



Elements of Twitch Skill

CSC430/HCI530

Twitch: *fast* decisions



Challenging the Player

- Players become better at a challenge by playing
 - Eventually, the concept of *useful mastery*
- Too many challenges, too quickly: overwhelming
- Too easy to overcome: boring
- As always: balance / tune
 - Know your users!
 - Also balance for the player skill progression: the challenges must progressively become harder

Strategy vs Twitch



Strategy vs Twitch

- Major difference: *Time*
- Time pressure makes us stupid
 - Corollary: games with time pressure can (should?) be shallower in terms of decision-making
- Completely different gameplay for twitch
 - Many decisions per second
 - Obvious correct action
 - Challenge: execute it quickly and accurately
- Engage different parts of the brain: rational / thinking vs instinctive / reactive

Tuning for Players

- Difficulty Levels
- Dynamic difficulty adjustment
- Difficulty curves
- *Different* playtesters: find new ones, monitor their first reaction to the game difficulty

Twitch mechanics



- Pure speed: car racing, button mashing (old arcades)
- Timing / rhythm: music / dance games
- Precision: FPS, football
- Avoidance: platformers (pure – 2D; plus rapid identification – 3D)
- Time pressure (explicit or implicit): can be added to all types of skill, strategic or twitch

Challenge 1: Twitch Chess

- Modify the rules of chess to turn it into a twitch game
- Play it (on paper, we don't have (enough) boards) and see how different it plays
- Time pressure would be obvious to add. Can you do something more interesting in addition / besides that? How about a dexterity component?

Challenge 2: Twitch Dice

- Design a game that involves only twitch and luck – no strategic skill; should be playable in under 5 minutes
- Consider physical difficulties. E.g., if players must quickly grab dice, the grabbing could involve changing the numbers on the dice
- Decide on an objective, progression of play, and rules for how the game ends
- Playtest

Assignment 2 : Twitch Bomb

- Create a card-based game with the concept that players must work together to defuse a bomb
- There is a time limit: if the players take too long, the bomb blows up
- Use the standard card-based mechanic: a deck of cards, and each player takes one or more cards from the deck per turn
- This assignment combines strategic and twitch skill, and luck. Which of the three do you emphasize? (not a trick question)
- As usual, come up with several sets of mechanics: setup, progression of play, victory/end conditions, player actions, definition of game views (who knows what when). The time limit you set will be hugely important for the aesthetics of the game (smaller = higher pressure / simpler decision-making).
- Playtest and iterate. You can make the game arbitrarily complex, but remember that 1. it is a twitch game, and 2. you want to do at least 20 playtests.
- Create deliverable (complete set of written rules; if feasible, also a prototype with all game bits / cards included)