

super spy crash course:

TEACHING PLAYERS IN SPLINTER CELL BLACKLIST

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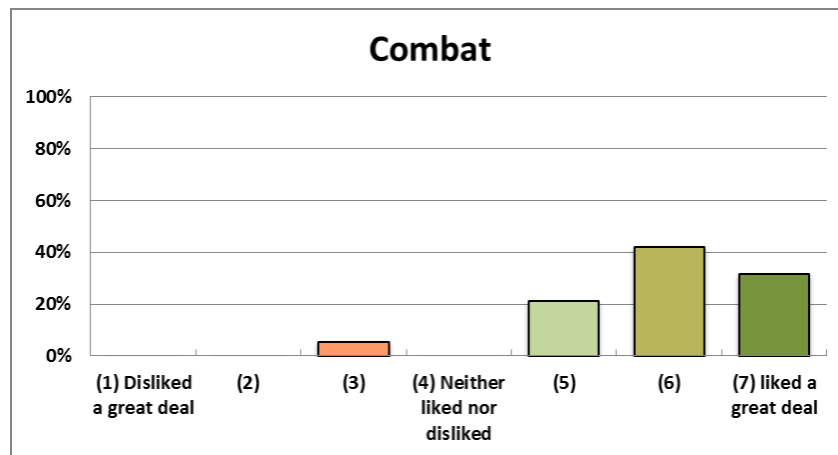
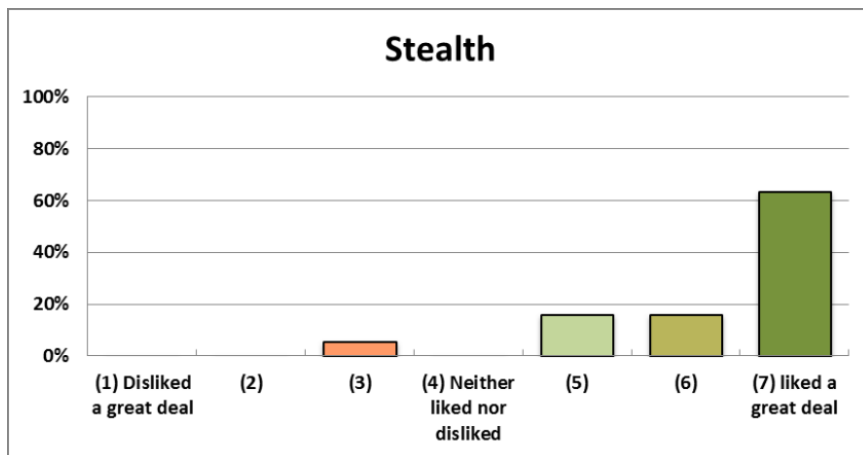
GAME DIRECTOR — UBISOFT TORONTO



THE MANDATE

**BUILD ON CONVICTION'S STRENGTHS WITH CHOICE IN MIND
TO CREATE THE BIGGEST SPLINTER CELL EVER**

EARLY PLAYTESTS RESULTS — OUR DILEMMA



THE PROBLEM

**WE HAVE A BIG SCOPE AND A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME TO
TEACH PLAYERS HOW TO PLAY STEALTH BEFORE THEY
LOSE INTEREST**

WHAT IS AT OUR DISPOSAL TO TEACH PLAYERS?

A NEXT COVER

RS AIM AT NEXT COVER AND TAP **A** TO MOVE

CENTER TUTORIAL TEXT

Use RB, Mark & Y Execute to
neutralize multiple targets at
once

A NEXT COVER

TUTORIAL BOX

STICKY NOISEMAKER

03 LB

003001
NON-LETHAL

SHADOWNET

A NEW DAILY CHALLENGE

\$ 0

0

GEAR \ CAMPAIGN \ LOADOUT A \ OPS SUIT \

OPS SUIT

CHOOSE SUIT PART TO CUSTOMIZE

A **TORSO**

GLOVES

PANTS

BOOTS

LIGHTS

CHARACTER CUSTOMIZATION TEXTS

DIFFERENT ARMOR PARTS MAKE YOU TOUGHER, MORE STEALTHY, OR ALLOW YOU TO CARRY MORE GADGETS & AMMUNITION

CLASSIC OPS SUIT SAVING

ARMOR 
STEALTH 
GADGETS 2
EXTRA MAGAZINES

BASE TACTICAL KIT OFFERS SOME PROTECTION FROM DAMAGE AND ROOM FOR TWO GADGETS

OPS SUIT TOTAL

ARMOR 
STEALTH 
WEAPON HANDLING 
GADGETS 4
PISTOL MAGS 3
ALTERNATE MAGS 3
SPECIAL MAGS 2

A **CUSTOMIZE TORSO**

B **BACK**

FREEZING AND FORCING THE PLAYER TO PERFORM A DESIRED ACTION (BOO)



KILL

x3
BREACH

20

LEVEL DESIGN SETTING

57 M

A RESTOCK

STICKY NOISEMAKER
03 LB

003 003
NON-LETHAL



VOICE OVER FROM THE TEAM (TAKES TIME)

56 M

STICKY NOISEMAKER

3 LB

003 003
NON-LETHAL



CONTEXTUAL SYSTEMIC TUTORIAL

A CLIMB

STICKY NOISEMAKER

03 LB

Y EXECUTE
003 003
NON-LETHAL

SHADOWNET

\$0

0

SAVING

LOADING TIPS

ACCESS SHADOWNET TO GET THE LATEST NEWS,
COMPETE WITH FRIENDS, AND TAKE ON CHALLENGES FOR EXTRA CASH

LOADING DATA



3 EXAMPLES

- **BEGINNING OF THE GAME** — THE CORE XP
- **GADGETS** — SPLINTER CELL AT ITS BEST
- **THE MARK AND EXECUTE** — OUR FLAGSHIP FEATURE

BEGINNING OF THE GAME

THE CORE EXPERIENCE

11 ABILITIES

NAVIGATION

CROUCH

CLIMB OVER

CARRY BODY

SELECTION WHEEL

COVER

COVER TO COVER


ABDUCTION

ACTIVE SPRINT

EXOTIC INTERROGATION GAMEPLAY

SHOOT



A third-person view of a character in a dark, dilapidated wooden building. The character is wearing a dark, tactical vest and pants, and is standing on a wooden floor. The building has a rustic, weathered appearance with wooden beams and walls. The lighting is dim, with a strong light source from the left, casting long shadows. The character is looking towards the right side of the frame.

HOLD  FOR SELECTION WHEEL

PROBLEMS

- **PLAYERS ARE TOO CONSTRAINED. NOT FUN**
- **PLAYERS ARE NOT LEARNING HOW TO PLAY**
- **NO ROOM FOR EXPERIMENTATION, JUST A SUCCESSION OF ACTIONS OUT OF GAMEPLAY CONTEXT**
- **OTHER TECHNICAL ISSUES**

BACK TO THE CORE

NAVIGATE STEALTHILY USING COVER AND COVER TO COVER

AVOID THE LIGHT TO STAY UNSEEN FROM ENEMIES

PERFORM ABDUCTION MOVES WHEN NECESSARY

FROM 11 TO 8 ABILITIES... IN BETTER CONTEXT

NAVIGATION

CROUCH

LIGHT & SHADOW

COVER

COVER TO COVER

SELECTION WHEEL

ABDUCTION



Follow me
Basic Note

Cancelled

OK! OK!
Go



learning

- In our case, the *first map* had to be about the *core of the experience*
- *Anything else was just misleading* players about what the game is about

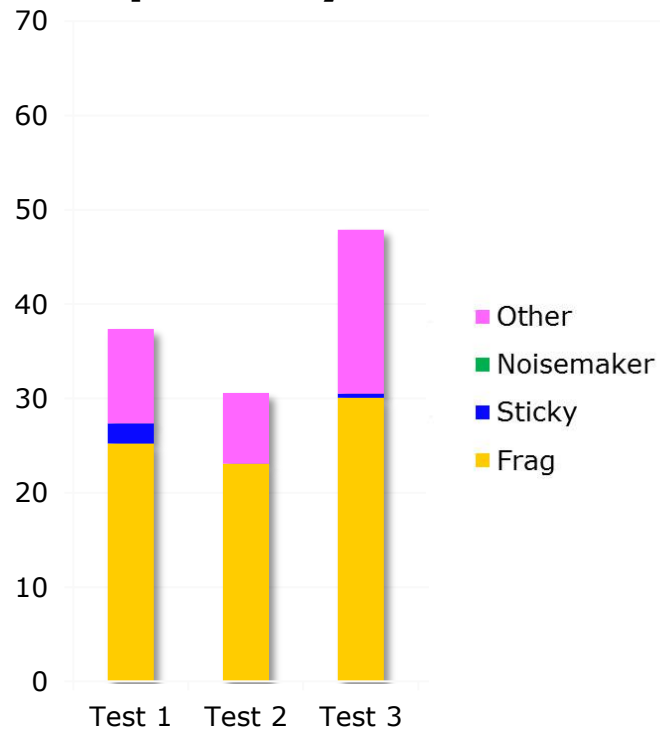
GADGETS

SPLINTER CELL AT ITS BEST

THE PROBLEM

- WE HAVE 13 GADGETS IN THE GAME
- BUT WE QUICKLY REALIZED THAT MOST OF THE PLAYERS WERE ONLY USING 1 IN ADDITION TO THEIR GUNS: THE FRAG GRENADE

Average Number of Gadgets Used per Player



WE DID 3 MAIN THINGS

1 / GROUP THE GADGETS IN CATEGORIES

RECON & DISTRACTION

A STICKY NOISEMAKER

STICKY CAMERA

STICKY EMP

TRI-ROTOR

GAS GRENADES

SMOKE GRENADE

TEAR GAS

SLEEPING GAS

MINES & CHARGES

PROXIMITY SHOCKER

PROXIMITY MINE

A BREACHING CHARGE

EXPLOSIVE GRENADES

FLASHBANG

FRAG GRENADE

INCENDIARY GRENADE

2 / TELL PLAYERS WHICH GADGETS CAN BE USED FOR WHICH PLAYSTYLE



EXAMPLES:

- *TRIROTOR: IDEAL FOR GHOST PLAYSTYLE*
- *SMOKE GRENADE: IDEAL FOR PANTHER PLAYSTYLE*
- *PROXIMITY MINE: IDEAL FOR ASSAULT PLAYSTYLE*

3 / REWORK INITIAL LOADOUT, PURCHASE PROGRESSION AND PRICING

- Remove the frag grenade from initial loadout and move it down in the list
- Increase frag grenade price
- Give stealth gadgets more visibility by putting them up in the list and encourage players to play with them by selling them at cheaper prices

**ON TOP OF THIS WE ALSO USED ANOTHER
COMMUNICATION CHANNEL AT OUR DISPOSAL:
VOICE OVER FROM CHARLIE WITH GADGETS
RECOMMENDATION BEFORE GOING INTO A MISSION**



GEAR \ CAMPAIGN \ LOADOUT A \ GADGETS \

GADGETS

EQUIP GADGETS [3/4]


RECON & DISTRACTION

A STICKY NOISEMAKER STICKY CAMERA  


STICKY EMP \$27000

TRI-ROTOR \$72000

GAS GRENADES

SMOKE GRENADE 

TEAR GAS \$27000

SLEEPING GAS 

EXPLOSIVE GRENADES



EQUIPPED

STICKY NOISEMAKER

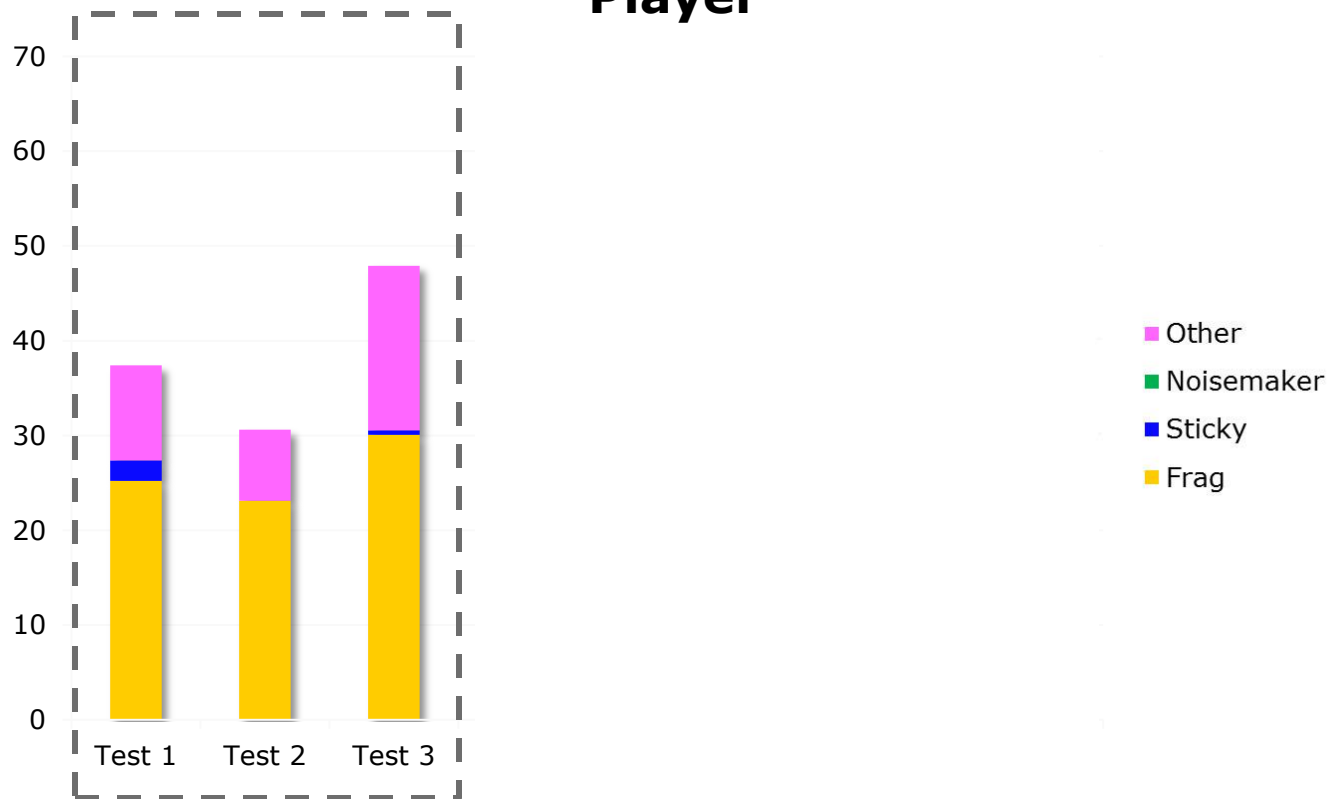
STICKS TO WALLS AND FLOORS,
EMITTING SOUNDS TO DISTRACT NEARBY
ENEMIES

IDEAL FOR  GHOST STYLE

X UNEQUIP

B BACK

Average Number of Gadgets Used per Player



THE MARK AND EXECUTE PROBLEM

X KNOCK OUT

X HAND TO HAND TAKEDOWN

STICKY NOISEMAKER
05 LB

16 M

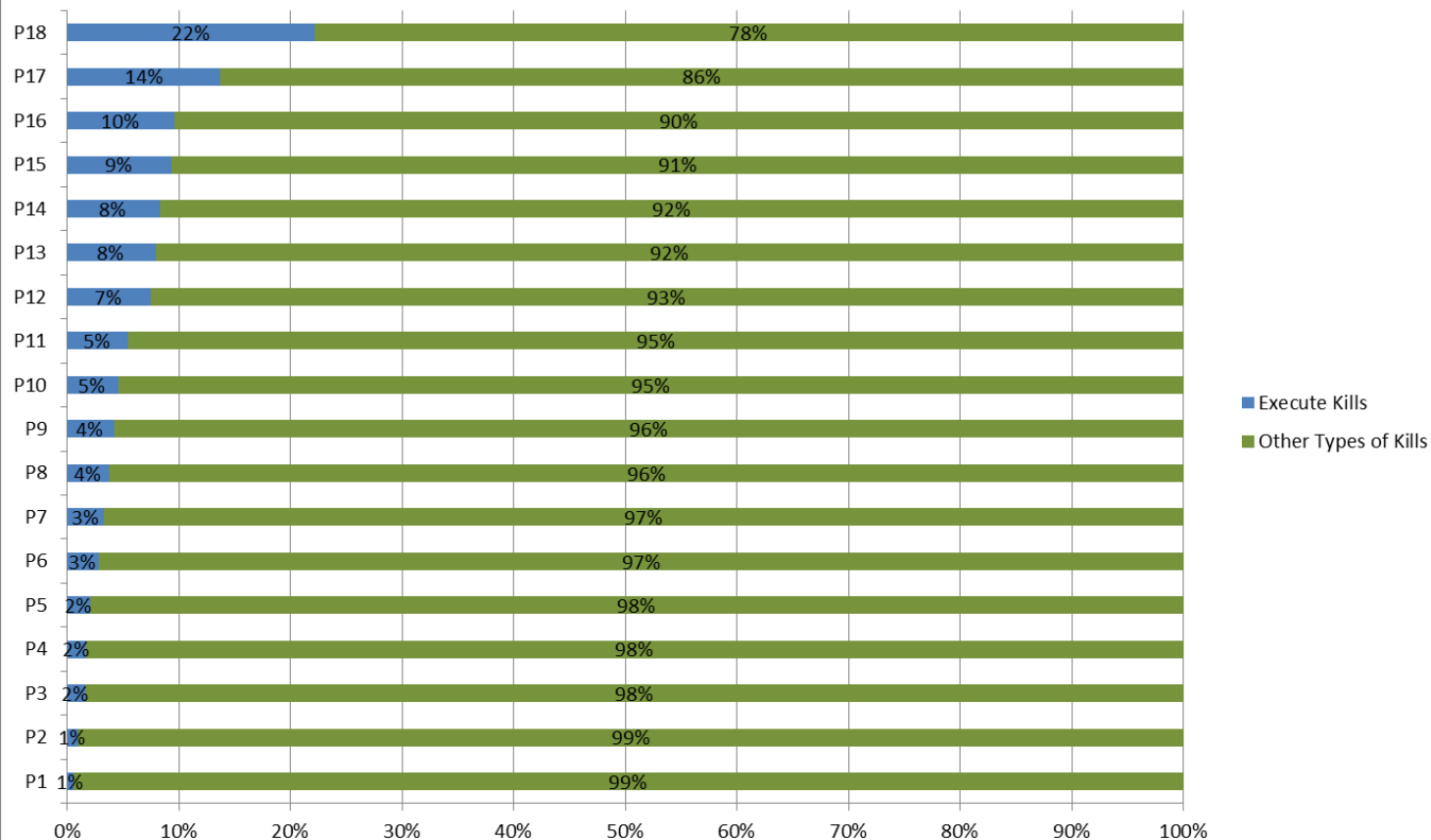
0011
SILENCED

PLAYTEST 4 — *18 PLAYERS*

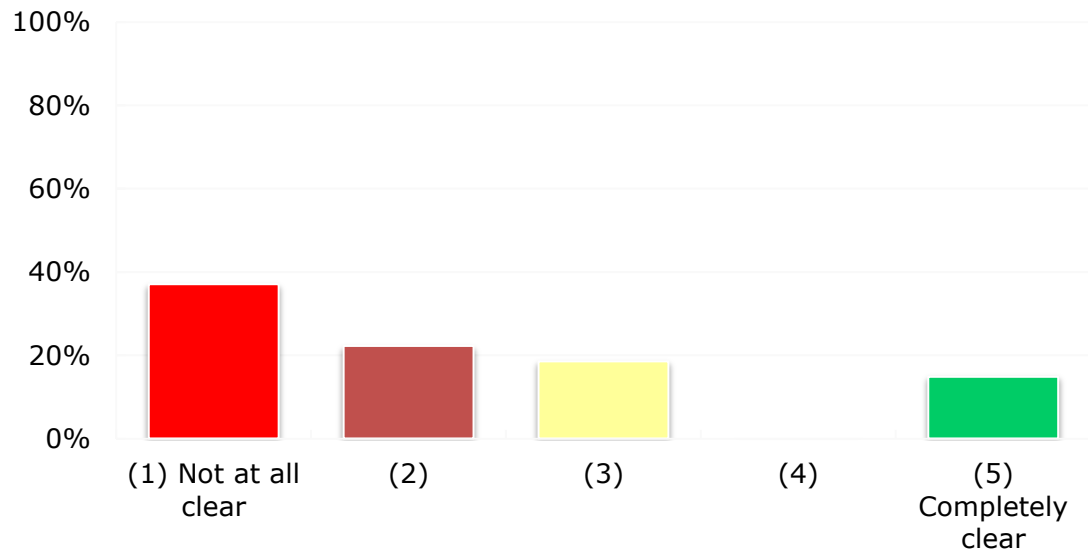
AVERAGE 6% MARK & EXECUTE KILLS

WORST CASE: 0.6% M&E USAGE (2 KILLS ON THE ENTIRE SP CAMPAIGN)

Test 4 (Pre-Tutorial)



Mark and Execute Clarity



CLARITY AVERAGE: 2.4

PLAYERS COMMENTS.....

- *did not always understand how close I could be*
- *I was **often unclear** as to when the enemy, when they walk away, **was out of range** for the execute part. This caused me to execute maybe one enemy but then proceed to be shot by the other when I thought it should kill all that I mark.*
- *Wasn't completely clear about **how it recharged**, and **couldn't use it a couple of times** when I needed it.*
- *Well, **I still don't really understand it**. It wasn't really explained in the tutorial.*






X KNOCK OUT

X HAND TO HAND TAKEDOWN

STICKY NOISEMAKER
05 LB

01100
SILENCED

 NEXT COVER

AIM AT NEXT COVER  AND TAP  TO MOVE

 x 3
BREACH

20 

KILL

x3
BREACH

16 M

20

FREEZE SCREEN FOR [5]s + BLACK OUT ALL SCREEN EXCEPT TUTORIAL PROMPT & GAUGE + GAUGE FLASHING

TAKEDOWNS & WEAPON KILLS FILL UP YOUR EXECUTE GAUGE

KILL

x3
BREACH

20



TEXT MODIFICATION: "[X] HAND TO HAND TAKEDOWN" instead of "[X] HAND TO HAND"



FREEZE SCREEN FOR [5]s + NEW PROMPT + BLACK OUT ALL SCREEN EXCEPT TUTORIAL PROMPT & GAUGE + DELAY EXECUTE GAUGE ANIMATION

EXECUTE READY

YOUR GAUGE IS NOW FULL - EXECUTE ABILITY READY

5 x 3
BREACH

20
EXECUTE

SAME AS IT IS NOW



NEW PROMPT



TEXT MODIFICATION + MARK RED ICON: “[Y] EXECUTE WHEN MARKS ARE RED [RED MARK]”



BUT THAT'S NOT ALL!...

HOW TO TURN THIS FEATURE INTO ALMOST A “REFLEX”?

- Even if we had a chance to improve the learning of the feature, players could forget that it is there over the next map or the one after.

MILITARY CITYPOST

W. HILLTOPPER CANYON

ROVER & BAY

W. HILLTOPPER CANYON

WAREHOUSE

W. HILLTOPPER CANYON

SAVING

PROCESSING DATA

1.000

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MARK HOSTILES WITH **RB** IN ADVANCE
AND EXECUTE WITH **Y** IF YOU GET OVERWHELMED

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

ONE TARGET

Use RB, Mark & Y Execute to
neutralize multiple targets at
once

A NEXT COVER

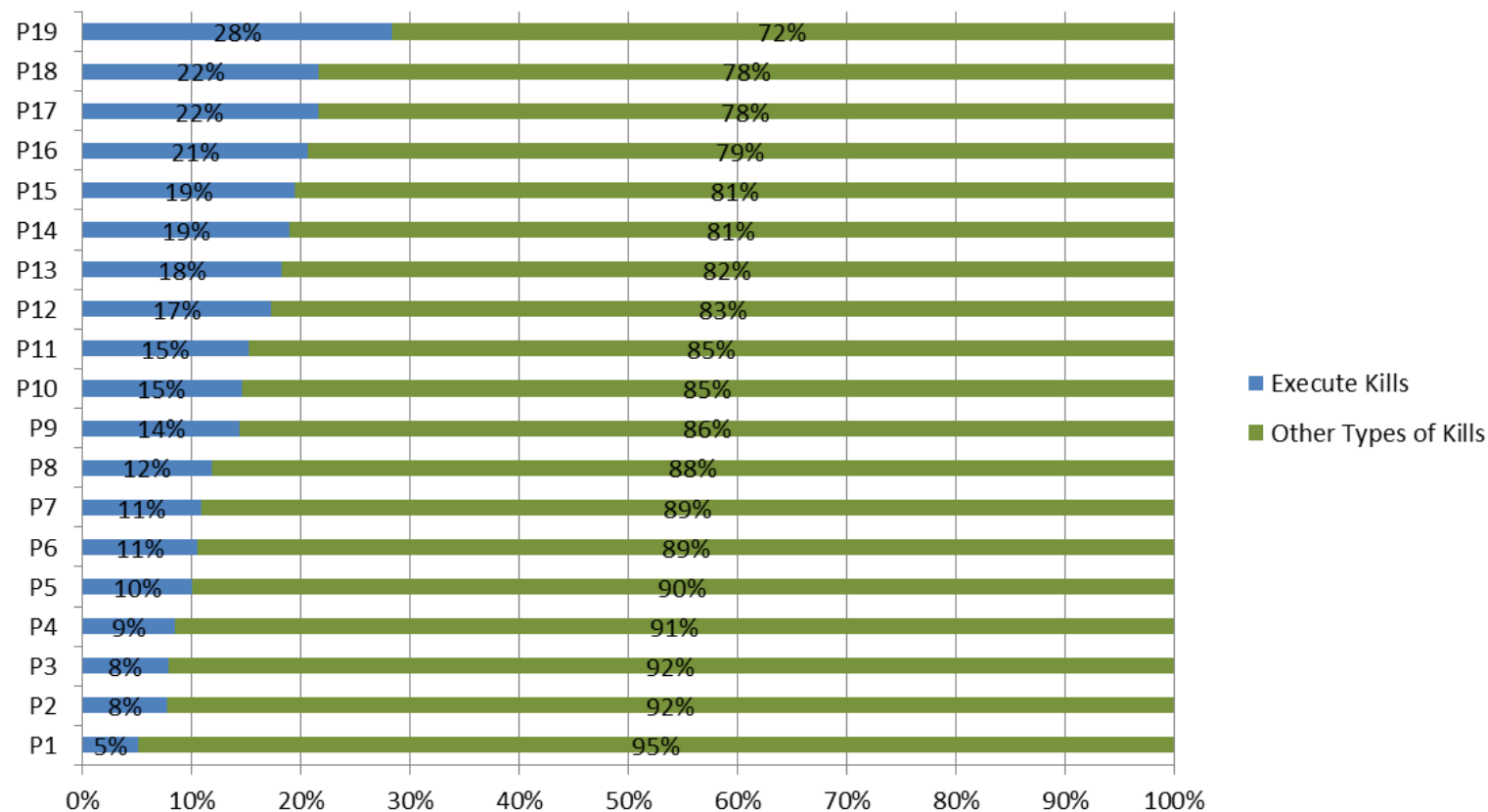
STICKY NOISEMAKER
03 LB

003001
NON-LETHAL

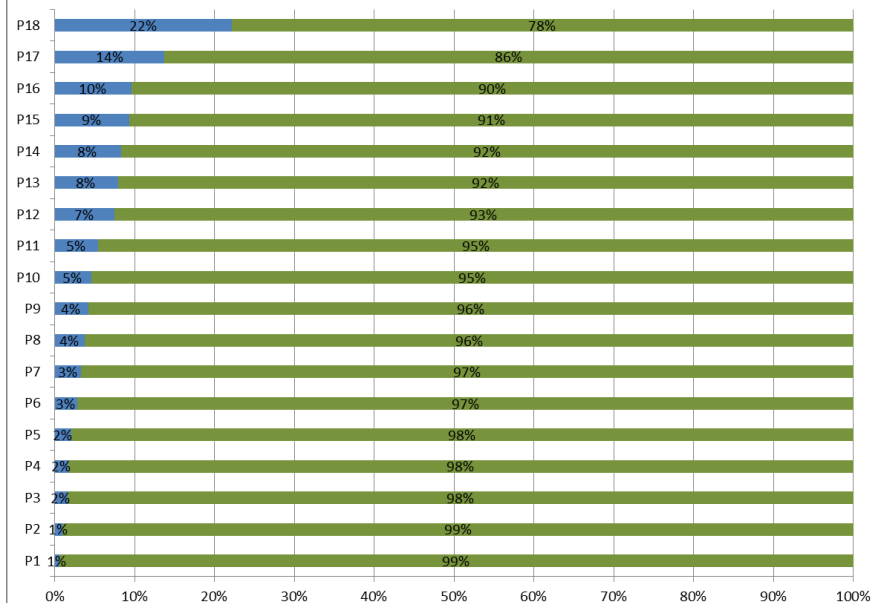
PLAYTEST 6 — *19 PLAYERS*

- AVERAGE 15% MARK AND EXECUTE KILLS
- WORST: 5% MARK AND EXECUTE KILLS

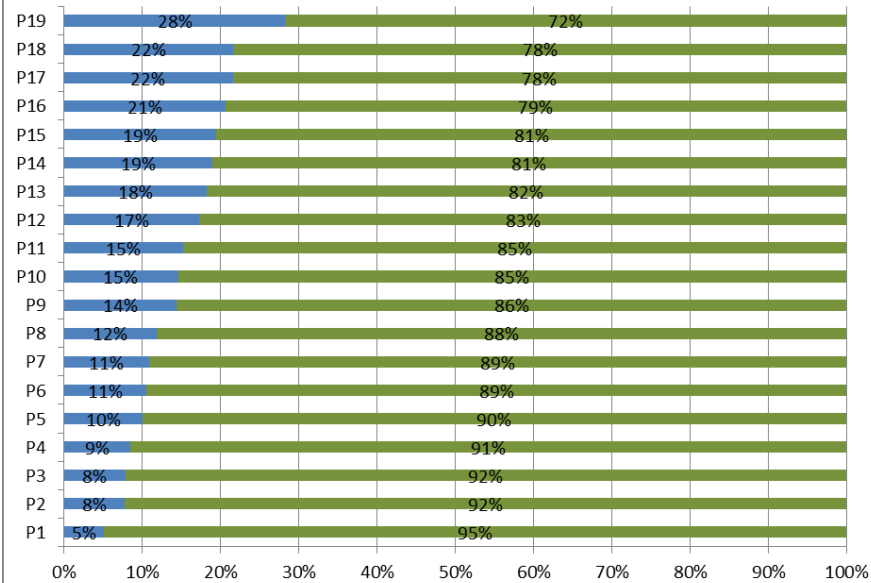
Test 6 (Post-Tutorial)

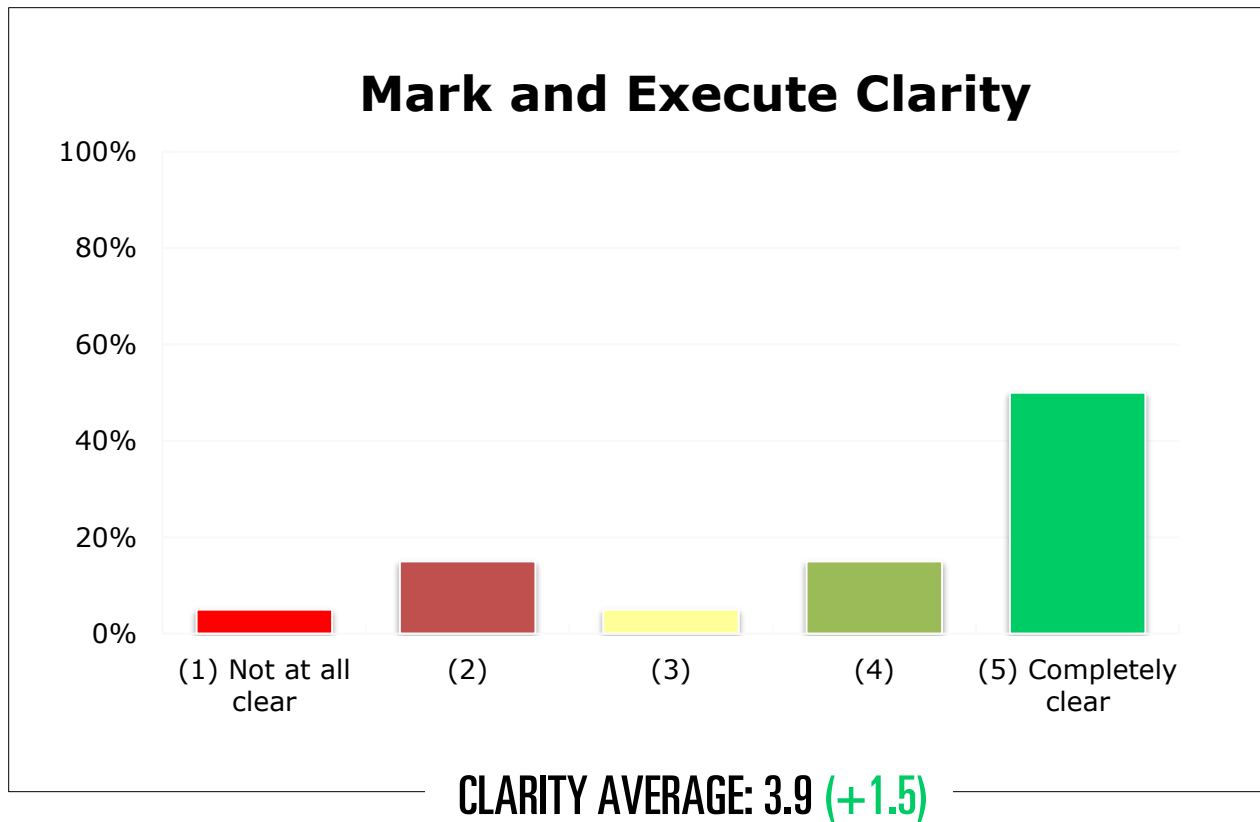


Test 4 (Pre-Tutorial)



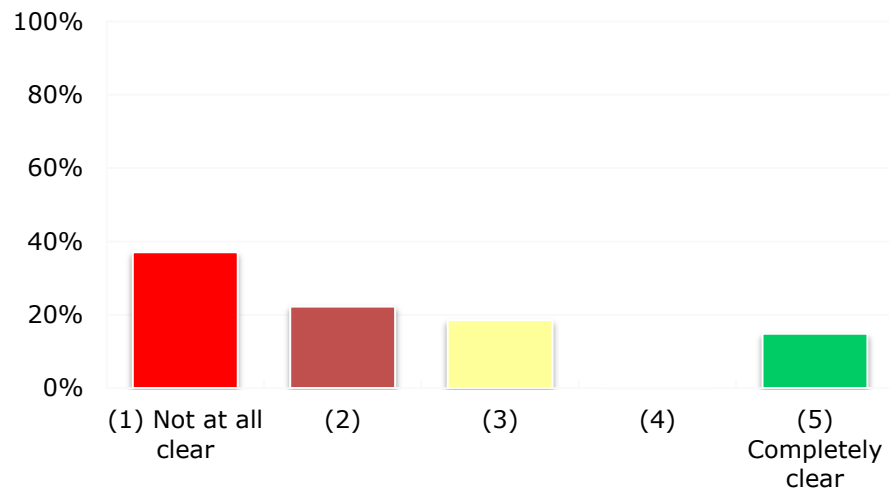
Test 6 (Post-Tutorial)





TEST 4

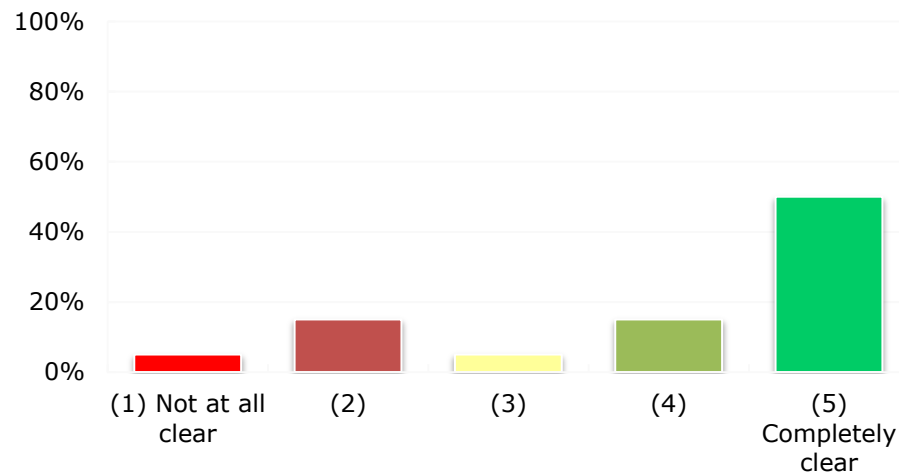
Mark and Execute Clarity



CLARITY AVERAGE: 2.4

TEST 6

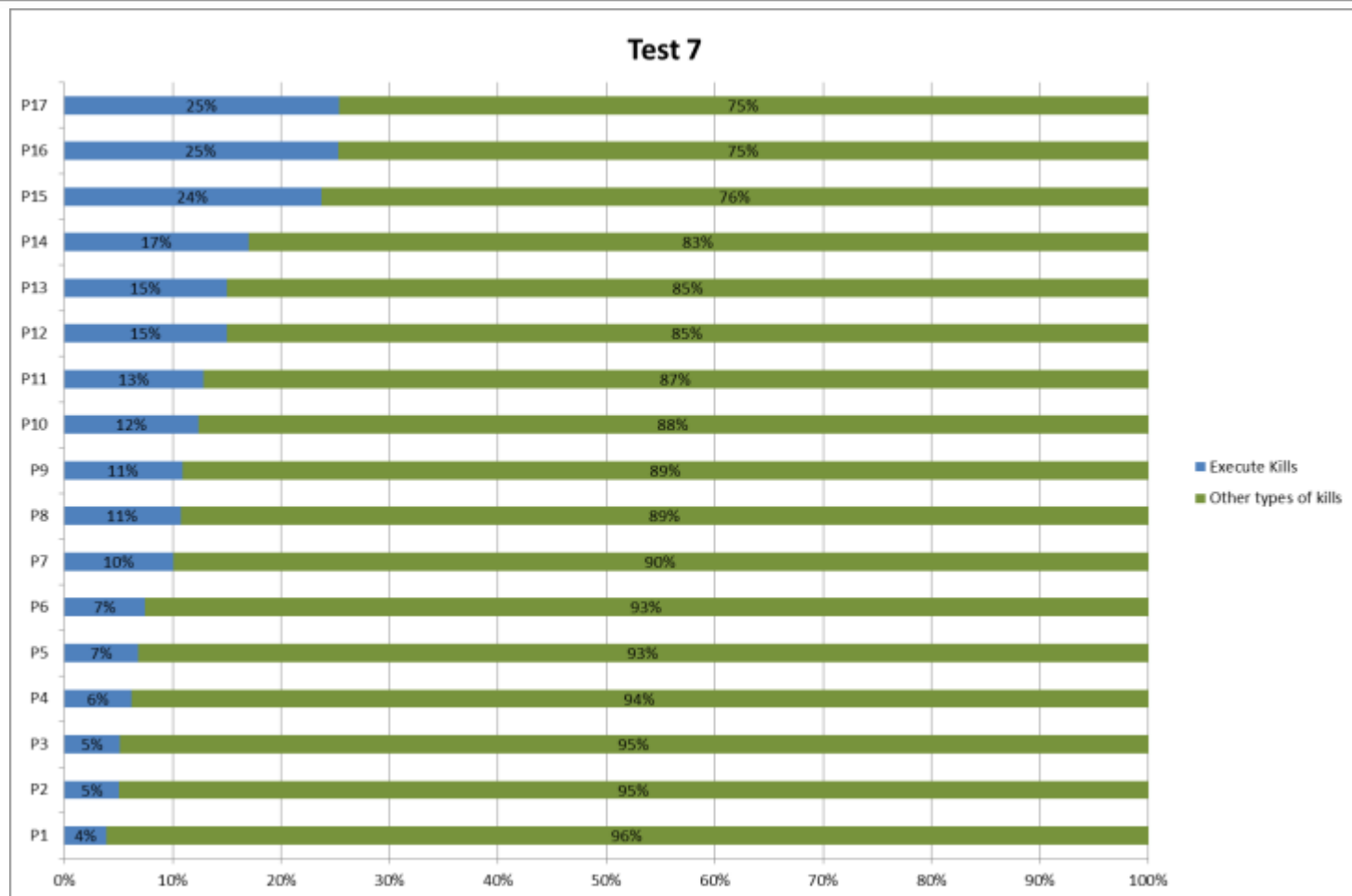
Mark and Execute Clarity



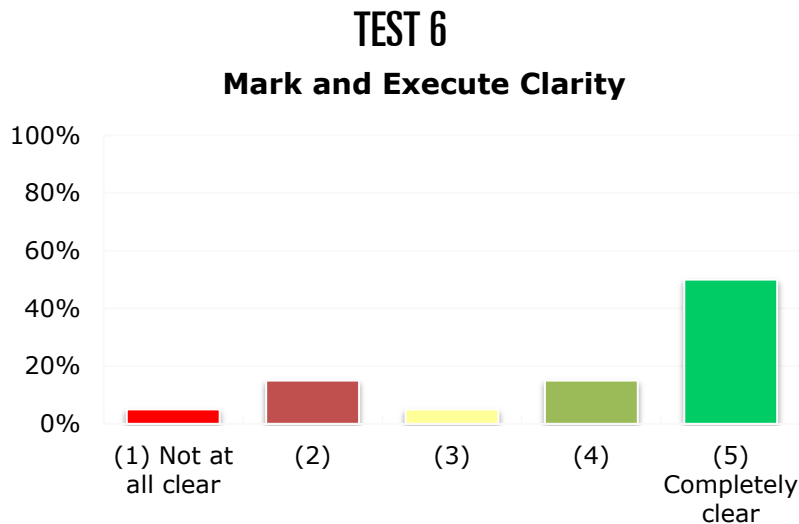
CLARITY AVERAGE: 3.9

PLAYERS COMMENTS.....

- *I thought it was a great feature and was definitely useful in tough situations. I **especially liked that you had to earn it and didn't have unlimited use of it.***
- ***Loved it.** Easy way to take out a room of guys but **you can't overuse it.** I honestly would save it until I absolutely needed it. I prefer dealing with people on my own but sometimes it was nice to just use this feature and be done with it. Also when I was in trouble this REALLY came in handy. **Just a couple of RB presses and then Y** and I was set.*
- ***I liked to mark targets in advance** so I can keep track of where they are **even if I don't have Execute available.** It also **allows me to kill multiple enemies** if I get into a sticky situation.*



ONE MORE THING!



"...Wasn't completely clear about how it recharged, and couldn't use it a couple of times when I needed it [...]"

A NEXT COVER

RB TO MARK TARGETS

STICKY NOISEMAKER
03 **LB**

003
NON-LETHAL



EVERYBODY LEARNS DIFFERENTLY

we need to adapt

CONCLUSION & *the future*

- DON'T NEGLECT THE **BEGINNING OF THE GAME** — THE CORE OF YOUR XP
- USE **PLAYTESTS** NOT ONLY TO IDENTIFY A PROBLEM BUT ALSO **TO VALIDATE A SOLUTION**
- REPEAT THE INFORMATION USING **DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS** TO HELP INCREASE INFORMATION RETENTION

FUTURE WORK...

- Define the *communication channels* earlier
- Use them in a way that provide “*safety learning nets*”
- More *organic tutorials*

@LaurentMalville

Modernizing Splinter Cell's Gunplay – *James Everett*

Location: Room 2016, West Hall

Date: Friday, March 21

Time: 2:30pm-3:30pm



THANK YOU