Technical Solutions to Crowdsourcing Playtesting Online

Max Birk
Games Researcher, University of Saskatchewan
email: max.birk@usask.ca
twitter: @d3mian2000
Computer Science
Rigorous Research on Games
Physiological Evaluation
University Research aims to be **generalizable**

Game development aims to answer **game specific questions**

Angus hates Aliens | Team Stendec
How to improve?
What about developers?
How about play testers?
Does the designer’s idea match the player’s experience?
=> the death of a beloved character
Hands up:
Who only tests with team-members?
Hands up:
Who also runs tests with friends and family?
Hands up: Who runs planned play tests with paid participants?
Time & Money
!Core to your Product
Return on Investment?
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sample size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Logistics of scheduling participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Physically present participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Crowdsourcing
Half a million workers.
Diverse sample.
Remotely available.
The Worker

mean age ~ 35 years
~ 45% female / 55% male
~ 47% married / 40% single
~ 60% bachelor degree or above
~ 60% identify as playing games

N=400
Accounts are valuable

Approval rate, e.g., 90%
No. of HITs approved, e.g. 20,000

Master worker – very high consistency, across HITs and requester
1. Increased access to participants
2. A diverse participant pool
3. Reduced time investment
4. Reduced testing costs
Instructions

We are conducting an academic study about personalizing, adapting, and balancing computer games. You will be asked to fill out questionnaires, play a game, and perform a task. Following game and task, you will be asked to complete additional questionnaires that ask you questions about your experience.

This task can only be performed in Firefox, since it requires Unity.

Select the link below to complete the study. At the end of the study, you will receive a code to paste into the box below to receive credit for taking our survey.

Make sure to leave this window open as you complete the survey. When you are finished, you will return to this page to paste the code into the box.

Survey link:  http://hci-mturk.usask.ca:8670

Provide the survey code here:  e.g. 123456

Submit
Recorded Play & Interviews
Surveys

- Multi-purpose: E.g., Demographics, experience measures, written feedback etc.
Logging
Logging
Physiological Signals

80.1 bpm

51 58 66 73 80 87 95 102 109 116 124 131 138 146 153 160 167 175
Awesome! So, no problems?
Multiplayer

- Cue workers
- Larger samples
Protect your Intellectual Property?!

- Difficult for AAA
- Protection?
- Visibility > concerns
Take away

Crowdsourcing playtesting:

- Gives access to playtests independent of studio size
- Allows to test your game early on
- Saves time and money
Technical Solutions to Crowdsourced Playtesting Online

Max Birk
Games Researcher, University of Saskatchewan
E: max.birk@usask.ca
T: @d3mian2000

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE EUROPE COLOGNE, GERMANY · 15–16 AUGUST 2016