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Virtual Reality for New Users

Individual Report - Information Architect

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Group 10

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1. Role and Aim

As an Information Architect, my job was to work on the key findings of the user research, handed over to me by the team's Lead Researcher, and to come up with a scenario and create several tasks that are easy to use and helps new users to learn VR.

2. Objectives

- To consider and ponder upon the user problems resulting from the user research and the way people use virtual reality, their mental models, needs, and desires;
- To find a way to guide the users and provide them with a path, right from the moment they wear the VR headset so that they do not face problems with this new medium.
- Enhancement of the created tasks' experience through tests and iterations, to create an experience that people will be delighted with.

3. Deliverables

My deliverables for the project included: Affinity Diagram, Task Flow Model, User Flow Model, and Information Architecture.

4. Affinity Mapping

Affinity Diagram was the best and the easiest way to help me make sense of all the mixed data, such as facts, design issues, user opinions, user needs, insights, and ideas resulting from brainstorming. Therefore, I performed the Affinity Mapping exercise to cluster and bundle all the key findings of the user research at the same place. (The Interaction Design Foundation, 2020)

The user research findings were categorized into three categories:

- Overall Virtual Reality user experience;
- User's involvement with the Controllers;
- User's participation with the VR Headsets.

4.1 Affinity Mapping Diagram



4.2 Affinity Mapping Artifact



4.3 Team Discussion on Affinity Mapping

As an Information Architect, I led the team discussion on Affinity Mapping after finishing the Affinity Mapping activity. It was done to take my teammates' reviews and opinions on the work that I have done. We discussed up on all the essential findings and decided on what issues to work on and what not to. As a result, we came up with the probable solutions for the issues we decided to work on, that we worked on at a later stage.

5. The Campsite Exploration Game

To create a pleasing and delightful experience for the new users to VR, it was essential to come up with a story or a scene consisting of tasks that could be accomplished easily by the users without stressing them. Therefore, we decided on a campsite exploration game.

6. Tasks

Keeping in mind the key findings from the user research, I decided upon eight tasks that go in a sequence from low difficulty level to the high difficulty level.

While thinking of the tasks, it was crucial to consider the fact that the new users to VR would never want to perform tasks that would need more effort and skills to accomplish them. Therefore I decided upon making the users do the actions that they function in their day to day life, for example: picking up things, climbing, throwing, playing musical instruments, etc.

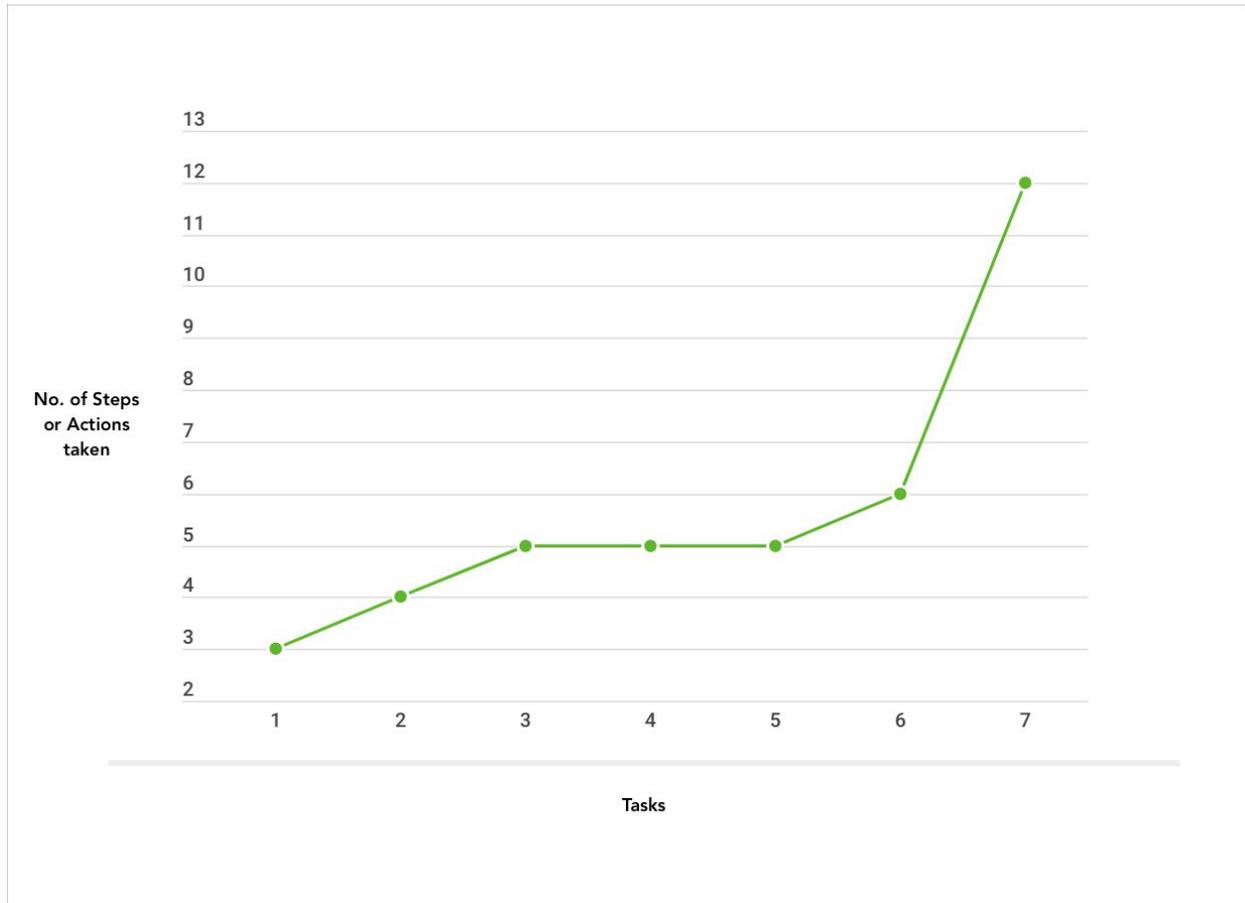
Furthermore, the motive behind choosing the tasks was to make the users explore the necessary actions and functionalities of the controllers and make them well versed with the VR experience at an initial stage so that they do not feel overwhelmed and lost.

The final tasks are a result of multiple brainstorming sessions with my team members, followed by constant changes.

Following are the seven tasks mentioned below:

- Picking up a Mushroom
- Picking up an Apples
- Playing the Drum
- Playing with the Dog
- Ball Slamming Game
- Bonfire
- Climbing up the Platforms

6.1 Tasks - Difficulty Level Graph



7. Card Sorting

7.1 Outcome of Card Sorting: Information Architecture

The Card sorting research method was used to discover how users are going to determine the information architecture of the digital experience. It helped expose the informational structure users think within, which provided an understanding of their mental model.

I led the card sorting activity, with my team members participating as users. We performed open sorts (as the product wasn't built), which allowed users to write their own tasks and content. (Medium, 2020)

7.2 Card Sorting Diagram

The diagram below depicts the card sorting exercise:



7.3 Card Sorting Artifact



8. Task Flow Diagram

Task flows for each of the tasks were created, which depicts a single flow that users follow to complete a specific action or task. The task flows have a singular flow; they don't branch out. The task flow diagram below depicts the flow for each of the tasks. It follows from task 1 to task 7.

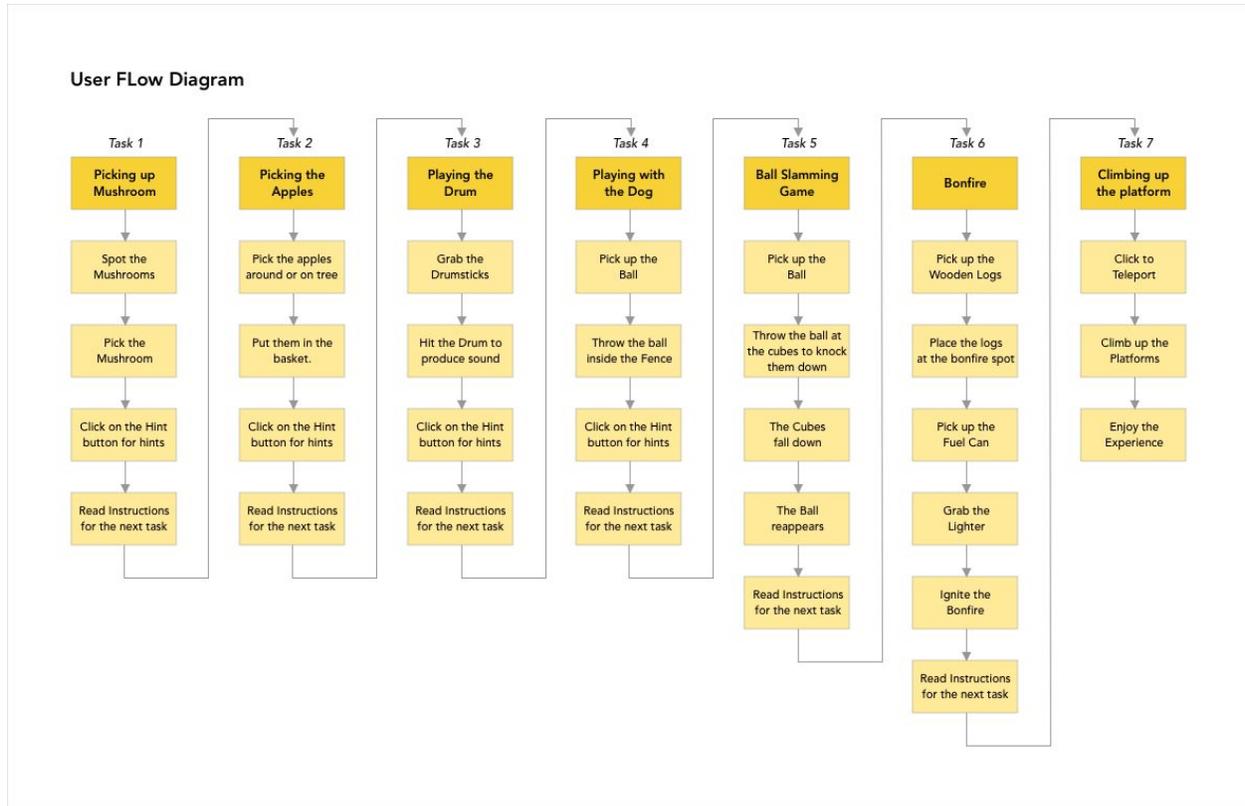


9. User Flow Diagram

The user flow diagram below depicts a path that the users follow through the campsite game. It shows all the tasks that the user has to complete in order to reach her goal. This flow diagram is a linear path as the tasks have been arranged in increasing difficulty level order. Therefore, the user has to complete the ongoing task first in order to go to the next task.

The motive behind creating the flow diagram was to use it as a communication tool to help myself to talk about the functions of the game with my team before building out the product. (Medium, 2020)

“Designing user flows leads to better results for both the user and the business.” - Morgan Brown
(Medium, 2020)



10. Discussions

Given the role of an Information Architect, my job was to think of a project topic to work on and then dive deep inside to structure the experience for the new users to VR, which is pleasing and easy to use for them. With several brainstorming sessions with the team, I decided to work on a campsite exploration game.

Once the research artefacts were handed over by the Lead Researcher, I started the affinity mapping activity to cluster and bundle all the key findings in one place to make things easier for everyone. Next, based on the key findings, I brainstormed on deciding the tasks for our game. With my team's consent, we finally decided on the seven tasks that were implemented by the game developer at a later stage.

Next, I worked on creating an information structure for the game, and for that, a card sorting exercise was conducted with my team. As a result of the card sorting exercise, information architecture for the game was built.

Furthermore, this information architecture gradually led to the task flow for each of the tasks with the tasks being arranged in increasing difficulty level order. Connecting these tasks led to the user flow diagram, i.e., the path the users would follow through the campsite game.

Finally, all the above artefacts were handed over to the team's Lead Designer to work on.

11. References

The Interaction Design Foundation. (2020). *Affinity Diagrams – Learn How to Cluster and Bundle Ideas and Facts*. [online] Available at: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/affinity-diagrams-learn-how-to-cluster-and-bundle-ideas-and-facts> [Accessed 24 Jan. 2020].

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