

Tat Star

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Get inspired, get creative, build an empire. Can you become a tattoo legend? The gun is in your hands.

Table of Contents

1. Plot
2. Basics
3. Gameplay
4. Reputation
5. Parlor/Customization
6. National Expansion
7. Practice Mode
8. Business Model & Budgeting
9. Design Process Statement
10. Paper Prototyping

1. Plot

You're downtown, on a nameless street in New York City. It's nighttime. The streetlights glow a faint, yellow tint onto the empty streets of an old neighborhood. Graffiti decorates the sides of buildings and alleyways alike. You see two red brick buildings, and between them is a small shop. Neon signs hang in the windows, giving the streets red and blue hues. There's a faint buzzing coming from the parlor. You look in the window. A masked artist paints the arm of a man with a beard wearing a leather jacket. The man doesn't even flinch. A single bead of sweat rolls onto the artist's brow. It is wiped off with the left hand while the right hand doesn't miss a beat. The eyes of the artist focus intently on the arm of their customer. Gun's and Roses plays over the speakers. Smoke hangs heavy in the air. Seemingly no time passes when the artist leans back and locks eyes with the man. They nod to one another. The man stands, reaches into the pocket of his jacket, and hands the artist a large wad of money. With a satisfied expression, the man walks out of the parlor. You hear his motorcycle start and drive off into the night. The artist counts the money and pockets it. They look at a picture of Los Angeles. Their cheeks pull back behind their mask, smiling. Determination in their eyes, they begin to remove their mask. Everything goes black.

Visions of the shop growing from a single chair with one customer to a grand parlor containing lavish furniture crowded with people waiting to get inked from the person they've heard so much about. The safe in the back of the shop begins to overflow with money. A plane lands at LAX. An image of a satellite store opening in LA. A crowd surround the entrance, anticipating its grand opening. The artist cuts the red ribbon with a knife. The crowd goes wild. The store grows exponentially. Another picture of money stacking too high in the back of the store. Another parlor opens in Seattle. Another in Dallas. Another in Miami. The masked artist is shown on TVs across stores all over America. The visions abruptly end. The artist is shown again, staring at the picture of LA. A globe spins in the background. The camera revolves to show the perspective of the artist. They turn and look into a mirror. The artist is you. Welcome to Tat Star.

2. Basics

- **Tattooing**

In this mobile game, you take charge of the tattoo needle. You have full control over your business, from the quality of your tattoos, to the customers, to the style of your parlor. Each client comes in with their own design. It is up to you, the player, to give each person the tattoo of their dreams. The customer will already have an idea of what they want and come in with an outline. You must trace the outline to the best of your abilities, within the time limit. Tattoo too slowly? You lose a customer. Tattoo too sloppily? You could lose a whole slew of customers. Tattoo quickly, with precision and you're on your way to becoming a Tat Star.

- **Reputation**

Depending on the quality of your work, you can affect your parlor's reputation, which can in turn affect the clients you tattoo. The higher your reputation, the more opportunities

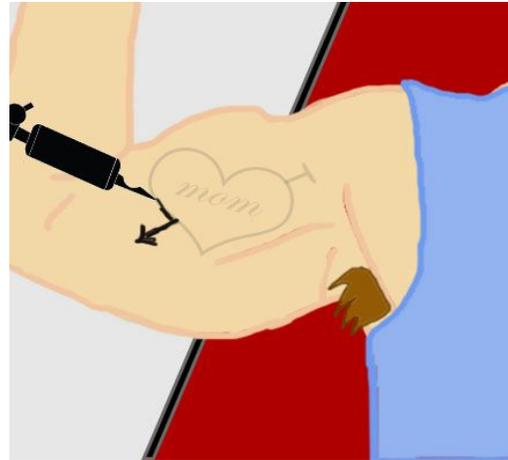
you get. The lower your reputation, the more you're limited. See "Reputation" for more information.

- **Customization**

The player is given control of a small tattoo parlor. By using the Bux made by giving tattoos or purchasing with real-world currency, he or she has the ability to buy and upgrade furniture, equipment, and decorations. See "Parlor/Customization" for more information.

3. Gameplay

When a customer comes in to get a tattoo, the player is given a stencil of the desired design on the client's desired body part (arms, legs, backs, chest, face, etc). The player then uses this stencil to trace the tattoo as accurately as possible within the time constraints. The accuracy and time limit affect how much the player earns from each tattoo

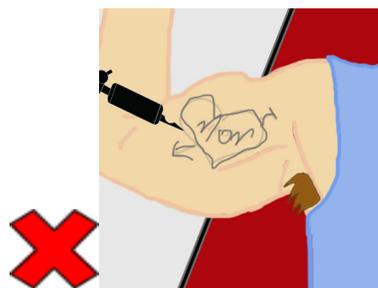
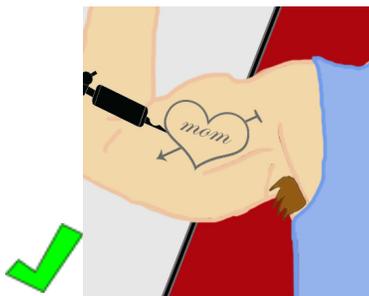


- **Time Limit**

The players are given a time limit based on the complexity of a tattoo. For example, if a tattoo is simple (a heart), the player will get 30 seconds, but if the tattoo is complicated (a detailed face), the player will get 1 minute. The player is not shown a timer or countdown, but is alerted when he or she hits certain time intervals (halfway done, 10 seconds left, etc). If the player completes a tattoo in under the time limit, he or she will receive a monetary bonus. Otherwise, the player will lose money in intervals (see "scoring"). The time limit is in place to challenge the player to complete the tattoo as quickly and accurately as possible.

- **Accuracy**

The player is also graded on the accuracy of the tattoo. The player is given an outline on their client's body. The player must trace the outline to the best of their ability. The closer the tattoo is to the outline, the more points they will receive. The player must also work to avoid distractions, as these will affect the accuracy of the tattoo.



- **Distractions**

Some customers pose distractions that the player will have to work around. These distractions include physical marks (zits, moles, scars) that the player will have to avoid when tracing. If the player hits these marks, they will lose money. Similarly, the client may shake or sneeze, causing the player to mess up the outline (losing money for accuracy) or pause (losing money for time). The player will be told whether or not their client is experienced in getting tattoos. If a customer is getting their first tattoo, they may shake more than a customer getting their 20th tattoo.



- **In-Game Profit**

After each tattoo, the player earns a certain amount of money ("Bux") based on their accuracy and speed. The faster and more accurate a tattoo is, the more Bux the player will receive and vice versa. Bux are lost when a player tattoos slowly or inaccurately. The Bux earned can then be used to upgrade the player's shop, equipment, and furniture.

- **Tattoo Difficulty**

Completing more complicated tattoos gives the player potential to earn more Bux (depending on the quality of their work). As in the previous example, think of a simple heart versus a detailed face. Because the heart would be easier to trace accurately within the given time, the player would earn fewer Bux for it. However, if the player completes a detailed face tattoo with precision and timeliness, their work will be rewarded with better payment.

- **Grading**

After each tattoo, the player is graded on a star-based scale from one to five (one being the lowest, five being the highest). This rating is accompanied by a customer review (similar to Yelp!) detailing the quality of the player's work. The rating the player gets will affect their reputation. If the player is given one or two stars, their reputation will drop. At three stars, their reputation will not change, and at four or five stars, their reputation will increase. See "Reputation" for more details.

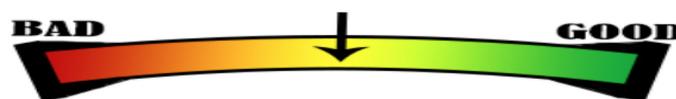
- **Scoring**

As stated previously, a player is awarded a certain amount of Bux for each tattoo given. Each type of difficulty has a base price, which can be added to or subtracted from based on the quality of the tattoo. In addition, if a player hits a blemish, he or she will lose \$8. Here is a basic breakdown of the scoring process:

Base Price	Time Penalty	Accuracy Penalty
Easy: \$60 	Lose \$1 for every 2 seconds over time limit	100%-90% -- \$10 tip 89%-80% -- No tip 79%-70% -- Lose \$5 69%-31% -- Lose \$10 30%-0% -- No money (Customer refuses to pay)
Medium: \$120 	Lose \$5 for every 6 seconds over time limit	100%-90% -- \$30 tip 89%-80% -- No tip 79%-70% -- Lose \$20 69%-31% -- Lose \$40 30%-0% -- No money (Customer refuses to pay)
Hard: \$250 	Lose \$10 for every 11 seconds over time limit	100%-90% -- \$50 tip 89%-80% -- No tip 79%-70% -- Lose \$40 69%-31% -- Lose \$60 30%-0% -- No money (Customer refuses to pay)

4. Reputation

The reputation meter is a way for the player to know how he or she is progressing through the game. It is a visual representation of how the player is thriving in his or her city, allowing the player to monitor the quality of his or her tattoo parlor. This mechanic can be compared to the trophy system in Clash of Clans or the alignment modifier in Fable: different levels allow the player to do different things.



- **How it works**

As stated previously, each tattoo the player gives is graded. This grade will either positively or negatively affect the reputation meter. This is significant because the reputation meter can either hinder or help the player's business. The higher the meter, the fewer limitations the player receives and vice versa.

- **How it affects the player**

The reputation meter affects several aspects of the player experience, such as customization upgrades, shop expansion, customer base, and tattoo difficulty. If the reputation meter is affected negatively, the player starts becoming more limited in availability of these factors. If the reputation meter is affected positively, the player is given more freedom. This is to encourage the player to give higher quality tattoos.

The content affected includes:

- Upgrades player is allowed to purchase. This includes furniture, equipment, customization options, and store size. These factors will heavily affect a player's progress in the game.
- The type of customers the player interacts with. A shop with a higher reputation will more get higher paying customers. A shop with a lower reputation will get more lower paying customers
- The sophistication of tattoos the player can tattoo, directly linked to the customer base. The higher the reputation, more complicated tattoo designs will be encountered. The lower the reputation, the fewer, more simple designs will be encountered.

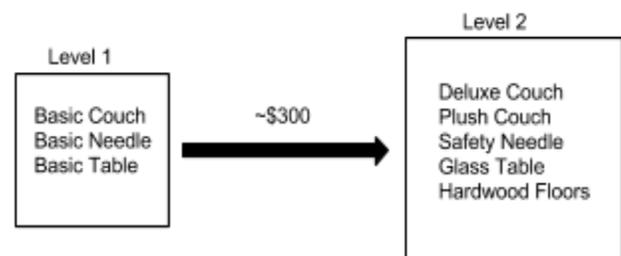
5. Parlor/ Customization

- **Basic Overview**

Customers come in and wait, sit on whatever is available for them in waiting area. Above each customer is a thought bubble detailing what tattoo he or she wants. The player can choose who to tattoo at their own discretion (in the same vein as *Diner Dash*). If there isn't enough couch/sitting space or if the wait is too long, customers may leave and write bad reviews. As the game goes on, the player is given the option to use their in game money to purchase upgrades for furniture and equipment. Higher quality furniture and equipment gives the player a better reputation.

- **Parlor Size**

The player starts out with a basic, small, bare tattoo parlor and the simplest of accessories (ie at first the user only gets a wooden stool, a small apartment, and the most basic of needles). As the player progresses and improves, they are given the ability to upgrade the size of their store. To do this, they must spend some of their hard-earned Bux. Each increase in parlor size also unlocks content (furniture, equipment, etc) previously unavailable in smaller shops.



- **Parlor Accessories**

As the user gets a larger parlor, it also comes with accessories each upgrade that depend on your tattooing style in accordance with your reputation (ie the user serves

only bikers with skull tattoos then they will receive grungy leather couches or accessories that reflect their clientele).

- **Tattooing Equipment**

The player starts off with basic tattooing equipment that provides little advantage to the player. As the player improves and progresses, they are able to buy better tattooing equipment with thinner/larger needles, less shaky, and more ink colors.

- **Parlor Furniture**

The player starts off with a basic stool and simple white-walled apartment as their first tattoo parlor. As the player progressively gains reputation and in-game currency, larger venues open up and they also allow the user to purchase new furniture based on the player's own personal style. For example, if you were a more modern and refined person you could have a nice marble floor/counters and large imported couches with paintings on the walls. The furniture will include posters, couches, chairs, wallpaper, flooring, tables, counters, etc.

6. Franchising Your Business

In the beginning of the game, the player is presented with a US Map featuring several different cities. The player can choose which city to start his or her business. Though the location doesn't affect the core gameplay, certain tattoos and furniture will only be available in certain cities. For example, if a player chooses to set up shop in New York, he or she will be able to tattoo the Statue of Liberty. Alternatively, If the player were to set up shop in Los Angeles, he or she will be able to decorate their shops with surf boards.

Once a player has maximized their business in one city (have unlocked the biggest parlor and have a high reputation), he or she is given the option to expand his or her business to other cities on the map. Once the player moves to a city, the player will have to start in the smallest shop. However, some of their reputation from their previous shop(s) will carry over with them. This allows the player to explore new territory without having to start completely over. This also means that a player will continue to give more difficult tattoos, even if he or she is new to a location.

7. Practice Mode

To allow players to practice their skills and play with their favorite designs, Practice mode is available to use at any time. In practice mode, the player is presented with a list of every tattoo they've encountered so far. They are then allowed to give the tattoo like they would in the full game. Completing these tattoos will not earn the player any money or affect their reputation, but it will allow them time to perfect more difficult tasks in a low stress environment.

It is likely while playing the game that a player might grow to love completing certain tattoos over others. Practice mode is a way for the player to spend time working on designs they enjoy on their own time. While, during the full game, the clients choose which tattoo the player gives, in Practice mode, the player takes charge.

8. Business Model & Budgeting

- **Business Model**

Our game will be a free-to-play, but the free version will have advertisements along the bottom of the screen. This will be where our sponsors (mentioned below) will get their brand out to the players. The ad-free version will cost the player \$1.99. This will be used to reimburse our sponsors, as well as increase profit once the game takes off. In an effort to continue supporting our sponsors, items that can be bought for the player's tattoo parlor include posters and logos for their personal favorite tattoo shops in the real world.

- **Cost of Production**

Using a team of 5 members, we plan to have the game produced within the time frame of a year. Aiming to hire students out of college, we offer them the chance to earn experience in the game industry on a \$5k/month salary. We'll be expecting to spend roughly \$50k for fixed costs such as the background music, the sound effects, etc... A bonus of \$50k upon completion will be given to the team as financial aid when searching for their next job opportunity. The marketing will be expensive, as it takes roughly \$1 to get a single person to download a free-to-play game. By spending \$100k on marketing, we can hope for 100,000 players. We understand this is very hopeful.

5 team members paid at \$5k/month salary for 12 months + \$50k in fixed costs + another \$50k backer reward + \$100k marketing budget = \$500k to get the game made, the employees taken care of, and to get the word out about our new free-to-play game. Due to the nature of the game, we believe it would be in the interests of many different companies to help sponsor our project.

- **Sponsorship**

Tattoos have been seen in almost an exclusively negative light by many, therefore getting companies like Miami Ink and LA Ink to help us fund a fun app game will paint them into a better picture for people enjoying our game. We also aim to appeal to Yelp to provide help, as our leveling/reputation system is based on their reviews. Sailor Jerry's is another option as they are famous for their fans getting tattoos of the girls on the inside of their bottles.

- **In-game purchases**

“Bux” can be purchased for set dollar prices. These can be used to purchase in-game stuff with in-game currency (Bux), much like the gems in Clash of Clans. The things that can be purchased by Bux have the ability to be unlocked by the player through gameplay, but are available to be purchased instead of waiting.

For example, in the tattooing practice mode, the player can only practice on tattoos he/she has seen before. If the player wants to use Bux to purchase tattoos to practice for the future, that would be a possibility.

9. Design Process Statement

The team settled on the idea of a tattoo game. There are not that many games on the marketplace that glorify the idea of giving people tattoos, and with the popularity of people getting inked it made sense to tap this demographic. Once the idea was agreed on, we wanted to make “giving a tattoo” fun and easy for the player.

Designing how to give a tattoo was not difficult, as the concept of the *Mario Party* mini-game, Crazy Cutter, was decided to be the best way to play the game. Earning money from the drawing game is used to improve the player’s parlor, and personalize it to the way the player wants. Much like the popular game, *The Sims*, the player gets to customize their own parlor to play the game in. The player can set a shop in a predetermined city of their choice, and start their business from there.

We then decided to make our game a free-to-play, but with things the person can purchase in the game itself. This is otherwise known as “freemium.” Freemium games have a nasty habit of influencing some people to spend entirely too much of their own money, but that money also goes into the pockets of the employees and our own. We all agreed we can sleep easy at night on a bed of money. It was decided that we charge the player for items that will advance their game, but will not be necessary to purchase them in order to “complete” the game itself. That way the people who want to build their shop on their own can do so, and the other people that want to build their shop as fast as possible using their own money can do so as well.

It was at this time we gave our first pitch to the class, and received their feedback. Someone asked about distractions that could be encountered while playing the game, so we added obstacles like moles and zits to draw around, scars that would obscure the line being drawn, and even the entire screen shaking when the customer is in pain from receiving the tattoo. It was later altered further so when the player gives a tattoo to someone used to receiving them the screen would shake less. Some people are better than others at getting a tattoo. This was modified to increase the challenge, and give a greater sense of realism for the player.

The second question was asked about why the city the player starts their business in matters. We added the concept of different demographics for different cities. As we said in class, a shop in Seattle may see a more “hip” audience, and a shop in New York may see more “thug” customers. The player may want to be more a part of a particular demographic themselves, and giving them the opportunity to start a business in different cities gives them a greater connection to their shop.

From here we looked into budgeting for the game. Using the link sent to us on canvas, we were able to make a rough estimate of what it would cost to produce this game. In-game currency was also added to make the freemium aspect easier to use for the player rather than purchasing individual items.

Play-testing our game was fun, because the people who played it had a fun time. Yes, it was simply tracing along a line, but the feedback given was even better knowing it was in good spirits. The time limits were too long at first, so we reduced again and again to match the skill level of the testers. The more intricate the design, the more we tried to balance the time needed to draw versus the time needed to make it fun. Incorporating accuracy and time restraint to the game will affect how much money the player receives with each tattoo.

The times will more than likely change in the future, as it was difficult to implement our hazard system of obstacles and shaking screens while the testers traced along the lines. A lot of the testers didn't pay much attention to accuracy, because “the player would be using their thumb or pointer finger while playing anyway.” This made sense, because we were using markers. Yes, a stylus is provided with some smart devices, but I imagine a majority of players will be using this on a small phone or tablet. Making the tracing lines thicker will make the game easier, but not by too much for a player trying to stay within the lines.

10. Paper Prototyping

In paper prototyping, the first thing to do is ask a question and focus on testing possibilities as to what the answer to that question could be. In our game, players are to trace tattoos onto a drawing on the client's skin. This process is timed, and affects the amount of money earned, grade, and overall reputation meter. The question we decided to pose and find an answer to was “How long should the timer be for tattoos?”. What we hoped to learn from this is an approximate amount of time to set the timers for. Why approximate? Fingers and styluses are much more different to gameplay than a sharpie and paper, meaning the gameplay on touchscreen devices are going to be off of these times in some way or another.

The way we paper prototyped this is by taking a blank piece of copy paper and drawing different designs on it including a butterfly, a skull and crossbones, and a face. We then had others test our question by drawing over each drawing in different amounts

of time: 20 seconds for a butterfly, 25 seconds for a skull and crossbones, and 55 seconds for a face. These times were chosen just to have a starting place to work with.



We set a timer for 20 seconds for the testers to trace over a simple drawing of a butterfly with a sharpie. After testing, we changed the time for simple drawing to 10 seconds.

We set a timer for 25 seconds for the testers to trace over a moderate drawing of a skull and crossbones with a sharpie. After testing, we changed the time for simple drawing to 15 seconds.

We set a timer for 55 seconds for the testers to trace over a complex drawing of a face with a sharpie. After testing, we changed the time for simple drawing to 40 seconds.



We learned from playtesting our game that players will sacrifice accuracy for time, and are generally good at tracing the drawings anyway. Adding challenge to the game is a must, much like *Crazy Cutter* in Mario Party. It adds a certain kind of stress to the game in that players will want to get as close to the lines as possible while also staying within the time limit.