Dead, Living, and Dying

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PROJECT SCOPE

Executive Summary

The game is a roguelike horror title about defending yourself from ghosts in a haunted mansion where taking damage exposes you to dangers of the spirit world. The roguelike structure allows for a high replayability while the gameplay, encounter design, and atmosphere all contribute to the horror atmosphere.

Problem Statement

The primary difficulty will be striking a balance between player power & skill progression utilising horror mechanics such as disempowerment. Additionally, ensuring the player has enough information to make decisions but not enough information to be sure of their decision will be critical to maintaining a compelling experience.

Proposed Solution

The solution is to provide a unique player experience through having a repeatable gameplay structure that still embodies the tenets of the horror genre. Key horror elements will have to be exercised in a dynamic way through the gameplay elements rather than relying on any one-time event or story beat.

COST AND BENEFITS

Cost Analysis

- $600 - minimum cost of forming an LLC in Canada
- $100 - Steamworks Partner Program
    - 30% fee of a game's sales on Steam
- $26/yr for domain name
    - website hosted for free through Github Pages
    - DNS service free using iNode
- $14,400 labour cost
    - 3 workers paid at $25/hr
    - 8hr/week each for 6 months: 576 total labour-hours

Risk and Mitigation

The game could fail to properly capture the essence of a horror title or the exciting tension of the roguelike structure. In these cases, it will be possible to accept one structure failing and pivot into focusing on the stronger aspect, making the "failing" one more of a minor component (i.e. a roguelike with a "spooky" theme or a horror game with some roguelike elements).

Most importantly, the horror theme will be difficult to capture as it strongly relies on quality art, sound design, as well as encounter and gameplay design. If the roguelike power-creep component allows the player to feel too powerful or confident in handling threats, then the horror element is lost.

Benefits and Return on Investment

Accounting for all costs excluding interest and inflation, we need to sell approximately 160 game copies/month for a year to earn all our money back if labour is an included cost.

We expect to launch at a very low price which will encourage more players to "pick it up on a whim". This increases the likelihood of purchase as well as facilitating peer-to-peer marketing. As well, there is strong support for "indie" titles on our publishing platform, Steam (e.g. Indie Fest), as well as the general video game market at the current time, so we expect that publishing through Steam will give us much more exposure and potential sales.

Implementation Plan

Once the game is near a "finished" state, we intend to release the game under the "Early Access" label on Steam to allow for earlier revenue as well as generating a larger source of user feedback for continued development. As the game becomes more polished, we will announce a release date (and likely price increase) for the full version.

As we move towards releasing the full version, we will also look to publish on other platforms appropriate for our type of game, such as the Nintendo Switch.