

## Space Rogue Playtest Results

### Design Questions

- Question:** Is the overall game too easy or too hard?  
**Description:** We want to be able to see if the game is adequately challenging to the player. A game that is too hard isn't fun for players as they will constantly fail and get frustrated, potentially leading to rage quitting. On the other hand, a game that is too easy is boring and a player would just stop playing after hitting some milestone.
- Question:** Are the rooms designed in a way that involves the player and adequately embodies the expected difficulty we're trying to achieve?  
**Description:** Since the rooms are one of the pivotal elements of the game we want to ensure that they are involving the player correctly. We don't want rooms that are too big where they are struggling to find enemies and we don't want rooms too small where they get overwhelmed by enemies too quickly and can't move around to dodge.
- Question:** Does the game give enough interesting choices to the player?  
**Description:** Currently the game lets the player choose the next room, which is correlated to the reward they receive. Is that choice enough to make the player feel engaged?
- Question:** Are the rewards intuitive and relevant to the player's experience?  
**Description:** We want to ensure that the rewards that the player gets are actually useful to them and valuable enough to feel like a true reward.
- Question:** Is the game easy to use?  
**Description:** We want to ensure that players are not confused about elements when playing the game. Were there any elements that needed to be explained (i.e. controls, mission, features) to the player before they started playing?
- Question:** Are the enemies challenging and realistic?  
**Description:** We want to ensure that the player is adequately challenged with the enemies to keep them engaged, as well as make sure that the enemies behave in a realistic way (i.e. movement, tracking, attacking)
- Question:** Did we give the right features to the player / did we build the right thing?  
**Description:** Since we're building a game in a well-known genre (Scifi, Roguelike), we want to make sure that we didn't miss anything that a player would have expected to have in the game. Nothing is worse than failing to meet base expectations of your users (looking at you Cyberpunk).

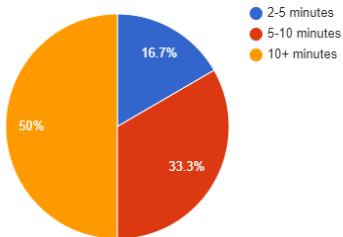
### Approach to Testing Design Questions & Playtest Methods

In order to adequately test the design questions, we used real players (with video game experience) to test our game. We observed the players as they played and had the instructors take notes on what they did so we could analyze them with respect to our design questions. We also gave the user a post-game questionnaire that asked questions that were similar to our design questions (but more experience-focused) to see if there was anything they had thought during the game that the instructors didn't pick up on.

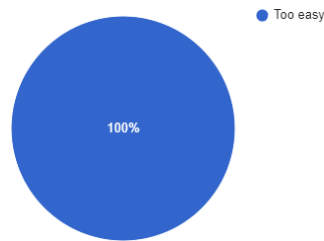
When having the player perform their playtest, we wanted to give them a just basic overview of the game -- a synopsis of the story and a brief overview of the controls. Following that, we just wanted them to play the game with as little input from the instructor as possible. This way we could get as close to the true experience a post-launch player would have. We would be able to see the features a player used (or tried to use), and how it affected their gameplay.

## Results Summary / Analysis

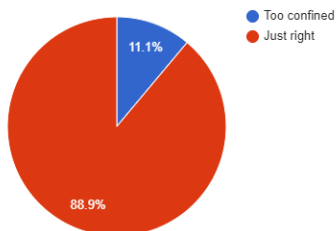
How much time do you think you were playing for?



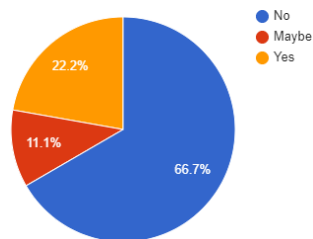
Did the enemies seem overpowered or too easy?



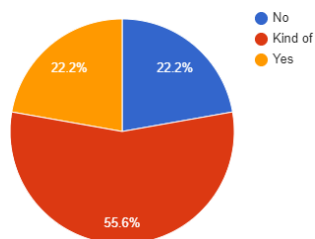
Did the rooms seem too confined or too spacious?



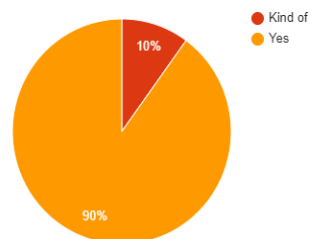
Did you feel like the decisions you made had an impact on your success?

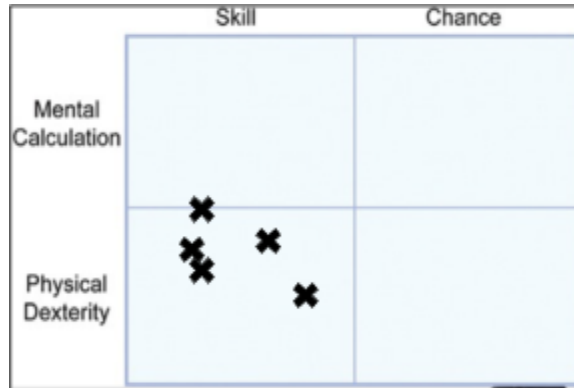
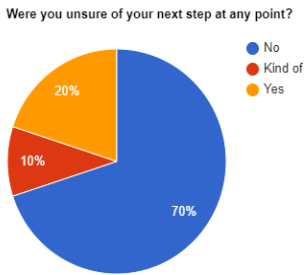


Were the room completion rewards valuable?



Were the controls intuitive?





From the data gathered, we can see that there are a couple pain points that stand out the most. Firstly, all the playtesters felt that the enemies were too easy. We sort of anticipated this response as the enemy AI and health systems are still not fully fleshed out. Secondly, around 66% responded that they felt that their decisions made no impact on their success. We expected this response and it is related to the bare bones rewards system, but also can be attributed to the enemy difficulty as well. Although rewards need more variety and polish, enemies are too easy and die too fast to really feel the effectiveness of any reward. Speaking of the reward system, we found that about half of the playtesters were lukewarm in regards to the usefulness of the rewards they picked up. The other half were split between the rewards being useful and not at all.

In terms of positive feedback, we were happy to find that the majority of the playtesters found that the size of the rooms were good. The majority also found that the controls were intuitive and easy to use. Finally, about 70% responded that they were not confused at any point and knew what they had to do through out the game.

Unfortunately, we were only able to get about half of the playtesters to respond with their playtest matrix but from the data we did gather, we can see that they see the game as one that requires skill and physical dexterity.

We also received more nuanced suggestions and thoughts from the playtesters which we included in the raw results document. We found that a few of the playtesters noted that the room with the hallway was too easy because they were able to camp there and shoot all the enemies. There was a variety of suggestions made so I will list a few here that we feel are important:

"better camera control"	"While weapon upgrades, seems rooms' difficulty has not been increased."
"needs UI or instructions"	"Not obvious how much total health you have. Maybe have the health ticks turn gray when they're gone"
"ball rewards not obvious"	"Boss is way too easy"

"Double fire was not very useful since enemies died too quickly."	Would be cool if you could tell the difficulty of a path (maybe based on # of rooms / types of rooms). Rewards would need to be synced to give better rewards for harder paths
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While there are more, we feel that the above generally represent the most common feedback we received. Some of the suggestions are related to lack of polish, such as better camera control, UI, etc. There are also suggestions related to the core mechanics of the game such as enemy difficulty, the reward system, and feature requests. We feel that we were able to gather a healthy amount of feedback and will be able use it to improve the game going forward.

### Action Items / Future Work

From the data gathered, we've put together a list of action items that we'd like to addressing moving forward. These are the items:

- Update rewards system
  - More types of rewards.
  - Make it obvious what reward each orb represents.
- Flesh out enemy AI and raise difficulty.
  - Polish the enemy AI and make the enemies more challenging.
  - Make the boss more interactive and engaging.
- More meaningful decisions
  - Better rewards, more rooms, etc.
- Polish
  - Improve camera control.
  - Improve player movement.
  - Update HUD.
  - Player and boss animations.

These are all items we already had on our radar but the playtest helped confirm our direction for the next few weeks. We also gathered more data such as suggestions and more nuanced feedback that couldn't be visualized but they can be seen in the raw data document. We plan to take this information into consideration and we continue working on the game.

### Playtesting references:

- <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/business/10-insightful-playtest-questions>
- <https://www.schellgames.com/blog/the-definitive-guide-to-playtest-questions>
- <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bazald/b/eecs-494/projects/3/Ledbetter%20Playtest%20Script.pdf>
- <https://flylib.com/books/en/2.489.1.63/1/>