

2 become 1: Skill and Randomness Concept

“The more I train, the luckier I get.”

Elevator Pitch

A simple FPS game that helps you master shooting, which at the beginning seems random, but as you practice, you get luckier.

The Main Idea

I took inspiration from World of Tanks, which is a highly skill-based game. However, there is one aspect that players hate more than anything else. When you aim, there is a circle around the point where your cursor is. When the player decides to shoot, the hit point is randomly chosen from that circle. This results in frustration for very skilled players, while new players don't even notice.

Wargaming says that they do this because they are trying to make a realistic game, and that's why this is part of their game. There are also other games that suffer from the same thing.

I believe people who are extremely skilled in real life usually eliminate these “random” things from their actions. It's quite an indescribable and rather subconscious feeling, similar to the famous quote from golf player Gary Player: “The more I practice, the luckier I get.” So, I wanted to create an experience that would come closer to this feeling.

Preproduction

The Planned Execution

To give the players this somewhat indescribable feeling of mastery (or less describable than saying: “The best way to win is to hover the mouse cursor over the enemy's head and click”), I decided to implement vibration. Based on the vibration you feel, you need to get a sense of the right vibration and press the trigger. At best, if a player is talking to their friend, they will say: “The vibration needs to be just right”, which is obviously not very specific advice.

Of course, this needs to be taught to the player – in a game of a large scale, I would leave it up to the players to figure it out (I mean, people have been playing World of Tanks with randomness for so long that this would definitely not affect the player base – because it's already in the game). Only the very serious players would figure this out, and soon everyone would know about it – but only a few would be able to master it because they would need to spend time and effort to become true masters purely based on feeling. That brings it closer to “The more I practice, the luckier I get.”. But this is not the case in my tiny game, so there will be some indication for the player.

So, in the beginning, the player will have no idea what is happening, and later on, they will get hints on what to do differently, and eventually, they should be able to master the game. I will try to aim for 10 minutes of practice being needed, as it is stated by the brief that it should be no longer than that. I strongly believe that, if intended, the process of learning the feeling could take up to hundreds of hours in more complex games (like, for example, World of Tanks).

Scope

I used Miro Board to do High-Level planning of what I will need to make.



Preproduction focus

I need to figure out a way to give feedback to the player that is not exactly describable.

Ideas to look into for feedback

Based on time, I might explore these mechanics of giving feedback to the players about how they are doing.

- Vibration
 - Ideal for controller
 - Does not work on mouse and keyboard
- Sounds
 - Cannot be described by speech but is easy to showcase in a YouTube video
- Visuals
 - Easy to describe and show
 - This is the least fitting way.

Thing to create

- Shooting
- Target hits
- Score Counting
- Win Condition

Gamemodes

I will only create the Default Shooting game mode. The other game will be created if I have time, so I will not spend time exploring possibilities.

Randomness & Skill and justification for choosing them

Randomness and skill don't go well together. Players that look for skill-heavy games rarely appreciate randomness in such games. Randomness does not support skill, but sometimes games add randomness to make the game more realistic. From my programming background, I know there is nothing like randomness in computers. Random number generators work with assumptions that whoever uses them does not know how the number is generated. So, for any ordinary computer user, the number returned by the generator is truly random, but for someone who can see the source code, it can become something predictable. Similarly, in real life, a novice archer will feel like his shot randomly did not hit the point they wanted to hit, whereas a pro archer will be able to feel all the aspects important for the shot instinctively. The novice thinks it's random; the pro knows it's not. I am trying to achieve this with my tiny game – new players think it's random, and within 10 minutes of gameplay, they understand it's not. Randomness shifts into skill, and they become one.

Mechanics Design

My whole game is extremely simple, so it would not distract from the primary experience of learning the skill and the feeling of a good shot (and also because of time). Therefore, the mechanic is just one.

Shooting

Design

The player has to shoot at the right moment. The specific vibration of the controller defines the right moment.

Tech side

I will use Line traces, which will have a direction based on the vibration. If the target is hit right in the middle, the target will break, and the player is awarded a score.

Level Design

For this game, there won't be much level design necessary. I'll probably have a room with a target in it.

Conclusion and how would you develop the demo in the future

This demo is a very cool experiment; I believe this could be a way how to add a layer of skill where some games just put slight randomness. I am proud of being able to set a tiny scope and avoid feature creep. The game would not be fun for hours, but it is quite fun for between 5-10 minutes. Planning and time tracking could have been done better, but since this is a solo project, it doesn't matter so much, as no other developers would rely on me or vice versa. Overall, I enjoyed this contest and am glad I participated.

In the future, I am planning to expand upon this concept and build more levels and game modes where players can encounter more difficult challenges. I want to stick to purely skill-based games.