

SYGo – a location-based game adapted from the board game Scotland Yard

Mark Schmatz, Katja Henke, Clemens Türc
Christian Mohr, Timo Sackmann

{schmatz, mohr}@cs.uni-bonn.de, katja.henke@telekom.de
clemens.tuerck@ravensburger.de, timo.sackmann@uos.de

University of Bonn, Institute of Informatics III,
Römerstr. 164, 53117 Bonn, Germany
sam.iai.uni-bonn.de

In this paper we introduce *SYGo*, an innovative hide-and-seek game which is part of the AMOGA research project of the University of Bonn in cooperation with and funded by Deutsche Telekom. It is an adoption of the famous German board game *Scotland Yard* by Ravensburger. Besides being a location-based mobile version of *Scotland Yard* it comes with plenty of additional features concerning game flow, strategic planning, and sustainability. The latter is achieved since the game is designed with respect to an emerging community which again enhances the fun of playing. To cover just a few highlights *SYGo* includes communication features like conference calls and server-side SMS generation. Via a build-in game shop tools, services, and extra features, carrying special semantics and strategic avail, can be purchased.

The main focus of this paper is presenting results from accomplished user experiences, focus group tests, and professional test sessions carried out by us, Deutsche Telekom, and Ravensburger.

Concerning the user experiences we've basically introduced and explained the game to students and adults in Malmö, Sweden and Remscheid, Germany and invited them to play one or more sessions. After playing we've interviewed every gamer and analyzed the oral reports.

In order to get realistic estimations whether the game has chances to come on the market from a commercial point of view Deutsche Telekom has arranged so called focus group tests. They give evidence who would play the game respectively what has to be changed in order to expand the community. The focus group data was analyzed by grounded theory methods.

The Ravensburger game publishing company accomplished their standard testing procedure for game prototypes to tell whether the game complies with different required aspects like UI design, game complexity, and strategic balance. This procedure was applied by a couple of editorial journalists who played *SYGo* for a while. The test took place in Ravensburg.

All tests led to some useful improvements mainly related to UI design. The game flow and strategic elements were seen as very good adapted from the board game. The main differences compared to the board game relate to communication (not sitting around a table vis-a-vis but running outside not seeing each other) and non-discrete paying for movement (instead of paying a single chip for transportation). Both, gamers and Ravensburger considered these differences as successfully transferred.

SYGo is still work in progress and will be published later this year.