

Playtesting Report

1. Playtesting session

Playtesting party

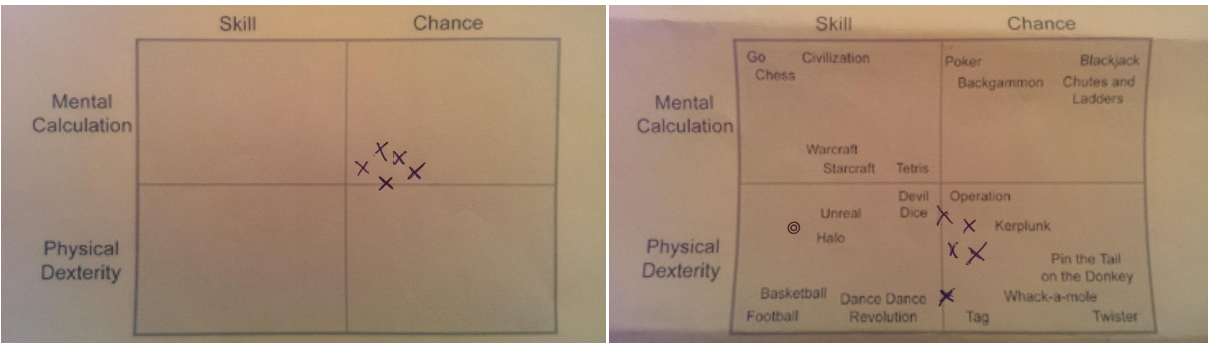
We planned a playtesting session with several friends at one of our homes, but only five guests were able to attend. Some of them were not playing a lot different video games that much, but everyone had at least some experience with playing on a computer. This is why we tried to have some additional friends to test our game in a more private setup distributed over several days, as the winter holidays were a time for them to get back to family, which makes planning ahead difficult.

When the guests arrived to test our game **Icewave**, we thanked them for participating and offering us their time. After a short indication of not testing their skill but our game, we started with our playtesting.

At first, we let one player after another play the game with the keyboard to begin with, followed by the smartphone control to receive also feedback about our control scheme. The other players waiting for their turn where able to spectate the currently testing participant, so they could learn a bit beforehand about the game for later questions about their first impression compared to after they played the game. We didn't really inform the players about certain behaviors nor answered specific questions, only when they were stuck because of some bugs. They were testing a game still in beta stage after all.

Questions

To begin with this section, we let the players use the Play Matrix to get the tester's thoughts about our game. For this we used two different matrices, one without entries and one with filled in examples, to see if they would shift their view on **Icewave** after seeing some other games.



Our impression where the game should be is on the highlighted dot position on the right matrix. (85% Skill/15% Chance, 65% Physical/35% Mental) ©

Our playtesters saw the game as being more chance based and on the mental region at first, but changed their view slightly to shift it more to the physical area. Reasons for their opinion

were the, sadly, occurring bugs, which seemed like their input didn't really matter that much. Also our physics assisted the controls that much, that the board was very stable on the water to reduce the chance of being too difficult, which in return made it too easy and less interactive. This is why they changed it afterwards to physical, as they rotated the smartphone very much in hope of having an influence. This needs to be refined.

In general, we see **Icewave** as a skill based surfing game where the player has to study the water behavior and react to that, which should, in the optimal case, make it hardly chance based. We agree with the physical dexterity, but it shouldn't be that high as the testers presumed, as the game should still be fun, not exhausting.

Additionally we asked our playtesters some post-game and formal elements questions on the playtesting slide. The answers are summarized following the question.

Post-Game Questions

- How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?
 - o Keyboard less intuitive, smartphone better, but still a bit difficult
- Did anything feel clunky or awkward?
 - o Steering needs improvement, surfer didn't behave as anticipated
- What was your first impression?
 - o Nice graphics, amazing technical background
- How did that impression change as you played?
 - o Impression confirmed, but strange score calculation
- Was there anything you found frustrating?
 - o Smartphone steering laggy, surfer jumping around
- Did the game drag at any point?
 - o Repetitive game, otherwise no
- What was missing from the game?
 - o Scoreboard, multiplayer, different difficulties/levels, obstacles, reward system
- If you could change just one thing, what would it be?
 - o Improved steering, multiple soundtracks, more objectives

Formal Elements

- Describe the objective of the game.
 - o Slide on the wave, collect points
- Was the objective clear at all times?
 - o Yes
- What types of choices did you make during the game?
 - o Slide from left to right and slightly forward/backward, buttons to press
- What was the most important decision you made?
 - o Amount of force and timing to steer
- What was your strategy for winning?
 - o Balancing movement, continuous sliding, hold out as long as possible
- Did you find any loopholes in the system?
 - o Bug in score calculation (5 million points), other bugs
- What elements could be improved?
 - o Steering, some bugfixes, music

Summary

We got valuable feedback from the playtesters, some of which we already knew but didn't have the time to change.

A lot of the players were over rotating the smartphone as of having less influence on the motion of the surfer. This is due to the difficulty assisting feature of our control on the physics side, which needs tweaking according to some difficulty settings. Because of that, the game was too easy in the playtesting session and standing on the wave was no big challenge. Some people were requesting combos and multipliers, which we already thought of, but only for an extra target and not in our given timeframe.

2. Changes

- Surfer
- Collision
- Animation
- Sounds

Planned changes

- Highscore list
- Difficulty settings

3. Suggestions

- Different game modes
- Obstacles