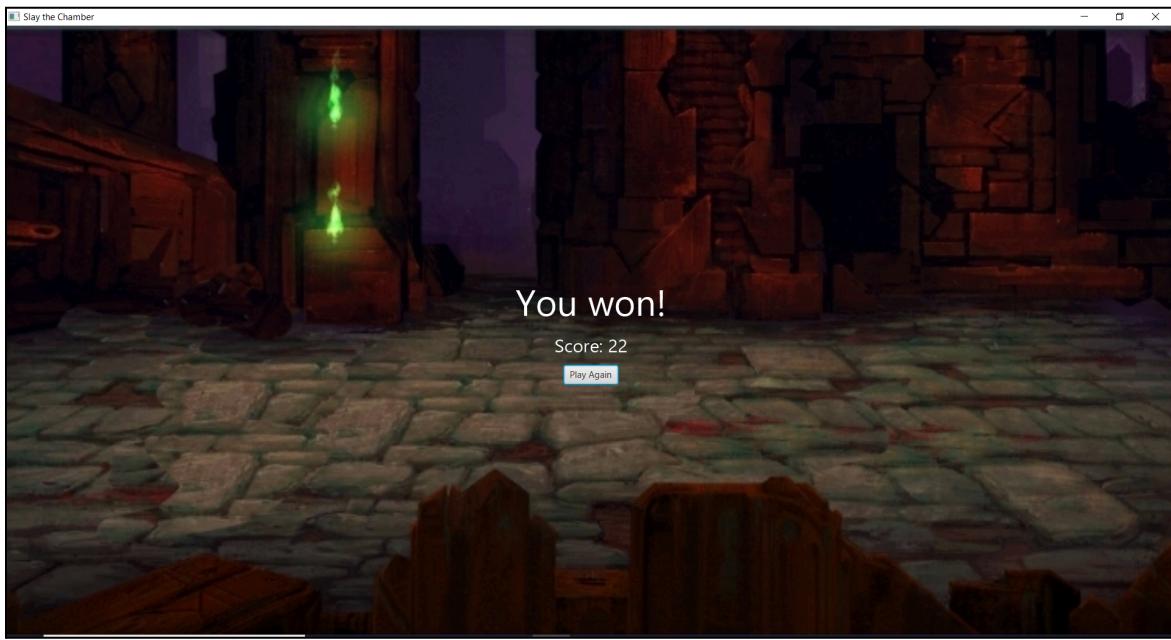


Figure 5: End Screen