

Project 3: Digital Prototype II: Aesthetics (Teams: 5 - 6 people) 15 pts

Key Dates & Deliverables:

- ❖ Session 8: Brainstorming, discussing ideas.
- ❖ Session 9: Finalise Team Formation
- ❖ Session 10:
 - High Level Design Doc or “Back of Box” Copy due (1/team)
 - **Either** a Paper Prototype delivered class **or** a Design Guide document to present & explain in class. Teams using Design Guides must also submit them (1 per team) before the start of class.
 - 2 minute presentation: the core of your game design idea (using Design Guide or Paper Prototype.)
 - For teams with prototypes: In Class testing.
- ❖ Session 11:
 - Product Backlog due (1 per team)
 - Sprint Tasklist with time estimates due (1 per team)
- ❖ Independent Focus Test: Using either your Paper Prototype or a running version of your game, conduct a focus test outside of class, gather data from your testers (at least 4), and use the data gathered from that test to improve your game. Record information on the Focus Test Summary for submission at end of project.
- ❖ Session 12: Project Due
 - Group Presentation (5 minute oral presentation to the class & teaching staff.)
 - Digital Game Prototype (1 per team)
 - Link to project web page due
 - Web page includes labeled links to the Final Build and builds used for focus testing. Additional working builds, date labeled, enables instructors to better see your design iteration but are not required.
 - Individual Postmortems: Due (1 per person)
 - Design Changelog: Due (1 per team)
 - Focus Test Summary: Due (1 per team)

Goals: Practicing project management with a larger team, independent user testing, design iteration using user feedback, creating consistent aesthetics inside a game. (i.e. art, audio, and game mechanics work together to create a unified ‘feel’ for the game.)

Constraints:

- Single Player Game
- Game takes no longer than 5 minutes to play through.
- Games uses randomization as a central element.
- Game does not rely on single use content as a key mechanic (although may use it as

placeholder for prototyping reasons.)

- No playthrough is identical to a previous one.
- The games' art, audio, and mechanics should support each other to create a cohesive fiction and/or aesthetic.
- Game must use & play audio for the player.
- Game should aim to entertain spectators as well as the player.
- Game must be delivered as a browser game, running on Chrome. (Teams should host the game & provide a URL for project submissions.)
- Game meets the minimal play & legal requirements in Appendix I.

Project Description: This project provides a test run of project management techniques with a slightly larger team. This project also requires independent focus testing by the group, and adds in aesthetic considerations - an important part of making a digital game feel polished or complete. It may be used as a prototype for the Project 4 game. New challenges for for this project are the independent Focus Test and an emphasis on aesthetics.

For the Independent Focus test, teams are responsible for deciding what information they want, how to collect the data, running their test with at least 4 subjects, and recording the process and decisions with a Focus Test Summary.

Aesthetics: Games are about appearance, as well as functionality. While this is a prototype, teams are expected to create a unified aesthetic, or theme, for your game. Mechanics, visual assets, and audio assets should work together to create a consistent 'feel' within the game. Done well, a game whose 'parts' work together to create a themed whole make understanding and playing the game easier - and more enjoyable - for players.

The instructors are aware that artistic content creation skills were *not* a requirement for this class; we do not grade on the *quality* of content! In prototypes, we greatly prefer simple representative images and simple, clear sounds. Teams can choose to create assets, or use downloaded assets. There are websites with freely usable assets listed in 'Useful Software' handout and you may find other sites on the web.

Be certain that you only use **open source** assets or have obtained permission to use downloaded assets in your game, and that you follow all legal requirements when using assets in your game. ***Using assets that do not belong to you, which you do not have the right to use, is stealing and will not be tolerated in this class.***

This is not an art class, and we are accustomed to 'programmer art' - but even working with pre-made tilesets and poorly animated characters, a consistent game aesthetic can be achieved. For example, play "[Sissy's Magical Ponycorn Adventure](http://ponycorns.com/)", a game with all assets created by a 5 year old. (<http://ponycorns.com/>)

Appendix 1: Playable Prototype Requirements

Basic UI & Legal Requirements:

- Displays the name of the game on the title screen.
- Credits are present, listing the names of everyone who worked on the game. (*If your team accepts work from outside your team, they should be credited. Credits may be on the title screen.*)
- Displays all required legal screens, licenses, and copyright information.

Playability:

- User is able to start a new game.
- User is able to quit a game or close browser game window without crashing.
- Clearly indicates to a user when a game is in progress.
- Allows the user to play all the way through the game.
- Clearly indicates to the user when a game is over.
- Clearly indicates the overall result of a game to the user: won/lost/other state
- If game can be paused, clearly indicates when game is paused.
- If game can be paused, it is clear how to toggle between paused and unpaused modes.
- Any game-breaking defect is documented for users.
- Runs for at least one playthrough without crashing.
- Any serious defects are documented, so the users can avoid them.
- All features required for gameplay are in and working.

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