# Code Vein – UX Study

Code Vein is an action RPG by Bandai Namco Studios. Its set in a post-apocalyptic world with dark and stylised aesthetics reminiscent of anime and gothic fantasy. Its an anime themed souls-like game where the player assumes the role of a Revenant, a vampire like being with supernatural abilities.

One of the standout features of code vein is its character customization which is deep and highly flexible allowing players to design a detailed character. Combat is the other standout feature, as a souls-like game, the combat in code vein is fast paced and action oriented. Players have access to a large variety of weapon types, ability types and upgrades allowing them to mix and match their combat builds in countless ways.

## Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are to evaluate the tutorial system, combat system and exploration.

1: Tutorial System

Tutorials are an important aspect of most games. Especially when it comes to a souls like game where the core focus is its deep combat mechanics, having a proper tutorial becomes essential for players to manage to properly advance in the game without ending up getting stuck due to the difficulty. This paper does an in-depth analysis of the tutorial system of the game to study the good aspects and the negatives of Code Vein’s tutorial.

2: Combat System

Combat is the core mechanic of Code Vein; the game features a deep combat system and wide number of controls each of which performs a different combat action. Each of the combat actions also have different damage and animation times. This makes using the right attack at the right time crucial. On top of the controls, the game also adds a layer of supernatural abilities players can use based on the “Blood codes” and “Blood veils”. The context of this paper will also analyse the combat system of Code vein. To reduce the scope of the paper, we will not be discussing animation cancels and more advanced combat tricks which might not be the mechanics that most players would be using.

3: Exploration:

The second core of Code Vein is its storyline. The game is an open world exploration game with a linear storyline. It features cutscenes, animations, voice lines, flashy anime styled visual effects. This paper will also analyse the exploration aspect of Code Vein, discuss if the linear storyline makes the game feel less of an open world and the rewards players get for exploring the maps.

## Combat System

Before we talk about the tutorial, we are going to explore the combat system of Code Vein to have a better analysis of the effectiveness of the tutorial in providing enough information regarding the game.

**Weapons:**

Combat in Code Vein is fast paced, dynamic and revolves around a mix of melee, ranged attacks and abilities. Each player can always hold two weapons on him. One being the active weapon and the second one being the offhand weapon which can be swapped real-time. There are 5 weapon types in game, each with its own mechanics; Swords, Broadswords, Spears, Axes, Bayonets. For instance, charge attack with a sword is a slash, with a spear is a thrust and with a bayonet is a ranged gun shot.

**Blood Code:**

Blood codes are the central gameplay mechanic in Code Vein which defines a player’s skills, stats and overall gameplay style. Its similar to jobs or classes in MMORPG games. Players unlock blood codes by progressing in the story, killing bosses and finding them in the map. Each blood code has gifts/skills that are associated with them which include offensive, defensive, support and healing skills. All these can be switched dynamically letting players customize their build and skills on the fly.

**Blood Veils:**

Blood veils are special equipment which give players stats, defensive scaling and some veil specific abilities to drain the blood of enemies and the primary source of getting mana to use gifts/skills.

**Focus and parry:**

Combat often revolves around managing a resource called Focus which is attained by performing specific actions and enhances player damage. Players also have the ability to parry attacks and dodge them by timing specific inputs at the right time.

The Good:

The good thing about the combat system of the game is that along with giving players access to a souls like game with quick combat requiring fast inputs, the game also gives them the option of using abilities to help them with defeating tougher opponents. The deep combat customization also lets players cater their build to the playstyle that suits them the best, allowing players who like close combat to have fun as well as letting players who like ranged combat have fun.

The combat is also very balanced which lets players experiment with different builds, allowing for the combat to not feel repetitive and cause exhaustion.

The bad:

As much as the deep inputs and combat mechanics make the game feel more dynamic, the number of inputs in the game can often make new players feel overwhelmed with the gameplay. In terms of UI, the game only has a single interface for all UI related actions

## Tutorial System

Once players are done with character customization and selecting a name, the game starts with the tutorial section where an NPC tells the player about the game context and controls. The focus of the tutorial is around the combat system and its controls, and the context of the game and lore is given as a voice over.

Throughout the early stages of the game, players are prompted with onscreen prompts and tooltips about the actions that can be done, regarding abilities and how to navigate the UI.