



THE FIRST TEST

This week was an exciting week for the team as we went full on into the production cycle with the prime focus on getting “the core” up and running and had our “First Test” today. All on that in due time to come. Lets take a step back looking at how the week progressed.

Sprint Start

Starting this week we started a new 2 week sprint which aligns up well with the beginning of the spring break and gives us sufficient time to get a prototype up and running. The sprint has been divided into two core focuses. The emphasis of the first week of the sprint (that is this week) was to get a basic prototype up and running which we could play with by Friday. And for the second week work on having the complete level one gameplay in. The team met on Monday at the start of the sprint and took a nice hard look at the project backlog and what all features we would expect this game to have. From this project backlog we moved over tasks that could be accomplished during this sprint and assigned these to specific members of the team with time estimates on how many hours to complete these tasks.

Digital Prototype

Once the paper prototype was out of the way, the team focused all its energy on getting a quick prototype running. Allison focused on getting the main gameplay logic running which required a lot of back and forth communication from game design end. Meanwhile Stephanie was the key point of contact for

setting up the server and as well as importing the map created by the art team and importing it into unity. Ben meanwhile focused on getting the client end of the logic which required getting input from the microphone on the smartphones/tablets and sending this information over to the server. The calibration logic is slightly tricky to handle since each person has their own pitch levels. Making it more intuitive would be a good strategy so that the device has complete instructions as to what needs to be done. We do want to play around with two different approaches as to whether having everyone calibrate at the same time would be better versus if everyone calibrates individually. Lets defer that decision to further play tests.

All this while Lucien who is handling game design has been working out ways to nail down different gameplay elements like how the territory expands, how fast they expand and how conflict gets shown on the screen when boundaries collide. Brian was hard at working getting a wire frame for the client interface which indicates how different elements of the client interface progress. On the other hand, Scott and Peter are coming up with the art style and the mock ups for



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the art style the game would adopt. These includes not just the overall art direction for the project but also minor elements like icons for different elements on screen, color layouts and patterns and everything in between.

This brings us to the big event of the week...

The First Test

Today we conducted our first ever open play test. The core focus as I briefly mentioned was to get our fellow ETC students to get the first sneak peek at the game. Also this helped us in evaluating our tech pipeline for data being transmitted from various Android smartphones and tablets on to the server and to the game logic which worked perfectly thanks to all the hard work from our 3 awesome programmers. The gameplay still required more polish and few features were missing like conquering other countries which the players highly demanded for. The high level takeaways from the play tests were that the client end interface and the calibration logic was confusing which we will be revisiting this coming week. Also, players lost focus since core feedback of their input was missing and they needed some sort of a graphical feedback on their devices indicating that their input was getting registered. Overall the play test was really helpful experience and a good learning opportunity.

Next Week

Again we will be focusing on enhancing the gameplay while addressing the core pain points from the first play test. We do plan on running another play test this next week before the school breaks for spring break. The core elements that we will be iterating on are as below -

1. [Mobile Device] Polishing the calibration logic and making it much more intuitive
2. [Mobile Device] Better feedback on the client device after the calibration step and during core gameplay
3. [Mobile Device] Input from microphone needs to be a lot more rigorously tested and a minimum threshold set for the input
4. [Gameplay] Include conflict mechanism when territories conflict

We will be focusing on getting a slightly larger group to play test the game this time around. I will be working on arrangements for the play test.

That's it from Week 7. Have a wonderful weekend everyone and see you all next week!

Mayank Grover

