SIDEWALK STALK

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Abstract

View the people around you in a different way when you play Sidewalk Stalk, an exciting game that combines elements of tag and hide and seek on a city street! Playable at any intersection with a lot of foot traffic, the goal is to steal your target's bandana without having your own bandana stolen. The catch: you can only move by following pedestrians. All alone on your side of the street? Well too bad: your feet are rooted in place until someone happens by. You can switch which pedestrian you're following or stop at any time, but keep these rules in mind: you have to be within two-to-three arms' length to follow someone, you can't follow other players, and players cannot follow the same pedestrian as another player. When you grab another player's bandana, their target becomes yours and they now have to follow you! Every player you get out joins the chain until you are the head of a terrifying snake marching straight towards your prey. Tune in to the natural flows of the city and ride the waves to your target, just be sure not to lose your attacker in the crowd...

Materials

- A bandana for each player.
- A busy 4-way intersection.
- 4 players (recommended).

Images

Rules

Set-up: Assign each player a unique **target** player. Each player then starts on separate corners of a busy 4-way intersection.

Goal: To snatch your **target's** bandana.

Movement
-You move by following any pedestrian that is two-arms-length away or closer to you.
-You can stop following them at any time.
-When standing still (i.e. not following anyone), you **cannot** move your feet.

Snatch
-You **must** be following someone when trying to snatch another player's bandana.
-Once you snatch a player's bandana, that player will tell you their target. Their target is your **new** target.
-Players you snatch bandanas from **must** follow you for the rest of the game. This can include multiple players, forming a chain. These players **cannot** snatch bandanas or leave the chain.

Win: Being the last person whose bandana has not been snatched.

Design Process Statement

At the outset of the design process our group wanted to create a game focused around the crowded yet anonymous spaces so characteristic of a modern urban city like New York. We wanted to somehow take advantage of the patterns or other qualities that might emerge by acting in a public yet somewhat anti-social environment. Some of the first spaces we considered setting our game were sidewalks, parks, elevators, lobbies, and even stores. We wanted players to navigate these crowded spaces full of strangers – spaces simultaneously offer opportunities while also creating a lot of obstacles – and work with their flows in order to achieve their goals.

After briefly hearing about the game in which players have to race one another to a specific location but can only move by following other people, switching between them as they so chose, seemed like a very interesting core mechanic to explore. After playing the game as we thought it might have been set out we found the following mechanic to be quite compelling and relevant to the space, yet felt as though the game was very one dimensional. We wanted to increase the amount of tension around the mechanic and make its overall use more dynamic and widen the elements of strategy. As a result of our critiques we decided to synthesize the core mechanic from the racing game with another concept we had for a tag like game in which each player can only tag one other person out, and once they do so then case the caught persons objective. The resulting game felt as though it had considerable potential, and upon play testing decided to limit it to four players and have them each start at the corner of a four-way intersection. Further play testing helped us polish the game by introducing physical objects to grab (scarves) instead of tagging to help mitigate the ambiguity of who tagged who first, as well as the addition of the rule whereby someone who is tagged out must follow the person who caught them which added to the elegance of play and also had an interesting intimidating effect on other players.