

Design Fiction – Home Hazard Hunt
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Our group proposes the idea of a hazard hunt that takes place within the home setting and is meant to be played with your family. The theme of the game is to promote earthquake preparedness, therefore it is designed to be played before an earthquake and requires the family to identify the hazards in the house. We want to challenge the notion of “safe” in our everyday surrounding and get people to reflect how “safe” they really are in their own house. By triggering sudden mock earthquakes, it showcases unprepared residents and its consequences. Our target audience is families (minimum age of 14) in the context of their homes.

We chose this theme because we discovered that casualties in a community lessen when each individual in a community is prepared. Preparedness also leads to a resilient community, but in our society a lot of households are left unprepared and the idea of a disaster is put at the back of their minds. In Japan, earthquakes are embedded into their culture and everyday life. For example, Japanese would always have a flashlight close to them when they sleep in case of an emergency. As a result, the community recovered much faster than places where individuals were relatively unprepared and lacked prior experience. A house is our safe haven and sanctuary, but is it really as safe as we perceive it to be? The game highlights the consequences of not being prepared.

The family would need to pick one member to be the actor/protagonist. The game will be played as a board game and the family members who aren't the actor will roll a dice to determine the steps the actor takes. The number you get on the dice determines if you land on a safe location, collect emergency supplies, or trigger a disastrous event such as fire. There is a Health Point bar that decreases as time passes. Once your Health Points run out, you “die”. The concept of time and health mimics reality where time is crucial in gathering supplies that you should've prepared beforehand. Obtaining supplies will increase your health points. The goal is to die less and try to complete the game in the shortest time, in turn training your reflexes and causing families to have the mentality of preparedness and adrenaline. The reality of an earthquake is people get killed by the unexpected, so being prepared increases your chance of survival in an earthquake. Playing in the dark with a flashlight also came up during ideation.

The benefits of this design are that it uses the familiar board game format. People who stay in the room would experience the frustration of helplessness and hopefully they would reflect on their current situation and think more about how it affects them in the future event that an earthquake happens. The experience in the game will hopefully improve their preparation practices and habits. The “actor” will learn about how critical preparing for earthquake is and will explore capabilities of technology and how it will simulate a real earthquake environment.

An alternative idea was to utilize Twitter and allow players to choose a role, giving them a sense of responsibility and involvement. Players will try to save other players and solve problems via tweeting back. Some challenges require gathering of players to complete. Players would have challenges that involve them to ask passersby's. What do you think?