

Design Thinking Project

Section 1: Empathize and Define

My target audience are the "Unkindled" from the Dark Souls universe. To better explain the Unkindled, first let's define what the "undead" are. The undead are essentially a group of humans who can't die, or rather, come back to life at the nearest special/magical bonfire. However, every time they die, they lose a bit of their humanity and their sense of self, until eventually they have no memories and can't remember who they are, essentially becoming mindless immortal zombies. The Unkindled then, are a special group of undead who are supposed to act as humanities last line of defense. If all else fails, then they are the ones tasked with prolonging the "Age of Fire" by becoming a "Lord of Cinder".

The needs of the Unkindled are many, but none as big and necessary as obtaining the "Cinders of a Lord", since five are needed to become the Lord of Cinder. Needless to say, obtaining the Cinders of a Lord and becoming Lord of Cinder is no easy task, quite the opposite. The other needs of the Unkindled are: weapons, armor, titanite (special material required to upgrade weapon), etc. Although their needs all have different names, they all have a common theme; help. The real need of an Unkindled is receiving some extra help for their arduous journey, the medium in which they receive this help matters not. However, getting help is often times unintuitive and complicated.

Unkindled, much like humans have differing values, some value loyalty, some value valor and courage, others value honesty but all Unkindled fear the same thing; forgetting who they are and losing their sense of self, the term for this is "Hollowing".

The problem many Unkindled face is that they have been given an enormous task and getting help for this can be hard.

Section 2: Ideate, Prototype, and Test

Ideating

I mentioned that one of the Unkindled's biggest needs was help, more specifically, a simple and easy way of getting this help. With that in mind I decided to look at the areas in which this could be improved the most. These are some of the possible solutions I came up with:

1. A location based app that shows you a map of the world so its easier to navigate throughout the world. Certain points of interest would be marked on the map such as bonfires, merchants, shortcuts, etc.
2. A guide based app that has all sorts of useful information on enemies such as what type of elemental damage they are weak to and the ones they are resistant to as well. It would also include other weaknesses such as weak spots.
3. A social based app that connects Unkindled with similar interests/objectives/goals with each other so that they can team up, i.e. jolly co-operation. This would be accomplished by either creating a group stating what you are looking for, or searching for groups that are already created.

Prototyping

For the first apps prototype, I simply drew a top down view of just one area, then marked as best I could, some areas with just some colored circles with each circle representing different things, e.g. red for bonfires and blue for merchants.

The prototype of the second app was simply two static pages. One showing small thumbnails of the bosses with their name next to it, (only did two for the prototype) and the other page showing a brief description of the boss as well as stating their strengths and weaknesses.

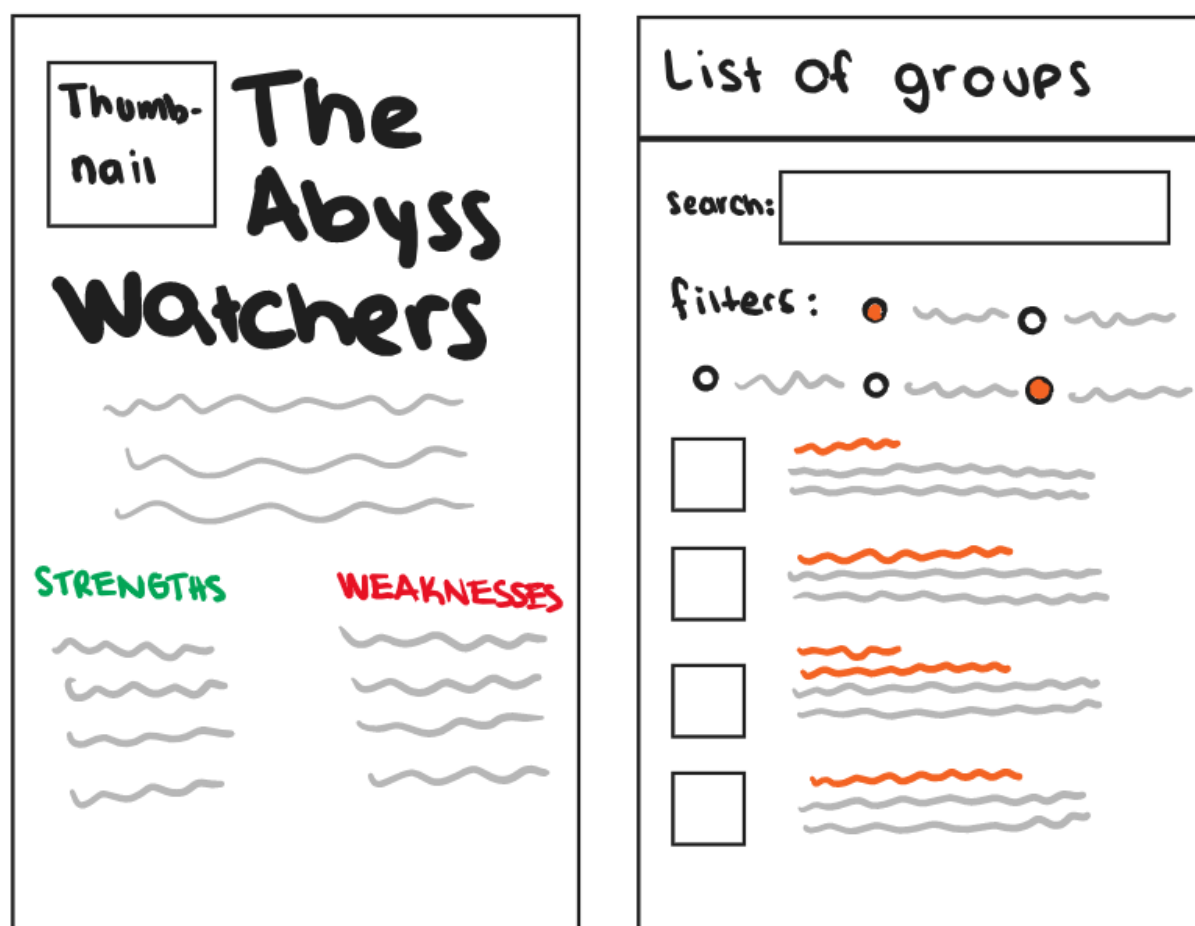
For the prototype of the third app, I created two separate static pages as well. One which would be the group creation page and the other being the page where you would look for an already created group to join.

Testing

When testing the first app, both me and the tester, quickly realized that while the top down view worked on flat areas, it was really lacking on areas with varying height. So the new version would display the map in layers, and the user would be able to turn on/off the layers.

Testing for the second app went well for the most part. Feedback from tester was to make text bigger and have the strength and weakness section pop more.

For the third app, looking to join a group was well received but creating a group was said to have been too complicated so in the next version I reduced the amount of questions asked.



Section 3: Reflection on the Design Thinking Process

I think my apps do have the potential to significantly help out the Unkindled, knowing the layout of the map, having important enemy information at their fingertips and being able to team up with other Unkindled hassle free, is a serious game changer. For the most part I think the Design Thinking process aided my group, specifically the empathize and test steps.

During the empathize step, I felt like I managed to understand my group better. During the testing phase, I was able to catch big mistakes. Even mistakes that seem obvious, are often times overlooked when you are working on something non-stop. That step reminded me of the importance of taking breaks and stepping back to view the project as a whole as well as the importance of having a different set of eyes look at your work. Different perspectives can help you catch mistakes that sometimes you can't even see.

I don't think my apps could have much impact on the Unkindled culture except for the third one. Usually the Unkindled are lone wolves, even though it isn't culturally looked down upon. I believe the main reason many Unkindled work alone is because it is often times too complicated, if my app successfully solves that issue, I believe seeing groups of Unkindled traveling and working together will become more and more common.