

Playtesting “Evolution Racing”

Dennis Ciofas, Stefan Schmidlin, 11.5.2015

Introduction

We conducted various playtesting sessions, most of them informally while developing the game. We gave the controllers to fellow students or partners and friends and asked them to play the game and give us feedback.

Our goal is to have a racing game with a low barrier to get in, i.e. also speak to casual gamers who want to have a good time.

Stage 1: First Tests (18-20 April):

Setup:

Informal Tests with two people not knowing anything about the game, only familiarized with controls and principle of game before starting by a member of the team.

State of the game:

At this time we had a game with the following significant elements:

- 2 Player Split screen
- 3 Coins are required to transform the care, and always appear in groups of 3 on the track
- 3 tps of tracks, Fire, Ice and Earth
- Transformation of track by driving accross transformation zones on the track which are always arranged in groups of 3.
- Track has several segments which can be transformed individually.
- 20% speed difference between fast car (car-type matches track-type)

Outcome:

- Transformation of car was not understood, people collected coins randomly and didn't transform car. After explanations they did transform, but not unded why and how.
- Transformation of track was random, people did not understand what the zones did when driving accross.
- Even after explanation, complete confusion over which button causes which transformation.

Changes that we decide to introduce:

- Only one coin required for transformation of track
- Can no longer transform car to a type that gives the player a disadvantage. I.e. while driving on earth, one could no longer transform the car to lava-type.
- Entire track transforms at the same time, not just individual parts.
- Only 2 Elements (Earth & Ice) instead of all three

Stage 2 - Testing between May 1st-May 3rd:

Setup:

Tests with other students from ZhdK, Denis' wife and Stefan's flatmate.

State of the game:

- 2 Player Split-Screen
- 1 coin of correct type required to transform the track.
- Car can only be transformed when it is an advantage for the player
- Driving behavior of car vastly optimized
- UI Elements introduced to reflect changes to coin concept
- UI Element to show relative position and current time and Laps introduced.

Outcome:

- Simplified game concept overall was a success but:
 - Simplified transformation of car proved to be just as confusing as before
 - The game starts to be a bit boring, there is not enough going on.
- Gamers have trouble relating the track transformation zones to a function, think that it will speed up their car.
- Optimized driving behaviour helps, but not enough. Players get stuck a lot.
- Graphics give rise to confusion. Players are not able to map colors to graphic styles.

Changes that we decide to introduce:

We decide to take 2 approaches:

1. Changes to Game Concept
 - a. Revert transformation of car to be less intelligent. If the player has a specific coin, he can transform the track, no matter if it's smart or not
 - b. Limit the number of coins and transformation zones. A transformation zone now always means that the track will change, and coins are more rare, so that a fight can start.
2. Changes to graphics
 - a. More abstract graphical style based on blue and red.
 - b. More tracks

Stage 3 - Testing on May 11th:

Setup:

Tests with other students from ZhdK

State of the game:

- Control scheme on joypad modified to be more adapted to Thrustmaster pads we use for testing.
- Transformation of car is no longer "smart"
- Less transformation zones and coins as before.

New graphical style is not yet ready, however.

Outcome

- Game is boring, but players understand its logic
- Feedbacks on graphical style remain valid, and need to be built into the game.

Changes that we decide to introduce:

- More tracks
- Weapons and power ups:
 - Rockets
 - Homing Missiles
 - Speedups
 - Change of Car Type of opponent (reverse evolution)
- Implement graphical changes



