Lecture 23: Playtesting

CM 148
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No final exam

Final Inform Presentations: Monday, June 8, 4-7pm

5 Assignments (35%)
Reading Quizzes (10%)
Midterm (25%)
Inform Storyworld + Presentation (30%)
Think-Alouds

• Sit down with a tester and encourage them to say what they’re thinking out loud
  – “I’m going to try this now...”
  – “I wonder what happens when I do this?”
  – “I expected it to do something else”
  – “That was great!”

• Take notes
  – What problems did they run into?
  – Where did they get stuck? How did they get stuck?
  – Where did they seem confused/frustrated/bored?
  – What worked well? Where were they in the flow state?
Think-Alouds

• The goal is to find the few biggest, most glaring problems

• It only takes a few testers at a time
  – 2-4 testers will find your biggest problems
  – More testers will just find the same problems

• **Iteration is important**
  – Identify problems
  – Prioritize and fix problems
  – Test again with more think-alouds!
Affordances

• Users afraid that they are using the system incorrectly
• In reality, it’s the designer’s fault
• YOU are the designer, don’t make a shitty experience for your players
• Find out what’s broken and fix it
Line up all three sheets so that two ladders of hydrogen bonds form between the center sheet and each outer sheet. Remember you can use rubber bands to bring the sheets together.

Congratulations!
Foldit Playtesting

• Playtest with 2-3 people (bribed with cookies)
• Share prioritized problems with developers
  – game-breaking vs. slightly annoying
• Run more playtests when problems were fixed several days later
• Many, many iterations
Bugs:
* Game still doesn't reset played levels when new users sign in
* Entering an incorrect password in the game or on the website yields weird 'server down for maintenance' or 'something is srsly broken' messages -- should probably be "oops, your password is wrong."

Annoyances:
* can't select text in sign-in widget
* want a button to clear away all floaty junk on the screen
* finishing last intro puzzle should take you directly to puzzle types

Confusion:
* wiggle tool: needs to be stopped manually
* wiggle tool: why does it sometimes mess up the protein
* shake tool: want to see it in action, more explanation
* pull tool: what it's doing/why, more explanation and suggestions for use would be good
* not clear that stubs are hidden side chains
* H-bonds: not clear when/why/how they form... hard to move sheets into the right position, hard to tell what the right position is. can there be a way to automatically pull towards positions that create H-bonds? a Hydrogen-snap-to tool?
* need info about how competition puzzles work, no max score, other players online, objective, problem description
* 'go to best score' button isn't obvious

NEEDS:
(after these levels, users aren't too intimidated by competition puzzles anymore, but they are still a bit too hard and frustrating without extra help.)
- draw attention to where tools live (1st level with shake tool)
- draw attention to wiggle-stop
- draw attention/change name/suggest as a hint sometime about the 'best score' button
- more explanation (available on demand) about h-bonds, all tools, competition levels, what protein folding is
- change 4-3 text (assigned)
- lower 5-3 score a little bit (assigned)
The challenge of scientific discovery games (Cooper et. al. FDG 2010)
Think-Alouds

• Split up into small groups. Everyone is either:
  – playing a game (and thinking aloud)
  – observing someone playing their game

• Think aloud!
  – First impressions, what you’re trying, what actions you want to be able to do

• Take note!
  – Where do your players get stuck?
  – What did they do that was unexpected?
  – Use these notes to form an action plan for improving your game

• Submit your notes here: http://bit.ly/1Q0C5Nt