

Atomic Race: Playtesting

So far three playtesting sessions were done.

A big testing session at a LAN party with the Alpha release of the game (directly in the weekend before the Alpha release). The game was commented by roughly 10 people and playtested by five people. This feedback directly went into our alpha release and made us change several aspects of the game which we already described in the alpha release chapter.

The feedback from the alpha release testing in class forced us to rethink important aspects of the game:

- Removal of the item based system and focusing on three game items:
 - Shield
 - Mines
 - Massitems/Isotopes which now defines the weapon class of the players.
- Inclusion of traps which slows down the gameplay and encourages player vs. player interaction.

Playtestings

Two playtesting sessions were done in the students room on the big AMIV TV with the XBOX.



First playtesting session

The testing was done with 2x2 people groups. On this testing we realized, that players need a lot of help in order to grasp the game:

- Some people had problems with our control scheme.
- People didn't realize our concept of respawn points
- Some people didn't get the notion of the atomic charge
- Some people had problems with our traps.

Feedback:

- People found the game concept awesome
- Some people found it difficult to move around in the tunnels.

The testing was only partly successful. We had a nasty collision detection bug, which made the game barely playable. Never the less we were able to incorporate some of the feedback. The overall control scheme is still a problem however.

Second Playtesting Session

We took the time over the weekend to fix some of the bugs we observed during the first playtesting session. During this session, we did four playtesting sessions with more than ten players.

Questions we asked to our players:

- Do you miss a specific feature in our game? (Welches feature vermisst du am meisten bei unserem Spiel?)
- How do you find our controlling scheme? (Wie findest du die Steuerung? Reicht der boost als Steuer Element?)
- Who wins the game? (Wer gewinnt das Spiel?)
- What is your winning tactic? (Was ist deine Taktik um zu gewinnen?)
- Do you know that you're able to increase the size of the atom? (Ist dir klar wie du das Atom vergrößern kannst?)
- What sort of weapons are available in the game? Which weapons would you want to play? (Welche Waffentypen gibt es? Welche Waffen wünschst du dir?)
- How often did you change your polarisation? Why? (Wie oft hast du die Polarisation gewechselt? Warum?)
- Did you always know which atom you're controlling? Do you have an idea on how to improve the visibility? (Ist dir zu jedem Zeitpunkt klar welches Atom du steuerst? Hast du eine Idee wie man es besser Sichtbar machen könnte?)
- Comments

Overall, the feedback of the game testers was very positive. We attracted a lot of casual players.

Looking at our questionnaire, we observed the following problems:

- Most players had problems with identifying their player
- Another problem was our point counting for the respawn points.

Most people found our control scheme good. The negative feedback we received mostly consisted of players not wanting to press the boost button all the time and one person finding the controls a bit to direct.

It was also unclear who's winning the game. That was mostly due to the fact that we had a few bugs in the game.

The winning tactics is the same for all players: Be at the front and shoot the other players.

Most people didn't know that the mass items change the charge of the atom and the weapon.

The same also holds for our weapons. Some did discover all the weapon types, but most were only able to find two to three weapons.

The polarisation change was used for three purposes:

- To find the atom of the player

- To get faster through the level
- To get away from the polarisation field

Things we want to change:

- Many players complained that it's very hard to follow the right atom. We want to fix this by having a different visualisation of the players, making the specific colors come out better.
- There are some crucial bugs with collision detection which we also want to fix so the game isn't so annoying.
- We have to fiddle a little more with the general control scheme and balance it with the pole and flow field interaction.
- We need an option for a short tutorial at the beginning to explain how everything works. In the testings we had to explain every detail to every new player in order for him to play the game with fun.

Conclusion

The playtesting was a very nice experience. After all the work we did on the game we more and more forgot how fun it was and that it is actually a pretty nice little game. The playtesting showed us that people appreciate the ideas and like the look and feel of our game. It was very motivating and fun to see other people enjoying our game.