

Playtesting: Beyond our Sight

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Team Two*2

Maximilian Hess

Oliver Jung

Viktoria Kirchleitner

Moritz Schirra

Playtest Preparations

The Playtesters

To acquire playtesters, we asked friends from various backgrounds to play our game. Only prerequisites were a windows computer, a stable internet connection, a microphone and an existing Steam-account since our multiplayer connects via Steam. In general however, hardware strength and specs may vary across testers, which mirrors the real world case of very different players trying out the final game.

In total we had 13 playtesters. Most of them were between 18 and 30 years old and had experiences with video games before playing our demo. In most cases, the testers that played together knew each other or were friends beforehand, as that is how cooperative multiplayer games are usually played.

Preparations


Since we developed a multiplayer co-op game, we needed two playtesters to play the game at the same time and be able to communicate with each other. Therefore, we set up a Discord server on which we made all necessary information accessible and invited our players.

To get feedback on the game and potential bugs, we created a questionnaire with Google Forms containing general questions about our players, the players satisfaction level, controls, UI, the puzzles and potential bugs. There, players also received a general introduction to the game and its setting and got to know our protagonists. Furthermore, we built our game and provided our testers with a link to download it.

Test Structure

Before starting the actual playtest, we asked our subjects to answer a couple of questions about themselves and their background in gaming.

After finishing, we provided them with a short description of the general theme of the game and the basic controls. The playtesters would then proceed to play the game on their own with us interfering only when asked for help.



Afterwards, our subjects either choose to play the game a second time, this time out of the other perspective, or to directly finish the questionnaire with questions about the demo, satisfaction level, different aspects of the game and possible challenges and bugs that they encountered. In some cases, one of us was present silently during the testing to get more insights on how players approached each puzzle and what common pitfalls might be. Once, the playtesters even made a cut video of their playthrough to help us further.

Playtesting Results

During playtesting most testers encountered situations where the view on their character was blocked by another object (e.g. a table). This led to moments of confusion because they could not see what their character was doing and where they were at the moment. Furthermore, the testers specified they were missing more information about the environment and also feedback for interactions as well as the successful completion of puzzles, especially regarding right and wrong button presses. Additionally, they wanted some more hints on what they need to do next, because some testers interpreted parts of the rooms / puzzles incorrectly and were confused as the puzzles could not be solved with their approach.

Concerning our narrative, the players indicated the setting and characters were not introduced well enough inside the game. Therefore, they often did not understand why one character is able to do a specific task (e.g. sneaking through an observed area) and the other is not able to do the same. Especially in the last room of our first level this behaviour frustrated multiple testers as only one of the players had the opportunity to enter this area and the other one could not even see what was happening in the other room. In this case one player had to wait until the other solved a part of the puzzle and could not offer any help. This was stated as boring.

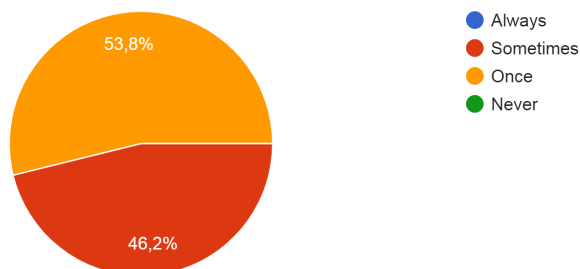
Other problems arose from multiple bugs which our testers faced during playing. Some of them made the rooms more challenging, but they did not prevent the players from progressing entirely. Most of these issues have been fixed in the meantime. The most common one was an issue, where movable chairs could be shoved to a wall and were thus not usable anymore, as there is no pull functionality. This is now prevented by a small ledge on the ground which stops the chair ahead of the wall. Another problem arose with items placed in a way that they cannot be picked up again or items getting lost while respawning.

Beside the mentioned issues the testers feedback was quite positive. They stated their communication with their partner has worked well and the visual style of the game was very appealing. Also, most of them liked the music and agreed it was fitting with the game. Some would have liked more different sound effects and an additional music track for the menu. Concerning our characters and their abilities / perception, the testers preferred Alice over Anton.

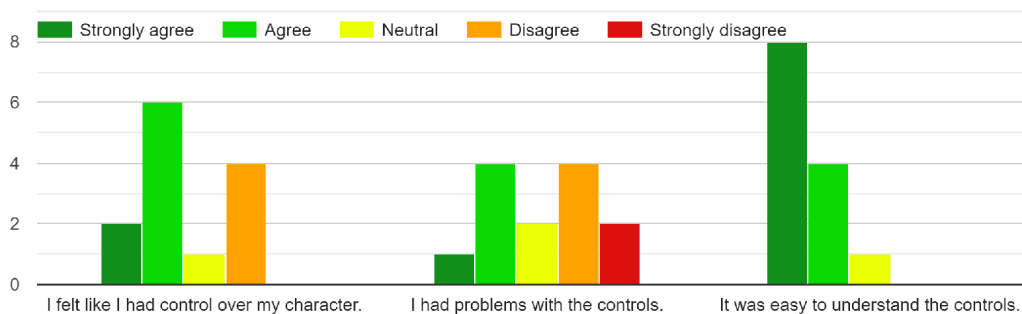
Diagramms

Did you have problems to find the next necessary task?

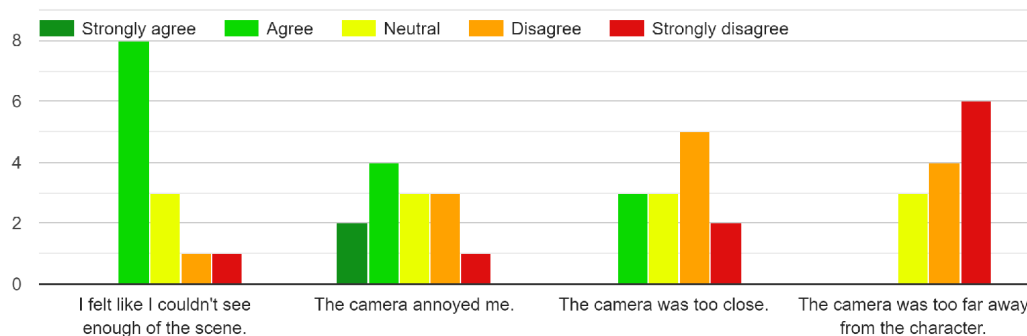
13 Antworten



Concerning the controls:

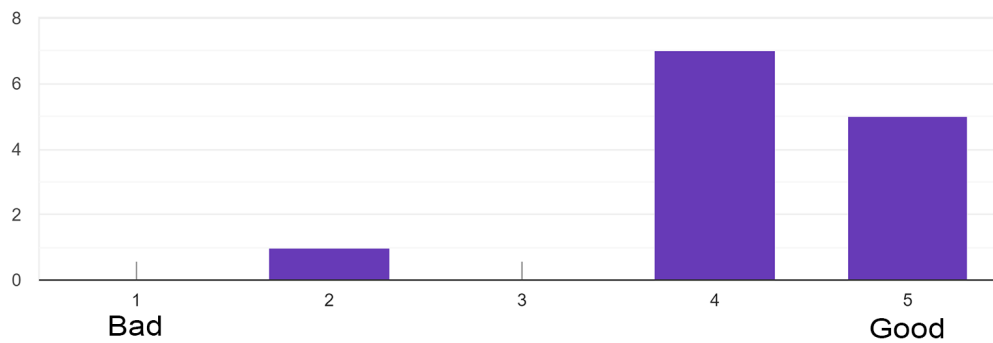


Concerning the camera:



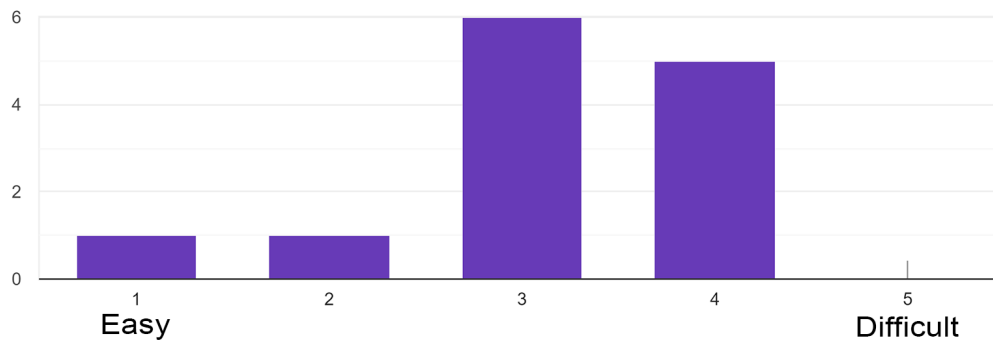
How well did the cooperation with the other player work?

13 Antworten



How easy was it to solve the puzzles?

13 Antworten



Changes

Changes & Additions

Due to problems with physics which appeared only in the built version of our game, we had to adjust our second puzzle before we started the playtesting. Originally, the male character should be able to find a big object, which could be moved through an illuminated area in order to cast a shadow inside which the female character could travel safely without being spotted by the observing teachers. However, as the physics simulation of the object did not work properly after building the game, we decided to simply replace the object with the male character himself. Now they need to sneak close to each other through the illuminated area to continue to the next room.

In the future we plan on adding more information about our characters and some narrative elements like short dialogues between the two characters. Furthermore, we will provide the players with additional hints and visual / acoustical feedback in order to guide and inform them inside the rooms. Additionally, we are working on a solution for making a player's character visible through other objects or objects transparent if they are located between character and camera.

To prevent the user from accidentally putting down items, we plan to add a dialog asking the user for a confirmation. This might also prevent a bug caused by putting down an item too close to another object which possibly makes the item inaccessible.

Moreover, we want to adjust the position of the camera and the jumping mechanic to improve the user experience. The camera will be positioned higher if the player is on the ground in order to prevent the camera from clipping through objects. For the jumping mechanic we plan to enable a slight directional velocity change while the character is in the air so the player can influence where the character is landing. Until now the user had no influence on the character movement between leaving the ground and landing.

And lastly, we are working on designing more interesting abilities for our male character Anton, because the testers described playing Anton as rather boring and they disliked the times when they had nothing to do but to wait until Alice had solved the "interesting" part of the puzzle.