June 6th Playtest Feedback Assessment

Review and Codified Analysis

Chris Shantz

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Forward

Included in this document is a breakdown of the responses from the June 6th playtest. All quantitative data is present, qualitative data has been iteratively interpreted, codified and organized. Additional quantitative data has been constructed using a coding framework and has been subject to critical interpretation. Significant effort has been put to maintain integrity of the original responses and capture the essence of the participants' viewpoints.

The coding framework used was by sorting all responses on a spectrum of either keyword identification (common words or themes) or by identifying positive/negative language. From here, the information is then cross referenced within categories for similar responses, and is then quantified. Sometimes both keywords and positive/negative sorting are compounded by use of charts and qualitative breakdowns for richer analysis.

Question 1 – A-B Testing

Original Provided Question

Between Version A and Version B, which Boost mechanic did you prefer?

Provided Answer Options

- *Version A – Instant Boost Upon Pickup*
- *Version B – Controllable Boost Upon Left Trigger*

Pie Chart

Version A - Instant Boost Upon Pickup
Version B - Controllable Boost Upon Left Trigger

66.7%

33.3%
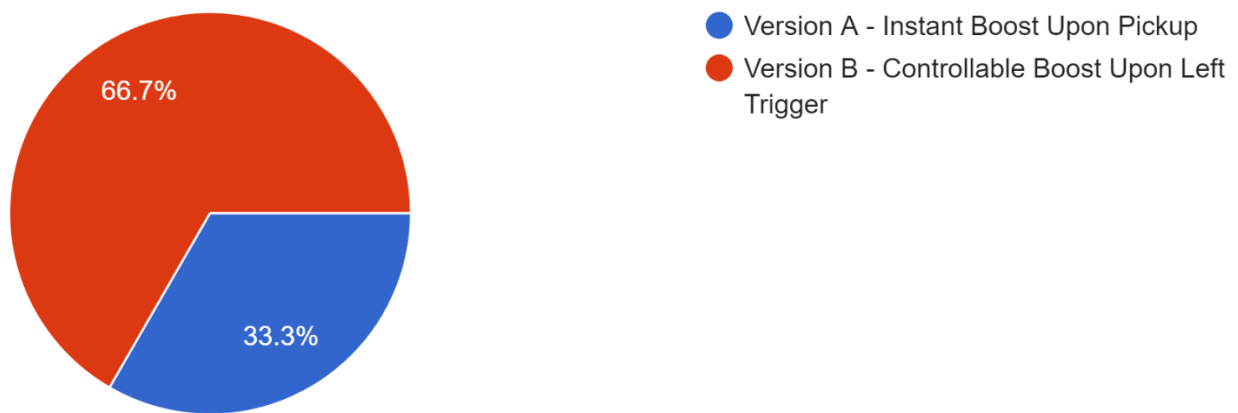
Brief Editorial Interpretation

2/3 of playtesters preferred **Version B**, using the controllable boost.

Simplified Action Item

Moving forward, development will shift toward nurturing this mechanic, making relevant considerations in level design, ability balancing, and implementation across relevant game elements.

Question 2 – See/Act/React Cycle

Original Provided Question

Did you feel like you had enough time to observe and react to obstacles during your run? Did you ever need to stop moving forward to think about your actions?

Provided Answer Options

Player Provided

Quantified Interpretation

See/Act/React Time?

Legend: A Lot · Sufficient · Moderate · Not Enough
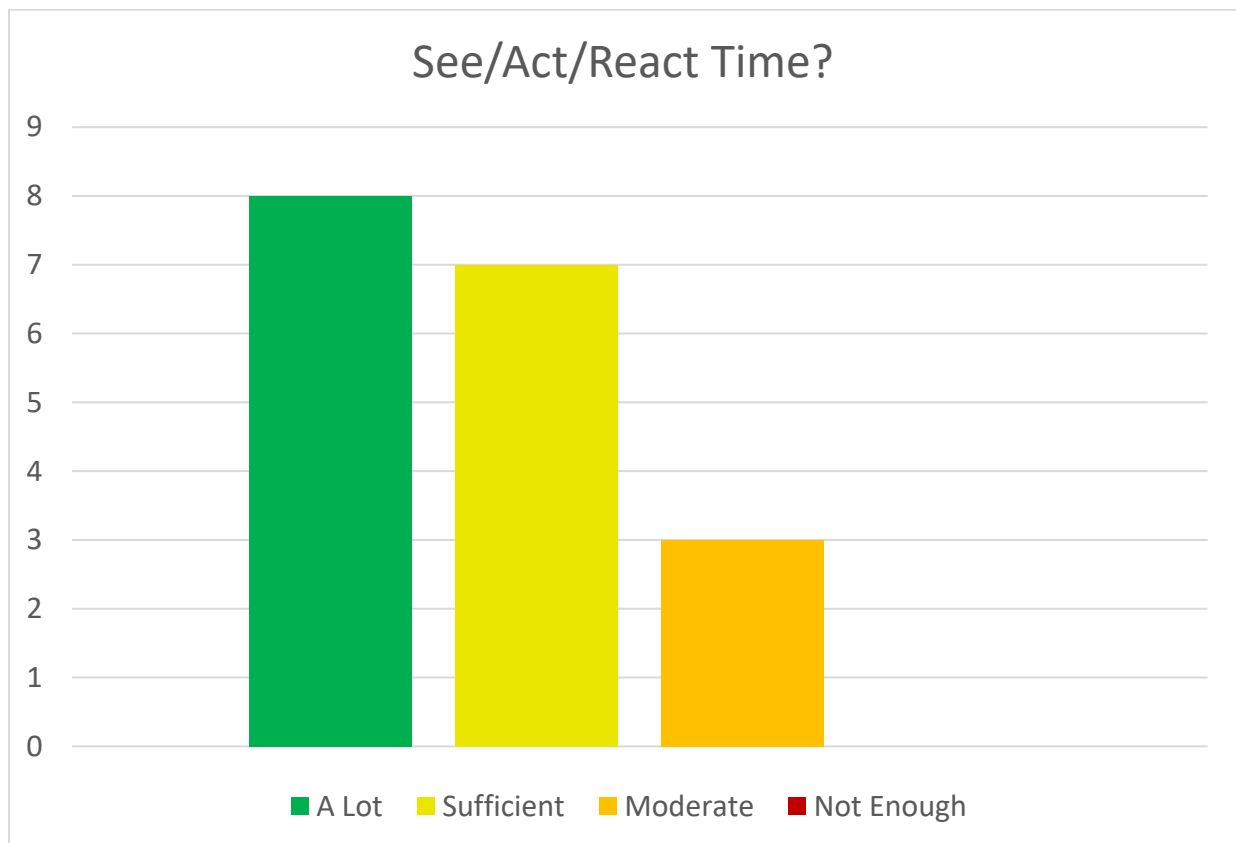
Qualitative Breakdown

4 respondents felt they had more than enough time to react to obstacles.

3 respondents indicated briefly needing to stop to assess obstacles or misjudged jumps.

3 respondents mentioned the overall smoothness of gameplay, with no need to stop and think about the next steps.

2 respondents mentioned reacting to platforms and obstacles without much delay.

2 respondents mentioned the need to stop and observe in large areas with multiple paths.

1 respondent commented on instances they needed to stop to shoot or clear specific obstacles.

1 respondent appreciated the moments of stopping and thinking when they were deliberate.

1 respondent mentioned planning out their actions for smoother delivery.

1 respondent expressed the need to adjust the camera or get a lay of the land before proceeding.

1 respondent suggested making pickups more visible and delivery locations more discoverable.

Brief Editorial Interpretation

The majority of these responses indicate satisfactory level metrics, if not a little bit too generous. The issues appear to stem from control issues such as aiming to shoot and camera controls. A few responses mention deliberate/required moments of stopping in order to achieve a task, designers need to be cognizant as to when the player is taking these breaks and what exactly they are breaking their flow for.

Simplified Action Item

Work on tuning the environment metrics. First by creating scenarios with stronger context (open levels, decision points, etc.), and following up by tuning the see/act/react cycle to allow for meaningful challenge.

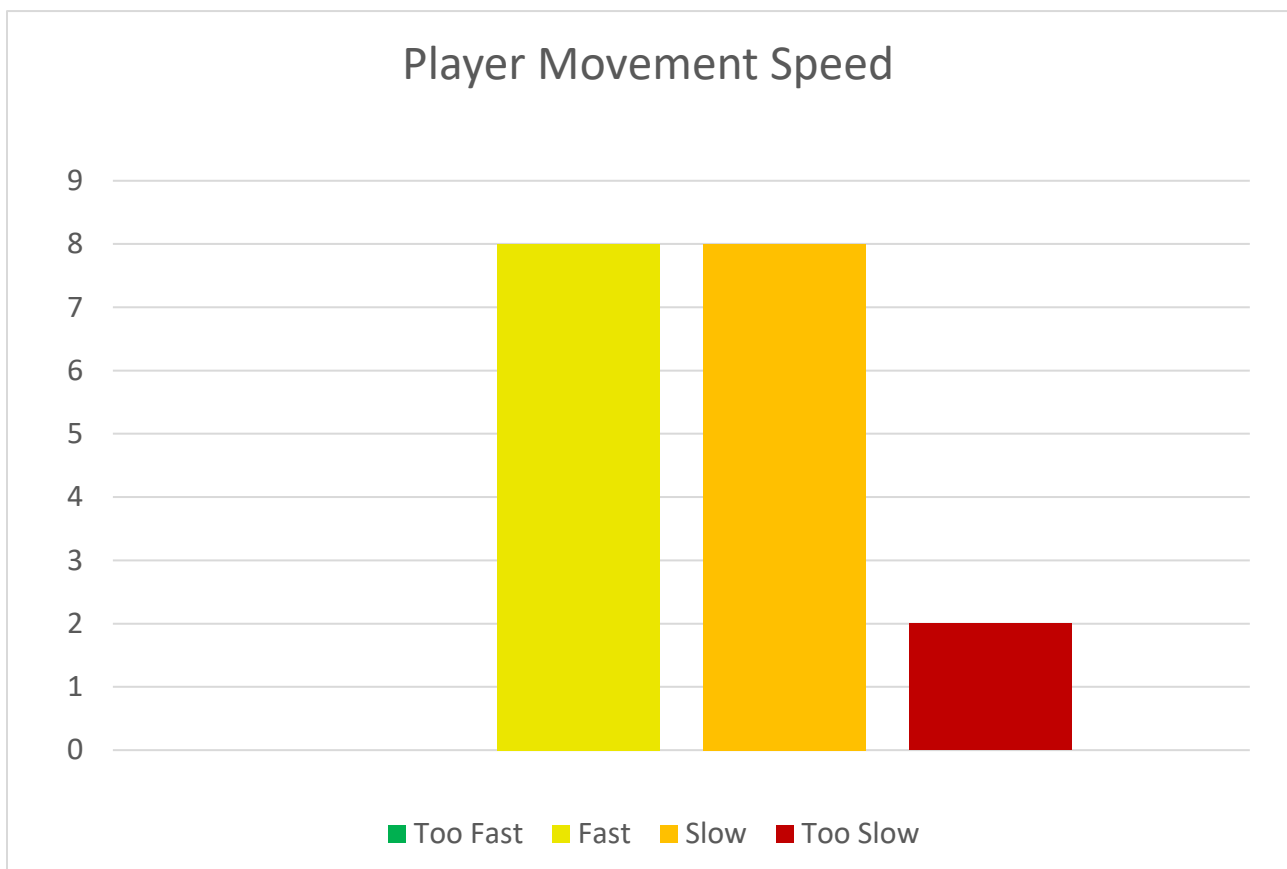# Question 3 – Player Movement Speed Assessment

Original Provided Question

Did the player's movement feel too fast or too slow? Too slow = 1, Too Fast = 4

Provided Answer Options

1. *Too Fast*
2. *(Fast)*
3. *(Slow)*
4. *Too Slow*

Column Chart

Qualitative Breakdown

6 respondents felt that the movement speed was satisfactory.

5 respondents desired an increase in the movement speed.

3 respondents specifically mentioned the boost speed, suggesting it should be faster or serve as the default speed.

2 respondents expressed satisfaction with the movement speed when combined with the environment.

2 respondents mentioned the need for improvements in animation speed or changes to animations to enhance the perception of speed.

1 respondent suggested investigating the quality of motion, acceleration, deceleration, inertia, and weight for a more immersive experience, mentioning Steve Swink's "Game Feel" as a source of inspiration.

1 respondent mentioned feeling slow.

1 respondent preferred version B over version A due to increased control.

1 respondent desired the ability to run at a faster speed while maintaining control, suggesting that the green boost could be used to achieve this desired experience.

Brief Editorial Interpretation

An interesting intersection of viewpoints here. Player speed is gravitating around the center non-option with a slight lean to being too slow. The issue doesn't seem to be the player's velocity when running, but rather the frequency in which the player has this ability available.

Simplified Action Item

Further tuning to the player's speed is planned, as well as increasing opportunities for the player to collect speed-up bonuses. The intention is to create environments in which the player can always actively seek out methods to increase their speed. The concern is making sure to balance this bonus with a potential consequence as to avoid simply delineating to the player an optimal strategy. Stacked speed boosts resulting in an increasingly unwieldy movement speed is a testable method to address this.

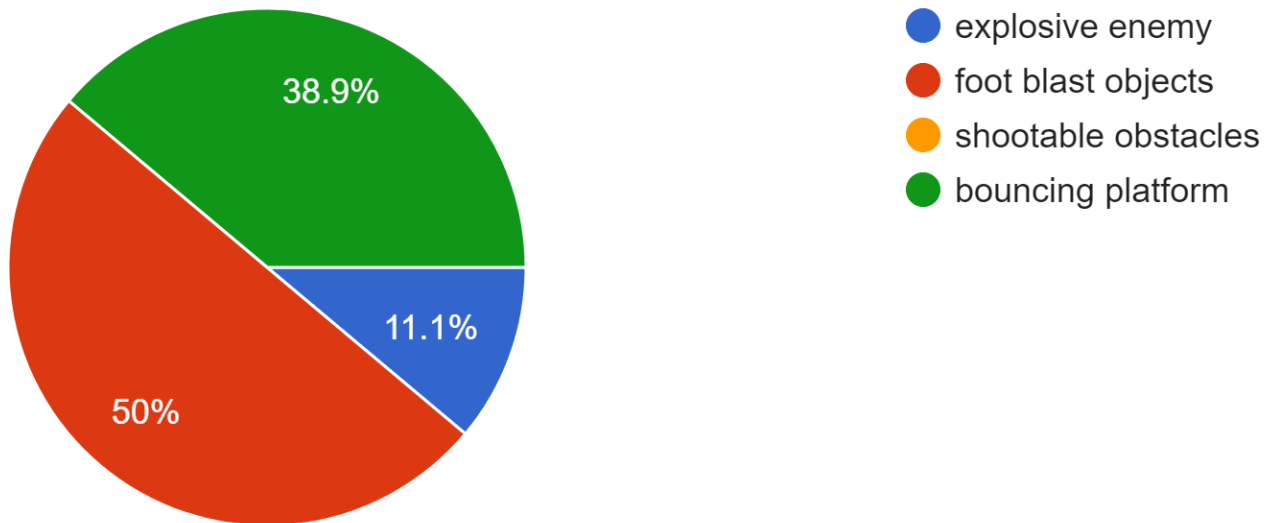# Question 4 – Liked Mechanics

Original Provided Question

Which one of the following actions did you enjoy doing the most?

Provided Answer Options

- *Explosive enemy*
- *Foot blast objects*
- *Shootable obstacles*
- *Bouncing platform*

Pie Chart

Legend:
- 🔵 explosive enemy
- 🔴 foot blast objects
- 🟠 shootable obstacles
- 🟢 bouncing platform

Pie chart values: 38.9%, 11.1%, 50%

Qualitative Breakdown

Foot Blast

4 respondents had positive responses to the foot blast mechanic, expressing enjoyment and enthusiasm towards it.

3 respondents felt that the foot blast lacked purposefulness and desired a more relevant use in gameplay. They expressed a desire for alternative methods or triggers to enhance the mechanic and its overall significance.

2 respondents appreciated the physics-related aspects of the game, including the serotonin reward from timing physics objects and user input, as well as the overall physics mechanics.

1 respondent found the explosions in the game to provide direct feedback and be controllable, unlike shooting bullets.

1 respondent mentioned feeling compelled to do foot blasts without being prompted, indicating a spontaneous inclination to use the foot blast mechanic.

1 respondent felt that the obstacles meant to be blasted seemed like a waste of time.

1 respondent purposefully ignored boxes as they became obstacles that could slow down progress.

1 respondent noted that the game focused on speed and progress, and therefore ignored interacting with boxes to maintain speed.

1 respondent mentioned that an effect coupled with a higher jump "always feels great".

1 respondent suggested that forward movement may feel better.

Bouncing Platform

3 respondents mentioned that they enjoyed the feeling of being fast-paced, the enjoyment of platform jumps, and the satisfaction of experiencing a boost of speed and height.

2 respondents enjoyed the act of bouncing and the feedback of the player flying

2 respondents felt that bouncing platforms contributed to the game's overall sense of speed and urgency.

1 respondent felt that the platforming aspect was their preferred aspect of the game.

1 respondent enjoyed the feeling of mastery and skill when shooting platforms in mid-air.

1 respondent found the other elements of the game not particularly engaging in comparison.

1 respondent enjoyed shooting the platforms but would have preferred not to have to click so much overall.

Brief Editorial Interpretation

Another interesting result. Foot blast took up half of the playtesters' attention in this category, and this was in spite of it being recognized as lacking purposefulness and clashing with the game's speed. Secondary to this was bouncing platform, which was identified as being a joyful, if not sometimes tricky, action to pull off. Both of these common choices spoke to player's kinetic/haptic sensibilities. Game feel for these actions is already in the right direction. The third player choice was actually a misinterpretation of the choices, and they were speaking about foot blast.

Simplified Action Item

The group is doubling down on foot blast, we're planning on making it into it's own button to allow for more control (blast-to-jump or jump-to-blast, or simply jump or blast). The blast can be charged and will allow for better feel, purposefulness, and usefulness as the attack range increases in value, allowing for more choices and opportunities in play. Additionally, addressing player's request for more horizontal moves, we are investigating our options in making this blast propel the player forward, allowing the player to smash through objects or enemies using this ability. We intend to test how this ability is triggered (in-air dash? On ground? Flick-stick and button press?).

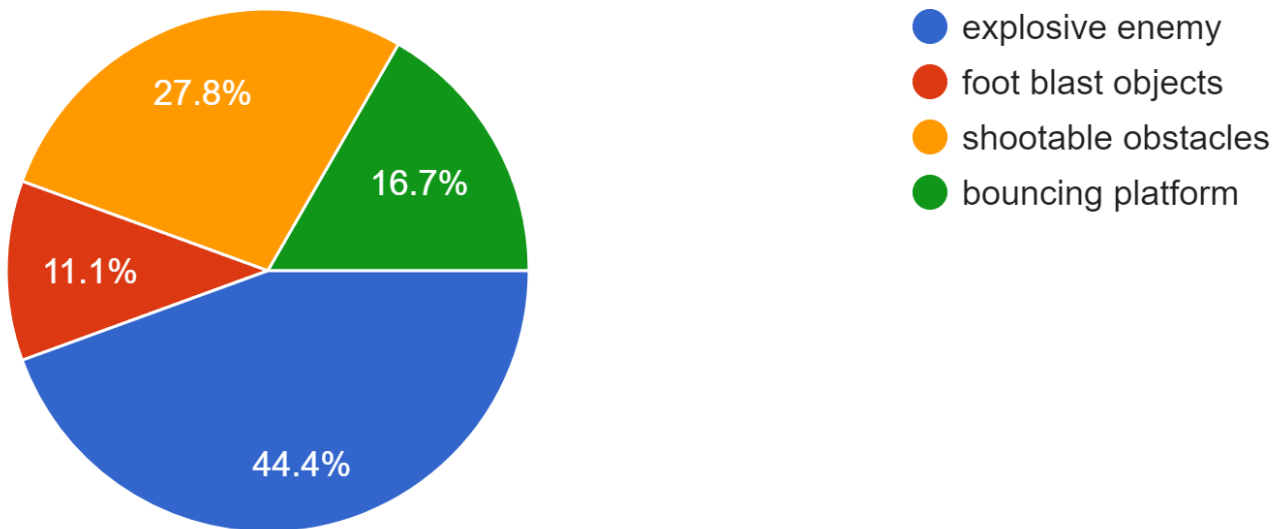# Question 5 – Disliked Mechanics

Original Provided Question

Which one of the following did you dislike doing the most?

Provided Answer Options

- *Explosive enemy*
- *Foot blast objects*
- *Shootable obstacles*
- *Bouncing platform*

Pie Chart

27.8%

16.7%

11.1%

44.4%

- explosive enemy
- foot blast objects
- shootable obstacles
- bouncing platform

Qualitative Breakdown

Explosive Enemy

2 respondents felt that the explosive enemies were barely noticeable or lacked significant impact, suggesting a need for more prominent visibility or consequences.

2 respondents expressed a desire for more dynamism in enemy engagement, consequential attacks and movement behaviors.

1 respondent recommended having more enemies present in order to increase the challenge and encourage player decision making.

1 respondent suggested that this enemy provided "kinda negative feedback for this prototype"

Shootable Obstacles

3 respondents question what the purpose was, waste of time or chore

2 respondents found the targeting to be nonfunctional and a detriment to this experience

Foot Blast Objects

1 Respondent felt like this mechanic lacked purpose

1 Respondent disliked the lack of choice as to when it was used, tied to first jump

Bouncing Platform

2 Respondents found engaging with this mechanic to be hard or failed too often

Brief Editorial Interpretation

Primarily the negative reaction came from mechanics that require shooting, static obstacles and explosive enemies. I suspect a large contributing factor is the level of control the player has compounded with the aiming distance metric and other implementation considerations such as AI and placement. Purposefulness and consistency in enemies and static obstacles placement may also be a contributing factor.

Simplified Action Item

Tuning and polish for shooting regarding aim, frequency, and response is vital for our project to justify keeping it. Additionally, the things the player will be shooting need to have more presence, purpose, and relevance to the game overall. This includes reworking the enemy's behavior and adding another shootable object that awards the player with a boost.
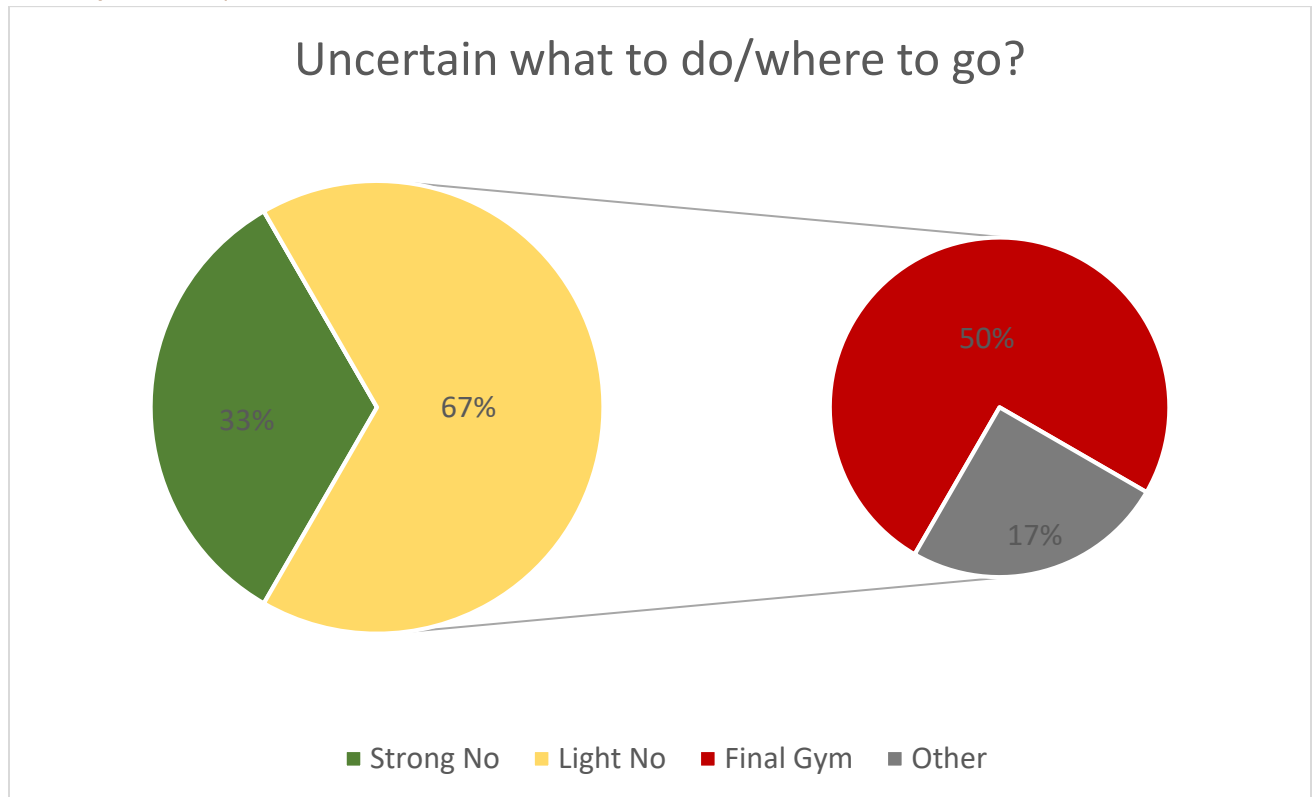
Question 6 – Design Clarity

Original Provided Question

Were there any areas which you felt unsure as to what action was required to progress?

Provided Answer Options

Player Provided

Quantified Interpretation

Uncertain what to do/where to go?

33%

67%

50%

17%

■ Strong No   ■ Light No   ■ Final Gym   ■ Other

Qualitative Breakdown

4 respondents experienced no uncertainty during the playtest.

3 respondents found the final gym location difficult to manage/understand.

2 respondents were unclear on the depth of the delivery mechanics, purpose.

2 respondents felt that the compass served little purpose in the playtest.

1 respondent needed time to think about the distance between platforms before jumping.

2 respondents found it had a negative reaction to the compass being removed during the final gym.

1 respondent had difficulty understanding camera orientation and level perspective in certain areas.

1 respondent felt that linear levels were straightforward but desired more options or the ability to "get lost".

1 respondent mentioned that the transition from linear levels to a small sandbox area was not smooth.

1 respondent mentioned that taking it slow had no real risk or reward system in place.

1 respondent felt that the ending area, which required more thought and planning, slowed down the fast-paced platforming experience.

Brief Editorial Interpretation

Final gym's level of quality stood out like a sore thumb and unfortunately diluted the response pool for this one. For those who did not respond to the level design in the final gym or claim that the had no problem: The delivery mechanic need to be fully realized before the player will feel compelled to engage with it, HUD elements like timer, the player score, and additional visual feedback is important to supporting this mechanic.

Simplified Action Item

The main takeaway is, understandably, to create scenarios and paths that are rational and deliberate for the game. A lot of the elements present in the game are implemented but not completed, or completed using "dirty fixes", so we need to put a magnifying glass on them and identify the steps to getting these mechanics feature-complete.
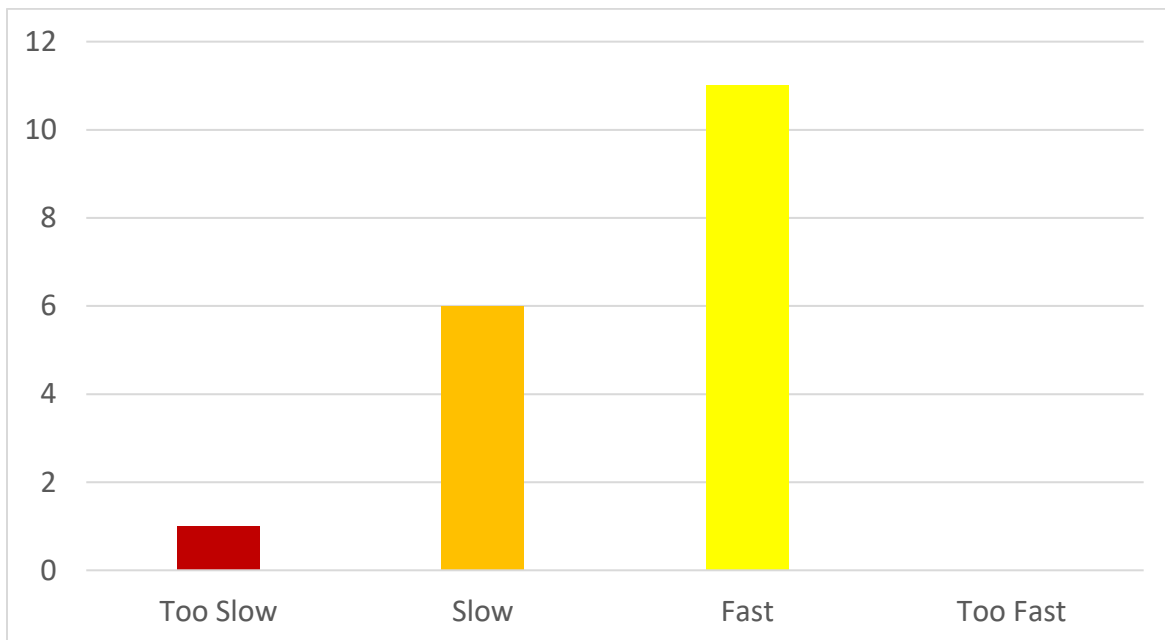
Question 7 – Weapon Fire Rate Speed Assessment

Original Provided Question

How do you feel about the fire rate of the weapon? 1= too slow, 4 = too fast

Provided Answer Options

1. Too Fast
2. (Fast)
3. (Slow)
4. Too Slow

Column Chart

Brief Editorial Interpretation

Unfortunately, this question didn't provide a qualitative response option so there isn't much to go by as to why the data is like this. Judging by the results, it can be interpreted that the weapon's fire rate is seen as pretty fast. Some tuning to make sure that this speed is adjusted relative to the other changes in enemies, environment, and abilities will be necessary.

Simplified Action Item

The groups current plan is to adjust fire rate and quality of the shooting weapon to a tap-to-shoot/charge-up shot functionality. We believe this will make the action of shooting more deliberate, as well as allow the player to make risk/reward choices when engaging with enemies.
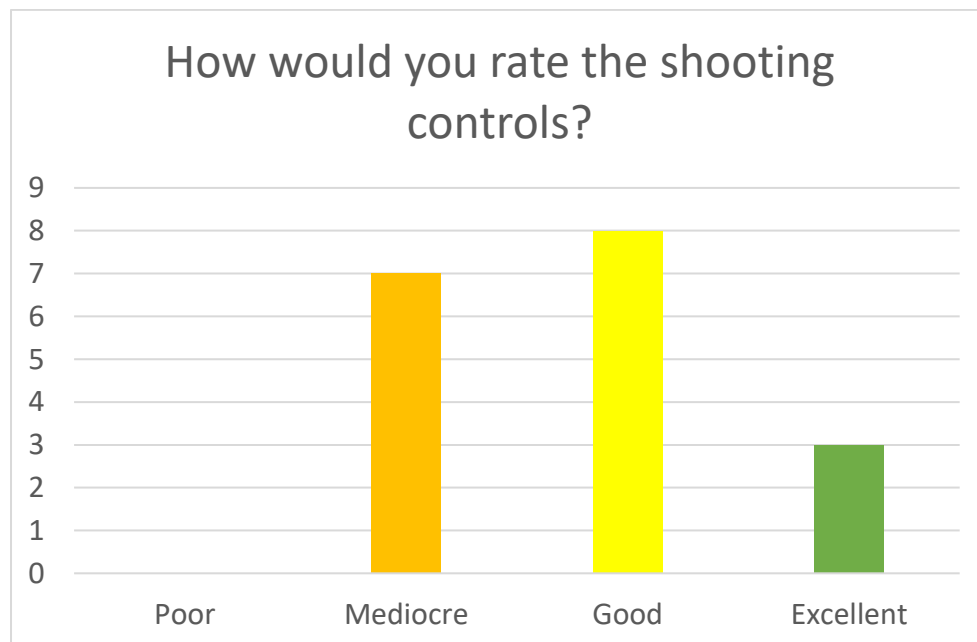
Question 8 – Shooting Controls Quality

Original Provided Question

How would you rate the shooting controls? 1 = poor, 4 = excellent

Provided Answer Options

1. *Poor*
2. *(Mediocre)*
3. *(Good)*
4. *Excellent*

Table Chart

How would you rate the shooting controls?

Poor	Mediocre	Good	Excellent
0	7	8	3

Brief Editorial Interpretation

Unfortunately, this question didn't provide a qualitative response option either, so there isn't much to go by as to why the data is like this. There seems to be a pretty wide spread between mediocre and good controls response, with a bit of leaning toward excellent. I wonder, however, if enough combat or shooting scenarios were presented to the player to have a strong opinion.

Simplified Action Item

Like the last action item, tuning is required to make sure that this mechanic is enjoyable enough to remain relevant in development. Experimenting with different sensitivities and alternate approaches to shooting will be needed, as well as getting a clearer understanding of the shooting mechanic within context of a typical level.
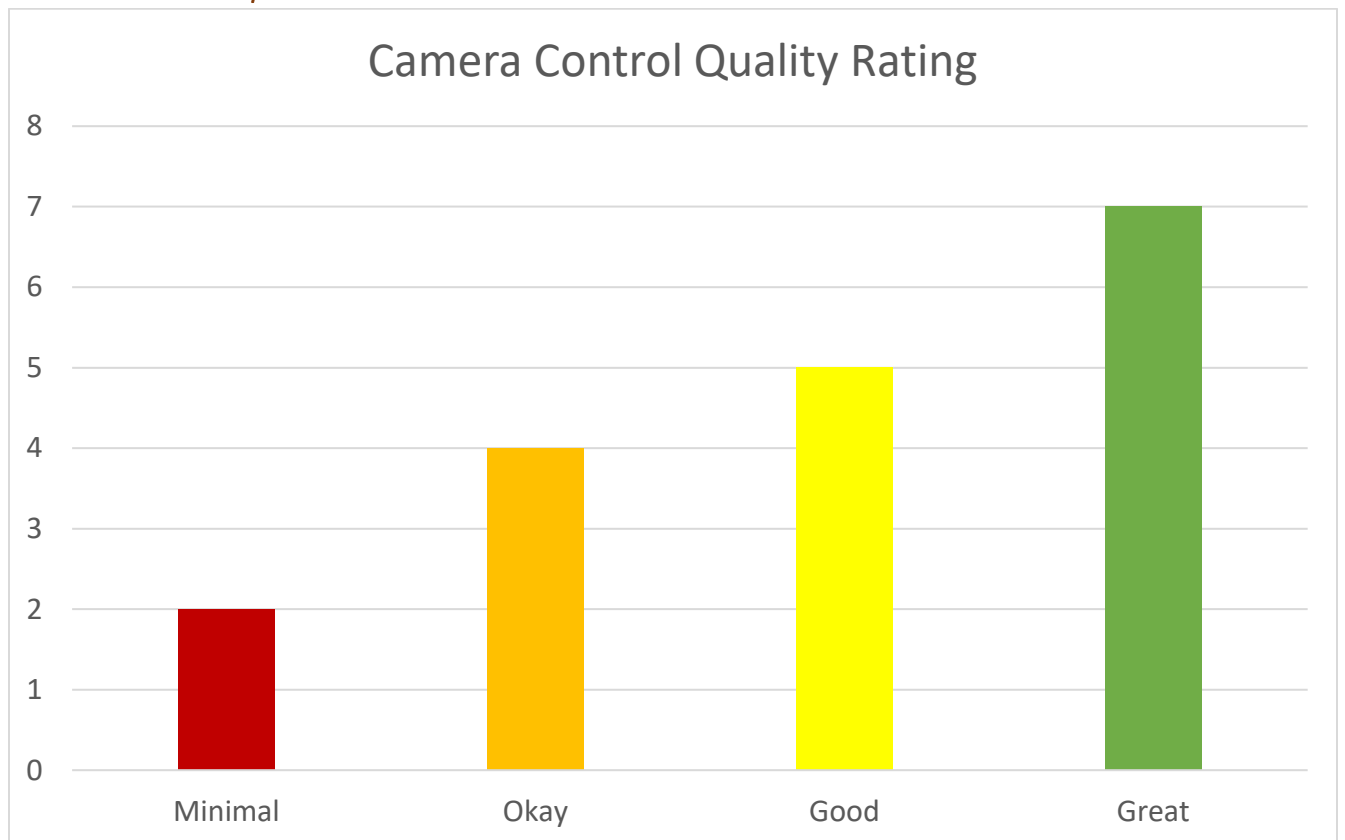
Question 9 – Camera Control Quality

Original Provided Question

Did you think the camera control supported your traversal through the playtest? Would you suggest any improvements?

Provided Answer Options

Player Provided

Quantitative Interpretation

Camera Control Quality Rating

Rating	Value
Minimal	2
Okay	4
Good	5
Great	7

Qualitative Breakdown

3 respondents expressed positive sentiments regarding the camera, indicating its functionality and support for gameplay.

3 respondents felt positively about the camera, without elaborating.

1 respondent expressed that the camera "looked good enough".

2 respondents expressed minor preferences or concerns related to camera control, indicating that settings may need to be introduced for player comfort.

1 respondent found the camera quick and responsive but felt discomfort moving the camera frequently during the end gym

1 respondent mentioned that the camera quality was minimal, functional but not compelling.

1 respondent mentioned the need for the camera to return to a set view when the player starts running to avoid the need for readjustment during pick up and drop-offs.

1 respondent expressed a need for better indication of the relationship between speed boost and its effect on jumping.

Brief Editorial Interpretation

The overall trend leans toward a functional camera system and we can thank Cinemachine for giving us a good base to work with. It's looking like the camera controls are going to need to support multiple player's tastes and that while it is functional, it needs to increase in quality.

Simplified Action Item

This may be a long-term action item to some degree, but tuning the camera to react to movement in a compelling way will lend a lot to the game's feel. An important consideration, however, is how we want to address the camera when the player is aiming their weapon (midpoint or average between plain orbital target and the aiming target, perhaps?), or a spline that the camera follows when entering certain areas (camera swoop and pull to reveal landmarks or focal points of interest in new locations)? Camera collision with geometry (what does it do, does it avoid or clip, when?). Simple feedback as well can go a long way, some rumble or tilt might help.
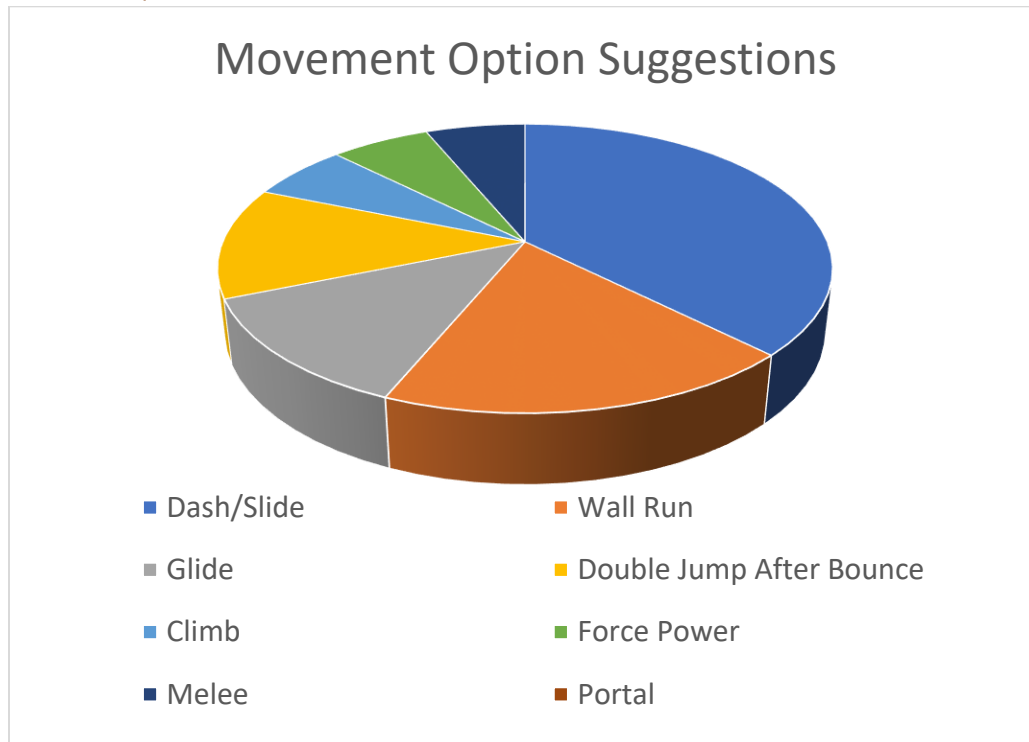
Question 10 – Movement Option Suggestions

Original Provided Question

Do you feel like you have enough movement options? Was there any movement options missing?

Provided Answer Options

Player Provided

Quantitative Interpretation

Brief Editorial Interpretation

A lot of different suggestions! Dash and Wall Run together take up more than half the suggestion, also gliding and some suggestions for altering the bounce behavior coupled with jumping. This is evident that there is engagement with our project and players want the movement system's forward motion to be more supported. The dash in particular seems like a good decision.

Simplified Action Item

We have decided to integrate a dash-like mechanic into our foot-blast ability. We intend to test a few approaches toward it soon and are taking ownership of the orphaned foot blast mechanic's apparent visceral appeal and strengthening it. Moving forward we are going to address how we can make that vertical and horizontal boost act harmoniously, this might be through different types button combos or button presses (tap for dash, hold for vertical blast?)