Student: Robin G. Blaine

Class: Java Programming (ITEC 2831)

Instructors: Rocky Mazorow, Greg Davis

Subject: Proposal for Final Project

Introduction

My proposal for my final project is a character creation GUI for the tabletop roleplaying game, Open Legend. Open Legend is an “open source” roleplaying game that allows anyone to modify and redistribute rules for the game. A character creation program speeds up the process of making a character and eliminates issues such as math errors. Character creation programs have become ubiquitous for many tabletop roleplaying games. Open Legend, however, is a new system (only backers of the game’s KickStarter have received PDF copies of the system and physical books have not left the printers as yet) and few, if any, such programs exist for it.

Target Population

The target population for this program is, obviously, people who play the game. The system is newly-released, so the number of people playing the game is somewhat limited. However, Open Legend was crowd-funded via KickStarter, and, as such, has a certain built-in fan base from those who backed it. Over 1400 backers pledged over $100,000 to support the game’s creation… an average of $75 per backer. That indicates that there are likely at least 1400 people who are highly interested in the game.

Additionally, the creators of the game include Matthew Mercer and Ed Greenwood… two very famous names in tabletop roleplaying and related fields. Matthew Mercer is famous for his voice-acting roles in animated films, video games, and radio commercials. He also does a several highly popular web series on gaming-related subjects. Ed Greenwood is a fantasy writer with over two dozen novels to his credit and is the creator of Dungeons and Dragons most popular game setting, the Forgotten Realms. The popularity of these two fantasy gaming icons all but guarantees that Open Legend’s fan base will grow drastically once it becomes more widely available.

Purpose to the Consumer

The purpose of the program is to improve the process of creating characters for the Open Legend tabletop roleplaying game. It removes the need for players to do math to calculate the cost of their attributes and feats by doing the math for them and ensuring that all the numbers are balanced. When a player creates a character, they have a limited number of points to spend and the costs for attributes are not linear, but follow a triangular sequence. (That is to say: 0, 1, 3, 6, 10, and 15.) While the math is not exceptionally difficult, there are 18 different attributes and dozens of different feats from which to choose. This makes it easy for one or more minor mathematical errors to creep into the process. Obviously, a computer program (if properly coded) will not make such mathematical errors.

The program will also make the selection of additional qualities, such as feats, easier. It does this by listing them all together and handling the point costs associated with purchasing them. As well, it ensures that the character meets all prerequisites for those qualities. Many such qualities require that the character meet certain minimum requisite scores in one or more attributes or that the character already have certain other qualities before selecting another one. Again, this is not a highly complex process, but the volume of information makes it easy for error to occur.

Equipping your character is also easier using a computer program. Since the program will list all available options and lets the player know what is available to their character as well as the benefits and drawbacks of each piece of equipment, the player does not have to flip/scroll back and forth through a book or PDF document. Characters must have the requisite minimum level of wealth to purchase equipment and meet certain other requirements to use it. When all of these rules are combined, it can be somewhat confusing (especially to newer players) and can cause mistakes to be made. All of these issues are greatly simplified by using a program that instantly informs the player if their choices are not legal in the game system and what must be changed to make those choices legal.

Constraints

The primary constraints for this project are the mathematical equations involved and the sheer amount of information to be entered. The mathematical equations are not terribly difficult, but must be precise. PDF for the rulebook is 145 pages. This means that the volume of information makes it highly likely that typos will creep into the descriptions and values in the program. The only other concerns are properly implementing and formatting the GUI interfaces.

1. Accuracy of the mathematical equations
2. Typos due to the volume of information.
3. Proper implementation and formatting of GUI interfaces

There are several steps I will use to avoid these pitfalls. The accuracy of the mathematical equations can be ensured with thorough desk checking. Careful entry and thoroughly double-checking the descriptions and values entered should minimize/eliminate typos. As for proper implementation and formatting of the GUI interfaces, some trial-and-error should be all that is required to ensure that everything fits into the display together properly and functions as intended.

Conclusion

As a backer of the Open Legend KickStarter, I have a personal interest in the system. I hope to spread some interest locally, and a character creation program and make the system more accessible to newcomers… especially those that do not, as yet, have access to the system rules. (The basics of the core rules are available on the website, but a comprehensive PDF is not yet available for download.) While demand for the program may not yet be high, the potential for such demand is definitely there, and getting in “ahead of the curve” could well cement this program’s popularity. Even if Open Legend’s popularity does not take and even if this program does not gain traction as a popular tool for the game, it will still prove useful to a small core of individuals such as myself.

My strategy is fairly straightforward. The program will make use of a GUI interface to build characters for the Open Legend game system. The character sheet, the character, and various qualities of the character will be objects that return information necessary to the player in order to play the game with his or her character. It is possible that not ALL of the information can be entered in the timeframe (15 hours) of the project, but a working model is well within the realm of feasibility. Even if the entirety of the character creation rules cannot be transcribed within that timeframe, I intend to complete the project for my own purposes, if nothing else.