GPF104: Playtest Report

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# Introduction

This report details the data obtained from playtest feedback, which was useful in gauging what aspects of our game needed improvement. This report will detail the issues with data collection and detail the results of playtesting from each round of playtesting. Finally, this report will provide a summary of all playtesting results. This report is to document the outcomes, findings, and insights from our game's playtesting process.

# Notes on data

Our total responses collected throughout our playtest study consisted of 11 responses split unevenly over three rounds of playtesting.

Playtesting rounds were conducted over three weekly sessions via public bulletin posted to the Torrens University Discord community and by enlisting the help of friends. These sessions spanned between the following dates:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Playtest Sessions | | | |
| Playtest Round | **From** | **To** | **# Responses** |
| 1 | 25th July 2023 | 31st July 2023 | 3 |
| 2 | 2nd August 2023 | 6th August 2023 | 2 |
| 3 | 7th August 2023 | 10th August 2023 | 6 |
|  | | | **Total:** 11 |

Table 1 - Playtest Rounds and Reception

Due to our small sample size[[1]](#footnote-2) and lack of distinction between friends and strangers[[2]](#footnote-3) per response, we cannot comment on definitive relationships or correlations with the data collected and must also account for bias. Feedback received served as a rough guide for decision-making when tweaking our game settings and implementing new mechanics in the pursuit of delivering a fun and enjoyable experience for the player.

# Playtest Round 1: Refining Arena & Controls

The first playtest session immediately followed our finished game prototype. We collected data on playtime, score, player movement, enemy spawn times, map size and trap spawn rates. In response to the feedback, player movement speed was raised, as were the number of traps generated, the arena size was also made smaller. We also collected feedback on tactics and other notes/concerns the player encountered when playing.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Any other comments? | Last Score | | Last Time |
| Found a bug where a spider spawned inside a tree and couldn't move. Had to kill it with a fireball. Would be nice to have a healing mechanic, like switching between spells with the scroll wheel. Otherwise, far too slow to start enemies I [sic] think, if you're aiming for arcade game feel. | 1255 | 02:28 | |

Table 2 Example feedback from Round 1 Playtest Survey

During this stage of development, we were mostly interested in refining the game arena, spawn rates and player controls so we could focus on implementing different enemy types and other mechanics during this early stage of production. In response to feedback, we adjusted the spawn rates, so the game started ‘faster’ and began discussing ideas about a healing spell.

# Playtest Round 2: Finalizing Mechanics and Enhancing User Experience

For the second round of playtesting our game-play mechanics had been finalised and we were starting to get a real feel for how the game looked and felt. The data collected consisted of game time, game score, scroll spawn rates, enemy spawn rates, loading times, player movement, including questions relating to tutorials and game menus.

From the feedback received relating to game time and written feedback fields it became necessary to add a potion mechanic to lengthen game-time, as well as to increase player movement speed. Feedback also highlighted the need for instructions on how to play, and several bugs that needed fixing.

During this stage of development, we focused on load times, optimization, and implementing more robust solutions for feedback responses.

# Playtest Round 3: Addressing Feedback and Improving Gameplay

The third and final round of playtesting had the same questions as the previous surveys, music and sound suitability, visual coherence, loading times. From the responses we concluded that loading times, player movement and spawn rates for enemies and scrolls were no longer an issue.

Table 3 Scroll Spawn Rates over Playtest Sessions

|  |
| --- |
| Question: Please describe any strategies that you created. |
| Find an open area and kite. |
| Ran around in circles until the enemies blobbed up and then used the scroll to kill them all. |
| Wide circular to group up then inferno tougher mobs. |

Table 4 Strategies Play Testers Invented

We also began noticing a pattern in responses relating to tactics such as kiting enemies around the central tower, which was resolved by adding more traps. In addition to this, we decided to remove world collision for the ghost enemy type. The click to shoot mechanic was another cumbersome issue we needed to resolve and decided to alter it to support the mouse button being clicked or held down.

# Summary

In summary, the only data we could use to measure the effectiveness of changes was a general upwards trend in playtime over our playtesting sessions. The decisions made in response to feedback had a noticeable impact on gameplay duration. Further balancing of our game mechanics from playtesting is needed for the player to reliably achieve our initial pitched time of 5 to 10 minutes of game time.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Data Summary | |
| Average Time | 03:08 (mm:ss) |
| Average Score | 2114 |

Table 5 Data Summary

Table 6 Game Time throughout playtest iterations

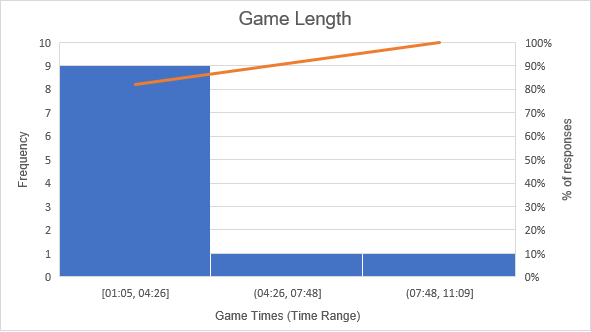


Table 7 Pareto Chart of Game Time Responses

# Conclusion

In conclusion, this report illustrated our data collection methods, outlined our data's reliability, and how that data was used to shape our decisions over three playtesting sessions. For each session, this report states our primary focus and what data we were primarily interested in at the time of each playtesting session. Finally, we summarise what information we could use to gauge the effectiveness of our implementation.

# References

Catcheside, S., & Powell, S. (2023, August 12). Untitled Wizard Game. *Playtest Survey*. Adelaide, South Australia, Australia: Unpublished Raw Data.

1. 11 responses, which limits our ability to generalize our findings. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Participants included the public and friends and was factored when interpreting the data. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)