

Level Design Reflection

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1 Introduction

This report intends to discuss the intention, process that went into the level design of the third prototype iteration of the turn based, rock paper scissors card game.

2 Intention and Process

The game-play loop was altered in this iteration. In this instance, each player is dealt a random hand made up of the cards from their deck. Each time a player plays a card, that card cannot be played again and it disappears from the player's hand. After all four cards in each players hand have been played, a new random hand is dealt to them. In addition to this, the player is now able to see the secondary type of the cards in the opponent's hand as they are now colour coded to match the card's type. The intention of the changes is to allow the player to try to deduce which cards the opponent have left in their hand. This intends to make the game less random and more strategic. As the player becomes more familiar with their opponents deck, they will be able to recognise certain cards when they are in the opponent's hand. As the opponent plays the cards, since the number of cards in their hand is also reduced, this process of reduction becomes more simplified.

In order to create a form of progression within this game-play loop, a series of three stages was implemented. Each stage includes a unique and more difficult opponent. The intention was to create a difficulty curve which the player must approach accordingly. For the player to successfully complete the game, they must beat all three of the opponents without losing. If the player is to lose at any of the individual stages, they must start again from the beginning.

Each opponent the player faces has a unique deck, a different type, improved stats and a different style of playing. The player must become particularly familiar with each opponents deck and play style in order to improve and get through each of the stages. The first opponent is fire type which means they are affected more by attacks of the water and earth variety. The first opponent is the easiest and has stats similar to that of the player before they have leveled up. In the first stage, the opponent is programmed to favour playing cards that are Rock or cards of the fire type. The second opponent is stronger than the first opponent and will be significantly more difficult for the player first time around. This opponent will be biased towards playing scissors cards or cards that are dragon type. The third opponent is the strongest of them all. It is programmed to favour

cards that are paper or earth type. The player is not aware to any of this information regarding the opponents and must pay close attention to each opponents pattern of play.

As the player beats each of the the opponents, they find themselves levelling up by one for every victory. The player's level is indicated above their health bar. Increasing the player's level increases the underlying stats that influence the amount of damage they deal when attacking or how much they take when defending. This allows the player to grind the game play loop to get stronger and have an easier time beating the more difficult AI opponents. Additionally, an extra set of stats was introduced to this iteration of the game which represent each of the five secondary types. As The player levels up, each of they're stats increments by one with the exception of the type stat that matches the one they chose at the type select screen which increments by two. These stats add another layer of damage onto the player's attacks when they play a card of the given type. The intention here is to add more value and depth to the type the player chooses as well as each individual attack. The player is also more vulnerable to attack that counter the type they chose.

3 Reflection

The new implementation of the card based game-play loop improves the biggest problem with the game which was the randomness of the attack and defence system. Before it was near impossible for the player to predict which card the opponent might play. The improvement in the opponent intelligence also contributes to this as earlier iterations saw the opponent make more random decisions. Now the player will be able to recognise unique patterns that each opponent adopts when choosing which card to play each round. The levelling system allows the player to brute force the strategic element of the game. This is less ideal but is designed to decrease the amount of time required to finish the game. This is a common mechanic implemented in many turn based games as it removes most of the games difficulty over time. The design of each opponent is subtle but gives the player the opportunity to learn about each level. Each opponent's deck is a representation one of the primary types: rock, paper and scissors, and includes a full set of the secondary type that is shown under the opponent's health bar. This creates a symmetry to the level design which the player must pay attention to discover for them self.