Stakeholder Interview

Why did I choose this research method?

Since this project is currently in the “Discover” stage of UX Engineering, I will be conducting a Stakeholder Interview (Farrell, 2017). “Stakeholder interviews kick off a project” (Gibbons, 2022).

I am conducting a Stakeholder Interview to understand the requirements and constraints of the feature I am to develop (Farrell, 2017). I want to know as much as possible before starting, so I can save time while creating what the stakeholder wants (Gibbons, 2022).

How did I conduct the research?

Gibbons (2022) states “there are 3 types of interviews”, and I found the interview I was involved in was unstructured, since I had no planned questions or topics to cover, and the stakeholder was the one leading the conversation.

Gibbons later explains how to be a good interviewer; by ensuring you keep notes, don’t rush or interrupt the stakeholder, keep a neutral emotion, and show you are listening with short acknowledging phrases. Which I followed to the best of my ability.

Each time I was not entirely sure about a part of the feature, I used open ended probing questions, as Gibbons suggests. These allowed me to fully understand the feature and the stakeholder’s vision.

What did I learn about the UX requirements?

- First person shooter (FPS) game inventory system.
- When players walk over items in game, they will be added to their inventory.
- Players have a limited inventory size and will have to choose what to keep.
  This means each item has a use in specific scenarios.
- Players should be able to easily compare different items in their inventory.
  Optional, if the player’s inventory is full allow comparisons in game.
- There should be about 5 classes of weapons: e.g. shotgun, pistol, etc.
  Where each class gets its own ammo type.
- There should be 4 classes of armour: head, body, legs, feet.
- 3 levels for both weapons and armour (not ammo), e.g. good, ok, bad.
- Players should want to upgrade a lower level for higher level, e.g. bad gun for ok gun.

User Interviews

Why did I choose this research method?

Within the “Discover” stage of UX Engineering, Farrell (2017) also includes User Interviews as good research to conduct.

Since I have completed the stakeholder interview, I want to know what inventory system FPS players have preferred to use in the past. Neilson (2010) states User Interviews are useful to know what users thought of a product or feature after they have used it.

I will be conducting User Interviews so I can “understand participants' current behaviors, expectations, or frustrations” (User Interviews, n.d.) around current FPS inventories.

How did I conduct the research?

User Interviews (n.d.) states there are many different types of user interviews, but the type that most fits my situation is generative interviews.

According to User Interviews (n.d.) you only need to interview 5 participants. I have determined that since this inventory will be connected to an FPS game, I should interview players of existing FPS games. Although, since there are many similar FPS games, I want players to have played at least three different games, so they do not have a bias for the couple of inventory systems they have used.

Since many of the people I know that play FPS games are only accessible online, and with many different time zones at play, I have created an online survey for my interviewees to fill out for me. I understand that the effects of Online Disinhibition (Lapidot-Lefler & Barak, 2011) could cause the participants to answer incorrectly, and unfortunately, I do not have a solution to mitigate that issue.

I am also aware of the issue that the “human memory is fallible” (Neilson, 2010) and memories will change as time progresses. I have mitigated this issue by ensuring the participants have played several FPS games within the last month.

The questions I asked of the players follow the critical incident method suggested by Neilson (2010). I use this method specifically to find the inventories that players most and least like using. The advantage of using an online survey as this gives the players as much time as necessary to answer questions about the past, or even boot up any game they want, since “recall can often take time” (Rosala, 2020).

My survey questions follow the example given by Rosala (2020), where the study is introduced with an FPS inventory focus, the player then self-checks that they meet the previously mentioned criteria, then the player rates each inventory system they have previously used, finally the player explains the worst and the best inventories they have used.

There are no official names for inventory systems. So, I have given each type a descriptive but brief name, explanation and examples. This is to ensure players understand what I mean and can answer as well as possible.

What did I learn about the UX requirements?

Please note that the following section uses the type names I assigned in the survey.

Of all the different things stated by the players, filtering and sorting was the most common. This was the main thing that made an inventory good or bad. Even little sorting was not enough for many players to enjoy using an inventory, it must be well developed.

The most liked type of inventory was Carry Weight. This is due to it being the most realistic, and making it easier for players to judge and then discard items that are taking up too much weight.

Most of the least liked inventories were sorting and filtering issues, despite the inventory type.

Average ratings (all out of max 5):
Carry Weight – 4.6
Tetris Style – 4
Limited Category – 3.7
Limited List – 3

How will I use my Requirements Document to prove that my final build meets the users' needs?

The bullet points above from the Stakeholder Interview show the major themes of the project (Gibbons, 2022). I will use them as a checklist in the final build.

The User Interviews hold more detail into what inventory system I will make. This info will allow me to create a prototype, that gets tested and then polished into the final product (Neilson, 2010).

What technology stack will I use for the final build and why?

I will be creating a Unity game, since Unity is the game engine I know how to use.
Unity Learn created an FPS Microgame that looks to be a perfect starting point for my project, this allows me to focus on the inventory system itself and not try to code the majority of a game in a very short amount of time.
I am unsure of other packages or add-ons that I may be including in the future.

References

Farrell, S. (2017, February 12). *UX Research Cheat Sheet*. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ux-research-cheat-sheet/

Gibbons, S. (2022, October 23). *Stakeholder Interviews 101*. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/stakeholder-interviews/

Lapidot-Lefler, N. & Barak, A. (2011, November 10) *Effects of anonymity, invisibility, and lack of eye-contact on toxic online disinhibition*. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563211002317?via%3Dihub

Neilson, J. (2010, July 25). *Interviewing Users*. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/interviewing-users/

Rosala, M. (2020, January 26). *The Critical Incident Technique in UX*. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/critical-incident-technique/

User Interviews. (n.d.). *User Interviews*. https://www.userinterviews.com/ux-research-field-guide-chapter/user-interviews