SLCR Deployment Plan

Introduction:

SLCR is an acronym for the first person shooter video game developed by Team Crossover. SLCR, or Shoot, Loot, Craft, Run; is a video game that tests the players' mental agility, as they shoot their way through challenging levels, collect items, craft powerful weapons, and repeat.

The current deployment of SLCR will follow the software release cycle standard to the Video Game Industry as of 2019. Namely, this product will be developed under three Stages, Alpha Stage for developer only contributions, Beta Stage to allow select players to provide testing, and Full Release as the product will "go gold".

Stages will comprise of a determined number of 2-week sprints for each Stage, with an estimated total timelapse of up to two to three years of development.

Alpha / Pre Alpha Stage: Development Stage

At the time of this report, the product is currently at the Alpha Stage of deployment. The list of tasks at this stage will be to complete the following in order to proceed to Beta.

- Develop a functional AI system to release for Early-Access Release.
    - There must be several variants of enemies the Player(s) will face against during game play.
    - Enemy Variants Include:
        - Turrets
        - Patrolman / grunts
        - Heavy grunts
        - Drones
- Create up to 5 unique levels for the player(s) to walkthrough for the duration of the game. These levels will also be released at the Beta Stage, so the following levels will be tested for any irregularities before release.

Any additional levels will be determined and will need to be fully developed by the Full Release Stage.

- ○ Level 1: Beginner's Luck
- ○ Level 2: Platformer Staircase
- ○ Level 3: Maze of Doom
- ○ Level 4: Circuit
- ○ Level 5: First Boss Level

- Develop a Player HUD system to display all relevant information to the Player
  - ○ Health meter and Ammo Counter
  - ○ Display of Inventory system for Player to use different guns collected by the player.
    - ■ Identify which gun the player has currently equipped
    - ■ Notify the player of all gun parts
      - Under barrel attachments such as grenade launchers and lights
      - Scopes: iron sights, laser sights, etc.
      - Ammo Type: shotgun shells or magazines
      - Firing mode: fully automatic, semi-automatic or single shot.
- Develop the item pick up system to allow players to pick up health and items, such as new guns.
- Develop Models and assets for all characters, enemies, and objects for the game.
- Create a functional online system of the game to allow up to four players to walkthrough the same level to complete.
- Create a crafting system for players to collect items and gun parts to assemble in order to create more powerful guns as they progress through the game and face more difficult enemies.

Once all these features have been developed, SLCR will now proceed to the Beta Stage.

Beta Stage: Early Access

SLCR will be made available for Beta Testing on Steam as well as running a kickstarter campaign to help fund early development costs. From there we will allow users to download a free beta version to provide testing for any bugs or defects unidentified by QA and to contribute any ideas for more levels and guns. To increase secondary revenue we will allow people to support us on various crowdfunding sites such as patreon and kickstarter with the ability to download more frequent versions and making the bigger releases public.

Gold Stage: Full Release

SLRC will be made available for full release on Steam. The game will launch at full price for an independent video game ($20.00), and will be subjected to a price drop of $10 after the first year, and well as repeated price drops by the same increment every following year down to $10.00 depending on expected revenue.

Company Webpage:

In order to provide a central resource for interested consumers to learn about the game, Team Crossover can develop a company webpage.

This webpage can include:
- Updated information about game development
- Upcoming features
- Mailing list option
- Link to where to purchase

Steam Release:

The process for developers to release their games on Steam is through a system called Steam Direct. Completing this submission path will result in Team Crossover becoming an official member of the Steamworks Developer Program, allowing for the addition of games such as SLCR to the Steam store.

The official steps for becoming a Steamworks Developer are as follows:

1. Sign and submit the official paperwork.
2. Pay the app deposit fee.
   a. This can be done using any Steam payment method.
   b. The deposit fee is $100 per game.
      i. The fee will be paid back to the development team after the game has earned $1,000.00 net profit for the Steam store.
3. Complete the bank, tax, and identity verification paperwork. This is so Steam can confirm who they are working with.
   a. Bank information is required in order to send payment for game sales. The account holder on the bank account must be the same as the provided legal ID, so an official bank account for the development team must be made if signing up as a company. The required bank information includes:
      i. Routing number
      ii. Bank account number
      iii. Bank address
   b. The tax information required may be different if signing up as a company or as an individual. For the purposes of Team Crossover, the information found on a W-9 form will suffice.
   c. Identity information must be provided, whether presented as an individual or as a company.

4. After the above steps, Team Crossover will have access to Steamworks, where the store page can be designed. Steam has provided documentation to provide for more effective design. Here is where the team will:
    a. Build the store page that potential consumers will buy the game.
    b. Upload builds of the game for various stages of release.
    c. Set desired Steamworks features.
    d. Enter pricing for the game.
5. Wait for the initial review process. This is where the steam team will do a preliminary check of the game and the store page, which can take anywhere from 1-5 days.
6. Wait for the further review processes. There are two more waiting periods before the game's release:
    a. After paying the fee, there is a 30-day waiting period for Steam to confirm the provided financial and identity information.
    b. The store page must have a "coming soon" page available to the public for at least two weeks to build up potential customers. This is the time for marketing, as customers can wishlist or post discussions regarding the game.
7. After the required waiting periods are over and Steam has confirmed the credentials, the game is ready to be released. The beta stage is now ready to begin.
8.

Costs of Deployment:

The decision to release SLCR on Steam is very cost-effective. Because there are no physical copies, there is no concern about printing discs or physical packaging. The only official cost for submitting a game on steam is the application fee of $100, which can be recouped once the game has earned Steam a net total of $1,000.00.

However, the cost of a website must be considered. The domain name is $14.99 per year, and the cost to host is $7.99 per month. The website could be designed

in-house, however, an outside developer could be brought in to do the work. The cost to develop a professional small-business website could be anywhere from $3,000-$6,000 depending on detail. Due to the simple nature of our website, it would likely be on the $3,000 end.

In addition, advertisement for the game could be done. Our best bet to save on hotel costs would be to choose local conventions, such as Planet Comicon. The cost of a booth is $750 for the entire weekend.

Another route for doing advertisement for low cost would be giving review keys to various youtube personalities who enjoy the genre of game we are making. Indie devs tend to garner a level of interest with these individuals and can collect a large crowd; however, this does require a level of luck as no personality is guaranteed to cover the game and this can only be done once a working beta of the game is produced.

Overall, the total costs for the deployment of SLCR are $3,772.98, and can be broken down as follows:

- $100 Steam application fee (refundable)
- Website
  - To keep the domain name: $14.99 for the first year
  - Hosting cost: $7.99 for the first month
  - For website development: $3,000
- Paid advertisement
  - Planet Comicon booth: $750

Note that the developers were unpaid during the course of project 4. Score!

SLCR Maintenance Plan

At first, it seems that maintenance cost should be rather low. After all, if a game is running smoothly, then it is running smoothly, right? However, it is estimated that maintenance costs should be 15-20 percent of the development costs. Despite the bulk of work being done during development, there is still much to be done once the product is released.

User feedback is key, as a developer is not likely to release a perfect game on the first try, especially if it is the first game they have worked on. Based on user feedback, changes will need to be made in almost every aspect.

Possible feedback topics include:

- UI: Are the menus showing up as intended on every system?
- AI: Are the enemies performing as intended?
- Textures: Are the desired textures rendering as intended?
- Player interactions: Are the players able to use the keys as intended?
- Levels: Are players able to navigate as intended?

In addition, the fact that SLCR is a PC game complicates things, in that there will be various specs and operating systems involved. Issues could be found within these variations that the development team was not prepared for.

Not only does maintenance need to be done on already established features, but new features need to be introduced and maintained in order to keep the customers interested in the game.

Potential new features could be:

- New levels: New levels could involve different enemies and different rates of health and gun spawns.
- New rooms: At release, there are limited rooms designed. Adding new rooms of various complexity will keep players from getting bored.

- New enemies: Players become familiar with repetitive enemies, so new enemies will keep gameplay varied with new strategies to defeat them.
- Boss battles: At release, the only enemies are mobs. It would be a unique challenge for players to have to defeat a boss-level enemy.
- New gun features: There are a myriad of options to keep gunplay interesting, such as adding elemental damage.

These new features require developers. To keep training costs down, the same development team could be used for these game updates. The team was unpaid throughout the development process, but a proper salary is required to keep them on board for continued development and maintenance. Ideally, the team would be paid at least the average game developer salary. According to glassdoor.com, the average pay for a game developer is $56,000 per year.

The minimum required developers are:

- **Level / floor design expert:** The design of each level, as well as each floor, requires a lot of work, and thus should have its own expert. The level/floor design expert will work on implementing new rooms that can be connected to form new levels. Levels can have new designs, but also contain new enemies, textures, and more complicated items with which to design guns. Like all developers on the team, the Level/floor design expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
- **AI expert:** New enemies require new thought processes! The AI expert will design how the enemy thinks and responds to the player. The AI system at launch has standard functionality that can be enhanced with new features. For example, new enemies may understand the concept of cover and may go hiding when at low health. Like all developers on the team, the AI expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
- **Graphics expert:** Any new addition to the game must have a solid aesthetic that matches the game. The graphics expert assures that the art

design is pleasant to look at and is consistent with the overall visual theme. In addition, there are always aspects of a game's graphics that can be improved, so the graphics expert can also work on new visual effects to enhance the player's experience. Like all developers on the team, the graphics expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.

- **Item expert:** The guns and inventory system are one of the more complicated aspects of the game, considering how many moving parts are involved. This developer must be able to add new items, such as gun parts, and ensure their functionality is working properly. Like all developers on the team, the item expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.

- **Playtesting expert:** The playtesting expert must be familiar with all aspects of the game, as well as how they may be potentially broken. They must stress test the less thought-of areas and functionalities that may be missed by the other developers during their own testing. The playtesting expert may also provide assistance in fixing bugs. This person's job is also influenced by player reports of issues they run into while playing the game. Like all developers on the team, the playtesting expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.

The game itself is not the only aspect that requires maintenance. The developer team's website and social media accounts also need to be updated regularly -- not only with announcements, but also with community involvement.

Website maintenance is crucial for two reasons, one of which is to keep up with industry standards. As the nature of the internet changes, websites become outdated. The web developer must be able to keep up with standards and adjust the website accordingly.

The second reason to keep websites updated is for security purposes. Security vulnerabilities are especially concerning, as a modified website could disturb the

company's image. Due to the game being hosted and released on Steam, there is no website store, so the website would not need to be concerned about potentially losing customer information.

Because of the relatively low demands for this website's maintenance, it can be assumed that costs for this will be on the lower end of the spectrum. According to webfx.com, the costs for monthly maintenance range from $119 to $449, so the expected costs for Team Crossover's website maintenance could be around $150.

In addition to maintaining the physical website, there can also be a dedicated social media person. This person can be responsible for keeping the website -- as well as social media accounts -- updated with new features of the game. In addition, they can work on community involvement and pass on compliments, suggestions, and hate mail to the developer team. According to indeed.com, the average salary for a social media manager is $48,376, which is what would ideally be paid here.

In total, the costs for maintaining the game are:

- Developers, for a total of $280,000 / year:
    - Level / floor design expert: Like all developers on the team, the Level/floor design expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
    - AI expert: Like all developers on the team, the AI expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
    - Graphics expert: Like all developers on the team, the graphics expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
    - Item expert: Like all developers on the team, the item expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.
    - Playtesting expert: Like all developers on the team, the playtesting expert will have a yearly salary of $56,000.

- Website costs, for a total of $50,286.87 per year:
    - Monthly maintenance: $150 per month, or $1,800 per year

- To keep the domain name: $14.99 per year
- Hosting cost: $7.99 per month, or $95.88 per year
- Social media manager: $48,376 per year

Do note the website fees that are already included in the deployment plan for the first year. Take care that they are not repeated when considering both plans together.

The total costs for maintenance are $330,286.87 per year.