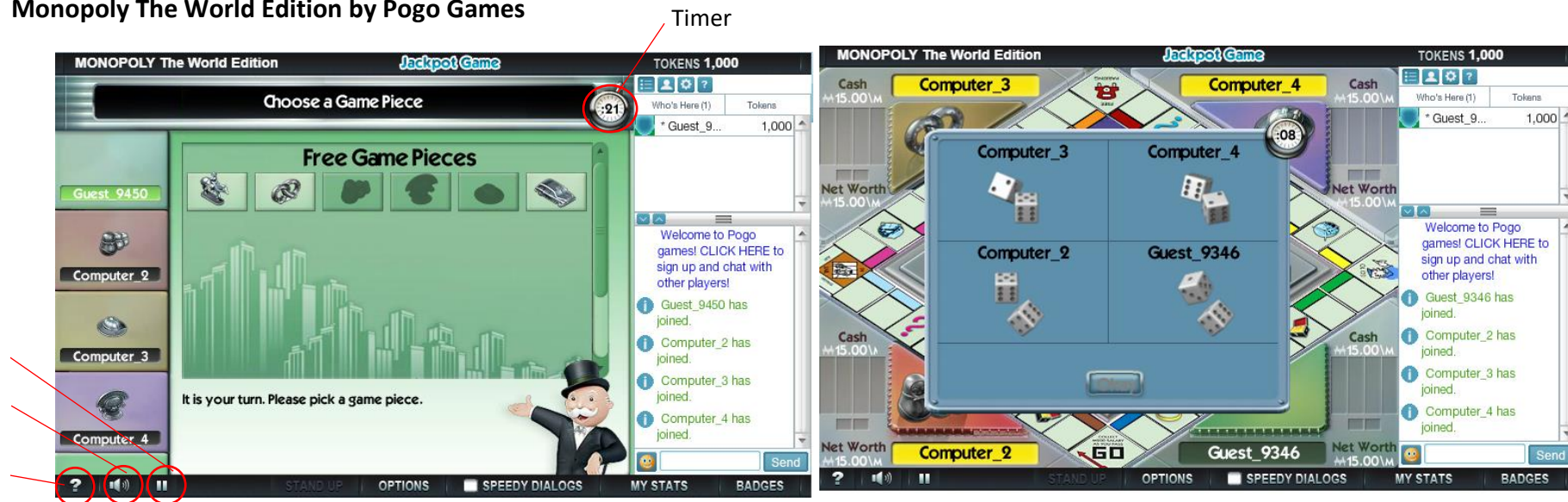By Robert Levy

Research for Property Tycoon UI Design

Introduction

In this document I will be playing and looking at various Monopoly games and drawing inspiration from them to create a UI design for Property Tycoon. This design will show how the game will look and specify things such as colour, buttons, windows and so on.

Monopoly The World Edition by Pogo Games

In this version of Monopoly, you are playing against AI's. The game takes you straight to a screen where you can choose a player token. Below that window is a space for text. There is also a second space for text at the top of the page. They make use of a toolbar to tell the user what to do. The players are also shown on the left by their chosen token and their name. Each have their own colour. To the right is a chat box, but this is only for the online version. Once you choose your token the board becomes visible and a window appears which rolls two dice for each player. This decides the ordering of who plays. The grey bar at the bottom has different options and doesn't change or disappear throughout the game.

I like the fact that each player has their own colour representation as well as their token. I also like the idea of having a bar at the top of the screen to display information. The use of the stopwatch also adds to the visual beauty of the game. The Monopoly character (Rich Uncle Pennybags) also adds to the look and feel of the game.

By Robert Levy

Displays users cash, bought properties and utilities

History   Trade   Build   Mortgage/sell   Unmortgage   Nominate winner

The playing board is displayed from a titled birds eye view. Each player has information about them in their respective corner beside the board. This seems like a sensible way to use the screen space effectively. In the middle of the board you can see how many houses and hotels remain but there aren't any playing cards within the display. This saves space for the logo and give more space to show design of the board. Even though you can't see it in this example, an imprint of a user's token can be seen on a property once they purchased it. The yellow background behind the user's name represents who turn it is and when it is your turn (as it is mine in the image above) a row of buttons appear. When another player buys a card, a window appears showing the image of the card, with a description below it and a button to acknowledge it and continue the game. Similar windows appear when the player wants to or receives trade offers, and a player gets community cards.
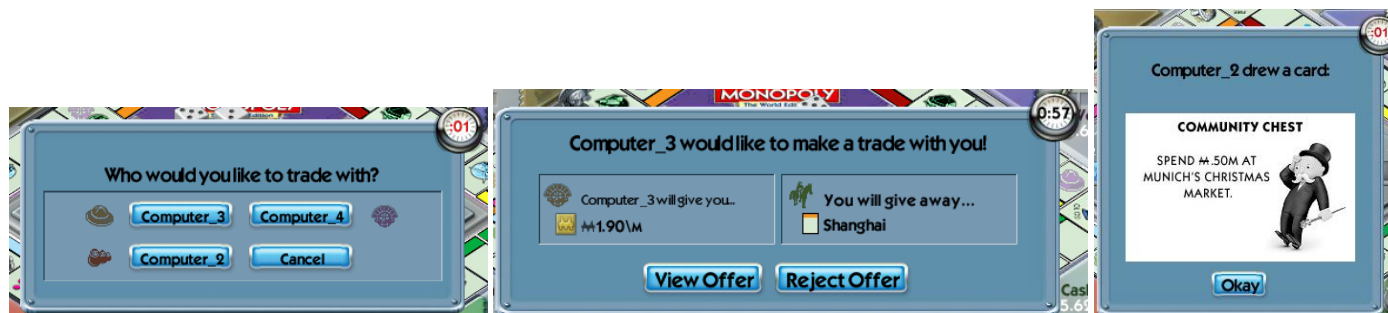
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User information

Cash and properties involved in trade

Cash each player has

Owned properties

This is the screen that appears while you are trading with another player. You can see what each player owns by looking at their board and seeing what tiles have a colour fill. Clicking on one of these will put the in the trade which can be seen to the left of the boards. As a helpful advisor, rich uncle Pennybag's offers advice on whether the trade is a good one. Another helpful thing is the approximate value of the total of each players trade.

The only thing I don't like about this design is how small the board is. It's hard to see what the property is and while playing it I sometimes miss-clicked the boxes.

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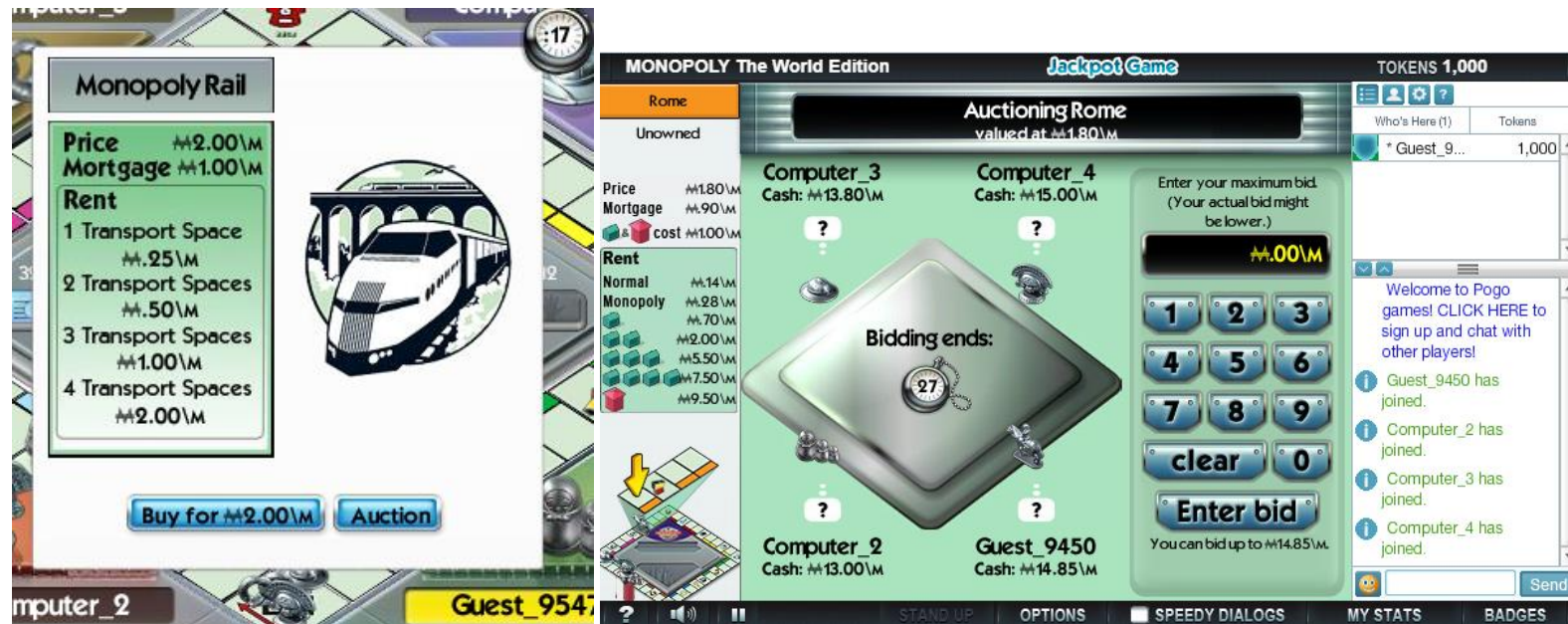
When a player lands on an unowned property an image of the back of the card appears beside a picture of the city or utility. Then you can either buy it or auction it. If you choose auction then you are asked to put your maximum bid in the number pad and enter you bid. After this speech bubble appear contain a bid from each player until the last bidder wins. Helpfully, the card information also appears within this screen on the far left hand side.

By Robert Levy

Monopoly on en.gameslol.net
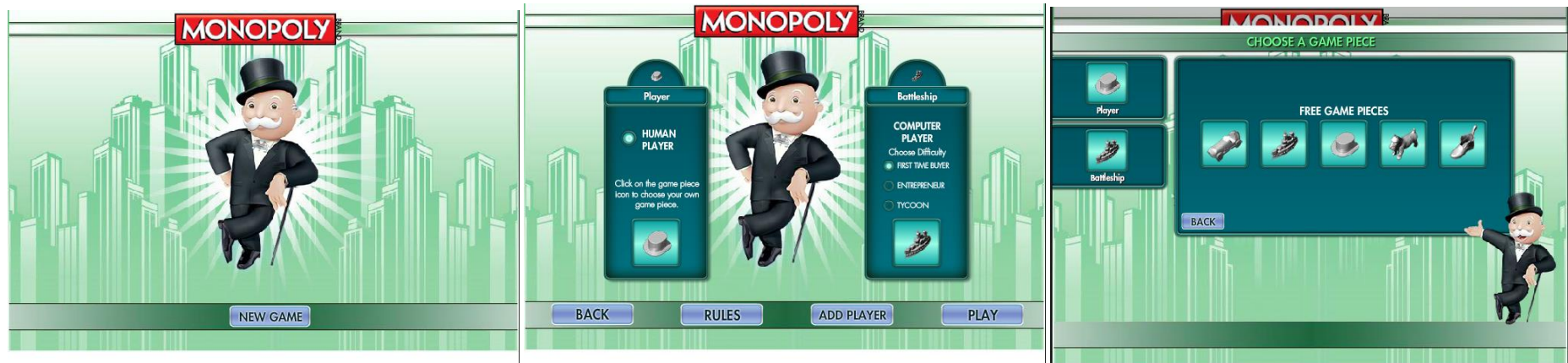
When starting the game you have choose new game and then select your token by clicking on the image of it. You may also add more players. When playing against the computers you can choose their difficulty too by selecting one above the token image. I like the idea of being able to choose your options and preferences through a start GUI instead of jumping straight into the game.

By Robert Levy

Player owned properties, cash, houses and hotels

Game time

History log

Purchased property

Token

Playing options

Each time it's your time to roll the dice a window appears for you to do so. The window contains the name, token and a button to roll the dice. The board is viewed from a straight birds' eye view. Community and chance cards can be seen in the middle of the board. Properties that have been purchased have an image of the players token that purchased it above. To the right you can see players information, a representation for the bank, and a history log. To the bottom of the screen is a row of buttons. These contain game actions such and selling and trading.

This version looks much more neat and easy to view information. Clicking on a player to view their information minimizes the previously opened one, which conserves space and makes it easier to look at.

By Robert Levy

The above images show the windows that appear when landing on a purchased property, trading with another player and hovering over a property. When purchasing a previously unowned property there is a title saying 'FOR SALE' with its cost and the image of the back of the card. You can choose to buy it or auction it. I really like the trading window because it makes it very easy to see who owns what. It's organised in such a way that properties in each coloured section are lined up together. The middle column also shows the card you are hovering over, so that you can make an appropriate offer. This same card appears when hovering over a property within the board. To add a property to the trade you just click on it and a green arrow will appear on top of it.

I like how neat it looks, which is mostly down to the background colours which split the different sections up. There isn't too much information to overload you. The only thing I don't like is that when making a cash transfer you have to hold down the arrows, which makes it hard to quickly put in a specific number. When playing it I found it hard to offer a rounded number.

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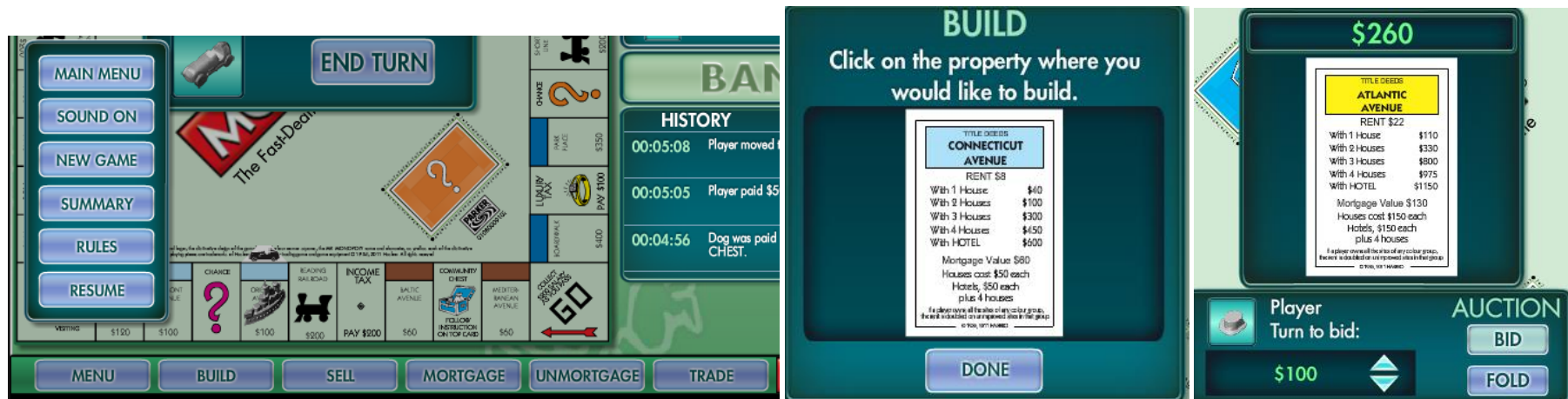
When clicking on the menu button the game pauses. From here you can navigate through some options like starting a new game, viewing the rules and so on. When building and mortgaging a window appears which shows you the card you are hovering over. When it comes to getting into an auction, the third image shows how it works. In this version of the game you can bid multiple times. You use the arrows to increase your bid or use the fold button to drop out he auction.

All the windows within this game share the same design and colour scheme. They always contain the player token and has a main window showing a card, image or text.

By Robert Levy

Conclusion

One of the most important things I found while playing both games was looking for player information, i.e. who owns what, how much money they have and compare it to my own information. This was most key for trading. For this reason, I found the second game better as player information was always visible on the right-hand side. Also, as previously mentioned the trading display was well organised making it easy for comparison. In terms of colour scheme and layout I liked both games. The main colour in both were blue, while grey and black could also be seen in both. The second game having a start GUI which allows you to choose game settings was something I found preferable. Both games featured Uncle Pennybag which adds well to the feel of the game.