

Project 3 - Coffeehouse Cahoots

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Summary:

For this project, we wanted to create a game that forced users to challenge preconceived assumptions and give players the choice to play “offensively or defensively”. Our game went through many iterations, shifting both conceptually and mechanically. Originally our goal of challenging assumptions was presented most heavily in the concept of the game, but as we user tested and modified rules, we reached our current iteration with a more casual and fun theme, where the mechanic deals strongly with challenging assumptions and how your choices impact others.

Our final game is called “Coffee House Cahoots”. The cards represent characteristics and traits of potential suspects in an irresponsible wi-fi misuse scandal at the neighborhood coffee shop. The mechanics of the game act as an analog to the conversation and interrogation of the suspects trying to solve the case. The two piles in the game, represent different aspects of their conversation. There is a safe pile for the argument, “well it couldn’t be because I am a” and another pile for steering the conversation to focus on specific traits- “It appears the suspect was a ...”.

Mechanic:

The core mechanic of “Coffee Cahoots” is in how the player decides to play their turn. There are two piles, one for general game play and another for restricting which cards can be played. By giving the player the choice of these two piles, we are giving them the choice to focus on themselves or hindering other players.

Feedback & Iterations:

Play testing at the Point was an insightful part of this process. The only element of our game that has extended across all of our iterations has been the personality traits on the cards. Users really seemed to have fun with the characteristics on the card, but the way in which the characteristics were functioning in the game created for long turns and game play overall.

Our previous iterations involved using the traits to generate crime scenarios and direct small “interrogations” between players within the game, but we ultimately found that players responded to and had the most fun with faster game play. With our final version, the characteristics on the cards serve as a way to tie the mechanics of the game play to concept and backstory of our game.

During the final class, we got new feedback on the latest iteration, which was a fairly significant reshuffling of past versions. The game was significantly sped up from past versions, though at the cost of the theming. Discussing potential next steps with this in mind, several variations came to mind to address this issue. One was to reframe the theming to be closer to issues around terrorism and public paranoia, where players must weigh which of their traits they can show vs what needs to be hidden. Another approach that was proposed was to reveal players’ hands during play (either entirely, or incrementally over the game), to add more for players to work off of for strategizing.

Ruleset:

Theme/Prompt:

Due to suspect activity on the coffee shop’s wi-fi, the FBI has pulled in suspects from the local coffee shop. The suspects must shift blame and use available alibi’s to shift the perception of who the criminal may be within the group.

Goal - Be the first player to get rid of their entire hand

The Deck:

The deck is similar to a standard deck of playing cards, with each card containing a suit and a trait. The suits and traits are as follows-

Suits:

Chai Guy
Decaf Deceptor
Java Joe
Latte Loafer
Tea Toter
Rocco Cocoa

Traits/Value:

1 - WWE Fanatic
2 - Musician
3 - Gamer
4 - Film Nut
5 - Writer
6 - Politically Active
7 - Cyclist
8 - Reader
9 - Programmer
10 - Philosophy Major

Matches:

By Suit - like-suited cards can be combo'd (A WWE Fanatic **Chai Guy** can be placed on a Writer **Chai Guy**)

By Traits/ Value - like-valued cards can be combo'd (WWE Fanatic **Roco Cocoa** can be placed on WWE fanatic **Java Joe**)

By Straight - consecutive values can be combo'd (Gamer(3) Tea Toter can be placed on Musician(2) Chai Guy or Film Nut(4) Latte Loafer)

Combo Matches:

A Value or Straight match may be extended if more valid cards are available. For instance, if the main pile has Gamer(3) and you match a Film Nut(4) to it, you may also play a Writer(5) of any suit in your hand, and then potentially 6, etc.

Likewise, if you match a 4 on the main deck with one from your hand, you may play any other 4s you are holding.

Veto:

The current veto card blocks certain matches from occurring, based on its suit and value. For instance, if the current veto is **Philosophy Major Tea Toter**:

- No cards with **Philosophy Major** can be played
- No cards with **Tea Toter** can be played

The exception to this rule is combo match cards after the first move. For instance, if the current combo is Gamer(3) Tea Toter and the veto is Writer(5) Latte Loafer, you could play a 4,5,6 combo.

Starting the Game

Each player is dealt a hand of seven cards. After this, two cards are placed face up on the table. One is the Main pile, the other is the Veto card. Dealer goes first.

Playing the Game:

Players can do 1 of 3 actions on their turn:

- Place a valid match onto the main pile.
- Swap the current veto with a valid match (you take the old veto into your hand)
- Draw a card until they can make a valid match (main or veto pile)

Ending the Game

Play continues until a player deals out their entire hand, at which point they win. If there are more than 2 players, play may continue until only one player remains with a hand.