The osu!monthly

Tablet VS Mouse

Written by: KRZY

Hi all, KRZY writing here. So, like most of you, last month I enjoyed Doomsday's take on the two major input devices of osu! gameplay, mouse and tablet. Being a player who uses a tablet as his main playing device instead of a mouse, I would like to offer my view on the same matter.

I am someone who thinks tablet players have certain advantages over mouse players. In most cases, the tablet area corresponds to the game screen in a proportional way, meaning that a certain spot on the screen is always the same spot on the tablet area. This really helps when playing particularly fast-moving or jumpy maps, since by setting the tablet area so that you can reach all corners of the screen while

fixing your wrist, you can enjoy a rather stable gameplay, whereas the mouse is likely to fly all over the place, forcing the player to readjust at every break or so. A stylus is also much more accurate than a mouse (in most cases), since it has a much more precise aim thanks to its tip, compared to the mouse's big flat bottom.

Tablets do, of course, have their downside. Often it takes some time to adjust to a tablet when one is accustomed to a mouse, which is, from my personal experience, quite frustrating. After a year of playing with a mouse, I switched to a tablet on June 2010. For the next three days, I had to struggle to pass Normal difficulties when I had been passing Insane difficulties with a mouse a week before! Also, lots of people have faster streaming skills with their right hand compared to their left hand, and while a mouse player can stream with his

On Mapping

Written by: Starrodkirby86

With the amount of beatmaps uploaded into the Beatmap Submission System increasing at such a staggering rate, it's more important than ever to create maps that truly stand out and ooze their god-forbidding awesomeness to the whole world. Unfortunately, it's not as simple as turning Auto-Pilot on and enjoying the show (in most scenarios, at least). There isn't a magic elixir to lust over or an osu!cookie that gives marvelous mapping powers, but the following can help give more conscious thought into creating phenomenal maps.

Have something that can define the map as "unique". For players, there has to be a reason behind a map that's forever kept and constantly played. Besides per-

sonal song preferences, the map's content can easily convince a player whether they'll treasure it as a favorite or forget its existence in a few months. It obviously differs how a map will steal the player's heart, whether it be the mapper's style, song choice, or even the storyboard. For example, simplistiC's masterpiece can easily be considered his finest work, making players addicted due to its breakneck yet creative patterns. The controversial yet sensational map BASARA had mapping techniques that were simply unprecedented and perhaps fueled everyone's appetite for higher Approach Rates. Groundhog (Beat Juggle) revolved around playing in progressively difficult "Levels", showing how a storyboard can easily complement both the map and the song itself.

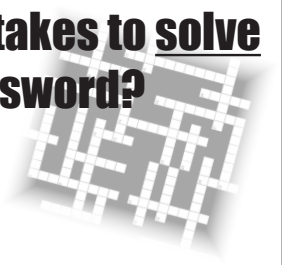Of course, I'm not encouraging any mapper to merely copy and paste these maps. The aforementioned, as well as many other beatmap gems,

Taiko World Cup

Written by: Yunacat

Recently, lepidopodus created the first ever Taiko World Cup (or TWC for short). Sign-ups started mid-March, and many teams from around the world registered. Prizes are sponsored by peppy, with third to first place receiving one to three months supporter respectively. First place players also received a special profile badge made by crystalsuicune. When everything was set, teams were separated into brackets and played against each other until they narrowed themselves down.

In all, seventeen teams signed up for the challenge. Each team consisted of a single captain, two members, and a back-up. Some areas had too many members signing up, therefore there were sometimes two teams per country.

A complete team list with all participating players can be viewed by clicking here.

Other members included arien666 who is the vice-manager for the tournmanent and wmfchris, Alace, and Noobita. dvorak and matthewhln recorded the matches and streamed them.

The tournament wasn't without its problems. Midway through, Malaysia and Philippines were disqualified for not managing their teams to be prepared on time for their match. Zekira and mekadon were the only members not banned from the following TWC, but that rule was later revoked by lepidopodus. A similar occurrence allowed the US to move onto the final rounds by default since team Korea B couldn't attend the match.

In the end, China defeated US, taking third and fourth places respectively. The battle was fairly close in points per match, but China won five out of seven of the rounds.

This year's winner was Taiwan, ending up just barely ahead of Japan by only one match. Both teams won four matches each, leaving the final match to decide the winner. Many of the matches were fairly close in points, with one match even being won by only a 19k points difference!

Congratulations to everyone who won and tried their best!!

ATTENTION!

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED IN CREATING STORYBOARDS? LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SHOW EVERYTHING YOU KNOW?
THEN PARTICIPATE IN OSU!'S STORYBOARDING CONTEST!
THAT'S RIGHT! OSU! IS HOSTING ITS VERY FIRST OFFICIAL STORYBOARDING CONTEST, COMPLETE WITH TEAMWORK, SKILL, AND PRIZES TO BOOT.
WINNERS RECEIVE PERSONAL AUTOGRAPHS OF PEPPY, A FORUM BADGE, A CUSTOM TITLE, AND 1-YEAR SUPPORTER STATUS.
COMPLETE DETAILS AND RULES ARE LOCATED HERE.
HAPPY STORYBOARDING!

Result

First Place	Second Place	Third Place	Fourth Place
Taiwan	**Japan**	**China**	**United States**
Numbers 596108 TW-KUMA01 ISHIDAMITSUNARI zx0502442	Inaba9510 TTTL aruru1234 03123456789	Yowane _ Haku yukey sagelord small-qlang	OzzyOzrock KYOUI Backfire anongos

List of winners in the Taiko World Cup.

Interview with ztrot

Interviewed by: *Gcode*

This month's main interview is with MATmanager and longtime osu! member, ztrot! Certain questions are user-submitted.

When did you join osu? How did you find it?

I joined osu! on February 12th, 2008. I found it while I was looking up S ranks on EBA in YouTube.

Did you ever expect to be a MAT, let alone MATmanager?

I never thought I would get any type of admin position on osu!, to be honest. It just kinda turned out this way.

What do you think of being the MAT-manager? Do you enjoy it?

It has its ups and downs. I do enjoy trying to help in the map ranking process as much as possible. It makes me happy to see that maps overall are always improving.

What kind of skills should modders have to become a MAT?

I personally think the person up for MAT should be well rounded. Things like storyboarding skills are not needed, but are a major plus. A sense of style helps as well, but when you get right down to it, as long as they can work out a song's tining and be able to pick out errors, I think just about anyone that is willing to take the time to learn could be a MAT.

Do you think osu! is getting boring for you, or do you still enjoy it as much as before?

I wouldn't say it is boring. Real life has taken a major chunk of my time and I can't put as much energy as I would like to towards osu!, but I still enjoy it as much as when I first launched the game, if not more.

Yeah, real life can be annoying sometimes, timewise. Now that we are on the topic of real life; How has osu! influenced your life?

Well, I can say that without osu! I most likely would have never even thought of making my own music, so in that aspect it has had a good deal of impact on me.

As for my everyday life, osu! hasn't affected it that much, but I'm really glad I found osu!, or I may have never taken the plunge to the world of music.

Who do you look up to in osu! the most?

Ah, that is hard to say. I owe my map learning to JarJarJacob, aka Jarby, so I respect him for that, but the main person that has my full respect would be my great friend jericho2442. I respect him, among other things, for his fair judgement and overall modding skill. When you have been around as long as me, though, users come and go...I couldn't possibly list everyone that I've ever looked up to, but I thank them all.

Now for a more touchy subject. There have been plenty of times in osu! where things have gotten rather ugly (e.g. Flyaway, D City Rock). How do you handle these situations?

Well, when things get like that, there are only so many things I can do. Flyaway I'll chalk up to the fact I was still learning. As for D City Rock, I had made a map for that way before I had seen the one I unranked; mind you, I only had the Insane difficulty finished. I only did what any mod would do with a ranked map that had incorrect timing. Now, should I have waited to finish mine? Yeah, possibly, but maps get double-mapped around here all the time. I'll admit I didn't handle the map thread so well, but I had quite a few people tormenting me when I had done nothing wrong. The way the mapper handled it was shocking as well, seeing that, since I posted, I would do everything in my power to help him get his map reranked. Mind you, even after all the abuse I got from that map, I still kept my word and helped him get his map reranked the following days.

Many people say that maps get bubbled/ranked by the mappers' buddies all the time. Do you believe this is true?

I don't really think it is a matter of friendship as much as mapper experience. I sometimes choose the lesser of

two evils: for example, in a Larto map, 9 times out 10 you are gonna find less errors compared to a newbie map. It will take more time to mod though the latter. This usually doesn't bother me, but if we have a massive page of pending maps, you wanna get the easy ones outta the way first, right? Usually the ones that bring up the friend tag ranking thing are either new or upset that their map isn't being looked at. I really don't think it is nearly as big of an issue that the community brings it up to be.

Do you think the osu! community has gotten better over time? Do you miss when it was more closely knit together, or do you think it's at its best now?

I enjoyed the small "family" a bit more due to the simple fact everyone knew everyone, but as we expanded things have been more and more easy to do; mappers and modders work together to make great beatmaps, so I'd say it's around 50/50.

Lots of people dislike the ranking system and want it replaced. Do you think the ranking system will or should be reformed?

Well, there is talk of reform, but I think the current one is fine in terms of beatmaps. As for the score ranking system, I think it might need a major re-haul.

If you could change one thing in osu!, what would it be?

One thing I'd change? That's easy. I want a skinnable main menu, or hold sliders.

Let's end this interview on a light note. Are you considering to ever open your moonbase again? *(refers to ztrot's streaming video site that was banned for inappropriate content - Ed.)*

Yes, my moonbase will reopen, but this time as a website, not a livestream channel. I plan to get it up and running sometime mid next year. It will be a place for art, music, anime and all things otaku.

Thank you ztrot! It was a pleasure speaking to you. Have a nice day!

Interview with New BAT/MAT

Interviewed by: poisonchan

INTERVIEW WITH: jericho2442

INTERVIEW WITH: Gonzvlo

Hey jericho2442, I'm from the osu!monthly staff. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions for our next edition?

Yo yo. Sure!

Okay, thank you! First question: Were you surprised to get BAT?

Yeah, they were positions I never thought I would make, to be honest. I thought that I was most likely to stay a normal modder.

How do you feel about being a BAT?

I love being a BAT, it means I can help out the community more and try to increase the ranking speed for old and new mappers alike. It also means I can try to help keep the peace on this place.

People are wondering: Now that you are a BAT, are maps going to be ranked faster?

No, what I mean is that by working with the BATs and also by working hard myself, I hope to stay active. An active BAT means more modding, and that can only be good for the overall ranking process.

About mapping and modding...What is the mapping element that you like the most? What about the one you hate the most?

When it comes to mapping, I love anything fun. This can be anything from the smooth slider maps GladiOol makes to the jumpy manic ztrot spacing. What I hate the most is probably badly used anti jumps; those can completely kill a map instantly.

What's the weirdest thing you have seen in a beatmap?

The weirdest thing I've seen is in fact also one of the greatest things. Ages ago, Sousei made a map called "Jihnsius - Cutting Circles", in which the slider went off one side of the screen and continued on the other! That was so weird but, at the same time, so fun. Many people, including me, were really sad once it got patched.

What is the colour of your underwear right now?

Wait, what!? Is that a serious question? Oh my god, who wrote these ques-

tions...? Pretty bland, good old black!

Who is your favorite mapper? (Yourself is not an acceptable answer!)

Oh my, that is so hard to answer. In fact, I don't think I could choose one.

So... You've never said "Another XXX map! I HAVE to download it."

Not really, I let the map do the talking, not the mapper name, but I admit if Al-Azif came back and mapped something, I would download it instantly.

How do you feel that the amount of requests may skyrocket now that you're a BAT?

I expect it, it's something that everyone in my position knows is going to happen, and in fact it's great that people spend the time to ask you in person. The ones I don't like are the people who either expect you to mod or are rude about it.

Do you have anything to say to those that, one day, want to become MAT/BAT?

Yes, only push to become a MAT or BAT if you truly are focused, because once you become one, your workload is gonna increase by a huge amount, and not only with modding. Also, keep those mod posts kind and informative.

If you have to choose 3 friends on osu! to visit, who would you choose?

It's cruel to make me choose just 3... But I'd pick Hikato (because I can if I want to), ztrot and Andrea (osuplayer111) because we are the osu! brotherhood of techno.

Final question: If you had a superpower, what would it be?

To control dimensions, because if you could control all the different dimensions it pretty much rounds everything else up into one.

Ok! I guess we are done with the questions. Thanks for the interview sexy black underwear Jeri!

Oh my... They are anything but sexy!

Hello Gonz, I'm from the osu! Monthly staff. Do you mind if I have a quick interview with you for our next edition?

Oh, alright.

Okay then...First question! Were you surprised to get MAT?

Oh yeah! Well, I was quite surprised mainly because I didn't expect any new BATs or MATs. At first glance, I was like, "Is this a joke?" because somebody PM'd saying "congrats" and stuff, but then I checked the forums and felt quite happy.

How do you feel that the amount of requests may skyrocket now that you're MAT?

It's getting a bit stressful. I get spammed daily with many requests and that kind of stuff.

I see! And do you plan to keep modding and mapping, or giving more attention only to mods?

I love mapping/storyboarding as much as I love to make mods, so I'm trying to spend the weekends finishing my mapsets and mod during the weekdays.

It makes people wonder; are maps going to be bubbled faster now that you are modding during the weekdays?

Actually, getting a bubble from me will be quite hard. I have actually not even given my first one yet, because I need to be 100% sure about the map I'm bubbling. Otherwise, I'll just leave it with somebody with more experience for now.

About mapping and modding...What is the mapping element that

you like the most? What about the one you hate the most?

I love pattern designs. I love unique and creative patterns. I HATE objects overlapping each other for no reason and nonsense spacing.

What's the weirdest thing you have seen in a beatmap?

Hmm, weirdest thing, but still quite cool, would be Rolled's map, "Dan Balan - Crazy Loop (mm ma ma)". *[The continuous loop slider around the end -Ed.].* Well, that's the one that comes to my mind right now.

Then, may I ask... Who is your favorite mapper? (Yourself is not an acceptable answer!)

ME!!! Just kidding. Hmm, can I choose two or three?

Nope! Only one!

Uhh, so hard... When I started playing osu!, I fell in love with Larto's maps. Then when I started modding and mapping I discovered awesome mappers like RandomJibberish and Krisom. So I guess Krisom is my favourite mapper, as of now. That was quite hard...

Kaay! Next question: what is your favorite food?

Hmm... I don't know. Sadly, I don't have a favorite food... I like food in general. Let's say Italian and Peruvian food.

What is the colour of your underwear right now?

Oh man, light blue with a black border on the top. **If you had a superpower, what would it be?**

Mind reading.

Why?

Just for the fun of it. :3 It'd be hilarious to know what people are thinking.

If you have to choose 3 friends on osu! to visit in real life, who would it be?

Uh, Krisom, narakucrimson and ErufenRito, I guess...

Why them?

Oh wait, I forgot Basschan! It's mainly because they are my closest friends here, and it would be very interesting to meet them in person.

Lolis, tsunderes, or normal anime girls?

You'll probably laugh at me but I don't know what a "tsundere" is. Actually, I got to know what a loli is because of osu!. I'll go with lolis!

And what kind of music do you like?

Alternative Rock and R&B.

So, that leads us to our last question... Do you have anything to say to those that, one day, want to become a MAT/BAT?

For the ones who want to become a MAT, it's about quality, not quantity. Don't rage because somebody doesn't agree with your mod post; everyone has their own opinion. To the future BATs/MATs, don't stop doing what you love to do because you're not a BAT/MAT yet. I mean, you don't need a "label/tag" to help people... That's all!

Next osu!monthly we'll be interviewing Cookiezi! Submit your questions here!

Editor's Note: Garven could not be interviewed for this edition due to being out on vacation. We at osu!monthly hope you understand.

THE OBSESSION OF RANKING

Written by: *Doomsday*

Y'alright? It's Doomsday.

Ranking, oh my. Playing for the sake of adding extra numbers onto your ranked score tally, or on the flip side, playing for the smallest rank number on the scoreboard, has become a crux of play for many osu! players. Both equate to the same thing; Person A wants to beat person B, but hopefully not with their fists.

Before I carry on, I am not about to say, "Ranking is bad! Being competitive is bad! You should feel bad!", because if I did say that I would have to be shot at dawn for three counts of extreme irony, along with one count of just being silly. If the online scoreboards were not around, I doubt I would have been here longer than a couple of months after joining. It gives a nice competitive edge along with something else to aim for (or just causes you to retry the same song 50 times). But the thing is, I've come across people who seem to measure their personal worth in ranked score, and failure to meet the standards they've set for themselves shatters their well being in an explosive manner.

Exaggeration aside, I've had people come to me being worryingly depressed that they are struggling with playing osu!. I remember conversations with quite a few people, none of whom I will mention by name, who seemed hellbent on becoming as good as the top players within a couple of months, and would commonly ask me, "How long will it take me to clear Insane difficulties?/Taiko Oni difficulties?", "How long will it take me to get to x rank?" and "If I play this kind of difficulty x times every day, will I clear them within 2 weeks?". I have seen these people play constantly, like it is second only to breathing. For some, when this regimen did not bear fruit, their self-esteem was crippled, like they had just been castrated. Of course I helped them out, gave them a pat on the back, and everything was fine and dandy by the end, but the point still stands. For some people, the obsession of ranking and becoming good at osu! is rather worrying.
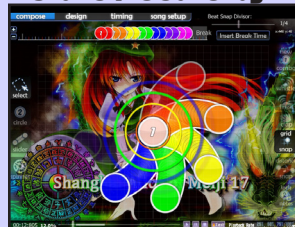
That comes part and parcel with all competitive gaming I guess. There seems to be two camps: the serious camp — whose members have the gremlin of success breathing down their neck like a drill sergeant — and the casual camp — who have their gremlin locked in a cast-iron box, whispering profanities. The box is the best place for those gremlins, in my opinion. They are not house trained.

A Further Look into osu!'s Editor

Written by: *Starrodkirby86*

It's important to know all the tools you have in your arsenal. If Batman didn't possess his utility belt, then solving crimes in Gotham City would be nigh impossible. If MacGyver wasn't aware of the awesome uses of many everyday items, then being a resourceful and versatile secret agent would be too impractical. If a Pokémon Trainer isn't aware of all the possible moves their opponent can employ, then winning a battle would be every once in a blue moon. This goes the same towards mapping. Knowing all the possible functions in the editor can create wonderful patterns, save time, and relieve headaches all with the convenience of a simple click (or keystroke). Here are a few nifty features around the osu! editor that not everyone knows about.
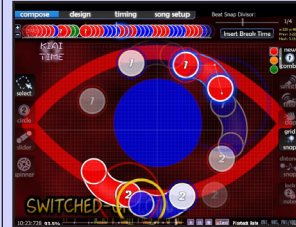
Rotate / Scale by...
Location: Edit

This feature can turn a boring duplicate pattern into something interesting, whether it'd be a vast rotation to all 360 degrees or a gradual increase in spacing. Think of creative ways to use this while still keeping some structure in mind!
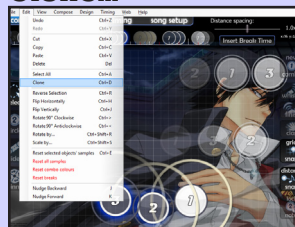
Reordering New Combos:
Location: N. Combo

Control the next combo color by selecting a new combo and pressing the arrow within the New Combo box. Doing this is definitely something that should be used correctly, as random placement of combo colors would be unappealing and confusing. A map with good new combo order would be *"Skye Ferreira – One"*.
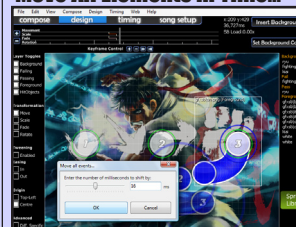
Clone...
Location: Edit

Clone duplicates the selected pattern and plops it 1/1 after it. If the selected pattern has notes that are nearby it, cloning will overlap them. Clearly, it's recommended to use it if there's nothing after the pattern. Cloning can save the mapper lots of time if there's a need to successively repeat a certain pattern. Just make sure it's not too repetitive!

Move All Elements in Time...
Location: Design

This function is a godsend for storyboarders, as it universally moves every object by a certain offset. This saves the user lots of time as they don't need to manually change every object's offset. However, this function does not fare very well if a beatmap has multiple timing sections that vary in offset changes.

Renard's DASH-DA-DASH DX EDITION

Written by: Backfire

"Renard's Dash-Da-Dash! DX Edition" is a freeware rhythm/bullet hell hybrid game made in 2011 by the popular techno artist Renard Queenston's game division, PSURG Design and Sillyslardy.jpg Games. Its bullet hell gameplay is synchronised to the game's soundtrack in a way that's easier to experience than to explain. Despite playing like a crazy idea some kid made up in the 8th grade, it has the addictive properties of an old school coin-op arcade game.
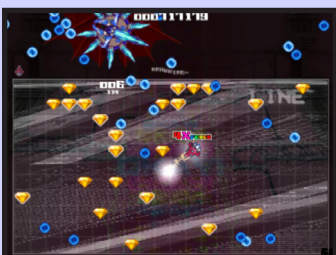
Controls and Gameplay

The controls are simple to learn, but hard to master. One aims with the pointer and clicks to dash to that spot. The player must collect gems around the map in order to boost their score while dodging bullets and fighting bosses whose movement and attack patterns are in time with the music. It sounds hard and it's harder than it sounds, but the adrenaline rush that comes from dodging all the bullet patterns is difficult to find in other games. Furthermore, many game elements, such as the background, music, and boss characters are randomised in each game session, keeping the experience fresh and engaging every time.

The game features two modes: DX and EX. In DX, the player has only one life and a limited dashing ability. In EX, however, things become more intense: dashing is unlimited, letting the player zoom all over the game screen with reckless abandon, but three lives are provided in compensation.

Sound

The spectacular soundtrack heavily features hardcore techno music, a lot of it by renowned artists like DJ Technorch, Scott Brown, and t+pazolite. osu! players may be familiar with the work of the last two. The sound effects are also top notch, with several being samples from other games.

Design and Graphics

The graphics consist of lots of strobe light effects, pretty colors, and cool boss designs. They're not what you'd call "top quality", but it's obvious the graphic artists put a lot of heart into their work. Besides, this also means you don't need a high-end graphics card to enjoy the game!

Epilogue

With a great soundtrack supporting addictive and original gameplay, Dash-Da-Dash DX is a strong contribution to the indie game scene that blows some big budget games out of the water. Since osu! is a rhythm game and has a significant Touhou fanbase, we think that many of you will enjoy this game. Give it a try and let us know how you liked it!

osu! monthly CROSSWORD

Think you got what it takes to solve osu!monthly's crossword? Give it a go! The first users to solve or submit the most correct answers for the crossword will be forever crowned in next edition's Hall of Fame.

A few friendly ground rules and tidbits:

- Answers for the crossword revolve around anything within the osu! universe. This can include game modes, events, osu! terms, famous users, and even famous maps. No holds barred.
- Answers cannot be publicly discussed among the forums or IRC. Treat this like hidden achievements. They're hush hush. After all, you don't want to have more competition on who completes the crossword first, right?
- You are allowed to work in teams with other members. When submitting answers (more on that later), credit all the contributing members.
- Answers may be submitted as many times as you'd like. You may submit a form without needing to complete every clue. The only submission that will be accepted will be your highest scoring one.
- You have until the release date of the next issue to solve this crossword while being eligible for the Hall of Fame. Consider July 1st, 2011 as your due date.
- A printable version for solving on the go (or just making life easier in writing answers) is available here. The submission form is available over here.
- Any further questions or comments should be sent to Starrodkirby86.

DOWN:
1 Half slider stream type
2 A quick, unfortunate mapping practice
3 And no one got A
4 Monkey who gave birth to Pippi
5 Unbeatable
7 Advised to practice a bit more
10 Stolen —— unknown thief
11 Lethal body of circles
14 Graduated from Ohio State!?
16 High–pitched chipmunks day
17 Keyboard _____
18 Usually accompanied with a lock
20 The original DT king
24 Likes to map 16's genre
26 Flashy fountains

ACROSS:
1 Beatmap Factory A
3 My PC sucks
6 Only available in Wai–Con
8 Currency of gratitude
9 Simplistic jumps? Depends
12 Maps and mushroom clouds
13 China's moé QQ princess
15 A DK Device
19 Banned forever
21 Happy birthday every day
22 Fancy gizmo tap dance
23 A furry distraction
25 Vegetable exercise
27 Godly mapper since 2008
28 Flaming's okay here

Tablet vs. Mouse - continued...

right hand, this option is unavailable for a tablet player. Some players overcome this problem by incorporating tapping with the stylus as well as the classic z/x (a recent example would be TTTL, who has a couple of full combos in 180bpm maps with DoubleTime mod), but generally this would be a disadvantage to tablet players.

Despite these downfalls, it seems to be generally true that switching to a tablet after spending some months playing with a mouse to get a feel for the game helps you become a better player. In my personal opinion, switching to a tablet from a mouse sets in action a positive feedback mechanism that helps one become a better player overall: one gets better at jumps, one is able to try faster, more difficult maps (which, on average, contain harder streams too), one gets faster fingers as a result, and the loop repeats itself. While the fact that most of the high-ranking players use tablets as opposed to mice might not directly prove that the former are superior devices, it certainly shows a correlation.

And that, folks, was my take on tablet vs. mouse. All comments or questions are appreciated!

On Mapping - continued...

were all the result of a person's own logic and thought - in other words, the mapper's style. Like a fingerprint, it's different for everyone, yet in undeveloped stages it can possibly resemble others' maps. This is where each beatmap's unique traits can get diluted and lost due to an overabundance of "boring", "simple" patterns.

Combating it isn't always easy. What I try to do for every KIRBY Mix I create is to think of some interesting challenge or aspect of gameplay to focus on. With this, not only does it become easier for me to map, I'd also be able to brush up on any gameplay aspect by playing my KIRBY Mixes without hesitation. Castle Corridor's KIRBY Mix focused on back-and-forth jumps and similarly styled patterns throughout its verses. SWITCHED-ON LOTUS was an incarnation of its predecessor map of the same name, so what I did was expand on the climax part of the original map - the insane, jumpy slider streams (I should also note that I further expanded on that in my Compilation!). One of my most recent creations, CHEVRON, played with the contrasting sections of the song - a more chaotic instrumental versus a soothing half-jump vocal. Of course, I can easily go on about myself; but basically, when one of my beatmaps contain a special selling point, I know I literally do have something valuable in my hands.

Think from the player's perspective. For a game developer, it's very important to have their product cater to the correct target audience. In osu!'s case, things are similarly

applied, for both the player and the song. When I mapped Shiroi Oka – Maromi no Theme for Beuchi-chan, I knew there were obvious common-sense limitations I had to follow due to its low BPM. That's why it ended up as one of the easiest KIRBY Mixes. I suppose what I'm trying to say is that it's definitely okay to be daring, providing that you're still having some sense of togetherness with the song. Romantic ballads shouldn't have the death-streams of Hatsune Miku no Shoushitsu (unless, maybe, that ballad was faced with rejection?).

This also applies to difficulty. For example, creating an Easy difficulty can be a challenge for mappers who are experienced in making Insanes. Of course, this sort of thing can easily improve with experience (more on that later), but it definitely helps to be conscious of the player's expected skills, or lack thereof. An Easy-level player shouldn't be expected to do mega-jumps or an abundance of half-streams littered throughout the map. A Hard-level player can't mow down death-streams and other ¼ beats with ease, so it's best for those to be at a minimum.

In addition, mapping easier difficulties doesn't need to be a chore. There are definitely ways that you can make it enjoyable. Mapping lower difficulties gives me the opportunity to use simpler rhythms, whether they'd be faithfully following the song or making up some catchy, simplistic beat. There are plenty of things that can be done despite having a limited difficulty of rhythm! Mapping Flyaway (Tales of) Remix's Easy difficulty was actually an exciting experience to me due to its upbeat and happy-hardcore-like atmo-

sphere, and I am still grateful that I took that route instead of copping out for some Insane.

Grab some experience and level up. Like an RPG, the more "beatmap battles" you'll face, the more you'll level up. Style can easily start to kick in after enough experience, which in turn will make excellent map-making more of a natural instinct and even, perhaps, a cakewalk. However, during that phase of experimental mapping or style development, consulting a professional mapper or player can work wonders. Of course, there's always a line of respect to be observed, but spreading maps through word of mouth can easily unearth the fame a map can truly deserve. Not only that, but it also leaves room for improvement.

While I can ramble on about these aspects of mapping, at the end of the day we should always remember that a subject like this is never set in stone. Generalizations on something as subjective and varied as this are, at least for me, extremely difficult to make. But if these statements are at least able to evoke more thought and, in the end, create a unique map for everyone to enjoy, then I'd be delighted and satisfied to know that this article has served its purpose well.

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