



Soft Opening

Weekly Newsletter – Apr. 17th.2015

For those who do not know what exactly ‘Soft Opening’ is, our Director Drew Davidson sent out a nice e-mail explaining its significance. It is a term used in the Themed Entertainment Industry and is analogous to a beta release or a preview. For us as a team, it is our third milestone and we will have all faculties come in next week and visit our project room to see our work. We will have to showcase all our work properly so that the faculty comes to know what progress we have made since halves. It will also be the last chance for the faculty to see our work in person as most of them will not be present at Elizabeth Forward Middle School.

So as planned, we had two playtests this week and it was arguably one of the most hectic weeks for us this semester (not exaggerating). We made a few changes to our third game (which will have a name soon, trust me) and went to Elizabeth Forward Middle School on Monday for our playtest. Our main focus was on the third game but we also wanted to reiterate on our previous versions for SPRACE and ScaleBot. We got mixed feedback for our third game from Monday’s playtest. The spinning mechanic for the wheel still seemed weird and the children found it a bit frustrating to control the wheel. Honestly, we ourselves were not satisfied with it. Also the role of the Book team was a bit vague and the kids found the fact that it is a 2 vs. 1 game difficult to grasp. We only had around 4 days to work before this playtest and it was a really challenging task.

According to these observations from our playtest on Monday and after talking to our advisors, we decided to make some changes to the third game. We made small tweaks as per the suggestions of the teachers. Two major changes that we made were:

1. We got rid of the book part (2 min silence for programmers and artists who worked on this part)
2. We changed the dynamic rotation of the wheel to a discrete 90° rotation.

We weren’t exactly sure as to whether these changes were good or bad. Friday’s playtest was a good opportunity for us to test these changes. We added a lot of visual and audio feedback in this game as the theme was conducive to doing so. We went to the SMALLab today and had the best playtest session ever! Not only did the changes work well but we received great positive feedback from the kids and teachers. We tested the third game with content put in by teachers and also tested our previous two games.

This might be our last playtest before we officially handoff our product and documentation to the school. Today’s moments of watching the kids play, laugh, shout out loud really made our day. Our next target is to make our project room ready for Softs and put forward our work in front of the faculties.

Until then, Ciao,
Stay AweSeven!