BA Proposal
Skill Issue

Observing the growth of a player skill in Fighting Games

Abstract

The fighting game genre is notoriously know as hard to learn and even harder to master, even inaccessible for most player due the high skill the games demand their players. Which skills are necessary and why?

Thesis:

The thesis will answer the previously stated question and give examples from other genres for easier understanding. For example how does "dexterity" translate from a shooter where the player needs to be able to aim fast to a fighting game where the player needs to do a button combination with precise timing. And offer new players solutions to "gain" such skills, or how to develop said skills without feeling intimidated or burnt-out of the genre.

Project:

The project will be a fighting game aimed at newer players, where the player chooses an elemental style, each representing one of the most common character archetypes in fighting games. The game is meant to be a digestible entry-point for the genre where players are put into a mostly even field (both players using the same base character) where they don't need prior exposure to the genre (simple controls and easy to understand tutorials) but where they can learn and observe the terminology and concepts introduced in the thesis.

Context

The subject of researching player progression or the evolution of the player skill in a certain game is something very important for game developers since they can approach this research with several important goals in mind like: "Where a newcomers struggling the most?", "At which point of the game we are losing players and why", etc. For the fighting game genre in particular this is very important since the games struggle a lot in maintaining recently introduced players for an extensive period of time, since those players tend to never fully grasp what the game is demanding out of them or think that it takes too much time to get good because they focus on the wrong things. A very common example of this is that players that perform the biggest and most damaging combos are always the better player, so they focus only in learning that one big damaging combo and they get frustrated when they either can't perform it because their lack and execution and quit, or they never find the chance of hitting that combo on a real opponent and quit.

Personal Connection

Fighting Games is my favourite video-game genre and because of that I always wanted to create my own dream Fighting Game. Being a somewhat niche genre people outside the dedicated community don't seem to understand the genre outside the superficial level. I think fighting games are extraordinarily depth and have a lot of interesting topics to research.

The topic I chose is one I wish was introduced to me earlier to me when I just discovered my first fighting games with Street Fighter II and IV as I didn't understand nor like the genre back then.

Methodology

Thesis:

Focus on the research of the topic of player skills

Compare the skill set necessary for fighting games to other games or sports

Explain which concepts are harder for new players to understand

Table of contents:

Project:

Game will be developed in the Unity Engine

Main goal is to create a simple working fighting game with one character for both players

Then to add variations to the character to give players different choices based on the most common character archetypes/play-styles (balanced/*"shoto"*, rushdown, grappler and zoner)

Project Features:

Basic game functions

Player Input

Movements

Attacks Data

Hitboxes + Animations

Attack Values

Create Character Variations

Character Customization

Special Attacks

Timeline

Thesis:

1. Prepare table of contents
2. Find research material and update bibliography
3. Conduct Research
4. Write Thesis

Project:

1. Set up project
2. Prepare basic assets
3. Implement basic functions
4. 2nd Iteration of assets
5. Building a working fighting game
6. 3rd Iteration of assets
7. Implementing character variations
8. Finish Project

Resources

Unity + Visual Studio

GitHub

Aseprite

Clip Studio Paint

Bibliography

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