AIT AUSTRIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

GAME EXPERIENCE

„A POSITIVE GAME EXPERIENCE IS CRUCIAL FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS!"

The most important factor in determining the success of a game is the experience. User Reviews in digital stores and possibilities for refunds represent a major hurdle for the economic success of a game title. For this reason, an early evaluation of the Game Experience and effective integration of player feedback from the target group are essential. Through heuristic evaluations and observational playtesting in our cutting edge User Experience Lab, problems in game design, balancing, usability and user experience can be identified efficiently.

As experts for experience design, we offer scientifically founded support in all project phases of game development: from the initial design of game concepts to the evaluation of game prototypes via playtesting and heuristic evaluations. Depending on the development stage of the game and customer-specific requirements, a variety of questions can be answered: Does the game create a good flow experience for the players? How are game elements perceived by the players? How high is the „willingness to pay", and how can I improve my monetization strategy?

THE CENTER FOR TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE OFFERS THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

Gameplay Innovation Labs
New game ideas can be explored within our Gameplay Innovation Labs using sound scientific methods such as design fiction. We also offer support in the development and testing of new forms of interaction in games. This includes the design of gameplay interactions with classic controls, as well as virtual & augmented reality and tangible interfaces.

Player Focus Groups
Focus groups provide qualitative feedback on game components. In the early phases of the game, this process can be used to compare different concepts or game elements with each other. The game is presented to the focus groups using audiovisual material (videos, concept art or game demonstrations) and discussed in the group. The findings from the workshops are summarized in a report and can thus be used as an early aid for decision-making in the design process.
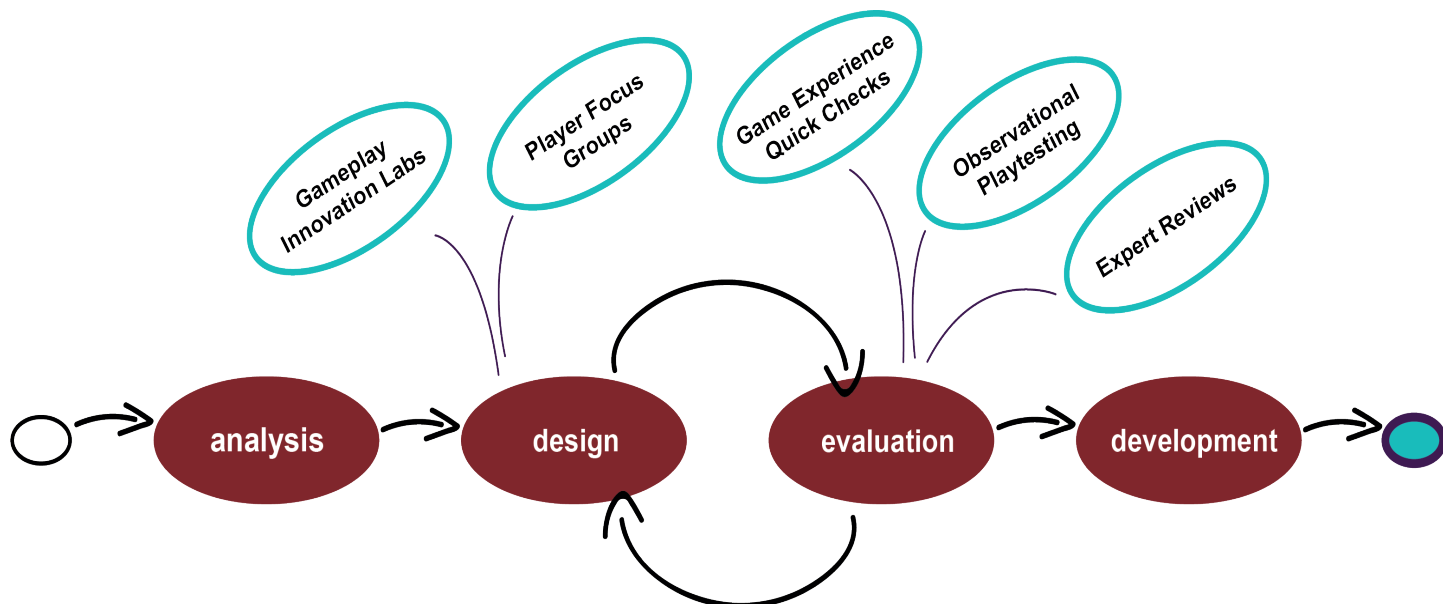
Figure: Experience in the game development process

Game Experience Quick Checks

This service is particularly suitable for gathering cost-effective feedback on individual aspects of a game (e.g. combat system, character creation, microtransactions, etc.), and is especially useful in the early stages of game design. The most pressing user experience problems are quickly identified in user studies with a small sample size and a short study duration, and illustrated in a short report.

Observational Playtesting

Our flexible lab can simulate various contexts for playtesting studies, like mobile gaming setups, team-based gaming e.g. at e-sports or a comfortable living room atmosphere for console games. The playtesting combined with simultaneous observation of the player behavior by experts (as well as additional technical aids such as eye tracking or face readers, if so desired) offers the unique possibility of also uncovering problems that players themselves don't realize, such as misunderstandings and subconscious factors that influence the experience. The players are recruited by us according to the desired target group (demographics, gaming experience by genre, etc.). Additionally, questionnaires and interviews with the players provide additional insights, which are evaluated according to sound scientific methodology and consolidated in the form of a structured report.

Expert Reviews

Heuristic evaluations (e.g. cognitive walkthroughs, game usability heuristics) by AIT experts are an effective means of obtaining timely, well-founded feedback for complex problems. They are especially useful for issues where the evaluation requires playing games for a longer time which are not feasible to be conducted in classic playtesting settings. Usability, balancing and game experience problems are analyzed through systematic playtesting by so-called double experts (experts both in the field of user experience and game design), sorted according to severity and translated into concrete design and recommendations for actions in form of a well-structured report.

Our service modules can be combined in different ways according to your specific questions and objectives, which we are happy to define together with you.