Summary of Changes to Production Timeline *4-5-06
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Because the programming portion took a lot longer than I thought it would, the scope had to be cut down for version one. Version one now has only 2 levels but they work and are still engaging enough for the user as testing showed. Sound has been incorporated into the game. This was actually only a possibility before but I was able to add it. There is a different sound appropriate to the customer type whenever the user clicks on the customer and if the user does not meet the goal of level one, the user can try again. The first level presents 6 animal types that are not unlocked yet but only three can be unlocked in this level. The first level has two customer types that come down the ticket line. The second level has one additional customer type to the original two and three more unlockable animal types (the rest of the total unlockable animals). I proposed two stages that comprised of all the levels in the game but that idea is thrown out. There will just be levels now since there will not be that many. So much more could be done per level to keep the user wanting to play more than I had thought so there are less levels. There are more visitor types to add into the game as well that have not been added yet.

The goals for version two are now to make these levels more engaging and give the user a little more challenge. At least one or two levels will be added for version two. The playing space will also be expanded so that all the activity is not just in one narrow area to the left of the screen as shown in version one. The visitors coming down the ticket line will be slightly changed like having them more spread out. Other things like cotton candy or peanuts can come down too as bonuses. Maybe if the user is over the goal while there is still time left in the game, the cotton candy and such start coming down. There’s also the idea of peanuts starting to fill up next to the elephant. More ways to attract more visitors will be added like being able to buy newspaper advertisements. Instead of having the blackened animals to show they’re locked, I will just have an empty space and the user will need to fill up the space as they get more money. There will be background music that speeds up as the time runs out instead of what I have in version one with just one sound that plays when ten seconds are left. Some other minor changes will be the clock. It will need to be assumed that kids do not read the instructions first. It needs to be more clear that the clock is showing time left. Visitor ratings have not been added to version one as proposed.

Things that will be added if there is time: visitor ratings; something happens when the user rollover the animals and/or they start moving or saying things as the game goes on; choice of buying which animals/habitats/anything else zoo-related; more things other than animals to unlock like ticket booth, nursery, gift shop, etc.

What I Learned

I have learned up to this point and even at the beginning that proposing the scope is tough. It is better to overestimate the amount of time I will take for a task to get done
particularly the programming portion. I had all these great ideas that I wanted but because of time constraints and being oblivious to truly how big of a challenge I was giving myself, I was forced to cut down the scope. What you propose does not always work out the way you expect it to but in some sense it is better because it is better to make a very polished piece than having all these unfinished ideas in the game that may not even work.

What I found more important was to get the game to just be functional than putting so many ideas into the game. Therefore, it took much testing and troubleshooting by myself before even testing it on the user. Then even testing it on the user I was able to discover minor errors. After I get the game to be functional, I needed to make it even better.

After getting it to be functional, more ideas could be added to each level. Each level even the little amount there is has the potential to be even more engaging, more fun, and overall better so that was more important than having a lot of levels. That is why the scope was cut and version two (final version) will have less levels than proposed but more things to do.