

Videogames for Social Impact

Playtest Report

Sandra Barrera, Humberto López, Johann Felipe González, Juan Pablo Albornoz

1. The videogame prototype

Our videogame prototype was developed based in the board game prototype that we created for the course. The general objective was the same: to simulate the bus driving conditions in the old bus system (which still operates) of Bogotá, which causes accidents every day and is detrimental to the bus drivers, the users, and the citizens in general.

The videogame prototype we developed is a single player game (not multiplayer like the board game), in which the user plays the bus driver. The perspective is not from above like in the board game but in first person, which means that the player sees as if he/she was inside the bus cabin. One of the aspects that was a success in the board game was that we were able to recreate the anguish and instability of the bus drivers' working conditions. Therefore, we pursued to simulate this as well in the game by making it difficult to survive the day without being in debt. The player is also free to be reckless; he/she may run red lights or surpass the speed limit. However, being reckless also has a cost in the game. In addition, in order to provide some context, we made a video which is available in the website that explains in less than two minutes how the bus system works.

2. The script

On July 23rd, 2018, we met at Universidad de los Andes for a playtesting session of the game. Player were shown the introductory video and were able to read the following instructions:

1. Player must choose a character (arrows to move, spacebar to select).
2. Player moves the bus with the arrows

3. The playtesters

Our playtesters were: Pablo (P), David (D), Leonardo (L), José Luis (JL) and Sebastián (S). L, JL, and S were people we didn't know. P and D are also part of the course.

The feedback

All players commented that the game ended up dragging. This was mainly because there seemed to be no new features to the ones the game began with. P suggested some simple

enhancements that would game the playing experience better, like a better organization of space and a better use of fonts and letter size. All players suggested that sound should be added to the game. All players were also confused by some of the game mechanics: passengers didn't seem to get picked up, and it was not easy to keep track of winnings and debt. JL and S suggested that there should be more traffic, since the street was too empty at times.

P and D said that they liked that it was played through the perspective of the driver. Playtesters also manifested interest in playing the finished game, since the prototype still lacked some playability. D and S liked the aesthetics of the game, although suggested as P that some fonts and letter size were not easy to read.

4. Reflections

The prototype was not as complete as we would have wanted. Time was an issue, as well as the fact that our team had only one programmer. Nevertheless, even if we weren't able to have all the things ready that he had thought about, we think the game was a success in that it remained faithful to the essence of the idea. For example, when we started we were faced with the decision of making it a first person perspective or a third person one (from above). The latter was the easiest choice in terms of the complexity in the programming. However, we thought that making it that way would cause the player to think of this game in more strategic way and detached way. We believed making it from the perspective of the driver, and seeing first hand all the obstacles that he must face every day, would enhance the message that we were trying to give. We firmly believe that once it's finished, our game can be a good combination of entertainment and social impact.

5. Images





