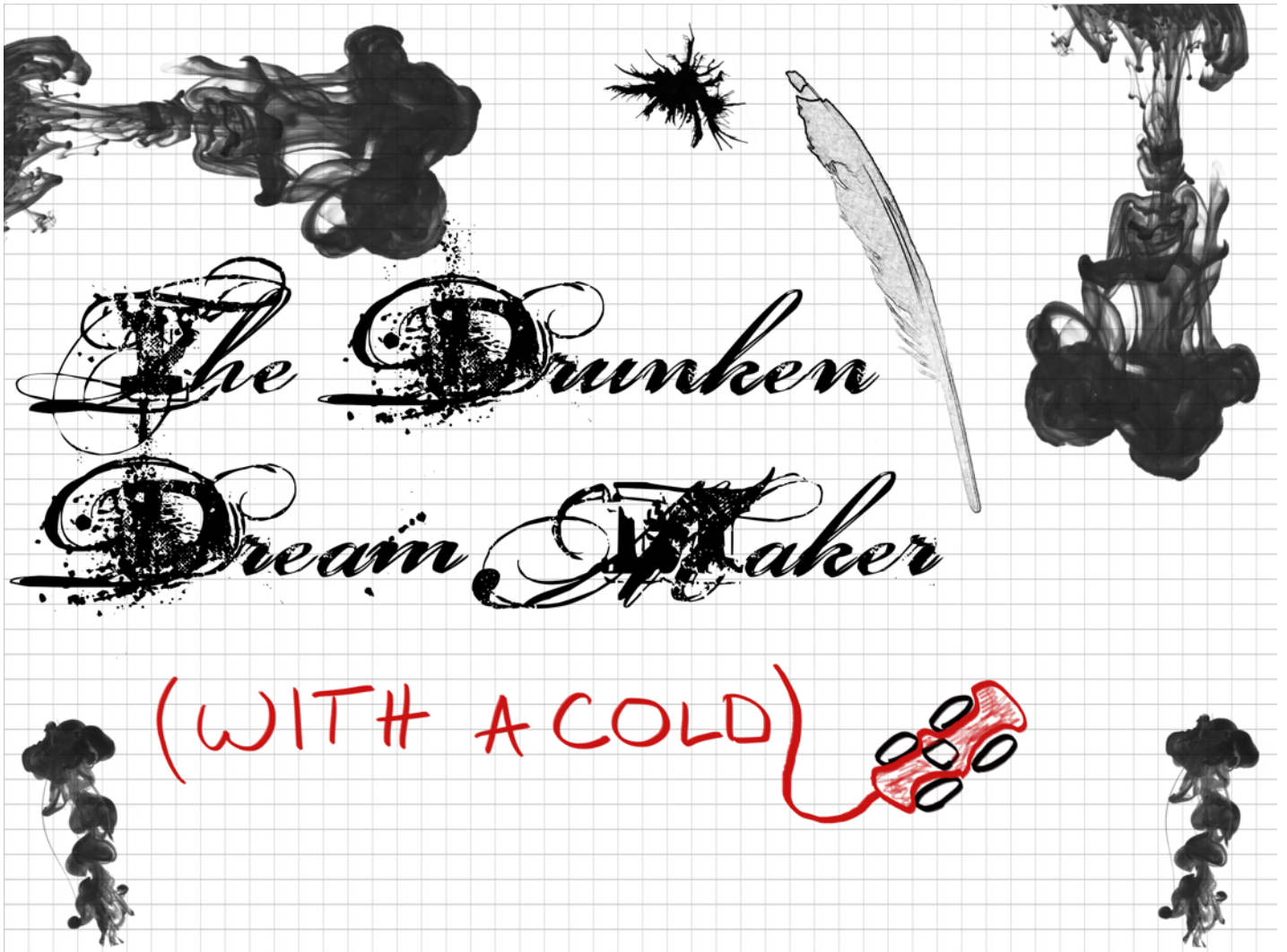*Triolozzi proudly presents*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

We organized three different playtesting sessions, one of which already took place just before the official playtesting week. During the alpha development phase we constantly took into account the helpful feedback of random people working at the computer labs and we noticed that their suggestions reflected quite well the results of our playtesters.

Unfortunately, due to the Ascension Day, many friends and acquaintances who were eagerly awaiting for the playtesting session fled to warmer places and we could only recruit 8 people. We are still planning a much bigger event with about 20 people in the upcoming week because we really want to have a broader audience and see what they think about our game. As soon as we have collected more results we will update this document and, if any, we will analyze new comments and critiques.

The testers are all (with the exception of a brave young teenager) in their twenties and two of them are women. Only two of the testers considered themselves to be avid gamers, while the rest, although familiar with video games, does not play regularly.

Results

We summarized the answers of all the testers, we report here in a short form what emerged from the playtesting session:

I.   What did you like about the game?

Liked in general the graphics and sound effects of the game, as well as the gameplay and the story line. A few of them also pointed out that drawing is a very fun element of the game.

2.   What did you NOT like about the game?

The driving controls seems to be a very unpopular feature. We already had the feeling the not everyone would have liked it and if we want to keep this driving style we will have to introduce some sort of tutorials before starting the game.

Some novice players also got eliminated very quickly and remained inactive even for almost a minute. This can be very frustrating and we are thinking about setting a time limit for when two players remain alone in the screen (in 3 and 4 players mode).

Some players also had difficulties distinguishing wishes and nightmares in the post it notes. Although we already changed the backgrounds for more clarity, we will probably need to introduce new differences between the two.

As a minor remark, the cars' looks must still be improved as they don't really match the style of the whole game.

3. Did you look at the tips before playing the game? Do you think the tips were helpful?

We had a very clear separation in this case. Some people did not even realize that we were providing a bunch of different tips in the loading screen (just before starting the game).

The other half found the tips very helpful and clear. We still need to improve these screens and find a way to make the novice player more interested in them.

4. Is there any important explanation missing before you start playing?

We are definitely not explaining enough what is the story behind the game, therefore we need to provide some more images (maybe animations) in the initial screen.

5. Does the game seem confusing to you? Is there something that you did not understand?

The driving style was once again the most confusing element in the game. Some "special" moves like avoiding nightmares by drawing an obstacle just before it (e.g. enabling the boost and thus not drawing while crossing the nightmare) is not explained and of course a new player cannot imagine such a behavior. This goes against in favor of improving the tutorial screens.

6. How do you like the driving style?

Even though some people complained about it, after they get ahold of it they told us that the driving style is actually quite enjoyable but it still needs minor adjustments (for steering, for example).

7. Would you like to be able to try out the controls (in the car selection screen, for example) before actually starting the game?

6 people out of 8 answered that they would like to try out the controls before the race, and we are going to try to make this possible. Unofficial testers also were in favor of having a "sandbox" for trying out the controls.

8. If you could add or change one thing to the game to make it more fun, what would it be?

We did not get critiques for any of the existing features, but we did get comments on how we could improve the game. Some people would like to have power ups (additional boost, destroying opponents' obstacles, ...) that are enabled when crossing wishes. As this feature needs quite some time to be developed, we are not sure we will be able to add it to the game.

9. Which of the following factors played an important role during the game?

As we already expected, people said that training is essential for getting better at playing The Drunken Dream Maker. A few of them also pointed out that a good strategy is important for blocking opponents.

10. What was your first impression? Did it change during the game?

The general impression is that the game is always really fun and it is a true party game where people can challenge each other. Some testers kept playing for a longer time that we asked, which is definitely a good sign.

11. Was the objective of the game clear at all times?

To some people it was not really obvious that the goal of the game is to score the highest number of points while racing. Once they saw the progress bars changing during the race, they realized more or less how the scoring system worked and therefore what the goal of the game is.

12. If not, do you have a suggestion for improving on this?

Again, we are thinking of making the goal of the game more clear by adding a new help screen during the loading phase.

13. Do the graphics match the style of the game?

On a scale from 1 to 10, the average: 9,2. Many people did not really like the style of the cars used in the race.

14. Do the sound effects match the style of the game?

On a scale from 1 to 10: 8, but with some testers the sound effects were not available due to the lack of an audio system.

Conclusion

The playtesting highlighted some of the problems that we already were aware of, but also made us understand that we need to explain everything more in detail and in a simple way in order to make it understandable for everyone. It was very rewarding seeing people enjoying the game and having a good laugh.

Playtesting pictures

Here is a picture of the testers busy crushing each other during one of the playtesting sessions.