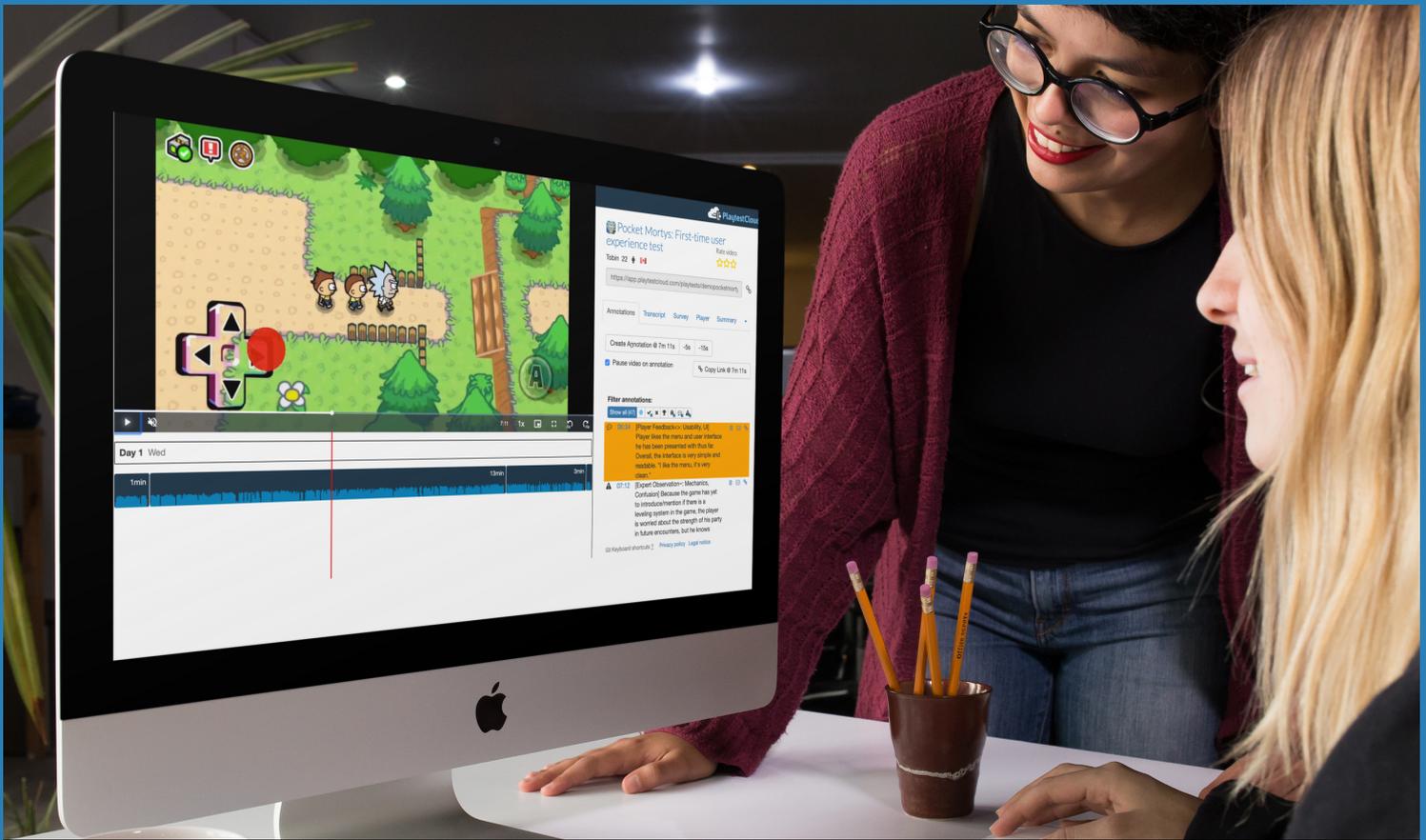




PlaytestCloud

**Longitudinal
Multi-Session
How to Guide**



INTRODUCTION

One of the most popular tools we have at PlaytestCloud are our long-form studies. We offer two tailor-made services in order to grow your research knowledge of your new game further than what is possible with the FTUE (first-time user experience) tests: Longitudinal playtests (multiple single sessions over the span of a few days) or Multi-session Playtests (multiple single sessions with integrated breaks between sessions). We hope that this guide will be a good resource to lead you in planning a successful study.

PROCESS



HYPOTHESIZE



DESIGN



RUN



ANALYZE



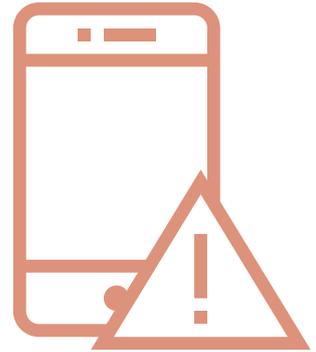
ITERATE

HYPOTHESIZE

DEFINE A NEED

The most exciting phrase to hear in research - the one that heralds Innovations - is not "Eureka!" but, "That's funny".

Chances are you have done single session playtests. But, you're noticing a huge churn (drop-out) of players on day 3 or 4, or perhaps you want to be 100% sure of a new feature before you release it to the public. This is your chance!

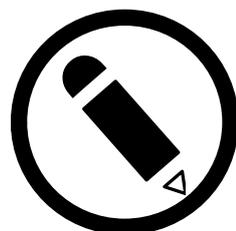


DEVELOP A HYPOTHESIS

Meet with your team and theorize why this is happening, and think of ways to test if your hypotheses are correct. You don't just have to come up with one hypothesis. We recommend testing as many theories as you can!

MAP IT OUT

Decide on what game elements and mechanics players will need to take to test your hypotheses. Will your game build support these steps? Which player profiles you wish to test? Develop what questions you wish to ask your players on a daily basis. Most importantly, develop some KPIs for your team to track when watching the videos in order to prove your hypothesis at the end of the playtest. In this guide, we'll call the document the KPI sheet.



DESIGN

CREATE A CALENDAR

The next most crucial step is to plan out your study thoroughly. As many of our game studios have advised, you should always work backwards when timing out your study - and design a Gantt chart or a calendar. Start off and mark on the calendar when your project is due. Then work backward and decide how many days your study will need to run for to test your mechanic (we typically recommend 5-7 days; remembering that tests will run for an additional 3 days than what you ordered) Next, decide how much time it will take to analyze your results. Think about how many team members you have to support you in your video analysis. Ask yourself questions like: Do you have the team capacity to run such a big study? Could you run an even bigger study? Do you have another sprint session to make the changes based on your findings?

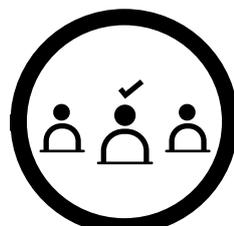
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
		Design Playtest	Contact PlaytestCloud			
Receive build from designers	Submit build to PlaytestCloud & start test		Receive first videos?			
				Receive final results	Team begins reviewing results	
	Team meeting		Meeting with stakeholders			

CONFIGURE YOUR PLAYTEST

Now look at your calendar (from above) and your KPI sheet (from the map it out phase) and consider how many players/days/gameplay time will it take to prove or disprove your KPIs? Bearing in mind, how many minutes of videos does your team have the capacity to watch? For example a single player playing for 30 minutes over 5 days is 150 minutes of gameplay video.

Configure Your Playtest		
How many Players	<input type="range"/>	10 players
Length of sessions	<input type="range"/>	30+ min
Number of days	<input type="range"/>	6 days

Airline pilots don't develop their route once in the sky - and neither should you. Always plan ahead... Always!



DESIGN

DAILY SURVEYS

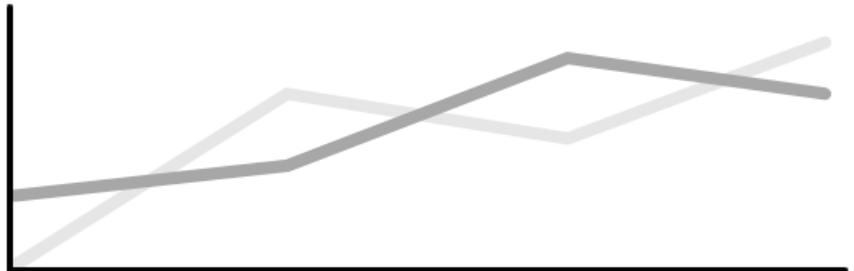
A daily survey is a good way to learn that little extra information about the player's experience. We often find that the most successful studies ask questions with quantifiable and trackable answers. This way you can track your success over the span of the study. We recommend asking the same tracking questions every day - this gives you access to our in depth graphs and charts after the playtest. If you choose to have different questions for each day of the survey, You can contact us and this can easily be arranged as well.

Daily Survey

Question 1
On a scale of 1-10 *How much did you like the game?*

Question 2
On a scale of 1-10 *How much did you like the game?*

Question 3
On a scale of 1-10 *How much did you like the game?*

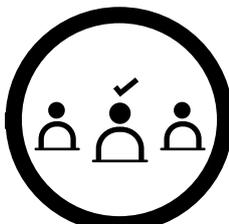


One of our customers recently reminded us that if you can hold a player for 7 days, you have captured that player permanently. Now it's time to put that truth to the test - with your game.



END OF PLAYTEST SURVEY

Once the players are done with all sessions of testing, you have the option to ask them some questions about their overall experience with your game. This is your best opportunity to hear their opinions about your game and to get an impression of how your game was perceived as a whole. But don't feel pressured to get this 100% perfect: if you have any additional follow-up questions you can easily contact the players after the test through our email function.



End of Study Survey

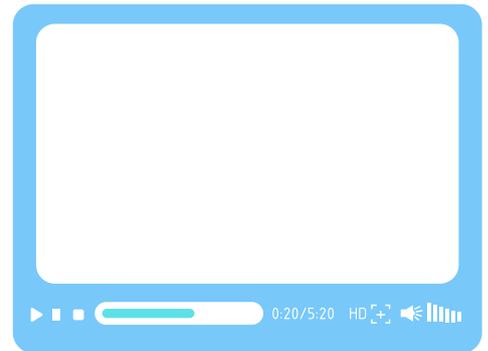
Question 1
How much did you like the game?

Question 2
How much did you like the game?

RUN

WORK AHEAD

As the playtest runs you will receive videos of our players playing your game daily. This is a good chance to work ahead and break up the work that you will have to do later: it's much easier to watch 30 minutes a day for 4 days rather than 2 hours in one session.

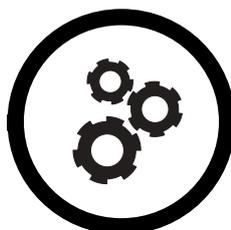


THE CHURN IS REAL

But, as a word of caution: players sometimes churn (drop out) of our multi-session or longitudinal playtests - even if you have already begun analyzing their playtests. Unfortunately, this can not be helped. As you know players churn for many reasons. Perhaps they become busy, forget to play their sessions, or perhaps a bug in your game dissuaded them from continuing.

ALL IS NOT LOST

If a player does not complete all of the sessions we will replace that player with a new player who did complete the sessions in their entirety. As a bonus, you will be able to keep the data of the un-finished player. Some studios actually plan for one player being replaced- which is something we recommend doing. In our experience most players stop playing due to an external circumstance, so no need to take drop-outs personally.



ANALYZE

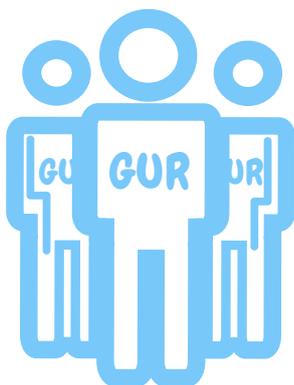
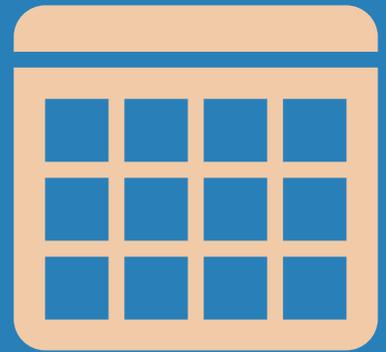


GRAB THE KPI SHEET AND BEGIN ANALYZING

As your videos come in, Your first step should be to pull up that KPI document which you created in the 'map it out' phase. We recommend taking your KPIs and listing them in a table for each player. As a player completes a KPI you should mark it in your video annotations and your chart.

PULL OUT THE CALENDAR

Set a realistic goal for watching these videos. How many players or minutes per day do you have the time or capacity to watch? With your team's manpower, how do you want to break up the workload? This might be a good time to refer to your calendar from the 'Design' phase.



CAN WE ASSIST?

Don't have the capacity to analyze the results as in-depth as they need to be? We can help you with that! Let us know and we will be happy to connect you with our team of games user researchers who can quickly give you a thorough analysis of your playtest.



ANALYZE

MEET WITH THE TEAM



Once you have had a chance to fully analyze your results, we recommend working in 3 phases to help organize your findings and move forward.

PHASE 1: Hold a meeting with the team who watched the videos and discuss all of your findings in depth.

PHASE 2: Hold a highlights meeting to review the playtest as a whole. This meeting should include those involved in the development of the game, as well as video clips of the relevant key moments of the test to present.

PHASE 3: Create tickets in order to turn the knowledge gained from the test into improvements.

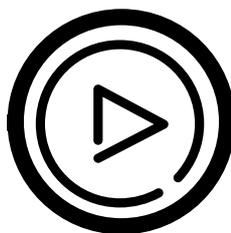
ASK QUESTIONS

In the phase 1 meeting your team should ask yourself 3 questions:

- 1) Which of our goals did we prove correct and what evidence do we have to support this claim?
- 2) Which of our goals did we prove incorrect and what actually happened to disprove our hypothesis? Why did it happen and do we want to go down this newly discovered path and research it more?
- 3) Now with the new information what should we iterate on? What changes should we add to the next sprint?



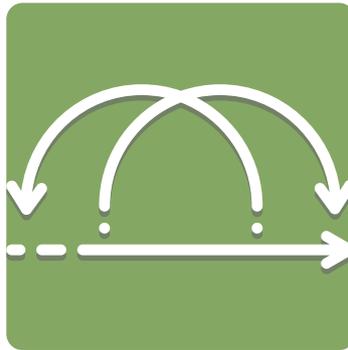
The biggest question one of our clients always asks is "Do players feel like they are succeeding?" If they feel like they are succeeding, they will usually continue on in your game.



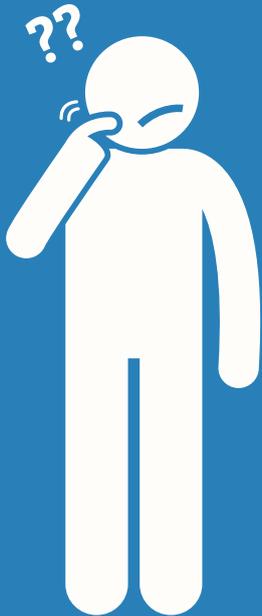
ITERATE

NEXT STEPS

The best questions you can ask yourself after a playtest is: What happened? Why did it happen? Do we need to fix it? How do we fix it? Should we run a new test based on our findings?



The most exciting phrase to hear in research is not "Eureka!" but, "That's funny". Sound familiar? Testing never ends...



WELL THAT'S A STRANGE THING TO DO

Unique gaming behavior and anomalies are not something to be ignored. Instead, look at why it happened: Is it the game build, did we miss our pitch, or is it the personality of the gamer? Think, does this unique gaming behavior warrant a new test?

STORE YOUR RESULTS

Once a playtest is complete, it's videos still have value. They will be a good archive of your game for the future. Also, they can be a great reference point when building future tests as well.

