

2.1 Vision & Core Philosophy

Elevator Pitch: "Project Nightstorm Reborn" is a text-and-UI-based, cross-platform MMORPG that focuses on deep, tactical turn-based combat and a player-driven social endgame.

Core Principles (The "Four Pillars"):

The game's design is guided by four key principles [1]:

1. **Tactical:** Combat is strictly turn-based. Success is determined by build, strategy, and party composition, not by who can type commands the fastest.
2. **Balanced & Meaningful Stats:** All stats, skills, and builds will feature diminishing returns. "Impossible builds" will not exist, and hybrid classes will be viable.
3. **Player-Driven World:** The true endgame is social and economic power. Guilds will fight for, own, and tax territories, controlling the flow of high-end resources.
4. **Client Agnostic:** The game is a single, persistent world. A player on a full web UI must be able to fight, trade, and party with a player using the Discord "lite" client.

2.2 The Core Player Experience

Player Fantasy: The player is a strategist, a guild leader, an artisan, and a warrior. They seek an experience where their choices—in stat allocation, in combat actions, in social politics—have a meaningful and visible impact on the world.[2]

Core Loop:

The player's journey is built on a simple, repeating loop:

1. **Engage:** Enter combat (PvE) or Guild-vs-Guild (GvG) warfare.
2. **Decide:** Use the tactical AP system to overcome challenges.
3. **Collect:** Gather loot (an economic "faucet") and raw resources (Mining, Herbalism).
4. **Improve:** Use resources to craft (Blacksmithing, Alchemy) or trade at the Marketplace.
5. **Dominate:** Band together in Guilds to conquer territories, control resource nodes, and tax the economy.

Text-Based Design Principles:

As a text-and-UI-based game, the design must adhere to the core principles of its medium [3]:

- **Clear, Concise Language:** All UI elements, skill descriptions, and combat logs must be unambiguous and instantly readable.

- **Player Agency:** Choices must have clear, tangible consequences. The world must feel reactive.[3]
- **Evocative Prose:** The text *is* the graphic. It must be descriptive and engaging, using words to build the atmosphere that visuals and sound would normally provide.

2.3 Core Mechanics: The "Nightstorm" Combat Loop

Turn Flow:

All combat follows a strict, turn-based loop [1]:

1. **Battle Init:** A battle is initiated (PvE or PvP). A BattleSession is created.
2. **Initiative Roll:** All combatants (players, NPCs) are added to a Turn Order list, sorted by their Initiative (a score derived from their Agility (AGI) stat plus a 1-10 random roll).
3. **Turn Begins:** The top combatant in the list becomes the ActiveCombatant.
4. **Timer:** A 30-second server-side timer starts.
5. **Action:** The combatant selects and executes actions (skills, items, etc.) up to their Action Point (AP) limit.
6. **Turn Ends:** The combatant's turn ends when they 1) run out of AP, 2) manually select the "Defend" action (costing 0 AP), or 3) the 30-second timer expires (which defaults to an auto-Defend).
7. **Loop:** The loop repeats from Step 3 for the next combatant in the list.

The Action Point (AP) Economy:

This is the core anti-spam mechanic [1]:

- **AP Start:** 3 AP per turn.
- **AP Carryover:** Unused AP (max 2) can be carried over to the next turn.
- **AP Max:** 5 AP (Current 3 + 2 Saved).

This system's strategic depth comes from its AP costs. The decision to make "Use Item (Potion)" cost 2 AP [1] is a critical and intelligent balancing choice. In most RPGs, healing is a "free" or "minor" action, which leads to "potion spamming." By making it cost two-thirds of a turn, the game forces a massive tactical choice: "Do I heal, or do I deal damage?" This is the very definition of "Tactical, Not Spammy."

Table GDD-1: Core Action Point (AP) Costs

This table formalizes the core combat choices and highlights the strategic balancing of item use.

Action	AP Cost	Notes
Light Attack	1 AP	Basic, low-damage attack.

		(e.g., Rogue.Stab)
Heavy Skill	2-3 AP	High-damage or high-utility skill. (e.g., Mage.Fireball)
Use Item (Potion)	2 AP	Critical Balancing: A high-cost action to prevent "potion spam."
Use Item (Poison/Buff)	1-2 AP	Varies by item.
Defend	0 AP	(Ends Turn). Grants a defensive buff for 1 turn.

2.4 Core Mechanics: Player & Progression

Primary Attributes:

A player's build is defined by five primary attributes [1]:

- **Strength (STR):** Scales Physical Damage, Carry Weight, Block Chance.
- **Intelligence (INT):** Scales Magical Damage, Max MP, Magic Resistance.
- **Dexterity (DEX):** Scales Crit Chance, Accuracy, "Off-hand" weapon damage.
- **Vitality (VIT):** Increases Max HP, HP Regen, Defense.
- **Agility (AGI):** Determines Initiative (Turn Order), Evasion Chance.

The "Diminishing Returns" Model:

A core philosophy is to prevent "impossible builds".[1] This is achieved through diminishing returns. A linear scaling system encourages players to dump all points into one stat. This design will instead use a "Soft Cap" system, where the cost to increase a stat rises at set thresholds. This model, common in games like Dark Souls [2], is intuitive and effectively encourages hybrid builds.

Table GDD-2: Attribute Scaling Model (Example: STR)

This table provides a concrete, easy-to-understand model for the "diminishing returns" principle.

Total Attribute Points Invested	Cost (in Points) for +1 STR	Resulting STR
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1-20	1 Point	1-20
21-40	2 Points	21-30
41-60	3 Points	31-37
61+	4 Points	38+

Class System (Archetypes):

Classes determine available skill trees and stat growth [1]:

- **Warrior:** Tank. High VIT/STR. Skills: Taunt (generates "Aggro" on NPCs), Shield Wall (mitigates party-wide damage).
- **Mage:** Ranged DPS. High INT. Skills: Fireball (AoE), Ice Lance (Single-Target, Slow debuff).
- **Rogue:** Melee DPS. High DEX/AGI. Skills: Backstab (high DEX-scaling damage), Bleed (Damage-over-Time).
- **Cleric:** Healer/Support. High INT/VIT. Skills: Heal (restores HP), Purify (removes debuffs).

2.5 Core Mechanics: The Player-Driven Economy

A stable virtual economy [4, 5] requires a careful balance of three components [6]:

1. **Faucets (Injections):** Ways currency and items *enter* the world.
2. **Sinks (Removals):** Ways currency and items *permanently leave* the world.
3. **Transfers:** Ways currency and items move between players.

Nightstorm Faucets:

- NPC loot drops (Gold, Items).
- Professions: Mining (Ores) and Herbalism (Herbs) from territories.[1]

Nightstorm Transfers:

- Marketplace: Global asynchronous auction house.[1]
- Guild Bank: Pooling resources.[1]
- Professions: Blacksmithing (crafts gear) and Alchemy (crafts potions) transfer value from raw materials to finished goods.[1]

Nightstorm Sinks (v1.0):

- Market Tax: 5% tax on all sales, paid to the Guild that owns the "Market" territory.[1]
- War Declaration: Guilds must pay Gold to declare an attack.[1]

The v1.0 sinks [1] are *dangerously* low. The 5% Market Tax is a *transfer* to another guild, not a *sink*—the money never leaves the economy. The only true sink is the GvG declaration fee. With faucets (mining, loot drops) constantly running and only one minor sink, the in-game currency *will* become worthless due to hyperinflation. This is a common failure mode for virtual economies.[6]

To ensure long-term stability, the GDD *must* be expanded to include more permanent, passive gold sinks.

GDD v1.1 Recommended Additions (New Sinks):

1. **Item Durability & Repair:** All equipped gear (weapons, armor) has durability. Combat actions reduce it. Players must pay Gold to an NPC (a true sink) to repair their gear.
2. **Crafting Fees:** A small Gold fee paid to an NPC "anvil" or "lab" is required for all Blacksmithing/Alchemy crafts. This fee is removed from the game.
3. **Guild Upgrades:** The Guild Upgrade Tree [1] should cost significant amounts of Gold *and* resources, which are consumed (permanently removed) upon purchase.

2.6 Endgame Systems: Guilds & Territory Warfare

Guilds:

A standard guild system will be implemented, featuring a Leader, Officers, Members, a Guild Bank, and an Upgrade Tree (e.g., "+5% XP Gain" for all members).[1]

Territory Map:

The World Map is a collection of zones (e.g., "Northern Mines", "Capital City", "Shadow Forest"). Each provides a unique reward to its owning guild.[1]

Territory Warfare Mechanics:

- **War Window:** A pre-defined, real-world time (e.g., Saturday 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM EST). This focuses all GvG activity, creates an "event" for players, and prevents offline raids.
- **Declaration:** Guilds must pay a Gold "War Declaration" fee (a sink) to attack a territory *before* the window opens.[1]
- **Battle:** During the War Window, Guild Leaders can initiate instanced, turn-based 10v10 (or 5v5) battles.
- **Capture:** The first guild to win 3 of these instanced battles "captures the flag" and owns the territory.[1]

Warfare Rewards (Incentives):

1. **Taxation:** Ownership of the "Capital City" allows the guild to set the Marketplace Tax rate (e.g., 2-10%).^[1]
2. **Resource Control:** Ownership of "Northern Mines" grants a daily deposit of "Iron Ore" into the Guild Bank (a faucet).^[1]