

# Post Playtest Review

## What We Learned

After the playtest we realized that we could clarify the user interface and give the player more choices in the game world. The big things we realized:

- Players were unaware of how long a turn was or when a turn completed.
- Players didn't recognize which home planet we theirs: some opted to scroll around the map immediately when the game started and lost track of their home planet.
- Our use of troops numbers did not communicate our troop allocation model to the players at all.
  - Also, the fact that these numbers covered up the mining and fortification icons literally obscured important information.
- Players didn't realize that resources flow between planets.
- Players commented that it was difficult to identify which planets could be colonized or attacked at a glance.
- The AI design in our playtest version would very often lead to stalemates.
- Players didn't know where they were attacking from if they controlled more than one planet adjacent to an enemy planet.

## Planned Updates

### User Interface

- Set the default zoom level further out to obscure less of the game map at the start.
- Decrease sensitivity of zoom as well.
- Cut off text/images in the help documentation viewer so that it's obvious there's more content.
- Display contextual help on the first colonization, attack, mining, fortification etc.
- Add an event log so that the player has an awareness of events taking place off-screen.
- Change the menu color to blue for uncolonized planets so that their coloring doesn't suggest the menus are disabled.
- Remove the troop counts displayed on planets and design an alternate visualization for troop counts.
  - For player's planets adjacent to enemy planets, draw an arrow whose size, direction and color intensity represents how a potential battle between these two planets would proceed. For example, a player's planet with a large number of troops that dwarves the number of troops on an adjacent enemy planet would display a large arrow pointing from the player planet to the enemy planet with an intense shade of the player's color.
- Highlight uncolonized planets adjacent to colonized planets. This offers hints as to where players should go next when expanding.
- Draw a cubic b-spline around the player's planets, representing the boundary of the player's planetary network.
- Persistently display resource information for adjacent, uncolonized planets and in-network planets.
- Implement a click-drag gesture to colonize.
- Display fortification and mine icons at the bottom of the screen alongside the influx of troops and resources for this turn.
  - Clicking on these icons reveals a list of fortified planets and mining planets respectively.
  - Clicking on a list item brings that planet into focus and displays its action menu.
- Include animations for attacks and to help players understand resource flow.
  - Specifically, when the player hovers over an action in the menu, the game map will highlight planets that will participate in the the attack.
  - Likewise, fortifying and mining will highlight planets that will benefit from increased resources or troops as a result of the action.

### Gameplay

- Cap the resource and troop capacity of planets based on their size (i.e. radius) and some randomness.
- Build a different map layout algorithm that generates more interesting game maps.
  - One possibility is a "solar system"-like layout where there are clusters of planets.
- Redesign the AI to attack enemies more often, rather than expand until it no longer can.
- Implement a "Reallocate" action for fortified planets, allowing players more control over their planetary network's troops.
- Implement a slightly different battle outcome procedure:
  - If the aggressor in a battle wins, they take the defender's planet.
  - If the defender wins, the arrests planet becomes uncolonized.
- Implement a "Raze" action that takes a mined planet and turns it into a **razed planet**.
  - Razing provides a resource bonus to nearby planets so that the player may produce more troops in the short term to break up a stalemate.
  - Razed planets can only be colonized; that is, no player can mine or fortify them.
  - Razed planets also have decreased troop capacity.

### Handing Things In

We would like to take advantage of the deadline extension to December 21st at 2:30 PM.