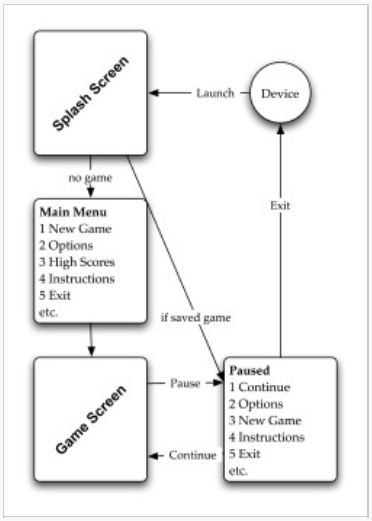
Game Navigation Design

This article explains the standard game navigation structure. See the Design and User Experience Library topic on game design for more information.

Design Guidelines

Mobile games vary greatly, but the navigation structure to support the game should not.

- The basic navigation for games is fairly standard, but screen design varies with device and game.
- Upon launch, a splash screen identifies the application and developer. Typically next the game displays a main menu, with a first item, already highlighted, to play. Other actions such as Options (always including volume on/off and vibrate on/off), High Scores, Instructions, and Exit are in the main menu. If a game has been saved, the application displays the in-game Paused menu.



Architecture for the non-play portions of a game

- Within the play of the game itself, there must be a quick Pause function. This is frequently the right softkey but can be any number of things. When the game is paused, the "paused menu" is displayed, which allows the user some context-specific functions including exit. The first item in this menu is Continue, allowing immediate one-click return to the game.
- When the device interrupts the user with an incoming call or message, the game should automatically pause itself.
- Other screens within the game should follow best practice design.

When Used

Even games that need not have a pause function due to a lack of time pressure can use this structure. Be sure to not count pause time in any game timers.

Rationale

This design is strong due to extensive standardization across games, the need for the device to do something when paused, the need for certain navigation functions during game play, and the standard approach of starting with the main menu of an application.

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