

Task-Based Evaluation Report

Cohort 4 Group 3

Team Members

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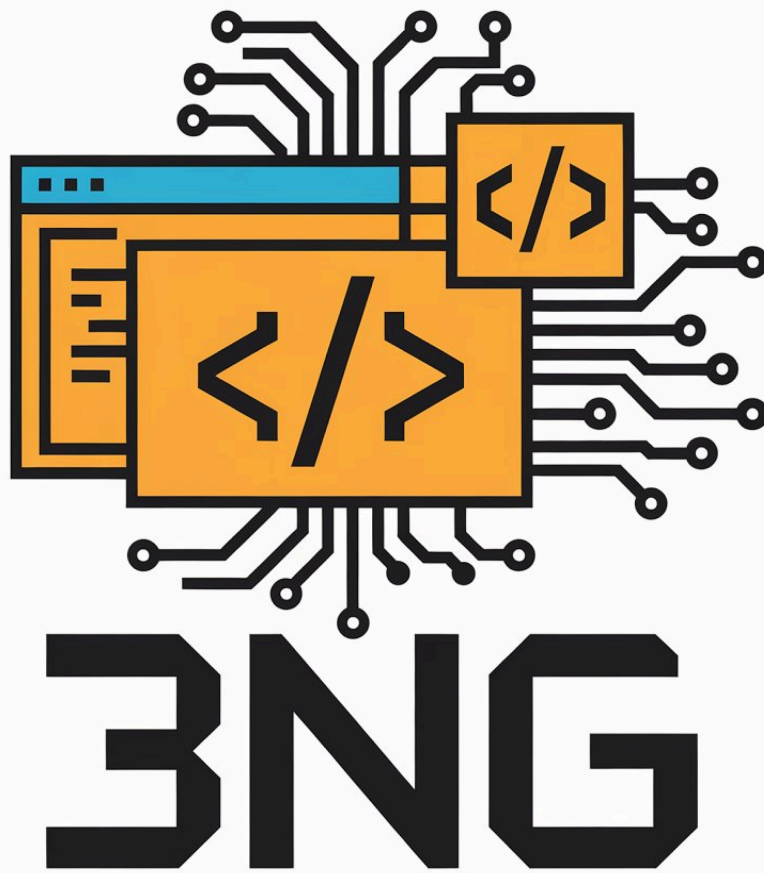
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Part A: Methodology

1. **Approach:** We undertook a task-based evaluation of our prototype. This type of testing checks if users can actually complete essential tasks for the prototype to be considered functional+user-friendly; thus we collected data using a simplified Think-Aloud protocol (Nielsen, 1993), where participants were asked to verbalise their thoughts as they completed tasks. We chose this method because it can reveal the cognitive process more clearly, helping us understand not only what problems exist in the system, but *why* they occurred.
2. **Recruitment:** We recruited an opportunity sample of (N = 3) participants from the student cohort that could represent the target demographic for our game; these were students over the age of 18, that may be interested in playing an escapist single-player game with a theme representing university life. We chose 3 participants because, according to Nielsen, 3-5 users is generally sufficient to discover approx. 80% of major usability issues, and the minimum number of users required by the assessment paper is 3.

3. Data Collection

3.1 Observation Table: due to the strict ethical guidelines we had to follow, audio and video recording wasn't permitted during the evaluation sessions. We recognised that high-quality notes were required for proper reflection, therefore a table was prepared in advance, with tasks on the left and a space for the scribe's notes on the right. This gave the scribe a structured space to write quickly, ensuring a maximal amount of feedback could be captured and the usability problems table could be populated with sufficient detail.

3.2 Timer: A simple mobile app timer was used to record the time users spent on a task, which were logged in the observation table; the decision was made to time tasks because abnormal times can highlight areas of high cognitive load/friction. It also provided more quantitative data to balance our qualitative notes.

4. **Procedure:** Sessions were conducted in a neutral environment (e.g. UG software labs) with the user, an evaluator and a scribe present.
 - The user is presented with the online informed consent form and information sheet for them to complete. Remind the user that they are evaluating the system, not the user's ability.
 - The user is briefed on the predefined core tasks they need to perform on the game prototype, and asked to follow the Think-Aloud protocol.
 - The user is given tasks to perform.
 - Once all tasks are completed, the user is asked the question "On a scale of 1-5, how easy was it to play the game?" Emphasis is placed on evaluating the system features, not on perceived game difficulty.

This procedure ensures a standardised approach for all team members to conduct evaluation sessions, whilst minimising participant anxiety that could produce inauthentic behaviour. It also captures the user's final impression once they aren't stressed or otherwise occupied with tasks.

Part B: Usability Problems Table

The following table lists the usability problems identified during the task-based evaluation. Each problem is mapped to the specific requirements of the product brief and assigned a severity rating based on Nielsen's (1994) scale.

Severity Key:

- **0:** No problem (I don't agree this is a usability problem).
- **1:** Cosmetic
- **2:** Minor (fixing this should be given low priority).
- **3:** Major (important to fix).
- **4:** Catastrophe (imperative to fix before release).

ID	Problem Description	Affected User(s)	Severity	Evidence from interview
P1	Clarity of walkable areas: Scenery representing edges of the map looked like open paths, leading to users hitting invisible barriers	U1, U2, U3	2	Users repeatedly tried to walk through a road graphic at the top of the map.
P2	Accessing pause menu: user thought the esc button was used to pause the game as this is a convention in a lot of other games, however the correct button was 'p' and the window closed when esc was pressed. User initially thought game had crashed.	U3	2	"Did the game just crash? Oh wait it's 'p' for pause"
P3	Hidden event feedback: Triggering a hidden event caused a speed change with no visual notification, confusing the player.	U1, U3	0	Note: fixed in latest build
P4	Lack of exit signposting: the maze exit was visually similar to surrounding tiles, causing players to wander without clear indication of their objective.	U1, U2	1	"I'm not sure where i'm actually supposed to go, i'm just going to keep exploring until something happens"
P5	Unclear event affordances: some visible events did not clearly indicate whether they were beneficial or harmful, causing hesitation or avoidance by players.	U1, U2	2	Players lingered around pickable items, longer time spent around these recorded by the stopwatch.