Playtest - Session

How we organized the session
For our first playtest, we invited five different peoples (4 ETH students, one college student). The session took place on May 7th between 16.00 and 18.00. The goal of this session was to determine if the overall game mechanics is clear to all. Each playtester was allowed to play 15 minutes, without any explanation of the game, where he was encouraged to ask questions to the game.
After this 15 minutes, we discussed with each of them their questions and gave some explanations.
Finally, they got again 15 minutes to play the game with their new background.

Who participated our session
We invited some friends of us, all of them were males. 4 study at ETH represented the target group in our age. The last person, was a controll guy in a lower age. Thus we had people with different expectations to the game.
It would be good, if we had a girl as test player, but we weren't able to find any.

Questions we asked
- Are the rules clear?
- Are objectives clear?
- Was controlling good enough?
- Was it fun to drive the Rolling Object?
- How difficult is it to catch the Maya?
- Was the graphic pleasant?
- Was the map rich/fun to navigate through?
- Were points clear enough?
- Do points make sense?
- Did you notice the heat-bar?
- Does the heat-bar make sense?
- Where you able to use power-ups?
- Did you understand what power-ups do?
- Were power-ups fun?
- What would you change to make the game more playable?

Feedback

The first and most important feedback was, that players didn't understand, what the game is about. Also the controlling was a little confusing and the first 5 minutes, they were just puzzled.
After they got used to the controls, they started to roll through the world, but still without a clue on what to do.

After the discussion session, they tried to catch each other. But still, they failed, since it was pretty difficult to locate and catch the opponent. After some time they came to the cubify-strategy: in order to catch the opponent they first were coming relative close to the opponent, using cubify power-up to freeze and then create the energy shield.

Moreover, it appeared, that they did not notice the heat-bar. Even after our instructions about it, it had almost no impact to the gameplay - they were just ignoring it, regardless to the point-penalty.

The main answers to the questions

Q: Are the rules clear?
A: No, the rules should be more explanatory/simple

Q: Are objectives clear?
A: No, not really, something with catching and getting points.

Q: Was controller good enough?
A: Yes, it was fairly good and they liked feel of speed, but the camera was confusing. The rolling direction was not clear, and they proposed to use some other model instead of sphere (spaceship, etc)

Q: Was it fun to drive RO?
A: Yes and no. Mixed feeling.

Q: How difficult it is to catch the Maya?
A: Very difficult, almost impossible.

Q: Was the graphics pleasant?
A: Was OK/good enough.

Q: Was the map rich/fun to navigate through?

A: Not really, they suggested to use more buildings, trees, and etc

Q: Were points clear enough?
A: They noticed they were gaining points, but did not understand how did they earn points.

Q: Does points make sense?
A: No, see above

Q: Did you notice heat - bar?
A: No, what's this.

Q: Does the heat-bar make sense?
A: What is heat ?

Q: Where you able to use power-ups?
A: Half of it, and not from the very beginning

Q: Did you understand what power-ups do?
A: Yes

Q: Were power-ups fun?
A: Cubify/Rocket jump - quite fun, repair/inf energy - does not make sense

Q: What would you change to make game more playable?
A: New models, better minimap, hints to catch the opponent, more easy rules.

Conclusions from the feedback

The playtesting session showed us that we made a game for ourselves. This follows from the fact that the complexity of the game was good on paper, but not portable to a real time game. Thus, it was hard for the players to elaborate fun, since it was not clear, on what to do.

Changes due to the feedback
Our aim was to make a fast round based gameplay, where player should have learned the basics in one round. Therefore we changed the rules:
-The heat as resource has been discarded, due to no impact on gameplay and transparency.

-Further we introduced an arrow that points towards the opponent.

-The discard of heat also impacted on the power ups. Repair was dropped and infinite energy is still in remodel phase.

- We still try to introduce some game mechanic that will compensate for the removal of the heat, simultaneously adding "speed" to the game.

- And the most important part would be: Make the game rules completely clear. More explanations, some hints at loading, etc.