

Introduction

Assassins is a fast paced augmented reality game. Each player is assigned a target and given the mission to hunt down their target and “kill” them. This is done shooting them (in real life) with silly string. When a player “kills” their target, their target’s target becomes their new target. Targets are assigned in a giant closed loop such that a player wins when they are the last player standing.

An example of the loop throughout a game is below:

Matt -> Zac -> Elyse -> Jorge -> Matt	Start
Matt -> Zac -> Elyse -> Matt	Elyse Kills Jorge; Now Elyse targets Matt
Matt -> Zac -> Matt	Zac Kills Elyse; Now Zac targets Matt
Matt -> Matt	Matt Kills Zac. Matt Wins

Assassins in the Dance Marathon Community

Assassins was first introduced to the DM Community at the University of Florida in 2011. That year they implemented the first online version of assassins and organized a game amongst their various teams (committees). Since then, Assassins has become a Dance Marathon tradition at UF and in 2014 raised \$2,300 for their cause.

Organization

Traditionally, Assassins is played within the event committees and does not include the general public. This keeps the game a reasonable size and puts the focus on team building. Members of the various committees pay \$5 - \$10 each to play. At the end of the game prizes are given. These prizes are usually a donation to your personal (or team) fundraising page. The prizes are given to the following categories: last player standing, top 3 killers, and top 3 team kill ratios (kills/member).

Games should last no longer than 3 weeks. After 3 weeks players tend to lose interest. Plot twists (described below) can help you speed up the game and keep it from dragging on.

Benefits of Playing Assassins

Team Building: Assassins is first and foremost a team building exercise. When a participant joins a team, the system makes an effort to avoid giving players a target from their own team. This allows players to help members of their own team.

Icebreaking within teams: Because players are targeting members of other teams, they are forced to interact with members of teams they wouldn't usually work with. In many Dance Marathons a Family Relations member might not work with a member of the Sponsorship team, but in Assassins those barriers are broken.

Fundraising: Assassins has the potential to be a very successful fundraiser. Because the prizes are strictly "credit for raising the money" it costs nothing to run and can bring in some extra cash.

Marketing: Assassins is unlikely to go unnoticed and as a result, it generates quite a bit of publicity. After a few days of game-play, people naturally question "Who are these crazy people running around with silly string?" This leads to an organic conversation about Dance Marathon.

PlayAssassins.com

PlayAssassins.com is an online portal to manage games of Assassins. The portal automatically deals with target assignment, user management, and user updates. Players must have a Facebook account to log in.

To get started the game admin will log into the website and create a game. As the admin needs to be impartial, they are non-player users. The admin can decide to password protect the game when they create it; they can also implement a password later, or not at all.

An admin portal is available from the navbar. The admin portal gives the admin access to manage their game.

Teams

To set up teams, the admin needs to go to admin -> game settings, click the enable teams checkbox, and click save.

From there, the admin can go to admin -> manage users and create teams from the left sidebar. Users will be presented with a list of teams to join on signup, or the admin can assign players to teams from the manage users page.

User Roles

There are 3 user roles in Assassins:

Admin: Manages all the aspects of the game, does not play.

Captain: Each team is assigned a captain. This will usually be a Director in your organization. When targets are assigned, Captains are staggered so that they are unlikely to target each other. Captains also have access to move users between teams.

User: This is a regular participant.

User roles can be managed on the Manage Users page.

Inviting Users

To invite users, have them navigate to PlayAssassins.com and join your game. If you have created a password, the user will need to enter it. PlayAssassins.com does not support payments. Any Assassins related fundraising will have to be handled independently.

Starting a Game

Once you're ready to start go to admin -> game settings and click start game. You will have the option to have the portal notify all users that the game has begun.

Notifying Users

PlayAssassins.com allows an admin to opt in or out of notifying users upon any major action taken by the system. If the admin wants to send a custom message to a user they have to do it manually. This is to maintain PlayAssassins.com's reputation with spam filters.

Ending a Game

When the game is over go to admin->game settings to end the game.

Plot Twists

Plot twists are one of the most exciting parts of Assassins. Plot twists rearrange targets in clever ways and give users new constraints to keep the game interesting. As an admin, you can activate plot twists from the game settings page. Plot twists are implemented with the following goals in mind:

Prevent The Game From Getting Stale: There will always be a chunk of users who are unable to find their targets. Plot twists prevent users from having the same (unattainable) target for too long.

Prevent Same Team Targets: While PlayAssassins.com makes its best effort to prevent members of the same team from targeting each other, eventually this will happen. By rearranging targets the system can reposition everyone so that no one has an unfair advantage.

Speed Up The Game: Some of the plot twists require that users make their next kill in a short time period or they're out. This removes inactive users from the game while keeping the core group involved.

Plot twists should be staggered over time to keep the game interesting without annoying users. A full list of available plot twists are available under admin -> game settings. Clicking on a plot twist will bring up a window listing all of its effects.

Game Rules

Admins have the ability to define custom rules to best suit their game of Assassins. A template is provided on PlayAssassins.com. Currently there is no automatic way to notify users of a rule change.