Out For Delivery – Development Notes – Adam Stammer

Trying to think of a theme, I wanted something culturally relevant and I do love me some ironic humor. With all of the craziness regarding the United States Postal Service, I thought something postage themed would be cool. I ran the idea by my group mates and they both approved.

Quite some time later I checked with my group and nobody had had the time to do anything so I got to work fleshing that idea out. I don't know enough about USPS to make an accurate rendition of that in a game, and I didn't want to mislead players into thinking USPS is something it's not, so I steered towards something a little more fluid and open to interpretation. With a Private Courier in mind, I prototyped a grid based system of pickup and delivery with what seemed to be reasonable obstacles a postal carrier might face (weather, construction, social events, holidays, etc.) and the items that might help them accomplish their job.

With this foundation of a game defined, I brought it to my group mates over a zoom meeting, but Connell didn't show. I don't remember his excuse. I shared my ideas and plans with him via email. They both approved and we started to brainstorm more obstacles and items, etc.

The next week, still nobody had done anything beyond what I was doing. We were running out of time to meet with the Prof. so I scheduled another zoom call to go over everything I had done so that the meeting was useful for everyone, not just me. Connell still didn't show. I don't remember his excuse. Brandon was even more pleased with the game than he was the week prior and agreed to design the map. I had a prototyped map for him to work from and as an example for the meeting with the professor. This map is still in the ruleset document.

The meeting went well, even though Connell still didn't show up; the professor was pleased with what we had and advised us to do what we were already going to do: playtest. Prior to a playtest we needed to get more specific with the obstacles and items in the game as we had only been brainstorming ideas so far. Brandon and I talked it out and came up with more idea, but still no quantified mechanics.

The next week we were running out of time, so we all talked about playtesting over discord, since I'm not in Winona. We never set a date so it never actually happened. I planned to playtest locally with a few friends of mine, but I still needed a map. Following up with Brandon, he was busy and hadn't gotten to it yet. We cleared some stuff up so he better understood what the map needed. He sent me the map two hours before I was scheduled to playtest with my friends, two days before the project was due. The map was missing some rather key aspects of the game, which leads me to think that Brandon didn't even read the ruleset I had singlehandedly typed up and shared with the group a week prior. You can see in my "playtest proof" image that I had to draw many features in by hand. Most of those features I added to the digital map after the playtest because I figured it would be faster and easier than asking Brandon to do it. The results of that playtest can be found in separate document that should accompany this one. Even that document was the result of my friends and me. My group mates never asked about my playtest or the results of it, let alone speculated on solutions to the issues I found. I can only imagine what my group mates will write for their development notes, since they'll have so little to say.

Group Review Summary: I don't want to discount what Brandon accomplished, but as far as I'm concerned this game was almost entirely my work. I didn't have the time to micromanage the group and I'm not sure it would've ever gotten done if I hadn't just done it. I shared what I had as I had it, so my group members were free and able to work on it too; they just didn't. As far as I know they never playtested it; I'm not even convinced they read through the ruleset since the meeting with the professor. Brandon did make the map, and he helped me brainstorm a good bit, and I'm thankful for that, but the Minnesota theme didn't really fit with the wording of the ruleset and many features were missing. I could've made a map myself in an hour or two, and it probably would've been more balance

and fit the theme of the ruleset since I was the one who wrote everything. Connell literally didn't do anything but give us a thumbs up once or twice. He only showed up to one of our 4 meetings and didn't say anything of substance. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't even know the title of the game. If it was an individual assignment, it probably would've been a better result with about the same amount of time and effort from me. I didn't mind doing so much work, it was fun project, I'd just rather not work with these guys again.