



THE HEART OF THE SWAMP

This was week 8, right in the heart of the semester. Next week we have our 1/2 presentations and a brief update on that is in order. But that will be the topic for next time.

Week 2 of Sprint

Last week we started a two week sprint and this week was week 2. We had earlier aimed at getting a play test for the end of this week but due to classes being off on Friday this had to be postponed. Now our next play test will be on 20th August, during the week of the 1/2 presentations. For this week our core focus was on using the feedback from our first play test to improve on the playable version of the game all this while also expanding on the gameplay elements. I will briefly mention about the improvements that we have done in different segments for the game.

Calibration System

On the smart phones, a calibration system is employed which takes in user's voice and calibrates the high versus low pitch input personalized for each user. This is highly crucial to the success of the game since everything starts from the calibration process. The workflow of this is now that the user will tap and hold a button which starts a countdown timer on the screen (in the form of a scroll bar) and the user has to sing into the device for this duration. Once the system reads the input, it adjusts to this specific user pitch

range. We are also trying to make the system as self-standing as possible so that anyone can understand how the calibration process works without any outside intervention. Also, art work has been added to the client interface which will be used for the next play test.

Game Play – Conflict Logic

On the main gameplay front, we are focusing on integrating the countries collisions/conflict rules. This is slightly tricky to implement since there are a lot of boundary conditions and cases to consider. Especially since the territories expand freely in all directions, when conflict arises in one part of it's boundary making sure it cleanly reflects a conflict condition is vital. The players should be able to understand this without any explanation otherwise they would be completely thrown out of the experience. Since this is our core game mechanic, this is something we want to get polished and flushed out as soon as possible. This the primary gameplay element we will be focusing on during our next play test as well.



THE HEART OF THE SWAMP

Art Assets

On the art front as well we are making good progress. The UI wire frame design for the main gameplay is almost complete which will set the look and feel of the main game. Also the client calibration steps UI and art assets which will be used for the next play test are complete and being already integrated with the Unity project. We also have the tile set for the main map and the design for the icons to be used for leveling up in the game as well. For these icons to be self explanatory, we are conducting icon tests in ETC corridors, a quick 15 second test, were people arrange these icons in the increasing level of power as they perceive it. This allows us to get immediate feedback as to if the icons are correctly representative of the symbols they represent and it virtually takes no time at all.

Play Test #2

For our next play test we want to target up to 20 people playing the game together. To truly achieve this we wanted to target iOS and Android both. With Steve Audio's help we have got our iOS developer account setup and have tested that we can successfully build and run our app on the iPad. We are also focusing on using TestFlight in order to build and publish our app to the testers ahead of the play test as well.

Common Theme

As you might have guessed by now our entire effort for the project will be focused on getting things either be gameplay, client interface or as small as icons in front of tester and observe. Since the game is for a mass audience play testing will be the key throughout the semester.

For the upcoming week we will be focusing all our energy into preparing for the play test and in the later half of the week for the 1/2 presentations.

That's it from Week 8. Have a wonderful weekend and a spring break. See you all next week!

Mayank Grover

