

Group Name: ANOTHER ONE

Group Topic: Life Balance

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Background Research

Executive Summary

The game we would like to develop is a caretaking simulation type of game. Through the player's interactions with the character and seeing the character respond to different actions and activities, the player will learn the concept of life balance and why it is important. We are aiming to keep the players engaged through various visual designs and graphics to increase their excitement, interest, and involvement in the character and the character's well being and actions. Instead of directly telling the players what they should or should not be doing in order to achieve life balance in their own lives, we will have them interpret and come to that conclusion on their own through interacting with the player and watching the player's well being increase through some activities and decrease while performing other activities. They will feel a sense of responsibility and, through interactions with the character, will learn to encourage them to make decisions to better its virtual life balance. Our objective is to have the players be aware of their life balance and take steps to achieve balance in their own lives just like they helped the character achieve theirs.

The target audience for this game consists of young teenagers and adolescents ranging from ages 10 to 13. Children within this age group are at the point in their lives where they learn new knowledge and form habits quickly and with ease.

In addition to this well thought out, creative and educational yet fun game idea, we have the perfect team to make this life balance game come to life. Boro and Luc will be in charge of developing the game. Se Yoon, Noelle, Sylvie and Jacqueline are in charge of the various design aspects of the game and player experience. By having every member of the team apply the strengths, skills and expertise as well as achieving all the goals we've set out for our game, we will improve our chances at making the game a hit and being effective in teaching and influencing our target audience to make better life balance decisions in their future.

Audience Research

Who is our target audience?

The target audience is adolescents and young teenagers. We specifically chose the audience between the age of 10 to 13 when they learn the fastest, whether it is knowledge or habits. The continuous and rapid development of technology is affecting not only the types of media people use, but also adolescents' online and offline habits, and kids and young teenagers are most affected by it.

How will you appeal to them?

A way of appealing to the audience is through our visual design, which will be bright and 'adventurous', a common video game look. Using similar graphic style as other common or popular games, it will give familiarity to the audience that allows captivation. Additionally, creating adorable animated characters intrigues users as people usually show admiration and sympathy towards cute objects or living creatures.

Audience research about web browsing, game preferences, and media literacy

There has been significant decrease in print media consumption in children and an exponential increase in digital media consumption. According to research, around 40% of children between the ages of 8 to 11 own their own phone (Troianovski, Ante, & Vascellaro, 2012). This means that children are experiencing digital media every day and are very likely competent to digital media usage including social networks, online games, and web browsing. In addition, 47 to 51 percent of children 8 to 11 years old use web portals for kid's entertainment, while the other half use internet for games (Monteiro, 2015). However, as adolescents grow up, they start to consume more time on social networks on their phone. It is evident that our audience are more reliant on technology and digital media.

Gaming has never been so various and accessible to all ages, even to adolescents. As a result of them owning a phone, juveniles have an easier access to mobile game apps without consenting or begging to their parents for the purchase (Troianovski et al., 2012). With few touches of their phone, the young phone users can install any games they want. The dangerous side of the game industry for kids is that even games rated as "Everyone" or "+10" contain violence (Oskin, 2012). For instance, common genres that adolescents play, which are action, adventure, combat, role playing, and sports, generally contain some violence such as hitting, shooting, and killing a monster or an object. Girls suggest playing fantasy violence video games while boys like realistic violence (*Children and Video Games*, 2002). Violent video games have significant

influence on an adolescent's behaviour, such as being more inclined to partake in fist fights, rumours and bad-mouthing. In addition, children overplay games and media activities because they cannot control their own time. It is important for children to be educated about the emotional, mental, and physical effects on their daily lives because of game or digital media overplay.

How will you balance the "play/learn with your kids" aspect with the target age of grade 5?

We would balance the "play/ learn with your kids" aspect with the target audience of Grade 5 with our interactive, alluring design to draw them to play mini games to help their characters have a good life balance. Through the game, the target audience will be responsible for managing the avatar's time so it does not go back playing video games. The simulation game is intended to make the users reflect upon their life to see if they overplay video games like the avatar in our game. Therefore, the Grade 5 audience will be able to entertain themselves interacting with the character while learning how to have a healthy state of wellbeing.

How does your approach exemplifies MediaSmarts' core values?

MediaSmarts values the wellbeing of children and youth with media literacy. They believe that through proper education, they can inform children about digital media literacy since we all live in a world where we cannot avoid contact with technology and media.

Our approach to life balance and game time exemplifies MediaSmarts' core values because our purpose of designing a simulation game is to teach adolescents to be a "media smart" citizen, especially in terms of controlling their game time in exchange for other activities. We want to show the ominous influence that video games have by showing physical changes or emotions of the avatar when it is fatigues by playing games on its computer. The game will also compel the young users to be responsible over the avatar and experience the consequences of the negative impact of video games. The character's life is situated similar to that of young children, whose time is exceedingly consumed by digital media.

As MediaSmarts believes that media is also powerful that can be beneficial to welfare of children, our team also conceives that video games can be a pleasurable platform for young users where they will learn to rightfully engage in both offline and online network, appropriately respond to media issues, and become a reliable digital citizen for a healthy community online and in reality. For example, the avatar will be able to communicate and play in parks and schools instead of video gaming. We anticipate the audience to implement the responsibility they had on our game to their lives, to be happier without digital media reliance, and to know the difference between what is bad and good information in digital platforms.

Video Pitch

The end goal of our video is not to throw mass amounts of redundant information at its viewers, but more precisely to present unbiased and crucial information about online gaming among young kids. We will be creating a fun and creative video that will visually appealing to kids and adults. The main focus will be to engage parents in the topic. The parents will have access to additional information about youth gaming. The video will contain both live film as well as several moving infographics that will touch on key information that cannot be presented orally. The overall message that we would like to convey to our viewers is when you take the time every day to be active you will see a significant increase in over-all areas of health, increased attention span and happiness. This will hopefully motivate both the parents and the children to tear themselves away from all the technology. It is as a way for parents to connect with their children and easily talk about significant issues without seeming like the “bad guy”.

In recent years there has been significant decreases in print media and huge spikes in digital media consumption. This trend is caused by allowing 60% of children between the ages of 8-11 to own their own phones (Troianovski et al., 2012). We hope to capture the viewer’s attention by exposing them to exceptional sounds and visuals through our design process. We decided to go towards a bright and ‘adventurous’ theme in order to motivate people to take action and live a healthier life. Our video will begin with an introduction scene revealing children glued to the screen playing various online video games. It will then fade to black and our animated infographics will be shown with pre recorded narrations to go into further. We would also like to tap into our viewer’s emotional side by showing frightening statistics centered around online gaming additions as well as live footage of people suffering from unhealthy lifestyles created by abusing online video games. To conclude our video, we decided to end on a positive note by showing images of active lifestyles so the viewers have a goal to work towards.

Game Content Pitch

Our game will be a caretaking simulation type game that teaches the player about responsible gaming and the rewards of healthy time management. Players are introduced to a character whose needs they are responsible for. Through simple click actions, players can control what the character does, where they go, and what they interact with. Colourful backgrounds will increase the excitement of being in new locations.

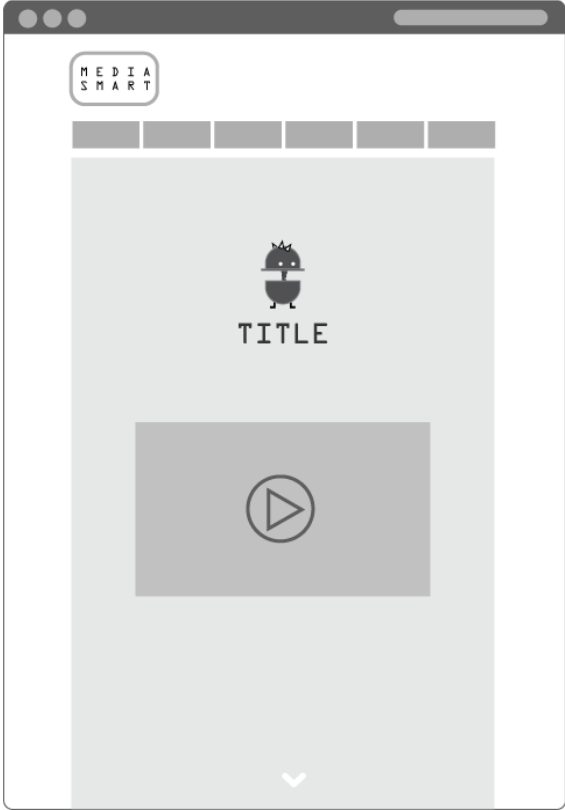
In the introduction of the game, it's explained to players that the character is heavily into gaming, and is unhealthy, unhappy, and unproductive. The character starts the game with a relatively short attention span, returning home to their room to play video games indoors after a period of time that will increase as the health of the character improves. Players are unable to interact with the character when it is playing video games, encouraging them to get the character to change to another task. Activities like cooking a meal, doing homework, going to the park, exercising or playing outside with friends will be available options for the player to select for the character to do. Each of these activities will be accompanied by a mini-game that adds enjoyment for the player and increases their interest in the character between tasks. In addition to the activities, there will be a small inventory of toys that the character can interact with like a Frisbee, bouncy ball or yo-yo. Both activities and item interactions will increase the health and happiness of the character.

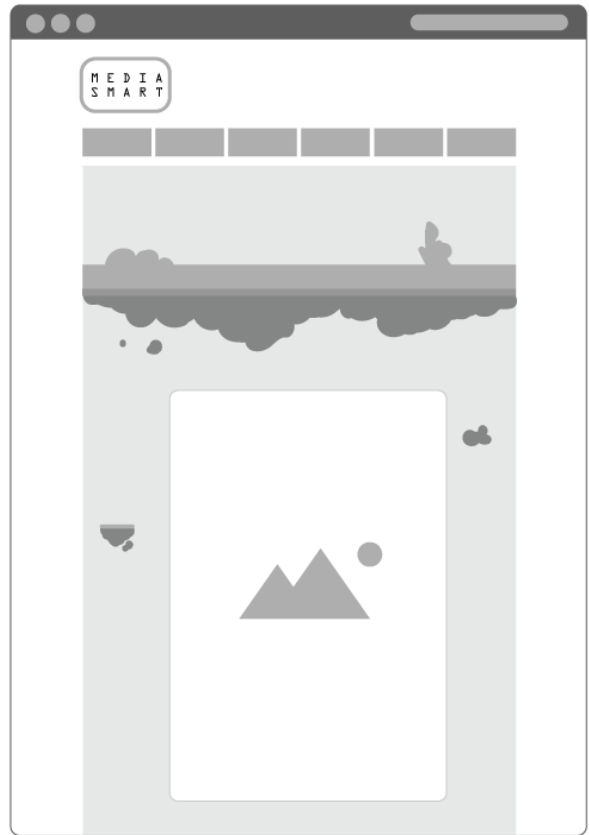
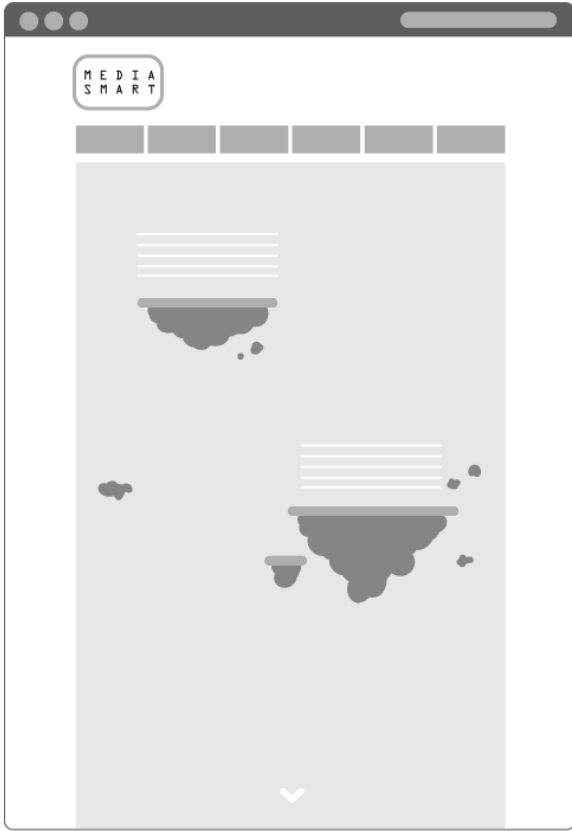
Players will feel a sense of accomplishment as they complete a variety of activities with the character, and unlock achievements and customization options for the character. Players will also feel a sense of responsibility for the character, who will at first bore of activities that take them away from gaming. As the game progresses and the character's health and happiness increase, playing video games for a short time won't take away from the progress bar.

The goal of the game is to teach players through the caretaking of the character about healthy life balance. As they encourage the game character to go outside and see the positive effect it has on his well-being, they will learn that making time for a bigger variety of activities will make them happier, and that responsible gaming doesn't need to mean that they never play. Gaming can have a positive effect on the creativity, ability to multitask and speed of decisions in kids and our objective is not to discourage all gaming.

Website Design Ideas

Wireframes

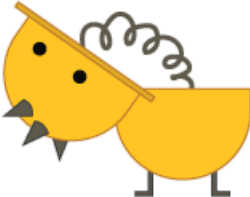
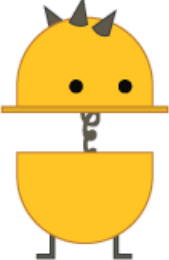
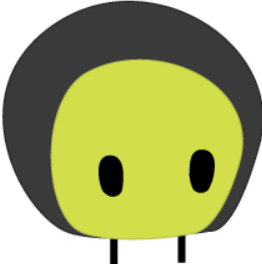
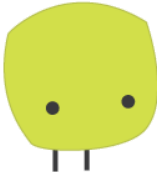
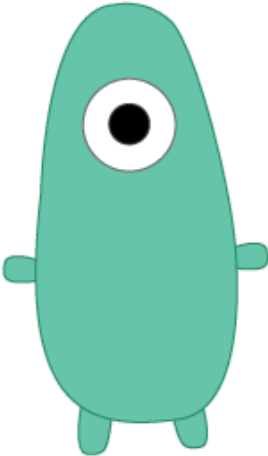




Colour Scheme



Game Characters Ideas



First Draft of Schedule

The following is the link to our Trello page:

<https://trello.com/invite/b/CopPHuui/ece28e98de5eb03e4af2ccfe90468f3a/mediasmarts-life-balance>

The project is scheduled along with due dates which can be seen in the main cards screen or in the calendar view accessible at the top right corner of the page.

Links to documents, inspiration, and assets for this project can all be found on separate cards on the Trello board.

References

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