CSCI 205 Final Project

Team BabaIsUs

ETHICS AND JUSTICE CONSIDERATIONS

I. INTRODUCTION:

When we first brainstormed what kinds of ethics and justice considerations we were going to encounter with our project, we were not really sure what would even be realistic issues. Initially before and during Sprint 1, the only ideas we could really come up with were making sure our game does not use any inappropriate language or derogatory terms that would be considered offensive, and that the GUI did not display any combinations harmful to those with epilepsy. We also thought about implementing multiple language support, but thought against it since we assumed that our stakeholders all speak English so this would be extra unnecessary work especially for a demo model of the game. However, this discussion opened up for more abstract ethical ideas such as the importance of some kind of tutorial or instructions, since game rules are especially abstract. The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), is a society with the goals of advancing computing as a science and a profession. One of the ways they do so is by promoting a code of ethics and professional conduct, as computing professionals have a capability to make huge impacts on the world, so they should do so responsibly. Overall, our game did not have too many ethics or justice considerations to think about, but there were still some that we thought about during the process.

II. ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS:

Here is a list of the ethical principles that we thought about during the design and development of our game. Most of the other codes in the document were more relevant to code

dealing with private and confidential information so we decided to not consider them for this project:

1.1 Contribute to society and to human well-being, acknowledging that all people are stakeholders in computing.

This Code is kind of obvious and easy to accomplish with a videogame unless you do so very intentionally. A game created to demonstrate the skills learned by students in college definitely doesn't NOT contribute to society and human wellbeing,

1.2 Avoid harm

This was one of the first ethical considerations we made before we even started coding the game, as the last thing we intend to happen with our game is to hurt someone with epilepsy, or triggering/hurtful imagery.

1.3 Be honest and trustworthy

We tried hard to make sure that none of the claims made in the game were false or misleading, especially when creating the main menu instructions, and in game hints, as it would be unfair to the user if this information was not relevant at all to the game.

1.4 Be fair and take action not to discriminate.

Overall, it was pretty easy not to discriminate against any group of people, as there are no humans in our game, and the user is able to change the color of their character easily if they have any issue with the one we chose for them. Also, the game can be played using exclusively the arrow keys and mouse, meaning that even those with non-english keyboards can play the game. One issue we did think about, is that our original version of the game was very text-based, which

might prove difficult for some, but decided this was not relevant as it is one of the core "challenge" features of the game.

1.5 Respect the work required to produce new ideas, inventions, creative works, and computing artifacts.

Initially, once we decided to replicate a simpler parody of the already existing game BabaIsYou, we began to research how the original developers accomplished their implementation. We quickly realized that not only would we be just plagiarizing him, but it also defeats the purpose of the project if we as developers did not input our own creative decisions. Also, the whole point of a Scrum process is to iteratively build a product from the ground up, making design decisions as we go.

III. JUSTICE CONSIDERATIONS:

When considering different perspectives of Justice and how they interact with our game, a few important topics are touched. Firstly, our game is quite equally perceptible since literally nothing in our game has anything to do with humans altogether, culture and experience are not integral to the gameplay, and we tried to accommodate for disabilities as best we could without eliminating core functionality of the game. One aspect of our game that increases its accessibility is the fact that no reaction time is needed for the game, anyone who is capable of pressing the buttons and seeing the screen can play. A small dissafordance in our game is the fact that there is a level progression requiring users to beat one level before they move to the next, however this is intentional in many games and was not seen as an issue. It is unrealistic to be able to accommodate for everyone and every goal in our project, as there is always a trade off between

certain affordances and disaffordances, thus placing certain users at with advantages over others (This is more in the perspective of disabilities, not race, gender, etc).

Surprisingly, the part of our project most influenced by perspectives of Justice and systems of power was the way we created our games buttons, controls, and overall menu layout. No one specifically told any of us that we should make the main menu be a list of buttons and a title, that the escape button would bring up the in-game menu, or that volume should be adjusted by a slider. Most of these were most surely subconscious choices, based on the countless GUI's we interact with on a daily basis leaving an impression of what should be a normal layout. When we as developers were tasked with creating a game, it is interesting to think about how much of our game is just based on our own societal norms of what a video game should look like.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Following a Scrum development process lets the developers iteratively look at each individual issue in the project under a microscope, which allows for discussions and decisions on important ethical or justice considerations to occur on every step of the way, while also visualizing the bigger picture of the whole project. This process also allows for those involved in the development process to comment on possible issues or changes early on. For example, let's assume that the Stakeholders are much more knowledgeable on the implications of certain affordances and disaffordances involved with the project. Having Stakeholders be capable of pointing out issues before the project is completed allows for more rigorous, thoughtful code, which performs its goals as intended in the fairest way possible without limiting essential and basic functionality.