

CONFIDENTIAL



Inter Office Memo

To: Distribution

From: Linda Adam *LA*

Date: 11/12/93

Subject: TANK FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The attached report is a topline summary of the Tank focus groups which took place on November 10, 1993.

Distribution:

R. Bugawan
M. Ford
M. Fujihara
B. Fuller
J. Grigsby
M. Hally
R. Moncrief
H. Nakajima
C. Peplinski
D. Portera
M. Pierce
J. Ray
N. Stern
G. Stark
P. Takaichi
M. Taylor
D. VanElderen
D. Wood

TANK

Focus Group Summary

Overall, focus participants liked Tank and responded enthusiastically to the sounds and graphics of the game. Player ratings on the game are generally high and show a strong likelihood to play the game again (see table attached). These players say that they, their friends, and players older and younger than themselves would be likely to play Tank in an arcade.

General areas of dislike or confusion are related mainly to the controls. These novice players are also confused by the overall objective of the game and complained of getting lost on the playfield.

Mainly because of the type of controls used on this game, Tank reminds these players of past tank-themed games, with Vindicators being the most frequently mentioned. These respondents have never played, nor are they familiar with Assault or Cybersled. There is also low awareness in these groups of BattleTech and Virtual Reality games in general.

Player Confusion

In both the solo and head-to-head mode, players easily understood the basic idea of blasting everything that moves on the screen. In both modes, player confusion arises from getting lost. In head-to-head, they figured out how to use "cloak" without instruction, but often lost track of their opponent and had difficulty using the radar and other visual aids to find the other player. In solo mode, several players cleared an area of enemy targets and could not find their way out of an area to seek out other opponents.

Much of the confusion related to "getting lost" is attributed by players to the similarity of the surrounding terrain. With the gray rock walls everywhere, everything in view looks pretty much the same. Players suggested adding some variety to the playfield walls, including the ability to blast holes in the rocks or somehow change the appearance of the walls they have hit.

In a related area, participants also noted trouble reading the radar. Some suggested moving the radar display to the top of the screen where it would be in better view to be utilized. Others respondents suggested including an overview of the entire playfield that would show other targets and objectives and would help keep them from getting lost.

Controls

Regarding the controls, these respondents complain about firing missiles when they did not intend to press the button. This problem was especially evident as the respondents tried to enter their initials at the beginning of the head-to-head game. One suggestion is to put the thumb buttons under a flap so that they will not be pressed unintentionally.

Several players noted that the cloak button should not be mounted a control panel that requires a reach away from the controls. Some suggested adding the cloak to the hand controls, another idea is to include a foot pedal control for the cloaking device.

Players especially like the visual effect of the guided missile. Although confusing at first, the graphic treatment and "rush" are exciting.

In general, players seem to feel that their vehicle moves fast enough. Only a few players said that the game moves too slowly. Participants did not have trouble understanding how to move forward, back, or turning. There was limited awareness of the direct-left and direct-right movement of the hovercraft. Suggestions for other control motions include the ability to briefly fly straight up to avoid being shot (could be actuated by moving both controls outward).

Most respondents say that they did not have trouble aiming and locking in on a target. There was also strong awareness of the names of targets and energy pods. (Note: modified analog joysticks were installed in time for focus.)

The position of the joystick controls at the sides of the seat appear to be manageable. Most participants favored the side-of-seat position over the more standard placement on a control panel in front of them.

A few players said that they had trouble getting in and out of the seat over the joystick controls. Several players seemed concerned about vandalism or general wear and tear on the joysticks if they are placed at the sides of the seat. A couple participants suggested having the controls retract when the game is not in play.

Graphics

Players especially like the detailed screen graphics. The realistic look of the tank explosions with pieces falling off, burning and flying debris, and the close-up view of the opponent tank are of particular note.

One recommendation would be to add different shapes and colors to the vehicles that players could select. Players noticed that their tank is the same design and color as their opponent (a couple respondents also noticed that the picture used for the players' vehicle is different than the one shown burning up after being shot).

Respondents suggest including a different graphic look and treatment to subsequent playfields. Most often mentioned suggestions are to have different Earth-like surroundings such as a snow and ice, mountains, desert, jungle, and volcano. They also suggest adding weather conditions such as rain and mist.

Game Design

When asked how many playfields there should be in the final game, the magic number seems to be eight. As little as three and as many as ten different playfields are suggested. Players say they would play Tank for as long as a half-hour or forty-five minutes and are very resistant to paying more than 50¢ per game. Some say they would like to see as many as four, up to eight, players linked together to play.

Players easily understood and liked the first-person view. None of the participants say that they would prefer to see a picture of the vehicle they control on the screen, although they seem to like the options offered on Virtua Racing. One respondent suggested adding a portion of the craft out the window, similar to seeing the hood of your car out the windshield.

Respondents generally prefer a health-based game, mainly because of the skill involved in maintaining and acquiring more time on the game. A minimum wave timer is also seen as a benefit; however, most players would not like a timed game where they cannot pick up more game time.

Players feel that more targets (on the ground and in the sky) and game play action are necessary in the both the solo and two-player versions of the game to add further interest. Some respondents say that they would like to see people blowing out of the tanks and walkers, perhaps to rescue and/or further eliminate.

Nearly all players say that they would prefer the game to have an ultimate goal and multiple special endings, based on performance. A few players note that they like games that have no end and just get more and more difficult; this would definitely seem logical in a head-to-head game.

Another game play suggestion would be to add vehicle options that the player could acquire and/or purchase to upgrade his hovercraft.

Sounds

Regarding the sounds on the game, participants felt the sounds on Tank are outstanding, especially blowing up obstacles. Compared to other games they have played, the sound and vibration of the low, rumbling bass is well regarded.

Ideas for other sound effects include dispatcher voice from a command base or helicopter contact to help guide them to their objective. Another voice was suggested for reward phrases and highlighting of game play.

Players did not notice the quad audio effects on the game; however, after the moderator described the sound delivery system, participants reacted very positively to the idea. A few then described the audio effect as "surround sound."

Several players seemed concerned that the sounds would not come across well in an arcade situation because the operator would turn down the volume.

Probable Player

On a particularly positive note, all of the participants say that they and their friends would play Tank in an arcade. In addition, they feel that other people, both older and younger than themselves, would be attracted to this game.

Game Name

When asked for game name suggestions for this project, there were not many creative responses. Ideas include Nuke 'Em, Hovertank, Mech Wars, Battle Mechs, Tank Wars, Rocks, Panzer Attack, or XenoMEK Battle. Reaction to the suggested name, XenoMEK, was mixed, noting that a more action-oriented name would be appropriate; one player insisted that the name should start with the letter, "Z."

TANK

Player Ratings

	Tank N = 25 <u>% of total</u>	Metal Maniax N = 28 <u>% of total</u>	Hard Drivin' N = 26 <u>% of total</u>
<u>Overall Play</u>			
Excellent	56	7	23
Very Good	44	39	50
Good	--	29	23
Fair	--	18	4
Poor	--	7	--
<u>Controls</u>			
Excellent	12	--	19
Very Good	40	29	12
Good	44	14	35
Fair	4	46	35
Poor	--	11	--
<u>Sounds</u>			
Excellent	84	21	35
Very Good	8	57	38
Good	4	14	15
Fair	4	7	12
Poor	--	--	--
<u>Scored Points</u>			
Excellent	4	7	15
Very Good	44	18	38
Good	40	50	38
Fair	12	21	4
Poor	--	4	4

TANK Player Ratings (cont'd)

	Tank N = 25 <u>% of total</u>	Metal Maniax N = 28 <u>% of total</u>	Hard Drivin' N = 26 <u>% of total</u>
<u>Graphics</u>			
Excellent	60	32	46
Very Good	36	25	35
Good	4	32	15
Fair	--	4	4
Poor	--	--	--

Comparison to Other Video Games

Much Better	76	14	54
Little Better	12	29	31
Same	12	29	8
Not as Good	--	29	8
Others Better	--	--	--

	<u>Favorite Game %</u>	<u>Tank %</u>
Challenging/takes skill	96	96
Competitive	80	88
Lots of action	80	96
Clear goal/objective	64	48
Will be around a long time	64	52
Good concept/theme	64	76
Easy to control	60	40
Hard to master	60	36
Variety of things to do	56	48
Appeals to all ages	48	56
Easy to learn	48	56
Room to improve score	44	36
Both girls and boys would like	36	32
Too fast	4	8
Silly	--	--
Too slow	--	4
Boring	--	--