Design Doc

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# Design Pillars

#### Multiplayer

Playing with other people who are threats in the same server makes the game tense and will create a lot of interesting interactions.

#### Combat

Fighting both enemies and other players needs to feel responsive, enjoyable, and interesting.

#### Replayable encounters

Every adventure and everything you encounter must be somewhat interesting and feel different than the previous one.

#### Balance

The player should feel challenged by the game and feel that they are able to improve to take on harder challenges as they progress.

# Core Loop

There are 2 separate loops which both allow for player progression, “Questing” and “Piracy”.

## Questing (Group or Solo)

This loop has 4 phases:

1. Claim Objective
2. Travel to Objective
3. Complete Objective
4. Return to Central Hub.

#### Claiming Objectives

Claiming objectives is straightforward. Go to an objective board, pick an objective based on Difficulty, and Biome.

#### Travel to Objective

While travelling, higher Difficulty will be both an increase in distance, and player challenge. Both Kill target and Encounter difficulty scale when away from Central Hub.

#### Complete Objective

After arriving at the player’s destination, the player completes their objective (by killing the target), and they receive Progression, and some rewards.

#### Return to Central Hub

On return to Central Hub, the player can hand in their objective to gain Currency and the full rewards.

## Piracy (Solo)

1. Find claimed Objective
2. Travel to Players in stage 3-4
3. Kill & Loot Players
4. Return To Central Hub

Detailed description of each phase below.

#### Find claimed Objective

Each player’s active objectives will be on the objective board. Selecting another player’s active objective will grant the Pirate\* certain boons, such as a location indicator, some travelling bonuses, and a specific reward.

#### Travel To Players

The pirate rapidly approaches the players who are either returning from their objective after completing it, or who are completing the objective (phases 3-4).

#### Kill and Loot Players

The pirate gains some ambush themed advantages, as well as extra possibilities to move around, to encourage setting up a trap for the players to go through. The World needs to support this sort of play style, using choke points and the Door World design.

The players drop several things, such as consumables and currency, and they lose access to their Return stage rewards.

#### Return to Central Hub

The pirate gains Currency and Progression at this point.

# A diagram of a circular chart Description automatically generatedWorld Design Layout

The world is designed to support the Questing & Piracy core loop. The biomes provide diversity of scenery, while lending themselves to different playstyles. Open planes with little cover in the desert, close quarter hallways in the industrial region, and a variety of the two in the grassland.

This allows both Questers and Pirates to prepare accordingly at the Central Hub before going into the core game loop.

Each region has distinct color choices, as decided by art and design to coordinate how these affect gameplay.

The Door World   
Map is divided into different sections that are connected through choke points which can be closed or open (and potentially key/lock puzzles?). This changes the path that the Questers take to reach and return from their objective and creates natural choke points for Pirates to exploit. This also creates the possibility to change up difficulty, balance Pirate vs Questers PvP, and modify travel length for mission scaling.

Let’s take this Door World layout of the desert. Each area gets darker with higher difficulty and can be created later in development. A full gameplay loop could look like this:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1.** A diagram of a hub  Description automatically generated Layout with all “Doors” closed. | **2.**  Questers receive objective, and a path opens. | **3.**    Questers (Green) travel to objective. |
| **4.**  Pirate can setup an ambush against players. | **5. (Idea)**  Pirate (cyan) could go through any Door. | **6. (Idea)**    The Doors can also  change at certain times. (the pirate might have  certain control over it) |

# Art Choices

Sci-fi setting. Clean and low-poly artwork. Clear shape language, gameplay before looks.

# Minute-to-Minute

Starter level sessions should last 20 minutes, but this can scale up to multiple hours in the endgame.   
  
The walk to the boss should always take longer than the walk back. This can be achieved through the pickups and pathfinding through the Door World system.

# Progression

The available types of Progression are Versatility and Cosmetic. To adhere to the Balance pillar, Player strength should stay roughly the same as at the start to prevent old players having an unfair advantage against new level players. Therefore,

Progression (Versatility and Cosmetic) is primarily in Unlocks and Currency: The Unlocks provide the ability to purchase items with Currency.

There is 1 Currency type in the game, but there are 2 separate Unlock tracks: 1 for pirating, 1 for the questing.

#### Questing Progression

Unlocks are gained by completing the Objective. This is hard to stop for Pirates since they are only able to attack players when they start the Objective Completion (Phase 3, refer to the Core Loop).

Currency will be more difficult to acquire since players need to fully complete their missions and return to the Central Hub to gain it. This will also be the main Progression blocker, and where the Pirate players play their main role.

It is important that the process of getting Unlocks is not frustrating as a Quester, as that is the main benefit of following the questing process.

#### Pirate Progression

Currency is easier to acquire since per player they kill, they gain currency. Unlocks are gained only through defeating the full group they face and returning with the bounty.

It is important that gaining currency is the clear benefit of pirating.

# Scope increasers

* Insurance loop (risk it for the biscuit or do it safe)
* Other objective types (CTF, Salvage, etc.)
* Assisting Solo Questers (Bosco, DRG?)

# Encounters

### Enemies

Needs Design: I’m thinking variety of attacks, movements, and such, inspired by Noita, maybe like how wands work (different possibilities, like shoot bullet 8 times, then a rocket, then mortar shells? Etc.). Currently I just have a helicopter flying in circles.

Enemy Encounters would constantly affect Questing players throughout their trip, but not Pirates. Needs Design: Would only start affecting Pirates on their way back from killing the players.

### Consumables

Useful items, like single-use weapons, grenades, abilities, etc. would be pick-ups for the Questing players. This gives the game a roguelike element that each objective run has a different feeling to it, and this gives them options against the Pirate player if one decides to ambush the players.

The consumables are taken away (perhaps exchanged for currency?) when returning to the hub.

## Objectives

### Kill

The only objective I’ll develop for now is an enemy that is a challenge, stronger than encounter enemies. The enemy has more abilities and some more puzzle-like mechanics, like a shield or vulnerability point.