

Ninja Exile

Playtesting Document

Playtesting

The goals for our Playtesting session was to find out whether our design goals of challenge and sensation were achieved. Each playtester was given a chance to play the game before being given the questionnaire. They were then explained the mechanics and game idea before playing the game again with the questions in mind. Upon conclusion they were asked to complete the questionnaire once more.

Goal

Ideally there will be miniscule difference between the first and second playtesting run throughs. We would like for the game to have a similar effect through every playthrough and be picked up easily. The results of similar responses would potentially indicate two things:

- 1) The mechanics are easily picked up during the first playthrough, and explaining the mechanics has no effect for the players as they already picked them up.
- 2) The game is able to draw out the sensation in multiple playthroughs

There are alternative interpretations of the above outcome to be considered. The game may not induce any sensation and so describing the game has no effect, and the game is not any more interesting/challenging while knowing the mechanics (eg. the mechanics don't add to the gameplay). To distinguish between these we will consider the other elements in the questionnaire and not solely rely on similarity.

Hypothesis

The game will feel less challenging on the second playthrough. Some players may not have discovered the Dash movement of the player. This may cause them to have a boring or annoying first experience with less sensation, and we would expect explaining this mechanic would change their perspective as it is a core movement. Apart from this, players that discover all mechanics will have similar responses through both playthroughs, maybe experiencing less challenge through the second.

Method

As described above there will be two variations played through

- 1) The player will play through the game with no explanation of any movement/input buttons.
- 2) The player will fill out the questionnaire.
- 3) The player will be explained the backstory to their character and set the scene, before being explained the mechanics and interaction with enemies.
- 4) The player will play through the game a second time.
- 5) The player will fill out the questionnaire a second time.

Data gathered

The quantitative data that will be gathered:

- 1) Length of the game
- 2) Number of dashes used
- 3) Number of times player took damage.

The qualitative data was gathered using a 5 point Likert scale and text fields.
The questionnaire that the player was asked to fill out is below.

Questions	Response
How challenging was the game	<div><input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></div> <div>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly Agree</div>
The game got more difficult throughout the level	<div><input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></div> <div>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly Agree</div>
I knew what to do during the game	<div><input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></div> <div>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly Agree</div>
I would play the game again	<div><input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></div> <div>Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly Agree</div>
Suggested improvements	<div>Suggestions:</div> <div></div>

Results

Quantitative Game Data

Game Number	Playthrough 1		Playthrough 2	
Player	Player 1	Player 2	Player 1	Player 2
Length of Game(min)	12:47	6:03	10:11	3:49
Number of dashes used	0	11	6	25
Number of times player took damage	19	6	13	2

Quantitative data analysis:

Player one was rather inexperienced with platform games. They struggled with timing on jumping.

1st playthrough – They didn't discover dash. It is worth noting that there are no sections requiring the player to use a dash to pass. They took damage as they started trying to kill enemies but didn't understand why sometimes they died and other times not, so they stopped after taking a fair amount of damage.

2nd playthrough – The player used dashes briefly at the start but eventually forgot about them and completed the level similarly to the first playthrough. They still took damage, however they went out of their way to attack majority of the enemies they came across.

Player two was an experienced gamer, and spent the first 20s of their first playthrough to discover all mechanics. They used the dash throughout the level where they felt it was useful. They also didn't understand why sometimes enemies die. The second playthrough they mastered the dash mechanic and use it to finish the level a lot quicker. They made mostly efficient choices when choosing paths and took almost no damage as they avoided enemies.

It was interesting to see players play the game in very different ways.

Player one took approximately the same amount of time to complete both run throughs but played differently each time. On knowing how the mechanic of the enemy worked they decided to attempt to kill all enemies. This may have been as a result of being immersed by the game and an increased sensation of the back story providing motivation to do so, or may just be because they didn't understand the mechanic in the first run through.

Player two played the second run through like a speed run, attempting to use all the mechanics to move through the level quicker. They also used their knowledge from the first time through to choose more efficient routes which was reflected by the time taken and number of dashes used.

Qualitative data

	Game 1		Game 2	
	Player 1	Player 2	Player 1	Player 2
How challenging was the game	Challenging	Easy	Challenging	Very Easy
The game got more difficult throughout the level	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree
I knew what to do during the game	Neutral	Agree	Agree	Agree
I would play the game again	Agree	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Suggested improvements	Fix the enemy attacking	Consistency in enemies, fix the wall collision	-	Wall collision, Consistency in double jump, more variation

Analysis of Feedback

The players had different experiences about the game. Player one found the game to be enjoyable, and had no improvements suggested after they were explained the design and the mechanics. Player two found the game too easy to complete, and managed to uncover some bugs and inconsistencies in the code. Both players left playtesting feeling indifferent about the game, which suggests more work needs to be done for this game to meet the expectations of our design.

The suggested improvements from both players were mostly in regards to bugs or intricacies in the mechanics. This highlights what we believe to be the biggest issue with the game, which is the scripting. Small bugs or an inconsistency in a mechanic clearly has a large impact on player immersion and consequently one of our core game design aspects, sensation.

The results of player two fit the first of the two goals we were hoping for while playtesting. The player experienced little change from the first and second playthrough in terms of sensation, but found the game much easier on repetition.

Conclusions

The goal of this play testing session was to analyse the success of implementing the game designs of challenge and sensation. The hypothesis was that the sensation experienced would be greater in the second playthrough and the players may experience slightly less challenge the second time playing. For the first statement in the hypothesis the data

acquired doesn't support or deny this. Players were either less interested or no change across the two sessions regarding their desire to play again.

It is clear that there is some work to be done to this game for it to effectively meet our design goal of sensation. While our playtesting had two different types of players since we desired our game to be challenging and one player found it too easy, we should attempt to make the game more difficult for players that wish for a challenge. We could do this by having a difficulty which changes the way enemies attack.

While our mechanics are buggy they seem to have potential for both the casual and advanced players. By spending more time on these mechanics and making them smoother we can increase the sensation of the game.