

Analysis of Mechanics

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Title: Don't Starve Together

Released: 2014

Author: Klei Entertainment

Primary Genre: Sandbox

Secondary Genre: Survival game, Base building

Style: Cartoon

Analysis

Don't Starve Together is a multiplayer sequel to the original game, Don't Starve. It was released in 2014 by Klei Entertainment, keeping the same style and gameplay as the original, but with the addition of multiplayer and an expansion of the world and lore of the Don't Starve universe. It is a role-playing sandbox with elements of base building and adventure. The style of the game is cartoon-like with an attempt at making everything look drawn.

When starting a new game, you pick from a limited pool of characters, which each have their unique abilities and characteristics. Upon entering the world with your character, the game does not force you, or even point you towards any goal, the main thing requiring an action from the player are the status indicator, which tells the player how healthy, hungry and sane the character is. The player can pick up resources, craft tools, and build special stations which allow him to make better and more complex equipment used for harvesting different materials, or weapons used against the many enemies in the world. The main motivation for the player is keeping the character in a good state by getting better equipment and stations useful for getting or storing resources. The player can also fight bosses, to receive unique resources, which are very helpful for surviving. There are many environmental threats, which force the player to prepare in advance. One example is darkness. Not only does the character lose sanity while in the dark, staying in total darkness, the player gets attacked by "Charlie", and starts rapidly losing health. This can be dealt with by simply carrying a source of light, or being near, for example, a campfire. The Second biggest threat are the seasons. The game starts in autumn (unless changed in world settings), when there is enough food and good temperature outside. During this time, the player has to prepare for winter, stocking up on food and securing a way to keep warm. On top of that the player has to prepare for the first unavoidable boss fight, a winter giant. After the first autumn, each season has its own boss, which tries to kill the player, destroy his base, or even steal the players resources.

The player has to collect a lot of resources, but has rather limited inventory, so base building is highly incentivised to build a base and storage, a special case of this incentive is the food, which spoils while not kept in a food storage box. The game also gives the player a lot of ways to customise and decorate the base. Most of the decorative stuff is purely visual and does not have any use for the survival aspect of the game. An example of such decoration could be a vase, or marble flooring. This also allows the player to decide where to invest his resources, because the same marble used to make the floor can be used to make a strong piece of armor. This way the player can choose what he wants to focus on and the ability to create a base and decorate it enhances the satisfaction of surviving in such harsh environment.

Multiplier allows the players to divide responsibilities and making the game a little easier. This is of course offset by the need to get more food and resources for more players. Keeping more people alive is more fun, but also more complex.

It is played from an isometric view, while the assets and characters are 2D. The hand drawn style gives the game a unique look helping it feel more friendly and relaxed, offsetting the complex character of the game-play.