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Following is a summary of the playtesting we did with the alpha release of the Momentum game.

We organised two testing sessions, one with friends at home, who had only a moderate game experience, and one in the lab room in the IFW D floor with seven computer science students. In the latter one we gave no information and let the players handle the game alone, noted any comments and questions, and in the end they had to fill out a questionnaire.

As in the previous chapters, our main focus was on the momentum mode.

Classic Mode

How does it compare to playing on a real board?

The gameplay is intuitive. The ball is easier to control than in the real game, maybe because in the real game the gameboard is usually slightly bumpy from the wooden coating.

Momentum Mode

How would you characterize the game?

Skill-oriented, requires physical dexterity.

Where would you like the game to move to?

Less weight on gamepad handling skills, more on racing.

What should we change in the game to achieve that?

Introduce more racing like levels, possibly also leaving the framework of a single board. Finetune the increasing difficulty of game levels.

How did the controls feel? Did they make sense?

They make sense and feel good, but explain button settings of gamepad at the start, maybe with a screenshot at the start of the game.

Did anything feel clunky or awkward?

Using the Momentum Buttons didn't do anything, it should reflect graphically. Vibration of the pads didn't make sense. Jumping was perceived as being very difficult to handle correctly.

What was your first impression?

Cool idea, nice to look at, appealing visualization of the balls, interesting light and sound effects. General gameplay is easy to understand, even for non-gamers. The game might be too simple to make fun.

How did that impression change as you played?

Levels 4 and 5 (the last two levels) are very difficult with a steep increase of required skills compared to the introductory (tutorial) levels. Not enough variations in sound and music. Graphics are perceived as being very nice.

Was there anything you found frustrating?

The difficulty of the last two levels. The camera is too jumpy, this increases the level of difficulty additionally. Explain the meaning of the momentum bars at the corners of the screen. The visualization of momentum energy by particles not understood (what's the meaning of losing the particles? particles not seen well when ball is steady => is that bad?). Always falling over the edge at the same point was frustrating. Not having mastered jumping.

Did the game drag at any point?

How to gain momentum is not clearly understood (one player always went back to the start of the gameboard to regain momentum). When repeatedly falling off the board at the same location. See as well last question.

What was missing from the game?

More easy and intermediate levels, also bonus and secret levels. There should be more possibilities to attack the other players.

If you could change just one thing, what would it be?

Add bonus items, introduce a time-limit for levels, arrows showing the way in the complex worlds. Show the scores also during play. Jumping behaviour. Weapons...

If you were to give this game as a gift, who would you give it to?

Just anybody (no matter what age) who enjoys playing skill games together with friends, to young family members or to someone that doesn't play computer games normally.

Observations

Too hard levels frustrate yet unskilled players. There were not enough information and explanations before each (tutorial) level. But all in all the players had fun and they enjoyed the game when the level was not too difficult. The female players had fun when occasionally bouncing into each other. Finally, they all wished that there had been more levels to play!

Future Modifications

It follows an informal list of modifications we plan to make for the final public presentation.

- Add additional intermediate levels, balancing and allowing the player to learn the required skills better. Improve explanations in the tutorial levels.
- Balance the capabilities to attack the contraries (for example to push them from the board when having more momentum) and add new means (for example steal momentum particles from a contrary to gain additional momentum).
- Finetune the momentum particle simulation of the balls. Show momentum usage.
- Add bonus items increasing the capabilities of the player.
- Finetune camera movement.
- Enhance sound effects and vibration.