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Micro-game 2 : Analysis and reflection

INTENT

The task provided was to either construct a new game, or progress the previous prototype, focusing on the UI and Communication of it. The previous version of the game was improved for this task to improve the user experience.

Clarity was the first task. The visuals, text, layout and other aesthetic elements would need to first be examined in the original game, updating these elements to ensure that information is conveyed correctly to the player. In the original prototype, the game focused on mechanics, and due to the time restrictions, this left the UI largely unfinished, allowing for a large amount of changes to be made for this prototype.

The second aspect to consider, was feedback. Now that actions are clearly understandable(through image or text instruction) , the next focus was this. The goal was to implement effects that clearly showed an action had occurred. This included combat based feedback, as well as feedback from the system for things like attempting a purchase without the required points. The goal with this was to have the game feel more engaging and responsive to the player, as opposed to simply being a complex calculator.

PROCESS

The process began, first looking at the in-game information displayed to the player. The original draft left too much information hidden, resulting in unclear patterns, or actions to the player, while also seeming as if glitching, but really just being an unfinished UI. First we will begin with ensuring clarity, then moving onto feedback.

 In the original draft, various values were not clearly indicated, such as the HP, which was vaguely displayed on a health slider. This text was added so that players could actively determine enemy stats as they attack or defend, and is updated after any change made to the values. Only the HP of the enemy is shown to the player purposefully, but it is still capable of using an ultimate attack, and does gain UP the same way as the player, despite not being shown.

Another issue that arose was in regards to round information displayed to the player. The times between transitions were far too short, resulting in turns that appeared skipped, as dialogue would change so quickly. To counter this, text at the center of the screen displays the current state of the game. The coroutine times for most of the actions was also changed to allow the player more time to read. In addition to this, another set of code was added, textually indicating the turn is changing at the end of each player phase to prevent confusion.

The store, while currently barren is also an important aspect of the future of the game, providing a risk/ reward choice to the player as they must use the same points to activate their ultimate ability if they wish to make a purchase. Text fields were added to properly show the current UP(ultimate points) available. Text fields were also added that display Red

warning text if the player attempts to make a purchase with insufficient currency. The wording and layout of the Heal button were changed for clarity, and an image was added.

Lastly, while the buttons were restricted to the player's turn, they appeared active while not within the player phase, which could cause some confusion, or at the very least, angry spam clicking. To fix this, buttons are set as non-interactable during non-player turns, and are covered with a black filter to indicate that they are not currently usable.

Now that the clarity was dealt with, it was time to move onto feedback.

When it came to the buttons, clicks could easily be left unnoticed as there was hardly any response from the button. To counter this, the buttons now turn red when hovered over, and green when clicked.

Lastly we come to combat feedback. This was done through the use of screenshakes. The length and magnitude of the shake was adjusted to suit different actions better. For instance, the partially successful attack or defense only shakes at half the magnitude of the fully successful attack, while the ultimate ability lasts twice as long and produces 2.5 times the shake of a normal attack. This allowed players to easily see when attacks were taking place, and also indicated attacks differently.

REFLECTION

Due to various issues pertaining to time, it is clear that the game is not yet in a finished state and that more can be done.

Looking at feedback for combat, creating a wider variation of shakes could greatly approve ability noticeability. A filter could also be placed over the screen, such as a red filter to indicate damage being taken. On the characters themselves, particle effects could also go along with the screenshake and filter, to look more like a simulated battle with hits. Popup numbers or simply "hit" or "miss" appearing above the character could also add some flare , while indicating the attack state.

Looking at the store, the system now correctly gives feedback to the player on their actions, such as attempting purchases with low cash. The buttons also shift colors on hover and click, and the Ult points are clearly indicated and updated after purchases, allowing it to function without jumping back and forth between the store and main stage.

The game state is conveyed far more clearly, and the added waitforseconds(), along with additional dialog, manages the game's pace better while also keeping all information clear.

On the technical side, the code could clearly be improved, Some functions just be separated and split into separate classes, especially for managing UI as the current main class script is becoming a little bloated.

The UI has ultimately ended up being more useful and clear than the previous build, in almost every way, however there is still major room for improvement, especially on the visuals.