

Usability Test Results

Who's The Boss

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Introduction & Methodology

The usability test was conducted using a combination of passive observations of players during a playtest of the game and questions on a survey. The survey was filled out immediately after playing the game. We had a total of 15 playtesters.

General Observations

As a general observation, players figured out really fast how to interact with the game and how to play through. 46.7% and 33.3% found it "really easy to use" and "easy to use" respectively.

For this analysis of the usability of the game, the focus will be on the two following aspects:

- 1) *The drag and drop panel of the topics and*
- 2) *The boss's reply navigation.*

Drag and drop Mechanic

As far as the drag and drop mechanic is concerned, although most players found it out immediately, it wasn't the first choice of interaction for many playtesters (their initial reaction was a simple click) but they managed to identify the mechanic correctly in their second attempt.

A possible improvement that we thought about is that on the first time a player is on the topics panel, apart from the visible tip of “choose two topics to speak about”, whenever the player hovers over the topic bubbles, two highlighted dotted lines would appear towards the slots that they need to drop the topic to.

Boss Dialogue Arrow Button

Our observations indicated that the arrow button underneath the boss text-bubble was often overlooked or ignored. This led to unforeseen issues as some players missed parts of the narrative, and since the choices made during the game rely on hints and clues given in the text this may have far reaching impact on the gameplay.

7 of our 15 playtesters were observed to not use, or express problems with the arrow button during playtest, and when asked “What, if anything, got in the way of you interacting with the game?” 3 replies (out of 5) mentioned this aspect of the game.

This leaves us with the question of what to do to mitigate this issue. The obvious solution, which has also been mentioned by some of our playtesters, is to highlight the arrow button, making sure that the issue of people overlooking the button does not happen.

This only seems like half a solution though. A better solution is to increase the size of the boss’s text box (it could easily be 40% bigger without compromising the art). This should be combined with an intense rewrite, dealing with the issue of the text being too long.

However, this would create the problem that we initially tried to avoid: having one big chunk of text abruptly given to the player. In order to solve this we thought about making the text animate slowly, with the option of skipping it (for example, if the player pushes a certain button on the keyboard the whole text appears). This would

result in making the flow of text given to player more controlled (steady pace of reading instead of one big piece) and also attract more attention to the reply, making the players more prone to reading before they focus on the choices.

The exact implementation of this system is still up for debate, and further testing would be needed to discover if this is the best possible solution.

Menu

We have also discussed the addition of an ingame menu, reachable via an icon in one of the screen corners. This menu is primarily necessary because we do not have a way to exit the game, so the inclusion of a “return to main menu” button is the first priority.

Using a menu rather than a simple “Exit” button is to mitigate other issues with the game discovered through playtesting, including a reference point for the game loop and a way to keep track of the game’s overall progress in the form of a list of discovered and still hidden endings.

Conclusion

All in all, there were no major issues with the usability of our game. As mentioned before, players figured out fast how to navigate through it and reach the endings correctly. The issues stated above are improvements for extra clarification and an overall better way of perceiving the experience.