

The Curse of the Gambler

Report

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I affirm on my honor that I have not received any unauthorized assistance in completing this practical work. I also affirm that I have not copied any material from books, articles, web documents, or any other sources except where the origin is expressly cited.

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Introduction

This report aims to reflect on the development process of the project *The Curse of the Gambler*, created within the scope of the curricular unit *Applied Game Development*. The game, developed in Unity, offers a *soulslike* experience with an innovative core mechanic based on wagering the souls of defeated bosses, introducing a risk-and-reward system that directly affects player progression.

Challenges Faced

Throughout the project, we encountered several obstacles that affected the pace and execution of development:

- **Lack of experience:** For most team members, this was one of the first large-scale projects. Learning new tools and methodologies while developing the game's core systems proved particularly demanding.
- **Ambitious scope:** Although we started with a solid and well-defined idea, the scope of the project turned out to be too broad given our available resources and time, making it difficult to complete several planned features.
- **Time constraints:** Time management was a constant challenge, as we had to balance game development with other academic and personal responsibilities. This negatively impacted our ability to meet internal deadlines and production goals.

Technical Challenges

One of the challenges we faced was the compatibility between blender and unity, in specific the texture problems that arose from blenders nodes system. As such any texture in the node system has to be directly connected to the principle BSDF, not allowing for any other properties to be included between the texture and the BSDF. If this is not properly executed, in unity it won't render the correct textures, not showing anything at all.

We also tried to implement crouching, but when doing so the player started clipping through the ground. It was later fixed, but ultimately scrapped because there was no need for the function from a gameplay perspective.

Results Achieved

Despite the difficulties, we reached several important milestones during development:

- We conceived a distinctive game mechanic centered on soul wagering, tying gameplay directly to narrative.
- We developed a basic combat system, inspired by *soulslike* games, with a focus on attacks and dodges.
- We created a comprehensive Game Design Document (GDD) that clearly defines the concept, gameplay, visual style, narrative elements, and core systems.
- We conducted initial tests focused on the fluidity of combat and the sense of risk generated by the wagering mechanic.

Future Potential

Although the game is still in its early stages, we believe *The Curse of the Gambler* has strong potential for future development. The project combines:

- A dark and intriguing narrative universe;
- Challenging and engaging combat;
- An unpredictable progression system that heightens tension and encourages meaningful decision-making.

With more time and experience, this project could evolve into an independent title with a unique identity in the action game landscape.

Lessons Learned

The experience of developing this project allowed us to gain essential insights, both technically and in terms of teamwork:

- The importance of clearly defining the scope to ensure project feasibility;
- Unity and other tools to aid the development;
- Valuing collaboration between team members, enhancing each individual's skills;
- The need for frequent iteration, adjusting initial ideas to the practical realities of development;
- The relevance of user testing, essential to gauge the emotional impact and effectiveness of implemented mechanics.

Conclusion

The Curse of the Gambler is a project that, although still far from its ideal version, represents a solid foundation with innovative ideas and a promising concept. More than a finished product, this project was a significant step in learning and growth for all team members involved.

We feel motivated to continue exploring and developing this concept in the future, using the knowledge gained from this experience to reach a higher level of quality and execution. We believe that, even in its incomplete state, the project clearly demonstrates the team's creative and technical potential.