**The Brief**

**Concept**

A simple game **based around RPG game mechanics**, AVIODING RPG CLICHES that can be played to completion in 20 minutes or less.

The project should specifically NOT be a traditional RPG (orcs, elves, swords, dungeons, etc.). The RPG game mechanics should be adapted to another type of game; a driving game, a puzzle game, etc. - or used in an unfamiliar setting; a bar fight, a baby in a nursery, a rail journey, etc.

**Aim**

The aim of the project is to explore some well known, tried-and-tested game mechanics outside of their familiar context (the long, 50 hour traditional RPG game).

We’d like to see RPG mechanics used to make a very short, replayable game, rather than a long epic, and also look at ways in which RPG game mechanics can be adapted for use in different game styles.

**Requirements**

The project should include each of the following game mechanics, in one form or another. Details of each game mechanic are given in the notes below.

* Story / objective
* Game world
* Levelling system
* Combat / encounter system
* Lock / key system
* Grinding system

**Deliverables**

* A playable, completable game with full rule set
* An accompanying design document

***Story / objective***

A simple scenario presented to the player at the start of the game explaining the aim or objective of the player character The player should very quickly understand the predicament of the game’s main character or avatar.

Any story needs to be instantly digestible (no more than a few lines of text).

**Notes**

Rather than being a traditional fantasy RPG scenario where a warrior has to escape from a dungeon, try something completely different like a troubled teenager wanting to escape the slums via the world of boxing. It can even be something completely abstract or purely visual, depending on the game style.

***Game world***

An explorable game worlD.

Some (or most) areas will initially be inaccessible (there may be locked doors, inaccessible areas, or some other form of barrier). The world will be populated by non-player controlled (NPC) characters or entities. Some or all of these will be enemies.

**Notes**

The game world doesn’t have to be a traditional RPG setting, such as a maze or an outdoor map (although that would work for some scenarios). A driving game with a series of increasingly difficult tracks, or a puzzle game with a set of levels to beat, or a platform game with increasingly hard to reach platforms would all work too.

***Levelling system***

A vital feature of the game will be to allow the player character to 'level up' regularly - to become more powerful or more able to overcome challenges in the game.

Enemies or environmental obstacles must also have a comparable 'level', which governs how difficult they are to defeat or overcome. The enemy level (and player level) must be clearly visible.

Every aspect of the game world needs to take into account and work properly with the range of levels available to the player character. For example, if the player character’s jump height increases each time he levels up, then platforms should be positioned with respect to the lowest and highest jump heights available.

**Notes**

A levelling system doesn’t have to use the traditional experience points awarded for defeating enemies. Items could be discovered which increase the player’s level, or the game could automatically increase certain abilities as they are used by the player.

***Combat / encounter system***

A way to decide the winner / loser of an encounter between the player character and an enemy or an environmental challenge.

This must be largely (but not completely) governed by the relative 'levels' of the two entities. An enemy with a higher level than the player will be difficult or impossible to beat. Similarly an enemy with a lower level will be easier or trivial to beat.

**Notes**

There's no requirement for the combat system to actually be based around violence. It could be a car race where the speed of the opponents, and the player’s maximum speed, are both governed by level. Or even a game of skill or chance, or a simple roll of a dice.

The important thing is that there is a winner and a loser and the outcome is heavily influenced by the levelling system, with it becoming easier to ‘beat’ encounters as the player levels up.

***Lock and Key system***

Access to areas of the game world will be restricted by locked barriers until the player acquires the correct 'key'.

Keys can be simply be found by the player, or may be 'dropped' by defeated enemies.

**Notes**

The game need not literally feature locked doors or keys. The barrier could be anything that restricts progress or access to areas of the game. A key can be any item or activity (like winning a race) which removes the barrier. It could even be a specific sum of money required to pay a toll, which is earned by performing certain activities in the game.

***Grinding***

It must be possible for the player to 'grind' if they get stuck, by which we mean that the player has a way to increase their level to allow them to overcome a difficult section of the game by repeating or replaying easier sections of the game.

**Notes**

The purpose of grinding is to ensure the game will always be completable regardless of the player’s skill level. It may be possible for a skilled player to defeat all enemies, or overcome all challenges, at the lowest level through pure skill alone. Less skilled players could keep fighting weaker enemies until their character is strong enough to beat a harder enemy.

It’s important when designing grinding mechanisms to avoid the feeling the skillful player (who never needs to grind) is playing the game correctly, and the less skillful player has to endure the additional chore of grinding before being rewarded with progress**. Ideally the grinding should be the most fun and entertaining part of the game, with the player who doesn’t need to grind almost missing out by playing through to game too quickly. So think back to all the work we did in semester one on Simple, Intuitive Enjoyable Mechanics.**

***Optional Features***

These are additional game mechanics and features that could be used to better meet the project’s aims:

* *Randomly generated world* - Aspects of the world are different every play through
* *Character customisation* - Change player character name / appearance
* *Character upgrade* - Improve aspects of the players character (weapons, armour) independently of levelling up - beware that this feature doesn’t conflict with levelling up
* *Integrated storyline* - Plot development as game progresses (remembering that this is a short game, so try not to slow down gameplay with exposition)
* *Second play through* - Once completed the game can be replayed with a levelled up character (and levelled up enemies)