

Playtesting Chapter

We held a playtesting session at the student lounge of the VIS/AMIV/VMP, where we invited some friends with different levels of gaming experience, ranging from never having played a game on the Xbox before to playing Xbox games for hours almost every day. This was a great way to get feedback on our game from people with diverse gaming backgrounds. Our playtesting session went very well and the game only crashed once.

Results

The following lists shows some points the playtesters either mentioned themselves or we discovered while watching them. We also noted possible solutions; most of them were proposed by the players. We marked the solutions we are going to implement in green and the ideas that need further investigation blue.

General

- Most players didn't know they had to drive the sheep towards the fence when they started playing.
 - We might need to add some clues or a tip on the loading screen.
- What is the motivation of the player to drive the sheep over the fence?
 - They need something to do behind the fence, like food.
- The discoverability of the power-up-buttons is rather bad: if the player just tries out all the buttons when the game starts, nothing happens.
 - give the players free power-ups at the beginning; flash power-up-indicator if empty
 - play some kind of sound while using the attraction power-up.

Menu

- The menu header looks like a menu item and the menu selection highlight is too subtle.
 - Add space between menu and header.
 - Change the color for the highlighted menu item.
- The left/right functions inside the menu are triggered accidentally.
 - Joystick needs to move more to trigger.
- It's not clear if a menu item has a submenu.
 - Add submenu indicator
- The yes/no options should toggle even with left/right
- The menu should include short descriptions of the different playing modes
 - Add space next to the menu for additional information.
- Nobody wanted to play without power-ups.
 - Remove the power-up disable option.

HUD

- The informations on the screen during the game (score, speed amount, attract amount etc.) should be better visible
 - use a visual representation e.g. of the power-up levels with a bar
 - design different HUDs for different game modes to highlight important things
- Show who won and why.

Level

- Level Border good visible but doesn't make any physical sense
 - Add a stone wall
- The sheep losing momentum if running towards the walls looks "unnatural".
 - Modify collision behavior
- Add more objects (testers had many interesting ideas like a river where the dog can walk thru but the sheep can't; or a bush that slows down sheep and players or attracts sheep)
 - Add random bushes that slow down sheep.

Camera

- Camera too close.
 - New default camera position; allow players to zoom in.
- Testers wanted to return to the default camera position
 - Add button to reset camera position.
- Camera inertia
- First person view

Navigation

- One player was wishing for a minimap or something to help with the orientation.
 - Add mini map
- Another suggestion was to alter the ground texture to give hints about a player's position
 - Add dirt traces in the middle of the map and towards the fences.

Gameplay

- Most players were walking too fast most of the time. If they would walk slower, the flocking behavior would make it easier to drive more sheep at once.
 - Adjust joystick sensibility; maybe add a button to walk slowly.
- Some player couldn't figure out how to efficiently use the power-ups. But they learned really fast by watching others.
 - Include some tips on the help screen
- Movement precision should be improved (hard to walk slowly; catch power ups)
 - Joystick sensibility could already solve this problem; maybe larger radius.
- Player inertia.
- Player should slow down in attract-mode (no need to run faster than the sheep)
- Sheep are attracted by player even if there is a repulsing player in between
 - Sheep are only affected by the nearest player.

Power-ups

- 5 seconds running per power-up is too long (since it only takes about 1.5s to traverse the map)
 - Change the run power-up time to 3s
- Power-up idea: something to drop on the floor and the sheep move towards it.
- Power-ups grow over time to give more power-up time.
- Do something useful if using attract and speed at the same time (e.g. speed up sheep)
 - make the sheep around you run faster (only in that situation)
- The power-ups look too similar.
 - Make the colors brighter; try new shapes
- More power-ups / invisibility power up
 - might already be solved by fading in/out the effects
- power-up effect to fade in/out

Game Ending

- Some sheep kept jumping the fence after the game ended, decreasing the number of free sheep.
 - freeze that number if the game is over
- Mark leading player already during the game (crown).
- It wasn't always clear how the overpopulation mode works.
 - Description in the menu; adapt HUD

We would like to thank the playtesters - they gave us valuable feedback on our game and came up with very creative ideas on how to enhance the game. We will be working on improving the game and incorporating some of the ideas, as well as continue with the tasks of our "high target".

Pictures

