Combat Outline – Lonely Sorceress

1. Basics

First person shooter / spell caster

Aiming and firing

Managing different spells

Eliminating enemies before they get too close

2. Desired feeling

Combat

Fast-paced

Tense

Tactical

Player

Powerful

Vulnerable

Versatile

3. References

Counter-Strike: Global Offensive

Weapon switching

Short combat cycles due to high damage

Destiny

Game feel

Feedback

Lichdom Battlemage

First person spell casting

Ability impact

4. Why do you fight?

Hostile, post-apocalyptic environment

Enemies block areas

Sneaking past them is not possible

Killing them is necessary to progress

Depending on the concept: Enemies could be the prison guards

5. Role of combat in the game context

Engaging, challenging conflict

Shows power of protagonist and magic in general

Enemies help portray the post-apocalyptic fantasy world

Change of pacing

Very different play experience, challenges, and required skills compared to narrative parts and puzzles

Helps deepen the understanding of learned spells

Game progression has to be earned -> more valuable and memorable

Raises the stakes because failure implies losing progress

6. Player

1 hit means death for the player -> enemies have to be killed before they get too close)

Available actions

>Moving

>Jumping

>Aiming

>Firing

>Selecting spells

Aiming

>Mouse movement

>Always centered, camera is rotated

>Crosshair indicating where you shoot

>Decal on ground for AoE spells

>Aim assist?

Ability system

>4 spells

>One spell equipped at a time

>Spells may be casted while moving

>Cycle back and forth between spells at any time

>Use is based on a charge system

>Secondary casting modes are found later

Charges

>Each spell has a unique amount of maximum charges

>Once current charges reach 0, spell can't be used anymore

Using another spell replenishes 1 charge of any other spell

Forces players to switch back and forth

Avoid mono-skill using

Danger of switching between two spells only

Fixed by very different ability functions

7. Movement in combat

Same as out of combat

Movement depends on where you're aiming

Can move backwards while aiming forwards

Movement does not interrupt casting / selecting new ability

Moving backwards is significantly slower than forwards

Players decide when they keep casting while retreating and when it's best to turn around and run away

8. Enemies

Amount

High amount of enemies

Combination of various types

Amount as key variable to adjust difficulty

Types

Basic "zombie" approaching player

(Maybe) One that becomes faster with every hit (-> burst)

(Maybe) One that splits up into two enemies when killed

(Maybe) One that teleports to player location after some casting time

Basics

No bosses

Attack when being attacked or when player is nearby

Die fairly fast

Don't lose aggro once the fight started

No respawn

No hostility amongst different types of enemies

Variations

Amount of health

Shape and hitbox

Visibility

Movement speed

Movement pattern

Additional behavior

Resistances

No explicit resistances against certain abilities

Implicit weaknesses / resistances by the way they behave

9. Damage system

Damage is defined per spell

Some spells don't deal any damage at all

Player has no health, 1 hit means death

No random critical hits

Damage range? With damage numbers it's more interesting to not always see the same numbers

Enemies don't have resistances, only health points

All spells deal damage of the same type (not something like physical, magical, absolute)

Dealt damage is shown on the screen

10. Rewards

No immediate reward after combat

No level / experience system

Blocked rooms / ways are now accessible

In the game world, new spells and secondary casting modes can be found

11. Challenge

Difficulty

Medium difficulty

Designed for mid-core players

Occasional failure and retrying is part of the intended experience

About 3-5 deaths for an average player throughout an entire playthrough

How is difficulty created?

Amount of enemies

Combination of enemy types

Behavior of enemies

Positioning of enemies

Level design in combat areas

Increase in componential complexity

New spells are added

Alternative casting modes are added

New enemy types are added

Skills needed to succeed

Precision to aim

Timing to fire

Speed to kill enemies before they're too close

Multitasking (casting, moving, managing charges)

Tactical, short-term planning for spell switching and charges management

12. User interface

Enemy health bars (in the game world)

Due to 1 hit death, it's important to know exactly if you can kill the approaching enemy with one more hit or not

Enemy markers

Damage numbers (in the game world)

Current spell charges (also visible out of combat)

List of other spells (also visible out of combat)

Crosshair (also visible out of combat)

Spell area decals (also visible out of combat)

No player health bar (because of 1 hit death mechanic)

13. Feedback

Hand animation

Enemy hit animation

Crosshair hit / death markers

Damage numbers

Hit particle effects

Enemy markers

Indicate position of enemies that are not visible on the screen right now

14. How is desired feeling achieved in mechanics?

Fast-paced

Short combat cycles (2-3 minutes)

High damage

Casting while moving

Kill enemies before they're nearby

Switching back and forth between abilities

Tense

1 hit = death

Enemies coming closer and closer

Tactical

Managing charges (key resource)

Each spell has its own function

Switching spells at the right time is a key challenge

Different enemy types with implicit strengths and weaknesses

Powerful

High damage

Range advantage

AoE spells against multiple enemies

Crowd control against enemies

No crowd control against player

Strong feedback

Vulnerable

1 hit = death

Running out of charges

High amount of enemies

Versatile

Different spells

Spells have unique functions

Not all spells deal damage