Date of Meeting: 21/11/2018

Time of Meeting: 13:09

Attendees: Thomas McCarthy, Elliot Chester, George Heath-Collins and Thomas McLaren

**Item One: Post-mortem of previous sprint**

The prepping sprint (Monday to Wednesday) seems to have went by with mixed success. In terms of what went well, Elliot was able to program the new method of feeding pets. This involves selecting a pet, dragging a fruit to it and then watching it eat. The fruit is animated so that Players have visual feedback, displaying the fruit is being eaten. The programming was done in such a way that will allow us to easily tweak the timings (using a public variable) so that through play testing we will be able to gather feedback and increase or decrease the rate of consumption. Breeding also now functions thanks to Elliot. Players can now click/tap on a creature to initiate the breeding selection mode, allowing players to select another creature to become its mate. These creatures then meet each other and providing that they are both ‘able to breed’, they will spawn an egg. The Giant movement has also been disabled in the current build, and the meteor event has been increased in frequency to aid testing purposes.

McLaren was able to perform some deep research on monetisation, showcasing a table featuring the pros and cons of various monetisation strategies. This includes ethical issues such as selling data collected from our userbase to offering paid DLC to provide more gameplay and prolong the lifecycle of Gaia as a product. He found that these strategies were used in the popular mobile title ‘The Sims 2’, and that our target psychographic enjoys that game despite the monetisation strategies it used.

McCarthy researched the game ‘Help Purple’, which at the time of writing was the third most popular game in the family section of Google Play. It is also very popular on iOS platforms. Having looked at the forums for the game, McCarthy found that users of the game enjoyed its vibrant colours, and the ‘cuteness’ of its character designs and animations. The characters featured in ‘Help Purple’ were very rounded, much like the characters in Gaia, however the facial features such as eyes were greatly exaggerated. This is something we could adopt in our game to increase the appeal to a slightly younger demographic or for players looking for something a little cuter. He was also able to find some criticism of the game regarding its pricing. It frequently changes from Free to Play to Premium, which the community surrounding the game seems to dislike. This has created a fragmented userbase and is something we should avoid. In terms of monetisation, McCarthy found that players often buy loot boxes, despite their negative connotations. Players will buy them for the opportunity to own bespoke cosmetics for their game and are far more likely to purchase them if they have the chance of getting something considered ‘Rare’. As such, we could artificially limit some items by greatly reducing their spawn rate or making them exclusively available in loot boxes to take advantage of this method of monetisation if we choose to.

George played Neko Atsume, a ‘cat collecting’ game which is popular among girls of all ages but primarily early teens. It has a consistent art style, featuring bold outlines that players seemed to enjoy. George found that one of the reasons that players kept coming back was the ability to customise their game space. By having different items in the players garden, different cats would come by, leaving a photograph and signing into the players journal, even when the application was closed. This means that even while the player is disengaged, the player is still making progress, which will increase retention as players are more likely to come back to see what they have earned. If we could employ a real-time mechanic such as this into our game, it would fit the theme of a growing place with growing pets. Players may find more enjoyment in our game and be encouraged to play it further, especially if we employ the use of hooks such as notifications of things happening inside the game to prompt players to play it further. In terms of monetisation strategies, Unity game engine offers the Unity Ads service, which allows easy implementation of advertisements within games, and allows the Developers to place them where they think are the most appropriate. By default, Unity offers video ads that can be skipped after 5 seconds or Reward Videos that are un-skippable. As the name suggests, Unity encourages devs to reward players for viewing reward videos, so if we were to implement these kinds of adverts, they would have to be triggered by the User themselves.

In terms of what went badly, McLaren had difficulty finding games to play that match the psychographic, as did McCarthy.

Both McCarthy and George left their tasks until last minute and although George had written notes, he hadn’t pushed anything to the GitHub Repository. This will be remedied later in the week when he has written them up digitally and as a whole, the group aims to commit work earlier to prevent risks rising and damaging our work flow.

**Tasks for this sprint**

**Tom McLaren**

* Create Hats and other cosmetic items for the Pets (2h)
* Create cosmetic items for users to customise their island with (2h)
* Create Idle Animations for the Pets (2h)
* Gather Playtesting Feedback (2h)

**Tom McCarthy**

* Create animations for each coloured egg hatching (2h)
* Idle animations for the Giant (2h)
* Travel Animation for the Giant to use between islands (2h)
* Pet Crying Animation for use when Pet is hungry (2h)

**George**

* Research Google Play Services and Unity Integration (2h)
* Make Pets grow (2h)
* Create a list of achievements for Google Play Users (2h)
* Create Shop UI and Screen Mockup (2h)

**Elliot**

* Spawn Eggs based on the colour of the parents (2h 30m)
* Set up Unity Ads (1h 30m)
* Set up Unity Analytics (1h 30m)
* Animate the Pets reaching for food (2h)

NOTE: While Elliot has 4h 30m in this sprint, during Wednesday onwards, he will only have 7h 30m, balancing out to the 12h limit.

**Meeting Ended: 13:56**

**Minute Taker: George Heath-Collins**