

SKYLIGHT

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ISSUE 10

OPENING REMARKS

Happy Halloween everyone! This week marked the end of development of Project Radius, the first tier of our game design. We conducted a final playtest for it and used our observations and feedback to improve the game's user interface and interaction system. The children reported that they enjoyed our game; and, when asked if they would want to play again, answered with a resounding yes. Project Radius has showing promising results.

Next week we will begin developing Project Arc-Fall, the second tier of our game design. After surveying the middle school students (grades 6-8), we determined that the most popular visual theme would be monsters and have already begun designing our user interface around that theme. As always, be sure to stay updated on our progress via our website at <http://www.etc.cmu.edu/projects/skylight/>

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

This week we focused on wrapping up development for Project Radius. After consulting with ETC faculty, we improved our user interaction interface. We consolidated all of our visual feedback onto the shell of each player's snail to prevent a potentially overwhelming amount of movement and information to keep track of while playing. We also re-integrated individual player scoring to encourage players to perform better, as well as to compete with each other for top scores. Lastly, we iterated on the template for our note-sequencing system.

Observations during our playtest this week informed us of the need to condense our user feedback. It also gave us insight regarding the default height threshold for playing notes on the snails. Teachers at the Elizabeth Forward school gave us useful suggestions on having students move their arms as they play, as well as implementing identical note streams for the three players (which allowed us to re-integrate scoring).

CHALLENGES

Our challenges this week included: determining how best to condense our user interface to the shell of each snail to avoid information overload, and determining the scope of our project so that we could develop a schedule for the remainder of our development cycle.

At the suggestion of Jesse Schell of Schell Games, we returned to one of our initial interface designs: color-coded animations on each snail that indicate whether a player has hit a given note with correct timing. This feedback system replaces the textual feedback that we playtested with.

In determining our scope, we decided to focus on completing tier two of our game before returning to add extra polish to Project Radius. We believe we have completed tier one satisfactorily and will verify it with our client before final deployment. And now, it's onward to Project Arc-Fall!

