

Anna Hall  
26 March 2014

## **Usability Report for *Lost in the City***

### **Introduction**

In this age of electronic technology, parents are constantly looking for an educational and entertaining game for their younger children. Game designers recently created an online, interactive video game specifically for the purpose of educating children and enhancing critical thinking skills. The game, *Lost in the City*, requires children to think critically while still exploring and engaging in exciting play. This game requires children to use logic, mathematics, critical thinking, spelling, among other important skills, to solve a series of puzzles in order to complete each level within the game.

### **Objective**

The designers and writers of this video game scheduled a test of gameplay before releasing the game to the public. The purpose of testing the game was to identify any areas of improvement that may have arisen during the production process and also to assure optimal gameplay for prospective buyers/users. Additionally, testing was designed to measure and evaluate consistency and to eliminate any obstacles in order to ensure a smooth and consistent gameplay experience.

The game creators tested college freshmen who play problem-solving games of different kinds. This age group was chosen because it is difficult to get permission to test children, and because this age group is still young enough to be able to give good results on gameplay. This age group is not too old or mature to solve the puzzles too quickly, and also is not too young to become easily confused.

### **Materials and methods**

- Persona
  - The persona tested was “Emily,” an eighteen-year-old freshman college student who has years of experience playing educational, problem-solving games similar to this one.
- Testing environment
  - The testing environment was in the home of “Emily” on her personal computer so as to make her more comfortable. “Emily” was tested alone, with no one else observing besides the note-taker. The environment was quiet, with no

background noises or other distractions, this was done to keep the participant focused on testing the game.

The test plan was followed for the most part by three out of the four participants. In general, the testing went well. Three out of the four participants followed the plan and performed the specific tasks properly and quickly, without many issues. The fourth participant decided to forgo all instructions and interacted with the game on her own pace, deciding for herself what should be done or not done. This participant also gave incredibly helpful feedback and suggestions.

## Results

The most successful part of the game was the story itself. All four participants enjoyed the idea of the story and said that it worked well and was interesting. Additionally, the puzzle was relatively successful as well, as 3 out of the 4 participants actually attempted and solved it.

The most unsuccessful part of the game was the navigation. It was difficult for all four participants to navigate from page to page. Often, to go back to the previous scene, they had to go in a round-a-bout way which was confusing to most participants. Also, the lack of a map was a big problem to each of the participants.

## Discussion

The main issues probably occurred because the game was not completely finished. One of the reoccurring issues was when a user was walking down the street and attempted to walk in a different direction than their current direction. This led the user all the way back to the barbershop, even if they did not want to go there and made it difficult to determine where they really were.

## Success/Fail Rate Table

	Success	Fail	Found Problems	Solved Puzzle	Would Not Purchase	Would Purchase
<b>User 1</b>	X		X	X		X
<b>User 2</b>	X			X		X
<b>User 3</b>	X			X	X	
<b>User 4</b>	X		X	N/A		X

## Comments and Suggestions

### Positive Impressions

- “Problem solving is a good thing.” – User 1
- “It is a good learning experience on a computer.” – User 2
- “It is an intriguing idea and also economic and interesting.” – User 3
- “It is a good way to keep a child distracted while also exercising problem-solving.” – User 4
- “It could be very useful for the parents of a younger child.” – User 4

### Suggestions

- “It would be great to have better map interaction.” – User 2
- “You should be able to ask the barber more questions.” – User 4
- “It could be a better idea to have a subway map instead of a map of Manhattan.” – User 4
- “The game should have more interaction with other characters; maybe have the map get stolen or have the dog go missing.” – User 4
- “Perhaps have a specific educational topic: history, science, math, etc., instead of only problem solving.” – User 4