

## Game Play Analysis: Bounty Hunter

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	<p>The overall primary goal of this task is for the player to get to the lower portion of the game play area. To accomplish this, the player needs to kill the monster and then proceed to find the control room. In the control room, the player will find a way to lower the center of the fighting ring which will allow them to complete the given task. The ideal performance to accomplishing the task would have the player lock onto the monster and proceed to fire. The game gives a short instruction on how to use the lock on feature and which button to press to fire the weapon. To kill the monster quickly, the player needs to rapid fire at the monster, but pause when the monster starts to deflect the blasts. When the monster charges at the character, the player should dodge by sidestepping and also continue shooting at the monster. Once the monster is defeated the player should be as close to the red side of the ring, by the wall to continue efficiently with the next tasks. When the player gets close enough to the opening in the electric fence, the game gives instructions on how to complete a hop over short walls. The player now needs hop over the wall and proceed to the blocked doorway. At this point, the game gives instructions on how to use the cutting torch to get through the door. When the player gets through the door, they must proceed to elevator at the end of the hallway. They must get on the elevator and travel up to the control room. When the elevator stops, the player needs to get off and go down the short hall into the control room where they will find some control panels and equipment. The player then walks up to a box in the middle of the room where the game gives instructions on how to push the button on the box. Once the player pushes the button, the player can see the inner portion of the ring lower. Now the player must proceed back to the elevator and travel down to the lower portion of the game play area. When the player gets back down, they must hop over the wall again and get to the opening in the floor. Now the player is given instructions on how to hang on a ledge and once they are hanging, they receive instructions on how to drop. When the player reaches the bottom, they have accomplished the primary task.</p>
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Primary Action Event	Grid Location	Time
Starting Location	0, 0, 0	00:00
Kill monster	0, -5, 0	00:23
Jump over wall	0, -6, 0	00:25
Cut door	0, -8, 0.3	00:29
Go up elevator	0, -12, 0.3	00:34
Push button to lower floor	0, -8.75, 3.5	00:37
Go down elevator	0, -12, 4	00:41
Jump over wall	0, -6, 0	00:44
Hang on edge of pit	0, -2, 0	00:46
Drop to bottom of pit	0, -2, -1	00:47

Skill Learned	How learned	Location
Lock on targeting	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Fire weapon	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Hop wall	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Cutting torch	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Elevator	Trial & error, exploration	n/a
Push button	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Hang on ledge	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle
Drop	On screen cue	Top of screen, in middle

## PLAY SESSIONS

PIE050302\_2\_  
BH\_PS2-1:

The player appeared to be confused with the specific goal of the game. The player asked the researcher several questions and talked to himself a lot throughout the game play. He would say things like, "Oh, ok" and "I know what I have to do." The player appeared to have played a game similar to this before because he used the lock on targeting and seemed to know what buttons did what in game play. After he killed the monster, it seemed like he knew where he had to go next. He followed the path of the ideal performance until it came to hitting the button to lower the floor. After hitting the button in the control room, he appeared confused because he hit the button another time and then left the room. It seemed like he was in a search/exploration mode and just wondering around the game play area. After exploring the area, he went back to the control room and hit the button again. After doing this, it appeared that he saw the floor lower because he went back down the elevator and proceeded to the center area where he dropped to the bottom of the pit.

PIE050302\_6\_  
BH\_PS2-2:

As I observed the girl playing Bounty Hunter, I saw that she seemed to know which buttons were what. She was really good at remembering what button did what including pressing the correct button due to what the instructions said on the screen. I could tell that she had played a playstation before by how she held the controller and she did not have to look at the control while playing. I noticed at first that she did not have any type of strategy when fighting the monster. Basically I observed that the monster was killing itself. She knew that she had to kill the monster but did not notice that the electrical fence was there for a reason, even when the monster was hitting the fence. Nor did she figure out that the laser from the gun was reflecting off of the shell of the monster. The player started to play the game at random without trying to find out what buttons were what or even to figure out what she was suppose to do. She was pretty confident with herself while playing in the environment that she was in because as I watched her play the game, she was very laid back and was also into the game. She seem to feel like she was in the room with people that she liked or had a good relationship with and she was able to communicate with her classmates when something was going wrong to her knowledge. As the player progressed through the game, she was looking for actual big signs that let her know what to do next instead of putting the puzzle together. One thing as I watched her play the game, I notice that she did not do a lot of wondering off. As she did not read the instructions, she figured out what she was suppose to do and managed to finish her objective. Overall, she completed her assigned instructions and used her own knowledge to guide herself.

PIE051201\_8\_  
BH\_PS2-4:

When the DVD begins for this player, she is not visible and it is extremely hard to hear the audio. When the game play first begins, it appears as if the player is unsure of what to do. She is just running around the monster and charging at it or dodging it. When the game tells the player how to lock onto the target, the player seems to understand because he uses the lock on targeting and proceeds to fire his weapon at the monster. After several seconds of shooting at the monster the player changes weapons. Once on the new weapon she uses the targeting and tries to use it on the monster. After several seconds she switches again and repeats the process of locking on and trying to use the

weapon. She goes through every available weapon this way and at one point the researcher asks the player what she is doing. The player responds by saying that she is trying to find what works. After this brief dialogue, the player switches weapons a couple more times before settling in on the blaster. Throughout the rest of the game play, the player asks a couple of questions to the researcher and makes some comments to herself about what is working to kill the monster. Towards the end of the play session, it appears as if the player has decided what weapon is most effective for killing the monster because she uses the blaster and ends up killing the monster. This is where this session ends, so there is no data for completing the primary goal of getting to the lower portion of the game play area.

RN030529\_1\_BH\_1:

The player appears very calm and emotionless throughout game play. He isn't distracted by anything or anyone in the room. The only type of emotion he shows is a short smile after being hit for the fourth time by the monster. He only switches weapons a few times and does not appear to button mash or fully explore the items in his inventory to kill the monster. In fact each of his weapon switches appears to be accidental. The first time he switches weapons occurs right when he is being hit by the monster. After that it appears that it takes him sometime to notice that he switched his weapon, and as he is trying to rope the monster he is hit again. He appears most comfortable with the select menu style of switching weapons, where the screen is paused while the player switches weapons. He uses this weapon select menu twice. The first time he uses it to get back to the gun. The next time this menu appears, it is by accident as the player doesn't spend a lot of time exploring it and reselects the gun. The player appears to use a "shoot and dodge" strategy to kill the monster. This player attempts to use the lock on and fire technique, however he fails to keep holding down the R1 button. This results in the player being able to face the monster and shot at him, but not being able to shoot and move at the same time and hit the monster. After the player kills the monster, he quickly jumps the short wall and cuts through the door. He pauses briefly at the bottom of the elevator when it goes up without him, but he eventually gets the elevator to come back down by jumping in the empty elevator shaft. Once upstairs the player runs over the health and pushes the

button. After running next to the other computers upstairs he goes back down the elevator and runs to the outside of the ring. It does not appear that the player knows what the button did at this point, because the pit is open in front of him, however he runs and jumps around the outside of the ring. Then he goes back up the elevator and pushes the button. While upstairs the player pushes the button three times. The first brings the lift back to the top in the middle of the pit. The second does nothing, because he hit the button while the lift was moving back to the top. And the third button push drops the lift back down. Immediately after his final push of the button, the player goes back down the elevator and drops into the pit. It appeared as though the player used a “trail and error” exploration technique in this phase of the task. He explores every coordinate of the playing area and eventually ends back at the button (the only thing he can interact with) before figuring out how to complete the task.

RN030605\_1\_BH\_2:

As with the last player, this player also has a very calm and emotionless expression on his face throughout the game play. However, because the player is chewing gum and the video is a little unclear, slight facial expressions may not have been picked up. The player does not interact with anyone while playing, but does look off screen a few times at what I am assuming is a game manual. The player speaks three times during game play. The first time he says “ah shit” after being hit by the monster. The next two times he speaks, I could not quite make out what he was saying but it sounded like he said “ah that’s what I got to do” while fighting the monster, and “I bet that’s what I do” when figuring out what the button does. The player appears to start the monster fight with the button mashing strategy, as he switches weapons multiple times. From this he appears to move into a “trail and error” strategy where he tries out all the weapons in his inventory and even jumps on the monster. He finishes the monster off with a “shoot and jump” strategy, where he locks onto the monster and fires repeatedly, when the monster starts to charge he jumps over the monster and repeats the process. While using this third strategy he switches weapons a few times but they appear to be accidental switches. After killing the monster the player begins a “trail and error” exploration strategy for the rest of task. In this strategy he not only explores every coordinate of the map multiple times, but

also briefly explores the items in his inventory once more. For instance while outside of the ring he tries using his rope and to cut open the door he tries to use his helmet. The player is indirectly given a hint from the game when he goes back into the ring after hitting the button multiple times (so the lift was up), and receives the drop and hang instruction when he is unable to use it. It does not appear that the player picks up on this hint, as he continues to explore the outside of the ring and the control panel for about two more minutes, before completing the task.

## ANALYSIS

### Mix of Players

After watching the videos and filling in the VX logs, I found some very interesting tendencies that were occurring during game play. There was a good mix of people that we observed with some two being female, two being college students, and three middle school students. The place in the game where there was the most contrast in strategies was during the kill the monster phase. When the players were thrown into this arena with no escape and the only instructions were to kill the monster, the players showed different strategies. There were three strategies that I saw during game play and they were button mashing, trial and error, and dodging/random shooting.

### Strategies

The players that showed signs of using the **button mashing** always seemed to do a fairly effective job at avoiding damage because they would be hitting buttons and then hit the jump button. Also with this, they never showed signs of recognizing the on screen instructions because they hardly ever used the lock on targeting and if they did, it was by accident. The players that used **trial and error** were very effective at killing the monster because they would go through every weapon at their disposal and test it on the monster. They would use the lock on targeting effectively, showing that they understood the on screen instructions. The one thing that these players did not do very well was avoid the monster. The players were too busy or involved in finding an effective weapon that they would forget to move out of the way of the monster when it would charge. The players that used the **dodging & random shooting** technique were very good at avoiding the monster. When

the monster would charge they would run or jump out of its path. Because they were so concerned about not being damaged, they just randomly shot at the monster. They did not seem to have time to use the targeting or they just didn't see the instructions on how to use it. It was also noted that most players would look and roam around the area (in this case, around the inner and outer part of the ring as well as the control room) so that they could understand where they were and what all their capabilities were within the game. Not only was roaming a big issue, but they also wanted to try out every weapon that they had. I assume that the players changed their weapons often because they wanted to see what effect each different weapon would have on the monster. This accounted for the excessive time differences in the first period of play.

#### Game Flow

After the monster was killed, all of the players progressed through the rest of game play in pretty much the same manner (see Fig. 1). The game was set up for the players to progress logically through the rest of this level. The players seemed to use an exploration method once they had passed the monster. They would get outside of the ring and cut the door. They would then proceed down the hallway and up the elevator to the control room. In here they were presented a control and they were supposed to push a button. They would approach and push the button, but there was no instruction as to what this button does, so they would push it several more times in the hope that they would see something happen. If the players looked closely, they would see the inner part of the arena disappear like an elevator. It was clear to me that all of the players missed this because they would go down the elevator and run around the rest of the game play area looking for another clue. Some players eventually asked the researcher what they had to do next and they would receive some hints as to what they were looking for.

Subtle Visual  
Clues a  
Problem for  
Some

Player/Gender  
Differences

Looking at the demographics of the group, I found it interesting that the two players who completed the goal in the fastest time and with the least amount of damage both were male and their favorite games were sports games. Based on this, it seems as if playing third person type games helps with this game. The two females in the group talked a lot more throughout the game play. I

found this interesting because they would talk to themselves and also ask the researcher questions about the game. This could be viewed as another strategy for game play. I think that they talk more through game play because of the fact that they are female and are usually more social than males. One thing that I notice about the boys was that they played as if they were imagining they were actually there in the game. They were the character fighting the monster, and would taunt the monster as if the monster could hear them. Boys seemed to use their imagination envisioning they were actually in the context in order to succeed throughout the levels. This might be because if one does what s/he would actually do in a real situation then it is probably what one would have to do in the game. On the other hand, girls tended to not care about “being in the games”, based on my observation. The two college students did not say much at all and seemed like they were really into the game play. This could be because they have a lot more experience with games and have developed into this more advanced player. This was in stark contrast to the middle school students who talked throughout game play.

#### Summary

Overall, all of the players completed the primary task, although we did have one player who stopped after killing the monster. Every person who played made it passed the monster and down to the lower level of the game play area. I think that this shows that the game is designed with a higher level of gamer in mind because of the lack on instruction, but the actual play is not as challenging. The game play that we observed was designed to teach the players how to use these tools and techniques through the rest of the game. Every player created their own strategy for completing the task, whether it was trial and error, button mashing, or exploration.

FIG. 1

