

A/B Playtest

Assignment #7 – CMS.301: Spring 2016

Summary: *The task is to modify an existing game and playtest the two versions to decide which one to keep.*

Learning Goals: Practice the fundamentals of playtesting.

Key Dates:

- Session 13: Exercise presented in class.
- Session 14: Completed playtest report due **before** class. Submit as PDF on the class website. One submission per student. The playtest is presented in class. Each student has 4 minutes. There is not time for using any presentation aids.

Assignment Description: This is an individual assignment.

Students will perform an A/B playtest where two versions of the same game are compared in order to see if a modification is beneficial in relation to desired experience outcomes.

- Planning and development

Pick an existing game/play activity such as Monopoly, Poker or Hopscotch and choose a way that the game potentially can be improved. For example, Monopoly might be better if it plays faster. Then make a prototype of the modified version of the game.

Create a script that will be read to playtesters giving the minimal set of instructions necessary to play a selected section of the game.

Decide which questions you want the playtest to answer. If your goal is to increase the sense of direct competition by making Hopscotch a two-player game, you can for instance ask in which version the tester felt that there was more at stake and other questions that together will produce the relevant information.

- Test execution

Invite at least three people representing the intended audience for the game.

Read the script to the testers. Observe and record them playing both versions. Since there is no separate facilitator, I strongly recommend making an audio recording for private use. Taking at least two pictures is mandatory. Also take notes.

Interview each tester separately. Use keywords based on the questions you are trying to answer in a semi-structured interview.

The whole test execution should not take more than an hour per playtester.

- Analyze and report

Go through the collected materials and figure out what the data means in terms of design decisions. Write a two-page (maximum) report summarizing the test. The report should include:

1. A description of the game modification.
2. The script used in the test.
3. First names of playtesters (3-4 people, no more than two of the same gender), with a brief description of each person including age, occupation, gaming habits (if any), favorite games (if any).
4. A summary of observations and feedback. (Include at least two images.)
5. Reflections on the results and your design decisions based on this information.

The highlights of the report will be presented and critiqued in class.

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