

INTERVIEW FOR SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT SAT - CRITERION 2

Interviewer: Andrew Nguyen

Interviewee: Stephanie Li (Client)

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Interview footage can be found at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjW3rLzLy5o>

Andrew: Okay. Interview. Hello, chat. You know what we're here for?

Stephanie: The interview of all time.

Andrew: Okay.

Andrew: You can keep this informal by the way, you know, you don't have to be, like, super...

Stephanie: Okay. Cool, cool, cool. That's chill.

Andrew: All right. What do you like most about... playing Taiko?.

Stephanie: I like just playing, like, my favorite songs, I guess. I guess also, like, the competitive aspect, like increasing my rank and all that...

Andrew: Like, watching the number go up?

Stephanie: Yeah. It's fun. And just, like, beating my old scores. Like improving my scores.

Andrew: Okay. Would you say, like, leaderboards are a big part of it?

Stephanie: Yeah. Yeah.

Andrew: You just like seeing your scores go up?

Stephanie: Both, like, with myself, like, just seeing like my numbers improve, and also just against other people.

Andrew: How important is having performance points/pp to you? Like, having a proper leaderboard.

Stephanie: Yeah. I think that's pretty important.

Andrew: Would you play a rhythm game if it didn't have it?

Stephanie: Um, yeah, I would still play a rhythm game. It's just like having a leaderboard is just another advantage that just makes it more fun.

Andrew: That makes... Taiko, specifically?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: So, like, what's the difference between, like... why do you play Taiko no Tatsujin versus osu!taiko?

Stephanie: What do you mean?

Andrew: Like, because Taiko no Tatsujin doesn't really have a global leaderboard. It's just kind of...

Stephanie: Like the console?

Andrew: Yeah. Either the console or the arcade cabinet.

Stephanie: Um... I don't really play the console. The arcade cabinet is just because, like, the physical drum kind of makes up for it. It's just really fun.

[Recording was briefly paused to disable notifications from the second monitor.]

Andrew: What Taiko games do you play currently? I kind of asked that... I'll change it to which rhythm games do you play, currently?

Stephanie: Um, I think the only one that I play regularly is, like, osu!taiko.

Andrew: Okay. What about have played in the past?

Stephanie: Have played? I've played Project Sekai, I've played like, Piano Tiles, if that counts. That's like, rhythm game-esque.

Andrew: Sure, yeah. How long ago did you play Piano Tiles?

Stephanie: When I was, like, a child like, in primary school, you know.

Andrew: Any others? Just list all of them.

Stephanie: Oh, I played, um... I forgot what it was called. Um, Cytus. Yeah, that.

Andrew. Oh, yes. Yes. Okay.

Andrew: And there was this other one, on my iPad, I don't even know if I...

Andrew: Arcaea?

Stephanie: I don't remember. I had it on my iPad. I don't know if I uninstalled it.

Andrew: I'm going to guess it was Arcaea.

Stephanie: Where is it? Give me like, two seconds. It's called Voez. V-O-E-Z. Very obscure, I don't think anyone plays it.

Andrew: No, no, no. I think I've... yeah, no, I've seen this. Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay.

Stephanie: I played it for a short while, but then I dropped it. But it was pretty fun.

Andrew: Fair, fair. It's not obscure. I've seen this before.

Stephanie: Really? I've never seen anyone play.

Andrew: Any others?

Stephanie: There was this one called Deemo.

Andrew: Oh, Deemo, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Stephanie: I don't know if I actually... I installed it but I don't know if I played it. I may have played it once or twice but like, never again. So not that significant at all.

Andrew: Mm... okay. What else?

Stephanie: I think that's it.

Andrew: Anything on desktop?

Stephanie: Well, there's like, osu!std.

Andrew: osu!std? Yeah, okay, that's fine.

Stephanie: I think that is it.

Andrew: Okay, that's fine. Are there any aspects of these games that make them particularly unenjoyable?

Stephanie: Unenjoyable?

Andrew: Like, what sucks about them? Like, at least your most regular ones. Like I'm going to say osu!std because that seems to be... because you've seemed to play that for a short while.

Stephanie: Yeah. Uh...

Andrew: Actually you've played other simulators, correct? Other taiko platforms?

Stephanie: Yeah, I've played the website version, on the Nintendo Switch, on the arcade machine and on osu!. That's four.

Andrew: Have you played OpenTaiko?

Stephanie: OpenTaiko? Yeah. Oh yeah, I forgot about that, oops. That's five.

Andrew: That's five. Okay, are there any aspects of these games in particular that are unenjoyable? Just include osu!std as well in there.

Stephanie: Um, unenjoyable. I don't know if it's related but OpenTaiko takes ten years to load, and also like, the UI is not very... nice. I like the UI on the arcade machines. On the console. The official ones. I think it's just really nice and colorful and cool. Aesthetic.

Andrew: How come... because OpenTaiko you've modded to look like the arcade version. How come it's... what's the issue?

Stephanie: It's still kind of... scuffed.

Andrew: Yeah, okay. Still feels janky? I guess?

Stephanie: Like it's not like completely accurate and like, you know, icons overlap then the text is kind of clunky.

Andrew: Yeah. Right. Right. It's because it renders at a half resolution.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: What about Taiko Web?

Stephanie: Taiko Web? Um...

Andrew: I think you've played every single Taiko solution that exists currently.

Stephanie: Yeah. Pretty noticeable, like delay and like... how do I say it? The sound versus when you actually, like, hit.

Andrew: Oh, yeah.

Stephanie: Like, it's not in sync.

Andrew: Right. So not responsive. Yeah.

Stephanie: Yeah. Like it's not in sync to like the music, versus when you hit the note. Also like the song search system is really.. bad, like i literally can't search up songs. It's either like all in Japanese, or there's like a million versions of that song.

Andrew: So if you're on, like, a song selection screen, would you like it to show English titles or Japanese titles? Because I'm noticing that, in like, for some reason in like, like Taiko no Tatsujin, like the arcade cabinet in particular, like it's... for some reason some of them are in like, Hiragana, and some are just in English like romanized for whatever reason, like romaji or whatever.

Stephanie: It might be, just like whatever's the most, like, recognizable name for that song.

Andrew: Yeah, like that one. That one, song. That, mafumafu... Like, *Hated by life itself*. You know that one?

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: It has the Japanese name on... yeah. So do you think for a song selection screen, what's the best approach to like, localization, I guess? And like, language.

Stephanie: For me, I think it'd be nice to have it in English just because, like, Japanese names can be a bit confusing and, like, having it, like, mixed up, on the arcade versions is kind of... not consistent.

Andrew: Do you think the current osu! solution is good?

Stephanie: I like the osu! solution a lot because like you get customizable maps, like you can play like whatever song you want. And like custom skins.

Andrew: I'm thinking in terms of like, localisation.

Stephanie: What do you mean?

Andrew: Like language. For the song selection screen in particular. Like whatever osu! does, is that, is it good? Because they don't use the characters or anything. Like if they do put it in Japanese, they use the romaji, always.

Stephanie: Yeah, I like that.

Andrew: Yeah. Okay.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: All right. Sweet. Back to games that are unenjoyable, like aspects that are unenjoyable, what about the console?

Stephanie: Console... um... because you have to hit the buttons, right? And hitting buttons for a game that's meant to be played on drum is kind of not satisfying.

Andrew: So what's the difference between that and a keyboard?

Stephanie: The Nintendo controllers... like the buttons aren't very like... they're not comfortable. they're kind of hard to press down especially when you're trying to spam multiple notes.

Andrew: Is there anything that the game itself could actually do to resolve that, or is it just an issue with the controller?

Stephanie: I can't think of any way that it could really... fix it.

Andrew: Is it more enjoyable with a drum controller?

Stephanie: Yeah, definitely.

Andrew: Okay. How come?

Stephanie: Because it's a game that's meant to be played on the drum.

Andrew: Yeah, okay. Fair enough. What about Taiko no Tatsujin? Like at the arcade. Is there anything particularly unenjoyable?

Stephanie: Like in-game wise?

Andrew: Like your experience of actually using the platform. Like playing it. This also includes song selection screen and that sort of thing.

Stephanie: It's more like I have an issue of, like, the actual drum and just the sticks being kind of horrible. The actual software is pretty nice, I like it.

Andrew: And lastly, osu!taiko?

Stephanie: I really like osu!taiko. Um...

Andrew: There's nothing particularly... yeah?

Stephanie: I guess, like, know how songs can be, like, graveyarded or like, qualified, and that? Like you have to wait a pretty long time for a song to be ranked.

Andrew: So ranking system kind of. Kind of.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's fair. Yeah. I think we can move on from that question. All right. So I've gathered that your preferred input device is either a keyboard or drum.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah. Okay. Do you prefer any in particular or is it just, they kind of offer their own experiences?

Stephanie: Yeah. They're both good in their own ways.

Andrew: Yeah. Okay. All right.

Stephanie: Are there any performance... you kind of touched on this one when you talked about qualms with individual platforms, but like, are there any major performance issues with the existing solutions? You seem to play osu!taiko and Taiko no Tatsujin the most, like the arcade one. Are there any major performance issues that you experience? Like ignoring the actual drum controller and stuff, like is it laggy? Is it like... how's the stability?

Stephanie: osu!taiko can be kind of laggy. But that might just be like a system issue.

Andrew: Lag in what way? Is it low FPS? Is it input delay? Is it audio delay? Like how is it laggy?

Stephanie: Yeah, like it kind of just freezes and or like lags and jumps a frame and stuff. And it can make you lose your combo and stuff and it's just kind of annoying.

Andrew: Any input lag?

Stephanie: Not that I've noticed, I don't know. Because I'm not very picky on that stuff.

Andrew: Audio lag?

Stephanie: Not really. Again, it's hard for me to notice that kind of stuff.

Andrew: Okay, it's okay to ignore Taiko no Tatsujin. Because it's on its own specialized cabinet and it's... it can't not run well, because it's only designed to... yeah. Um, okay. What features are essential to a Taiko game?

Stephanie: Like really like base level features?

Andrew: Um, stuff like. Okay, so ignoring the actual gameplay shit. So, like, like...

Stephanie: For example, like the score or something?

Andrew: Yeah. So like, let's say the gameplay elements in game, like you have, of course the track and you have the notes and you have the drum indicator. Right now, aside from that, what are the most essential elements for, you know, your experience?

Stephanie: So I guess the score... um... trying to think about what's actually on a Taiko screen, usually.

Andrew: Okay. What elements do you pay most attention to, then? To make it easier.

Stephanie: I care about aesthetics a lot. So, like, you know, the little sprites at the bottom, that like dance and stuff. I think those are cute. Yeah, yeah. Well it's not really necessary. I guess, like, the score is the most important. Just something that's like keeping your progress and like the combo number.

Andrew: Keeping your progress, being like, song progress?

Stephanie: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Andrew: What do you mean by keeping your progress?

Stephanie: Progress like, something that's tracking like how well you're doing, so maybe like a letter or something, like a letter grade. Or like, accuracy. Just stuff like that, and then your song progress. Yeah. I think that's pretty important.

Andrew: Okay. Do you think Taiko no Tatsujin, like the arcade cabinet specifically, could benefit from, like, an accuracy counter?

Stephanie: Yeah, it could.

Andrew: That's good. All right, so aside from actual gameplay elements, because I think you've kind of covered all of them there, what other things like, aside from actual gameplay, so stuff like song selection screen, like, what do you look for in a song selection screen?

Stephanie: Just like a search bar, like categories, for like different genres.

Andrew: Like a sorting system?

Stephanie: Yeah, yeah. Something that just makes it easier, so it's not just a big list of songs, but something that, like, makes it easier to search through.

Andrew: So do you say you would prefer the osu! searching, like the map selection screen? Or the Taiko no Tatsujin searching screen?

Stephanie: It's because on the Taiko no Tatsujin one, there's no search function. Like you kind of have to go through each category and like scroll through. I guess I'd prefer the osu! one, because like that search function is pretty important, like one of the most important aspects of a song selection screen.

Andrew: Do you care very much that osu! doesn't really categorize by genre?

Stephanie: I guess it's kind of hard for them to do that because, like, you're constantly like adding new songs and stuff that you download from the people...

Andrew: Does it bother you at all?

Stephanie: Not really. Usually I like, just search up a song that I want to play.

Andrew: Right. So aside from the search function, what else? What other features are essential? So searching and sorting are the two big ones?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, okay. Like by sorting, do you mean like by title, by artist, by date added, that sort of thing?

Stephanie: Yeah. That's good. Wait, what was the question?

Andrew: What features are essential to a song selection screen? So, searching, sorting you've got so far?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: What about in terms of song information? Because you would like it to show the song you're selecting. Like what would you like to see?

Stephanie: Um, I like how osu!taiko does it, like they have a lot of information about, like, the song, the artist, how many notes are in the song, how long the song is, I think that's really important. And then the leaderboard as well under it. It's cool.

Andrew: So you seem to just like the osu! selection screen.

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Okay. Difficulty? Like seeing difficulties, is that important?

Stephanie: Yeah, that's pretty important.

Andrew: Okay. Sweet. What about like, in terms of options? What would you like to change? Like what is... like what are some very important options to you?

Stephanie: Options, like what do you mean?

Andrew: Like, in gameplay settings. Like what do you change?

Stephanie: The actual settings of the game? Okay. Being able to customize like the... I don't know what you call it. The input delay and that stuff.

Offset, like audio offset?

Stephanie: Yeah, offset. Yeah, that stuff. And then like, again, I'm really heavy on the UI stuff, so being able to import, like, your own skins and stuff is very nice.

Andrew: How important is that to you? Like UI customizability?

Stephanie: Pretty important. Like, if, like, the current UI of the app is kind of ugly, like the default, then it's pretty important.

Andrew: If the UI looked good enough for you already, would you care if you couldn't change it?

Stephanie: If it was good enough, then I won't care too much.

Andrew: Okay. So let's say you had, instead of having full skin customization, you can just change, I don't know, the color of the sprites, maybe?

Stephanie: Yeah, I think that'd be nice. Having simple UI changes, like color palette, and just general theme. It's nice.

Andrew: Would you like to be able to, like, import and export those themes?

Stephanie: Yeah. But like, it's not like game breaking. As long as the default UI is pleasant to look at.

Andrew: How about like, being able to toggle visual effects?

Stephanie: Yeah. Especially for songs like, with backgrounds and stuff. It can be kind of distracting. So, like, turning off those effects would improve gameplay and stuff.

Andrew: Yeah, okay. What about, like, you know, like the sparkle effects... it's called, like, Go Go time or whatever in the osu! source code, but it's like when it's like during a chorus or something, and it's meant to be like higher energy.

Stephanie: Oh, yeah.

Andrew: Like the fountains.

Stephanie: Yes. Yeah.

Andrew: Would you like to be able to turn that off and that sort of thing?

Stephanie: Yeah, that'd be nice.

Andrew: And what about input customizability? Like just changing the input to... Your keybinds. Yeah.

Stephanie: Yeah that's pretty important as well.

Andrew: All right. What about in terms of video settings?

Stephanie: Just like, FPS and being able to customize like graphics and all that so that it can actually run on whatever device a person has.

Andrew: If it could run fine, would that really matter very much?

Stephanie: If it run fine then I'd be fine with it. But usually, I would want to run a game however high I can just to have the best experience.

Andrew: Fair. Okay, so that's settings. That's map selection screen. Yeah. Okay. I think that that's about... do you have any closing... anything?

Stephanie: Not really. Okay. osu!taiko is like the best solution right now.

Andrew: Yeah. Okay. Why would you say osu!taiko is the best at the moment? Like, just out of all of the current solutions, why is it the best?

Stephanie: I mean, a lot of work has been put into it. It's been optimized really well, all the UI is really nice, it's very customizable. And you can play almost any song that you want. The leaderboard system is cool.

Andrew: What would prevent you from playing another Taiko game?

Stephanie: Prevent me?

Andrew: Like, what would stop you from, like, making the switch?

Stephanie: To, like, a different Taiko version? I don't really know. I guess, like... it mostly has to do with the gameplay. osu!taiko does really well with it really satisfying to play, like the general gameplay is very nice. Like something that would prevent me is just like, the... I don't really know what to say.

Andrew: Would the lack of maps be an issue?

Stephanie: Yeah, definitely.

Andrew: What if you could play osu! maps on the other one as well?

Stephanie: Yeah, I think that'd be cool. Like just having a really large range of maps.

Andrew: Okay. Do you have any issues with not being able to play like, you know, the official TJA maps, like the official songs? Like, do you wish you could do that?

Stephanie: Yeah. Yeah. Cause I know a lot of, like, official songs like Freedom Dive and stuff that I would like to play so I can practice and then like, play on the actual arcade machines.

Andrew: How important would that be to you? If a solution had that would you make the switch if it could play both maps?

Stephanie: Maybe, but that wouldn't be the only reason I would switch, like there'd have to be other reasons, like, the gameplay would have to be almost or just as good as osu!taiko. It just has to be on par with osu!taiko's current systems.

Andrew: Okay, so you've said satisfying is the... okay. What's like some non-essential features that kind of really elevate the experience for like, osu!taiko in particular, because it seems like you've identified it as like, the prime.

Stephanie: Yeah. The satisfaction. You know when you hit a note, it has a certain, like, sound. Like, I think that sound is really satisfying. And if that sound of hitting the drum is, like, kind of not right, then it makes playing feel really not great. Like icky.

Andrew: How do you feel about the official ones?

Stephanie: I like the official ones. Because I've noticed that you know how on osu!taiko, skins can also change the sound of the drum. So some of them are too high pitched or like too, like clicky. And when hearing that over and over and over again, you can kind of like, overpower stuff, like against, like the song, and then you can't really hear the song that well.

Andrew: So the sound is a big part it seems? What else is there?

Stephanie: Like something that's, like, not super essential?

Andrew: Like, it's not necessarily like... it's things that aren't entirely necessary to the actual functioning of the game, but it's still important to you. Like, it's not necessary to the functioning of the game.

Stephanie: I can't really think of one off the top of my head.

Andrew: Things like, so you've identified sound, and visual seems to be a big one as well.

Stephanie: Yeah. UI. Visuals.

Andrew: What's like... yeah. So just being clean, it seems?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Okay. What do you absolutely not want?

Stephanie: Like just like any aspect? I'm thinking of the song selection screen for the website version. Just really horrible. You have to like, like, just scroll and scroll, there's no good search feature and there's no categories and like it's all in Japanese. So you can't read anything.

Andrew: On the [Taiko] website?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, alright. I think that's pretty much everything. Thank you for your time. That's cool.

Stephanie: No problem.

Andrew: Alright. Say hi to Mr. Toet.

Stephanie: Hi Mr. Toet.

Andrew: Okay, byebye.

Stephanie: Goodbye.