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Game 2-Playtests

About the game

The game is intended to be about a tank that shoots up at helicopters that drop bombs and follow the player. In its current state, the game is a cube that shoots up at floating spheres that follow the player and drop pellets that kill the player when hit. The mechanics are all there, but the art assets are not.

User Profile Summary

Sydney, Female, age 17, some computer/console game experience

Dante, Male, age 21, high amount of both computer and console game experience

Megan, Female, age 17, moderate to high amount of computer game experience, high amount of console experience

Mina, Female, age 18, moderate amount of console game experience, some computer game experience

Mishelle, Female, age 49, very little amount of computer or console game experience, some mobile game experience

Aaron, Male, age 21, high amount of both computer and console game experience

3 Hypothesis

-I think that players will have a hard time initially, but once they master the game, it will be easier for them

-I think that players will probably need some sort of prompting about the controls of the game since there is no prompt at the beginning of the game.

-I think there may be a lack of positive feedback for the player, be it through sounds, scoring, or ending the game.

The Playtest

Why?

Mostly I'd like to see if my game is difficult enough or too easy. I would also like to see who the game appeals to more, so I tried to have a wide range of players.

Who?

See user profile summary

Where?

I did the playtests in my room on my computer.

What?

See 3 hypothesis

How?

I was present in the room with the player. I did not give them any instructions on how to play the game ahead of time, other than maybe that the mouse and keyboard would both be used, as that was one of the things I was testing for (how easy it was for the player to pick up the game). I was present so that if after a couple of minutes they still hadn't figured it out, I could give them a hint such as "try hitting the spacebar."

Findings

One of the first playtests that I did (before the game was finished) showed that if the player was lazy or smart enough (however you'd like to look at it), there was no reason to move their character around the screen at all. They could sit in the starting position and just spam the spacebar (fire their gun) over and over again and win the game easily. I immediately went into the code and put a cool down on the gun so that the spacebar could not be hit more than twice each second. This playtest was not recorded and is therefore not a part of the six playtests in my video, but the information gained from it was valuable and thus I thought it should be mentioned.

Players for the most part could figure out that they could move their character using the wasd keys, but usually had to be prompted that they could also use the spacebar. When they first tried using the spacebar, it prompted a sort of "Ohhh" response as if it should've been obvious to them, but was not. Only one player was able to figure out all controls without being prompted. Two players had to be told to use the wasd keys to move around. Players either did not notice the score at the top left of the screen or noticed towards the end when all enemies had been defeated. I think I need to make the score bigger and more noticeable, possibly in a color that stands out more.

Players did break the game on several occasions. One player managed to make a collectible disappear from the map causing them to only be able to pick up 7 collectibles and not able to get to the "Winner" screen. Another player pushed a collectible to a location unreachable by their character, once again making them unable to progress to the "Winner" screen. Players also found that sometimes the pellets that the enemies would drop would stack, causing them to be unable to move to a new location or unable to pick up the collectibles after they had killed all the enemies. This is something I would like to look into. One player suggested a timer that makes the pellets disappear after a certain number of seconds.

When players were finally able to understand the controls and were able to beat the game, I was often prompted with the question, "Was that it?" or "Where's the NewGame+?" I could take this to mean that there is not enough positive feedback given to the player, which I believe is part of what this question entails, but there is one other thing that these players did that would lead me to believe something else as well. When I told them yes but also asked them to keep playing the game so that I could gather more data, they all continued wholeheartedly. Many times when I then told them that I had enough data collected and they could be done, they played through several more times before actually quitting out of the game. This leads me to believe that although my game is easy to get the hang of, it is not the easiest to master and

the player wants to continue playing even though they have reached a “Winner” screen at least once. One thing I would like to do is add more levels to my game, perhaps adding increasing difficulty.

Players also seemed to question the different colors of the enemies, though many of them didn’t figure out exactly what the different enemies do. (Color just represents how fast the enemy moves, or if it is Black, it means the enemy will move randomly) One player suggested that I make levels for my game slowly introducing new enemies to make the player understand that each enemy does something slightly different.

Players also commented on their confusion at the enemies “merging” together. They didn’t understand whether this meant anything. In reality, it does not. Perhaps I should make the enemies unable to occupy the same location at one time so as not to confuse the players.

Some players also commented on it being an interesting “mechanic” that they could shoot the pellets from the enemies out of the way. In reality, this was unintentional, but it does seem to be an interesting emergent mechanic.

Often times when players couldn’t immediately understand the controls or would die a lot of times, they expressed their dislike of the game. These same players did seem to be more excited when they would finally win the game however. One player expressed frustration about not being able to use the arrow keys instead of wasd. This player also felt frustrated that she “had to use two hands to play” and “was not coordinated enough.” This player expressed the most frustration at the game, complaining that I had told her she only had to play for 5 minutes (this was around the 3 minute mark). She was my one player that had almost no video game experience and I believe was frustrated that she even had to play the game.

One player began creating his own new goals when he had beat the game several times already. This was due to there being a lack of content, and is the main reason I feel like I should add more levels to my game. This player also was the one who suggested a lot of things as he was playing as well as to me afterwards. He seemed to be suggesting things due to his perception that the game was lacking in some aspect.