

SMASH - Usability Test Report - Friday, the 25th of October

Still to come:

- I may watch the videos again to find out if I missed anything while taking the notes. Just depends on my tasks this week and if you all want more stuff to work on - Darian

Resources:

[Link to videos](#)

[Link to Questionnaire](#)

[Link to raw notes from Darian](#)

Top Issues/Solutions from debrief:

1. Tapping at the top left for monster info
2. Science + Gold + Red stuff
3. Users swayed from the tutorial and got into additional features, creating early confusion
4. Bonus Rounds: No one knew how to trigger them
5. Why some can't user superpowers sometimes
6. Issues with random monsters after buying them
7. Doesn't inform what upgrade stats are or confirm the upgrade
8. Need to fix second monster selection on first screen.
9. News feed isn't being utilized.
10. User didn't know what unlock lvl 2 meant for helixes
11. Threshold for conquering cities
12. Auto revenge mechanic
13. Change the colours for the helixes in the store

[Solutions from Derek's notes](#)

Overall:

We ran 5 sessions this day, where 4 out of 5 of the users were new to SMASH. The 1 user who was not new to SMASH still ran through the same tasks, but their feedback was not very useful for the areas we were testing and was omitted from the report.

In the notes below, I've highlighted some points that seemed to be the biggest concerns in terms of usability and design. I decided which ones to highlight based on patterns across all/most users, or 1 or 2 users running into the issue almost immediately or at the same time, or just on what I think is something we need to keep an eye out for in the future. I did not highlight the positive points, but you can easily find those by skimming through the feedback.

These points are based mainly off of my notes and recollection. Please look at the videos if

you want more details on some of these points.

Here is a short intro to our users: (Questionnaire answers can be found [here](#))

User 1: Sonia

- 31 years old, female, is not a gamer of any sorts.

User 2: Preston

- 32 years old, male, plays mobile games frequently, plays a lot of clash of clans.

User 3: Dru

- 24 years old, male, plays mobile games frequently, also loves playing board games.

User 4: Oscar

- 12 years old, male, plays a lot of mobile games, experienced well with Clash of Clans

User 5: Jodie

- 28 years old, female, plays a few mobile games, plays lots of facebook games

Compiled Results from each task:

- Enter Username screen:
 - User read the text at the bottom of the screen (Sonia, Preston, Dru)
 - User did not read the text at the start (Jodie)
 - User entered their username easily (Sonia, Preston, Dru)
 - User stumbled a bit with username due to a space in their name, but figured it out (Jodie)
- First map view:
 - User appeared to be reading the text at the bottom (Sonia)
 - User tried tapping on the blue city first (Sonia,
 - User navigated to the monster selection page easily (Sonia)
- Monster selection screen:
 - **User wanted more information on the monsters in order to make a better choice** (Sonia, Preston)
 - User tried *dragging* monsters to their slots (Dru)
 - **User tried loading one monster and advancing and it took awhile before she figured out how to proceed** (didn't see the highlight) (Jodie)
- First smash rounds:
 - User read the text (Sonia, Preston, Dru, Jodie)
 - **User read the text, but had difficulties tapping the OK button:**
 - They would tap on the screen before tapping OK (Sonia)
 - They would tap OK but it wouldn't work (Preston)
 - User finished first smash easily (Sonia, Preston, Dru, Jodie)
 - User used super move easily (Sonia, Preston, Dru, Jodie)
 - User completed the bonus round easily (Sonia, Preston, Dru, Jodie)
 - User was not upset about failing as they understood why (Sonia, Preston, Dru)
 - User did not understand how far off she was from failing. She did not notice the percentage in the corner or read that she was under 75% (Jodie)

- User did not really read the 50% tutorial text (Preston)
- User wanted to know more info here so they could strategize/understand it better (Dru, Jodie)
- Back to menu: (Buying a new monster)
 - User wanted to click on base because it was brighter than the monsters button to upgrade (Jodie)
 - **User did not notice the glowing navigator right away, tried clicking around** (Sonia, Preston)
 - **User said no to buying the helix and backed out** (Sonia, Dru)
 - User bought the helix without any confusion (Jodie)
 - **User ended up buying two monsters** (Preston)
 - this led to a lot more questions and exploring from the user
 - The user dove into the collection, the achievements, etc...
 - **User doesn't know what "unlock level 2" means. Thinks he has to level up his profile or monster.** (Preston)
 - User wanted more information on the monsters and the collection mechanic here (Preston, Dru, Jodie)
 - **User went into the monster collection area, started exploring** (Dru, Preston, Jodie)
 - **User went into the chat** (Dru)
 - User called out the end of the tutorial (Jodie)
 - **Users did not really know when the tutorial ended** (Sonia, Preston, Dru)
 - User went into the achievements (Sonia, Preston, Dru)
 - All really liked them!
- END OF ACTUAL TUTORIAL ON RAILS

From this point on, users answered questions, continued to explore and discover the game on their own terms. Here are some findings that I attempted to keep in chronological order as best as possible:

- Back to game: (First solo attack!)
 - **User tried to tap on the monster on the top left to find out more info about the monsters** (Jodie, Sonia, Dru)
 - User strategized based on the super power. (Jodie)
 - User wasn't aware that they pressed the "super move button", or pressed it by mistake (Sonia, Dru)
 - User tried to move the screen but ended up tapping on the attack pad and started her turn. (Sonia)
 - User misclicked the "ok" and launched a monster (Dru)
 - User started to understand there was a strategy involved with colour correlation (Sonia, Preston)
 - User assumed blue buildings give more blue stuff. (Preston)
 - User is content to try all super powers in order to understand them (Preston)
 - User did not like the time limit when there were no bonuses for having one

- (Dru)
 - **User doesn't know why he can't activate the powers again** (Dru, Sonia)
- Back to menu:
 - User went to attack again and didn't understand what the glowing dots under each monster image was during the selection. Thought it was life but was unsure (Sonia)
 - user's city was under attack, wants to defend it but doesn't know how. (Jodie)
 - User got a wall post message and wanted to go there directly, but tapping on it did nothing. (Jodie)
- Upgrading city:
 - User understands upgrading cities it seems (Jodie)
 - User doesn't really know what his city is (Preston)
 - **User knows he needs to upgrade it, but doesn't know where to start** (Preston)
 - **User wants the specifics of the upgrade** (Dru)
 - User wanted to upgrade the city, but needs more gold to upgrade it (Dru)
- Second solo-attack:
 - User's monster died on first big attack, she then read the pop up. (Sonia)
 - User activated super power and destroyed lots and was proud (Sonia)
 - User strategized based on super power (Sonia)
 - User understands there is a strategy with colour correlation, but isn't sure how to use it (Sonia)
 - Knows the bonus round is tied to health (Dru)
 - User does not understand why some of the same monsters are different colours (Preston)
 - User does not know what the hint at the bottom of the screen is (Preston)
 - User still doesn't know what bonus round is for (Preston)
- Store: (solo)
 - User seems to understand the differences in the helixes (Dru)
 - User was disappointed with getting the same monster as first purchase in tutorial (Dru)
 - User doesn't know what the single and double stuff does (Preston)
 - User wants to see more information on everything in this screen (Preston)
- Upgrade Monster screen:
 - **User wants to know what he's upgrading to** (Preston)
 - User wants a confirmation if he can't tap on it to see what they are upgrading to.
 - **After looking at monster info for awhile, user figured out the colour correlation.** (Sonia, Preston) -- This is a positive note in a way.
- Third solo-attack:
 - User knew he would get the bonus round because his monster still lived (Dru)
 - User was assuming red/orange cities dealt with difficulty to capture (Sonia)
 - User is curious about the color correlation about the monsters and the colours

- of the buildings (Preston, Jodie)
- User is piecing together super power grids by trial and error. (Sonia)
- **Didn't know why he couldn't use the activation sometimes and not other times.** (Preston)
- User tried tapping on the bottom left "hint" (Jodie)
- User just noticed the health on the cities (Jodie)
- User still really wanted more information concerning their monsters (Jodie)
- Fourth solo-attack:
 - User is excited with his new monsters and upgrades (Dru)
 - User feels like he understands it now (Dru)
 - User is attacking the city based on the colours of the buildings and the colours of the monsters (Sonia)
 - User failed the city (Sonia)
- 5th solo-attack:
 - **User forgot who does what, and wanted the info, so she tapped on everything on the UI to find out but got nothing.** (Sonia)
 - User rocked the next city and was very pleased (Sonia)
- Revenge mechanic:
 - user went back for revenge (Jodie)
 - user is still strategizing with the special attack, not the colours. (Jodie)
 - user got stuff but didn't really pay attention to it (Jodie)
 - User didn't understand what revenge mode was just by looking at it. Had to experience it first. Liked the rewards! (Preston)

Responses to the Questions:

1. **Now that you've played the introduction, what is your understanding of the game? How would you explain it to somebody else?**
 - a. **Overall:** Users seemed to understand the attacking part, though taking over as many cities as possible was not a common answer across of all of them.
 - b. "it's about monsters destroying cities, but your goal is to take over the entire map" (Sonia)
 - c. it reminds me of yu-gi-oh, it almost seemed like you're battling someone else but you're battling the base. "get monsters, upgrade them, and attack cities" (Preston)
 - d. it's like rampage meets pokemon and a bit more random. There's some cool strategy to it. Cool art! (Jodie)
2. **What do you feel is the goal of this game?**
 - a. **Overall:** Still, users didn't really mention "world domination" as the end goal, so our goal might not be too clear.
 - b. I didn't know the real objective here. I would want to see what's the progression later on. I like that you can defend something too and build it up. (Preston)

- c. Seems like short term goal is to capture cities. long term would be to collect all the monsters (Jodie)
- 3. Were there any parts in the tutorial that stood out to you? It can either be in a good way or a bad way**
- a. **Overall:** The special attacks stood out the most and were the clear favourite
 - b. i don't think i saw the tutorial, the activating of the special powers is a bit tricky. It was interesting, I wish i just had a better sense of what each monster was able to get through and certain others couldn't. (Sonia)
 - c. it was kind of neat when you activated the power, it would be neat to see if it gets stronger later on. I would like to see it go bigger. (Preston)
 - d. the initial monster selection, after i got it i understood. the special attacks stood out (Jodie)
- 4. What were some of the more confusing parts of the tutorial?**
- a. the monster part, i didn't know what i was getting or what i did. it did tell me that one did 50% more to residential buildings, but i would like to know that before. (Preston)
 - b. not entirely sure what gets me more monster juice. the building types are a bit involved. (Jodie)
- 5. Did you use any strategy when you were attacking the cities?**
- a. **Overall:** Users understand there is strategy involved in this game, but none of them know exactly what it is this early on. They have their guesses but they don't know for sure.
 - b. i was trying to understand why you put people in certain places. It's obvious there is a strategy, but i wasn't able to figure out how to properly position them. (Sonia)
 - c. no i just wanted to see what would happen. I wanted to line them up as best as i could. (Preston)
 - d. mostly getting their hit patterns on their special attacks. I feel like there is another level with different buildings and monsters, but i don't know that yet. (Jodie)
- 6. Can you explain the bonus round to me?**
- a. **what is it?**
 - i. **Overall:** This was missed by our users. One user understood it had something to do with your health, but still did not know exactly why.
 - ii. i think it's there to keep you playing and get you more acquainted to the game. If i played and kept losing, it wouldn't be as easy to understand. It says i failed, but then i get a bonus round. i achieved a certain amount of points that got me a bonus round. (Sonia)
 - iii. didn't notice it. (Preston)
 - iv. it just feels like an extra turn. I'm used to getting shiny loot, this just feels like a bonus round. (Jodie)
 - b. **why is it there?**
 - i. not sure, knew there was a monster health related thing. (Jodie)

7. Can you explain how you conquer a city?

- a. **Overall:** They know you have to destroy a certain amount of buildings, though the actual percentage is a bit lost. Maybe a refresher every time you capture it could help? (ex: City Captured! *75% damage or more*)
- b. i still haven't identified a strategy, (but she gets it from other answers within the session) (Sonia)
- c. you destroy 75% of it, but what do i do once i capture it? can someone capture it from me later on? (Preston)
- d. you have to take down so many buildings. that one is 75%, but i'm not 100% sure on the threshold. (Jodie)

AFTER PLAYING A LITTLE LONGER:

1. Now that you've played it a little longer, what is your understanding of the game? How would you explain it to somebody else? What has changed since the tutorial?

- a. **Overall:** It seems after they play it for a little while longer they all have different ideas of how to approach this game. This can be good or bad, but just wanted to call it out.
- b. you have monsters and you are trying to take over cities. Each monster has strengths in different areas. Each building means something in terms of which monsters can attack it. Place the monster in a way that destroys a lot of them and then the rest clean up. (Sonia)
- c. seems like when i capture the base, you get the resources from it. the more bases you have, the more income you get, the more income you get, you can buy more monsters. I don't know how to get this stupid red stuff. But i want to buy more monsters. (Preston)
- d. it's a puzzle like monster collecting game where you can build your own forts. (user doesn't know it's a multiplayer shared map) (Dru)
- e. i'm looking at more UI elements now, hp and city progression, etc... not sure about the super power as i couldn't do it sometimes. (Jodie)

2. What do you feel is the goal of this game?

- a. **Overall:** Seems that after they play it a little longer, they are understanding the goal a bit better.
- b. to continue to take over the honeycomb. (Sonia)
- c. smashy smashy. Expand your area from the middle and take over more areas. (Dru)

3. Did you use any strategy when you were attacking the cities?

- a. **Overall:** Users just expanded on the strategy they understood in the tutorial, so not much really changed after playing a few more games, but it was improving a bit. Maybe we just need some more reminders. The Star Trek game has a good way of introducing add-on mechanics and strategies, may want to look at that.
- b. yeah, i tried to. (Sonia)

- c. i was trying to activate their ability in a certain square so it gets most of the buildings. Only problem was that i forgot what this guy does and which areas he hits. I also forgot who does more damage to what kind of building. “why would i attack the green ones, i want to attack the colours that match the resources”
 - i. (user knows there is a colour correlation, but not the importance of it) (Preston)
 - d. At first, not really. Didn’t know how their abilities worked. (user mentioned the superpowers. Didn’t easily explain the colour correlation, but knows they damage different buildings). (Dru)
 - e. still don’t know optimal attacks for building types (Jodie)
- 4. Can you explain the bonus run to me?**
- a. **what is it?**
 - i. **Overall: Nothing really changed here.**
 - ii. no. it’s another chance to get more points. (Sonia)
 - iii. (user was puzzled) i think it depends on damage but i got it all the time. (Preston)
 - iv. as long as the monster has 30% or more, but i don’t remember too well or damaging more cities the more you come out of it. (Dru)
- 5. How do you think this game would work if you wanted to play it with your friends?**
- a. **Overall: At this point, users understand how it works with PvP.**
 - b. i would try to take over my friend’s cities. (Sonia)
 - c. he would attack my bases, i would attack his. (Preston)
 - d. players could attack cities together. (Dru)
 - e. looks very pvp, i want to get back at the guy that stole my stuff. (Jodie)
- 6. Was it clear that you could upgrade your monsters?**
- a. **Overall: This was missed due to other notifications appearing and it not being on rails in the tutorial. I think our users were expecting it and understand why it’s important, but they missed the experience of it.**
 - b. yes, i did upgrade it in the tutorial. (Sonia)
 - c. i didn’t really pay attention to it. it’s the same spot as upgrading a city, but i didn’t see it really. (Dru)
 - d. it was at first but i forgot about them because i got attacked and was filled with rage. (user was asked to upgrade monster and find out more info) (Jodie)
 - i. user upgraded easily and found out the information they were looking for easily
 - ii. user was associating the blue monster juice with the blue helix, and red with red.. (maybe change the colours)
- 7. Can you describe what each type of city on the map represents?**
- a. **Overall: $\frac{3}{4}$ of our users understood it well, at least after tapping on the cities for the first time. One user just did not get it and thought it had to do with difficulty level. I think this isn’t a concern but something to keep an eye on in the future.**

- b. **Blue Cities**
 - i. they were mine (Sonia)
 - ii. ones i owned (Preston)
 - c. **Orange Cities**
 - i. the neutral cities. (Sonia)
 - ii. unowned (Preston)
 - d. **Red Cities**
 - i. enemy cities (Sonia)
 - ii. cities i don't own and someone else does (Preston)
 - iii. user just clicked on it for the first time and understood it well. (Dru)
 - e. User assumed they were just difficulty levels (Jodie)
8. **What are these up here? (point to the different types of currency)**
- a. **What are they for?**
 - i. **Overall:** This was missed for how important it is.
 - ii. i didn't understand, i was trying to figure that out for awhile. it's obvious now that you can collect things, like coins (Sonia)
 - iii. user understands the premium currencies. (Dru)
 - iv. doesn't really know. (Jodie)

FINAL QUESTIONS:

- **What are your thoughts on SMASH?**
 - was there a tutorial? the meego one was a bit more intuitive, this is different. (Sonia)
 - when you upgrade stuff, show what you're getting. For the cities and the monster. More information about the monsters i guess. (Preston)
 - got me really engaged on finding out what monsters i can get (Jodie)
- **If you were playing this at home, what would get you back in faster?**
 - **Overall:** Users wanted to play with friends. Maybe including some hints or intros to playing with friends in the tutorial could help with retention.
 - knowing that i have friends playing because i want to attack their cities. (Sonia)
 - if you have friends that can play together. if you had a group of all of vancouver.. (cool idea! take over real cities!) (Dru)
 - if i was playing with a friend, that would be fun to tag team. (JOdie)
- **What do you want to see in the game?**
 - building something, i like building up a base and leveling. (Preston)
 - wants to get a good sense of the world, wants to know how far it expands (Jodie)