

## WSOA3003A

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Assignment 02

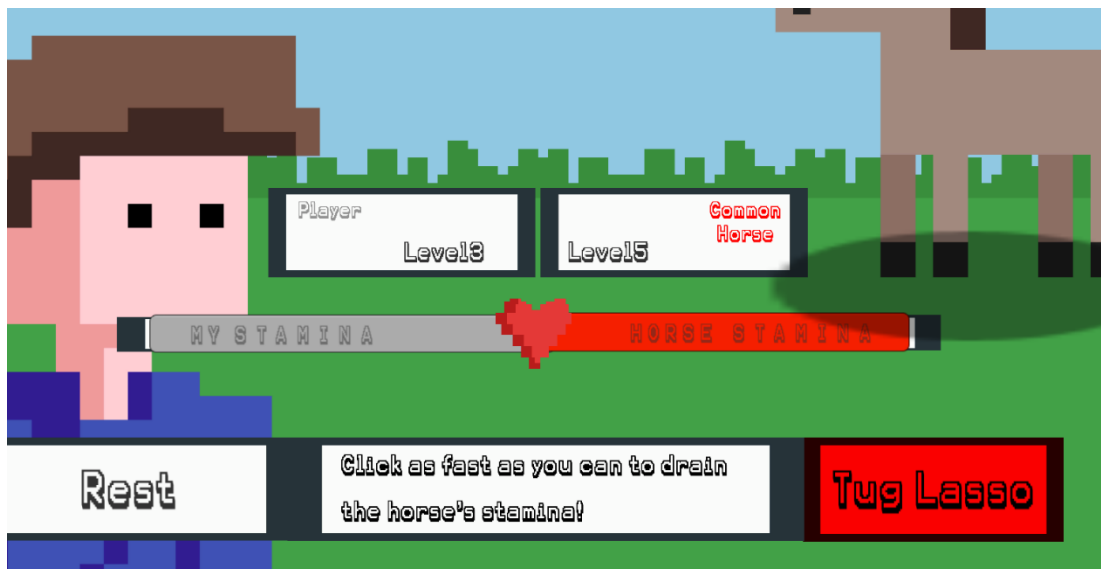
Communication Design Micro Project

Analysis

In the second prototype of my game, there was a focus on communicating what to do in the game. In this analysis, there is a clear intention, process and reflection. Mainly following the brief, the intention is to communicate a creative way to provide information to the player, may it be visually or through experience in gameplay. Building up from the previous iteration, the game was prototyped to slowly fit in new mechanics and grow. As a designer, I wanted to add my own twist into the mechanics and make something a little different.

Focusing on the intention of the prototype, mentioned above, is to communicate information to the player. UI (User interface) needed to be added in a specific way to show a correspondence between entities. This was done in the use of colour coding and placing buttons closer to what they affect. When changes are made as the player interacts with the game, it needed to be noticeable. However, these changes from the previous iteration to the current one has been documented and can be explained further.

Firstly, the font of the text had been changed because it was clearer for the player to read. A subtle screen-shake was added to enhance the game-feel of taming the horse. When tugging the lasso, there is a sense of action that the player does that is meaningful. When a player is tugging the lasso, they know that they are straining their stamina and trying to tame the horse. There is no screen-shake for when the player rests, indicating that it is not an action that will achieve the game goal. However, movement of the screen will stop and simulate the action of resting and regaining stamina.

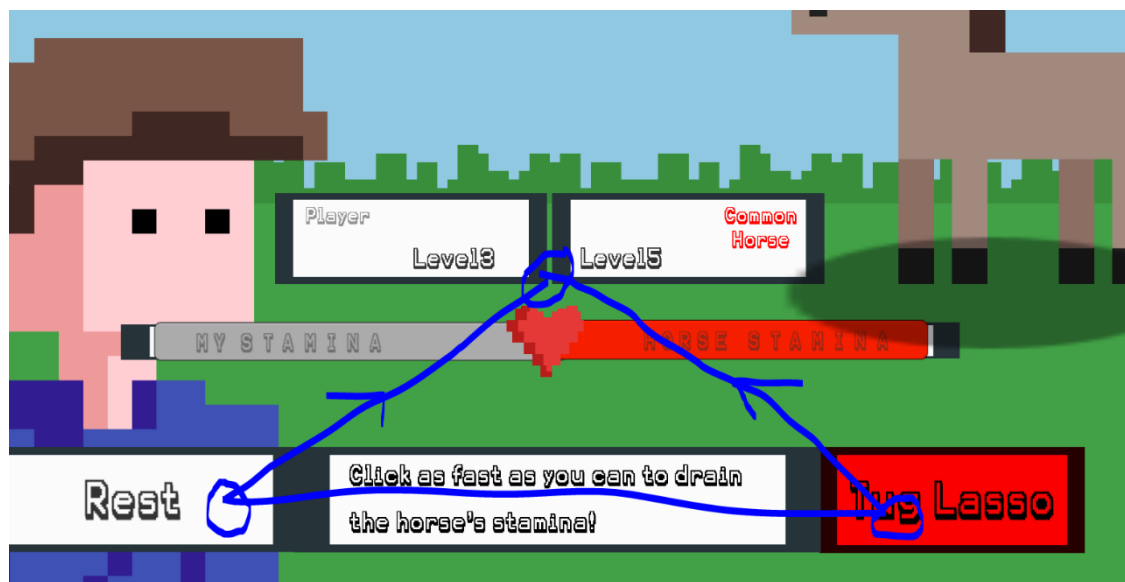


*Figure 1: A screenshot of the game when a player selects "Tug Lasso" option.*

In Figure 1 indicates colour co-ordination. As the player hovers their mouse over the buttons,

they change colour that match with the corresponding assets in the game. In this example particularly, when a player hovers their mouse over “Tug Lasso”, it clearly shows that it is the same colour as the Horse Stamina. When pressed, the horse stamina depletes. This button is also placed on the same side as the horse stamina bar, showing that it is placed logically for the player to understand. The same can be said for the “Rest” button, also on the same side as the player’s stamina bar. In between the two bars is a heart icon, which has been animated to look like it is beating rapidly. This has been placed here because it visually communicates the convention of an active and fast event that is tiring. It is the same idea as when doing a strenuous task that makes someone’s heartbeat faster. It is the indicator of where the game will finish. If a player’s stamina bar or the horse’s bar ends up touching the heart, it will conclude who is the winner of the game.

The middle bar between the two buttons is what the player can read if they are stuck. Through playing the game, the player does not necessarily need to read everything that is in the box, however, serves as a guide. It also separates the buttons into two sides, acting to indicate that there is a focal point, the heart. The one button is on the right and the other on the left, which shows that the UI is balanced. See Figure 2 below as an example.



*Figure 2: A visual representation of how UI guides the player's eye to the key mechanic of the game.*

Finally, as a personal reflection of the game in relevance to Communication Design, the key points to follow are where the UI is directing the player’s eye to. It is the same as an artwork, it cannot be all over the place. It will be too confusing and a mess, no matter how good the mechanic might be. With a game like this that relies on UI to communicate its mechanic, it must be ordered in the right way to be read easily. This is just a simple 2D prototype, however, demonstrates the ability to show UI design. I can argue and say that the boxes of information of the player and horse and their levels are not needed, as visual aspects of the game communicate who is the player and what is the AI. To communicate the game, I followed consistency. Without consistency, it will break flow and ruin the game experience for the player. So, evidently, everything is in pixel art. In future, UI can be changed into

pictorial elements that communicate the same thing, however for this prototype, it demonstrates that even words can do the same thing.

To conclude, this project was built on the previous assignment to focus on the communication design. UI positioning was changed to correspond with what they affected and aimed to achieve a balanced system that the player could understand. The game flows into a focal point that directs the player's eye to. Camera shake was added to subtly give the player information that they were doing something meaningful in the game, and when resting, the shake stops. This technique follows the idea of what happens in the real world, giving a sense of familiarity. Overall, it is clearly evident that my game communicates ideas and information to its player.