Prototype 4: Saving Animals

Rules and Objectives

Two players are put into a farm with a lot of farm animals including cows, pigs, hens etc. An illness has arrived that only infect animals. The players must find as many ill animals as possible and kick them off the farm before they spread their illness to other animals. The player who kicked the most animals out before time runs out wins.

The prototype application

The prototype is built so that one player uses the keyboard and mouse to control his player character, while the other player uses a controller. Other than movement, only one button is used, which is used for kicking. The game is a split-screen multiplayer game for two players.

How to play:

Players: 2 players
Controllers: one player has a PS4-controller, and the other uses the WASD-and left-mouse buttons.
Time: 3:00 minutes to make the most points
Win-condition: The player with the most points win!
How to get those points: Kick as many animals as possible before time runs out.

Design considerations

When designing the game, we mostly focused on gameplay experience and enjoyment. In designing “Saving Animals”, we are considering the main player-base to be any curious and playful individual, that may find the title and objective to be interesting. The focus of designing the game was to have players go into the game, unknowing of the happenings that will come to be, when they interact with the farm animals, but with a vague awareness of what they should do. Then, upon discovering the main aspects of the gameplay, we aim to inspire a strong sense of humour and silliness in the wake of the surprise.

Key Gameplay Characteristics

The key mechanic in this game is to move around the farm to kick every animal that appears. As the animals can spawn at different points at random, the key challenge is to find out where those animals appear. As the winner is the player with the most points, the player

has to kick more animals than his or her opponent. Some animals, however, reward more points than others, with cows and sheep rewarding the most, while chicken and ducks rewarding the least amount of points. A player can then utilize two strategies; either rack up points by kicking the animals that spawn often, but reward few points, or by going after the animals that reward many points, but spawn rarely.

Player Experience

“Saving Animals” is an Agõn game due to being a competitive game that rely on players’ speed and reflexes for finding which animals to kick. As both player characters behave exactly the same, neither player is given an advantage or disadvantage over each other, providing a fair challenge.
However, having implemented a “Free Mode” to our game, we additionally allow for a purer playful interaction for the 2 players. An opportunity for Mimicry-play in which the player can explore the map and the artefacts in it by their own wished, without the pressures of limited time nor winning scenario. In that sense, the players can articulate their own goals and play by their own rules.

Play testing

This section describes how an initial playtest would be handled, with the intention of determining whether the game creates an enjoyable experience and if it brings the intended emotion to the players.

Setup

Setting the game would only require of asking fellow students to participate, since the students of ITU are potential candidates. The players would then be given a keyboard and mouse and an controller respectively. The players are then given the opportunity to try out the “Free Play”-mode to understand how the game works. Once both players feel comfortable with how the game works, they shall try out the “Competitive”-mode where they can compete against each other. Notes would be taken on the players’ approach and how they seem to be feeling during gameplay.

Data Collection

In order to determine the outcome of the test, the playtests would be recorded on video. The focus of those recordings would be on the players themselves and their reactions toward the game.
Short interviews with the players could also be done after a playtest is over. Such questions that could be answered during interpretation would be:

- Do the players feel that the game provides a fair challenge?
- Do the players feel that the game is an enjoyable experience?
- What did the players initially feel about the game? Did that feeling change during gameplay?
- Why did they feel that particular emotion when playing the game? This is especially important if their emotion is not what we expected the game would cause.
- If the game does not cause the emotion that we expected, how can we improve the game so that it does?