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Post-Production Plan

Purpose

This post-production plan outlines the strategy and guidelines we intend to follow in testing Metal Panic, a post-apocalyptic corporative game.

Audience

In order to understand the type of testers we will employ and our target audience, an audience profile is necessary. This profile is based purely on my assumptions as a project manager and the audience summaries of Fak'ugesi Festival over the last four years. I chose to target this audience because it is the only other potential place our game may be played outside the academic setting and the audience in attendance have many overlapping characteristics to the expected audience of our end of year exhibition.

Profile

Age: 18-35

Gender: 50/50 male and female.

Race: Largely Black, followed by White, then Coloured, Indian and Asian in that order.

Profession: More likely a student or works in Art or Technology sector.

There are two important metrics in this profile: the age and profession. We know from these that we are building a game for a young creative and technical student or professional. Someone who is looking to have fun, explore and exchange ideas. This is also someone with the expertise to critically analyse our work and put some effort into understanding it. We have a good cross-section of society with a likely early adopter mentality.

Product Requirements and Specifications

The test team will use the following specifications to evaluate the game.

1 General

This section is about general requirements for the game.

Requirements

- It should be incredibly difficult for one player to play the game. The reason for cooperation must be apparent throughout the game.
- The game must be primarily driven by communication.
- Fast decision making should be essential to player success.
- Both players must be equally engaged.
- The art, effects and User Interface should reflect the story and theme.
- There must be a seamless integration of story, theme, design, and mechanics.
- The resources being collected and managed must make thematic sense.

- The game must be adequately tested.

Constraints

- Time: As of the writing of this report, Beta is due in 2 weeks.

Success Criteria

To be considered a success, our game must:

- Give players a very good reason to play.
- Give players a sense of urgency and create tension.
- Be driven primarily by communication.
- Be designed to have each player's actions or decisions affecting the other.
- Not feel like two games playing on a split-screen.
- Have well defined, balanced, and interdependent player roles.
- Force split-second decisions every moment and always create potentially costly miscommunications.
- Have a balanced risk and reward system with clear and interesting trade-offs.
- Eliminate downtime.
- Include spontaneous events affecting both players negatively and positively.
- Allow the player to be able to understand their environment and game story through gameplay.
- Be visually appealing and meaningful with cultural and historical references in the context of the game.

2 Specific

This section will go into the specifics of design and gameplay.

Requirements

a. Mechanics

Player 1

- Move-in and out of rooms.
- Pick up and place objects.
- Manage resources and information.
- Maintain engine and performance.
- Manage spontaneous events.

Player 2

- Accelerate forward and backwards, turn left and right, bank(rotate) left and right.
- Pick up objects.
- Fire ammunition.
- Customise and Upgrade features.
- Compete with AI and against time.

b. Design

Player 1 and Player 2

- Must always have a reason to communicate and gameplay must communicate too.
    - Resources picked by player 2 must be stored and managed by player 1.
    - Resources managed by player 1 must be vital for player 2, and how they are managed must influence overall gameplay game.
    - If player 2 hits a wall, there must be feedback for player 1 (Screen shake/Lights off).
    - If fuel runs out, the drone must fall, and the lights inside must go off.
- Must constantly negotiate trade-offs.

The Tracks

- The tracks must be designed according to these metrics as explained in this article: *https: //www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/6477/a_rational_approach_to_racing_game_.php?print=1*
    - Race Line
    - Clipping points (and related metrics)
    - Track Width
    - Camber
    - Height Variation
    - *The designer must contextualise these metrics to our game keeping in mind our vehicle and motion types*
- The tracks must be designed to optimise drone movements.
- The track must also provide enough paths to create challenge the player, but not too much to overwhelm them or the production team.
- Each path must have a good reason to exist, advantages and disadvantages to the player.

c. Aesthetics

- Assets must correlate with the story.
- Assets must be detailed enough to communicate but not highly detailed.
- User Interface must have a robotic and computer feel with war victors' colours.
- The place must look lifeless.
- Everything must be damaged, rusty, and dilapidated.
- Sound and music must add to the overall game feel and theme.

Success Criteria

The Drone

The drone must feel like a machine built as well as one can be with scrappy old parts.

- Handling must feel cranky and heavy without pick-ups upgrades or customizations. Sound, Particle Effects and Mechanics can be used to achieve this.
- Acceleration must give an exhilarating feeling.

The Tracks

- Show creative design.
- Fun to explore.
- Amazing to look at.
- Hard enough to race on but not impossible to win.
- Full of surprises, maybe add spontaneous events along the way.

Test Strategy

Test Objective

The objective of this test is to ensure that the game works according to the product requirements and specifications in addition to meeting target audience expectations.

Play Testers

I have all the characteristics of our target audience: a student with both technical and artistic skills between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. Since every one of my classmates meets those criteria, we have no shortage of playtesters. To ensure that we account for the diversity in our audience, we will use three types of testers:

- Someone familiar with the game and what went into making it, this would be someone from the team, ideally our QA.
- Avid gamers not familiar with the game: This is someone who played many games and has expectations about basic things like what WASD is used for. This could be a staff member or a classmate.
- Occasional and Non-gamers: These are the type of people who tell us when our How to Play Guide does not make sense, or when it is not clear how one exits the game.

At a minimum, we will need 6 playtesters, or 3 groups because of our co-op mechanic.

Test Metrics, Bug Tracking and Reporting

Assumptions made by the project manager

- All relevant and necessary Test Cases will be developed, formally or informally by Quality Assurance based on personal experience and specifications.
- All relevant departments will address defects immediately or provide a possible plan for more demanding problems.
- Quality Assurance will be expected to keep records of bugs in the game and the ones which were fixed. In addition to that, they will develop all metrics to enable us to measure and interpret data.

Tests and Timelines

10-17 Oct: Functionality Tests

18-24 Oct: AI Tests

25 Oct – 07 Nov: UX Tests

13 Nov: Release Candidate

It is worth mentioning that there is no AI in our Beta version. It will be developed while Functionality Tests are running.

Functionality Tests

- Feature Test
- UI Test

While playing the game, testers and QA will be testing how the game communicates with the user and checking if all the necessary features are present.

AI Tests

This will be done using playtesting methods, that is to look for imbalances, catch-up mechanisms, getting stuck in walls, track deviations, etc.

UX Tests

- Ad-Hoc testing

User Experience tests will be done with Ad-Hoc methods as well as information gathering from the users. Everything about the overall integration of the game must be assessed.

Test Environment

Our game corporative mechanic is mandatory, there is no single-player mode. This presents us with challenges given that the country is under different levels of lockdown regulations. The team will use Parsec, a desktop capturing application used for remote gaming.

Team members will also be expected to test with people within their proximity like family members and roommates.

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