

Games I: Design and Architecture

Week 06 (10/02) Physical Prototypes and Playtesting

What Playtesting Is Not

- Not you and your team playing the game and discussing its features (internal design review)
- Not finding bugs (quality assurance)
- Not focus group testing
- Not monitoring how players respond to interface (usability testing)

What Playtesting Is

- A method to determine if your game **meets user experience goals**, functions as intended, is **fun**, and is **balanced**
- Done **throughout** the design process
- Ideally players are members of your **target audience**, and don't have any preconceptions of your game

Playtesting Your Playable Prototype

Self Testing

Testing With Confidants

Testing With Strangers

Testing With Target Audience

Prototyping Stage	Playtest on Your Own	Playtest with Confidants	Playtest with Target Audience
1) Foundations	●		
2) Structure	●	●	
3) Formal Details			●
4) Refinement			●

Conducting a Playtesting Session

Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Warm-up Discussion (5 minutes)

Play Session (15-20 minutes)

Discussion of Game Experience (15-20 minutes)

Conducting a Playtesting Session

Introduction (2-3 minutes) - minimal explanation

Warm-up Discussion

- “What kind of games do you like to play?”
- “What do you like about these games?”
- “Where do you go to find out about new games? Why?”
- “What was the last game you purchased?”

Conducting a Playtesting Session

Play Session (15-20 minutes)

- Encourage players to think out loud
- Take notes!
- Offer help only when it seems needed

Discussion of Game Experience (15-20 minutes)

- “What were your overall thoughts?”
- “What did you think about the gameplay?”
- “Were you able to learn how to play quickly?”
- “What was the objective of the game?”
- “How would you describe the game to someone?”
- “Is there anything you would have liked to know before starting?”
- “Was there anything confusing? Anything you didn't like?”

Let's Get Playtesting!

First Round (40-45 minutes)

- Host: Team Won / Players: Stab'nShop
- Host: Team Koga / Players: Project 2.5 D

Second Round (40-45 minutes)

- Host: Stab'n'Shop / Players: Team Koga
- Host: Project 2.5 D / Players: Team Won

If we have time:

Third Round (40-45 minutes)

- Host: Team Won / Players: Project 2.D
- Host: Team Koga / Players: Stab'n'Shop

Fourth Round (40-45 minutes)

- Host: Stab'n'Shop / Players: Team Won
- Host: Project 2.5 D / Players: Team Koga

Playtester Feedback

Sample form (p.284)

9.10 Observations and Playtester Comments

IN-GAME OBSERVATIONS

[Your thoughts as you watch the testers play]

IN-GAME QUESTIONS

[Questions you ask the testers as they play]

1. Why did you make that choice?
2. Does that rule seem confusing?
3. What did you think that would do?
4. What is confusing you?

POSTGAME QUESTIONS

[Questions you ask the testers after they have played]

General questions

1. What was your first impression?
2. How did that impression change as you played?
3. Was there anything you found frustrating?
4. Did the game drag at any point?
5. Were there particular aspects that you found satisfying?
6. What was the most exciting moment in the game?
7. Did the game feel too long, too short, or just about right?

Formal elements

1. Describe the objective of the game.
2. Was the objective clear at all times?
3. What types of choices did you make during the game?
4. What was the most important decision you made?
5. What was your strategy for winning?
6. Did you find any loopholes in the system?
7. How would you describe the conflict?
8. In what way did you interact with other players?
9. Do you prefer to play alone or with human opponents?
10. What elements do you think could be improved?

Dramatic elements

1. Was the game's premise appealing to you?
2. Did the story enhance or detract from the game?
3. As you played, did the story evolve with the game?
4. Is this game appropriate for the target audience?
5. On a piece of paper, graph your emotional involvement over the course of the game.
6. Did you feel a sense of dramatic climax as the game progressed?
7. How would you make the story and game work better as a whole?

Procedures, rules, interface, and controls

1. Were the procedures and rules easy to understand?
2. How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?
3. Could you find the information you needed on the interface?
4. Was there anything about the interface you would change?
5. Did anything feel clunky, awkward, or confusing?
6. Are there any controls or interface features you would like to see added?

End of session

1. Overall, how would you describe this game's appeal?
2. Would you purchase this game?
3. What elements of the game attracted you?
4. What was missing from the game?
5. If you could change just one thing, what would it be?
6. Who do you think is the target audience for this game?
7. If you were to give this game as a gift, who would you give it to?

REVISION IDEAS

[Ideas you have for improving the game]

The Play Matrix

	Skill	Chance
Mental Calculation		
Physical Dexterity		

	Skill	Chance
Mental Calculation	Go Chess Warcraft Starcraft Tetris	Poker Backgammon Blackjack Chutes and Ladders
Physical Dexterity	Unreal Halo Basketball Football Dance Dance Revolution	Operation Ker-Plunk! Pin the Tail on the Donkey Whack-a-Mole Tag Twister

For Next Week (10/09) [Mid-term]

Physical Prototype - this time it counts!

- Process will be the same
- Take notes if you can (will help for digital)
- Grading criteria:
 - Game is playable
 - Objective is clear
 - Player experience goals demonstrated
 - Feedback from Week 06 taken into consideration

Physical Prototype Grading Criteria

- Game is playable
- Objective is clear
- Player experience goals demonstrated
- Feedback from Week 06 taken into consideration

NOT about how polished or balanced your game is

NOT about how you conduct the playtesting session