Unstable Underground

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Recommended Citation
Staats, Michael and Williams, Maxwell, "Unstable Underground" (2019). Purdue Undergraduate Research Conference. 60.
https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/purc/2019/Posters/60

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In order to know where to begin we first had to familiarize ourselves with the medium of board games. We began researching and testing various board games through different lenses to understand the appeal, mechanics, and what made or broke them. As part of observing through different lenses we consulted multiple sources in a variety of forms, including: Articles, Accessibility Teardowns, and Play Testing.

Articles: We read a multitude of articles to help us understand how to effectively create an interactive work such as a board game. These articles covered a variety of topics that gave us a better understanding of design practices, layout management, game mechanics, and accessibility.

Accessibility: One thing that was noted was potential accessibility issues within board games. This research has taught us about multiple accessibility issues which creates exclusion from our work. Common issues being color contrast, text readability, game piece sizes, negative emotional stimulations, etc. In order to best understand these concepts, we each wrote our own accessibility teardown on a modern board game. Being able to recognize the issues that arise from our choices will allow us to create a game that is more accessible.

Play Testing: Play testing was an invaluable source of information while designing our board game. We play tested our game internally to help balance mechanics, and externally to observe how others interacted with it. Our observations on our first version lead us to the conclusion to restart designing our board game. We play tested our game internally to help make our game both accessible and enjoyable.

Stage 1: Creating the first working prototype of the second version of Unstable Underground as a “Print-and-Play.”

Stage 2: Internal Play testing. We want to make sure our game balance and mechanics work as they should. Making adjustments as needed to enhance the playability and enjoyment.

Stage 3: Social Media plan. In order to begin external play testing we need to reach out into the board game community and find support to help make our game both accessible and enjoyable.

Stage 4: External Testing. Testing with intent to receive feedback to gain multiple points of view on the game. This stage also includes testing for accessibility as we want anyone to be able to join in.

Stage 5: Art Redesign. In order to make the game more engaging we want to apply the feel of the game to its look, and redraw the majority of our art assets without altering the accessibility of the game.

Stage 6: Funding and Publishing. Since we have spent so much time and passion we want people to be able to enjoy our work.

Base Mechanics

Rooms, each square room contains an intersection type (X T L O), every exit connects to its neighboring room card, and in the center is a room event Loot/ Monster/ Trap/ Special Event. The dungeon is built by players placing the room cards upside down at the beginning and are flipped over to become “explored”.

Loot as health and combat, means each loot card is summed to equal the player’s total health, and the stats on the loot cards have different effects on different monsters.

Ability cards players acquire from loot rooms or killing monsters.

Out players when a player is killed we want them to play as the dungeon itself. The out players’ goal is to kill the living players though the use of special ability cards and the ability to remove rooms from the dungeon.

The Collapse begins when all rooms have been explored requiring every player to remove at least 1 card from the dungeon to strongly encourage players to exit the dungeon (Note: players can be killed by the collapse).

Research

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