

FIT3145 Assignment2A

Game Analysis: The Division 2

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Overview:

Genre & Narrative

The game that is being examined is The Division 2(Massive Entertainment,2019).The story of this game happened in a world which has been destroyed by virus called “Green Poison”.Power of government is weak and different kind of bandits control many areas and killing people.Player as an agent of SHIELD which is a department of US government,duty of SHIELD agent is protect people and rebuild the order.Players need to destroy a lot of bandit gangs and rebuild Washington DC in main game story.

General gameplay

After the main game storyline,the core game experience can be revealed to players.This game is actually a loot-driven RPG game.Players can enter the advanced levels to get better loot and improve themselves continually.This is the end game content of The Division. Players can play the more difficult story mission and a kind of weekly mission called intrusion. Intrusion missions will ask players to enter the area from story missions,but with different mechanics and enemies. Players need to learn mechanics again even if they area in familiar maps.Some intrusion missions allow players to challenge the legendary level,legendary mission is extremely difficult and 4 players need to cooperate to finish it.Another kind of end game content is raid,which ask 8 players to cooperate and communicate to learn different mechanics. Mechanics in raids are more complex and difficult. But raids will give players very good rewards.

Sections will be examined

I want to examine the combat mechanics include the weapons,armors,abilities and overall combat experience by Design, Dynamics & Experience (DDE) framework.I want to examine The Division 2 because I have very good understanding of this game.I played this game since 2019 when is just be released,and I am pretty familiar with all contents of this game.I want to break down all design of mechanics by this analysis to learn how to combine weapons and abilities in game design.

The first section I would like to analyze is weapon system of The Division 2.All players in The Division 2 can equip 2 primary weapons (include AR,SMG,LMG,Shotgun,sniper rifle and rifle), 1 secondary weapon(only includes pistol type,unlimited ammo amount) and a specific weapon(base on the specialist you chose).The reason I want to choose this section is specialty of this weapon system,which allow players to build their own system by considering 2 core weapons rather than 1 cause you can have 2 primary weapons.This is different from many RPG games.

For primary weapons,player will use this type most of the time.All types of legendary primary weapon has an random ability which can edit the combat style of this weapon(give extra damage after killing,give extra armor after you reload near many enemies or reduce the accuracy to get extra damage,etc).And 3 attributes to improve the basic value of the weapon,like extra health damage,extra critical rate and extra critical damage,etc.Players need to choose the most suitable abilities and attributes for weapons to maximize the damage and functionality.

Players also have exotic weapons(red quality) which has some special abilities,but players can only equip 1 exotic weapon at the same time.



[Core stats and attributes for legendary weapon]



[legendary weapon information about the accuracy, stability, damage range and talents.]



[Exotic weapons also have core stats and attributes]



[But exotic weapons have mods that are unchangeable, rather than the changeable attachments on legendary weapons.]

Secondary weapon and signature weapon are not that important in this game, players just use secondary weapon in some situation if they are using some special armors to get extra damage for secondary weapon. Signature weapons have very limited ammo and very high damage compare to primary weapons, but players have not many chances to use due to the low ammo storage. Most of time players just use signature weapons for functionalities in some missions.

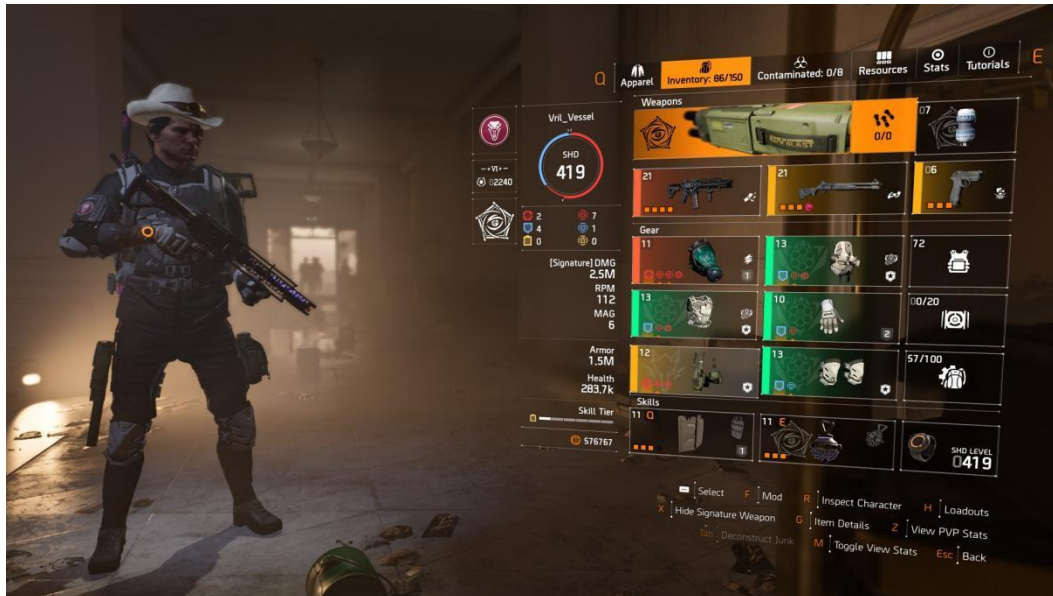


[Information page for secondary weapons actually as same as primary weapons]



[Signature weapons only have core stats, damage range and talents. And core stats are solid for all signature weapons.]

For armor system, The Division 2 has many different armor series. If players equip 3 legendary armor from same series, they will get extra reward on basic value like weapon damage or ability buff. This game also has Gear Sets which ask players to equip 4 armors from same kit to get extra abilities. Gear Sets is the core of armor system. The extra abilities from Gear Sets decide the combat style of players, players can become tank, DPS or support base on different Gear Sets.



[This is the overview of armor system. Player's can equip exotic, legendary and gear set armors. But players can only equip 1 exotic armor at same time.]



[Information page for armors will show the brand or gear set, players can equip 3 or 4 armors from the same brand or gear set to get extra value. And armors have attributes and talents.]

For example, a Gear Set called foundry allow players to recover the armor. If they are taking damage, they will get extra armor recover base on the damage they took. In this case, players can choose shotgun as primary weapon to suit the close range engagement. But the armor's base value can only get more armor for players, but it cannot get more health to players. If players want to survive after their armor is broken, they need to use attributes on armors or Gear Sets. (attributes on armors or Gear Sets can also give extra armor if players can accept to lose some extra weapon damage or ability enhance) The reason I want to analyze this section is the armor system in The Division 2 is unbalanced, I want to analyze and learn about how the designers from massive entertainment combine it with other systems in this game.

Ability system in The Division 2 related to armors and weapons. Players can choose 2 from shield, drones, explosive, poison launcher, scanner and support hive as their abilities. All abilities have 3 or 4 branches for players to customize the functionalities. Many different Gear Sets and weapons can enhance the effect of abilities, players need to combine abilities with other equipment together to get better experience and challenge difficult mission. For

example,a Gear Set called future can enhance the support hive effect and reduce the cold down time.Also if you destroy the hive by yourself,you can give extra heal to teammates. The reason I want to analyze the ability system is the specialty of it.Players have many choices in The Division 2 ability system and many options for customization.



[Ability system includes many different skills,information page for each skill give a brief description for this skill.And also can show the mods on each skill.]



[Branches under skills also have an information page,show the detailed information for each branches.Which can help players to adjust their load-outs.]

Overall combat system in The Division2 is not easy to learn for players.Players have armor and health value.Armor can take more damage than health,and it will take damage at first.After the armor is broken,players have very limited health and may only take 2 or shoots then players will die.Players have to focus on enemies' position in combats to make sure they won't deal with too many enemies at once.For enemies,only elite and higher enemies have armor.Normal enemies have no armor.But players still need to spend a few seconds to kill them in difficult missions.The reason I want to analyze this section is the combat in The Division2 is very fun,players almost always in danger and they cannot fight with no cover for long time.Players need to consider many things during the combat.This is very special in RPG games.



[UI in combat,shows the armor value,health,abilities and ammo storage at the middle of screen.Shows the radar at the top left corner of screen.Enemies health is shown on their head.]



[UI after player's death will show the damage player took before and re-spawn time.]

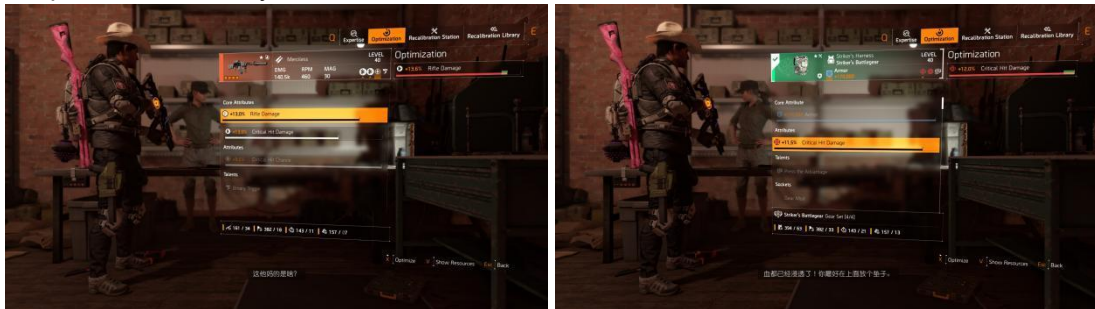
Game Analysis:

Method of my analysis is the Design, Dynamics & Experience (DDE) framework.

Weapon and armor Systems Analysis

Design

The application of weapon and armor systems in The Division 2 base on a process. Players need to get weapons and armors at first and then upgrade or use it directly in their equipment suit. Upgrading system of weapons and armors means players can spend some materials to improve or change attributes and abilities. The designers of The Division 2 encourage players to challenge the difficult mission to get legendary weapons and Gear Sets with better basic value and attributes. Then players may just need to speed a little materials to upgrade the weapons armor, or they even don't need to do so.



[Upgrade system includes expertise and optimization, players can spend some material to improve their weapons and armors.]

Designers also hope players to choose weapons suitable to them. Different type of weapons in The Division suit to different environment and Gear Sets. For SMG and shotgun due to the low accuracy and range, players can only choose both for close range engagement between 0-15m. But the DPS of shotgun and SMG is much higher than other primary weapons. Rifle is a kind of semi-auto weapons, which has medium DPS and good accuracy but long range around 40m. AR has good DPS in range between 15-40m and medium accuracy, this type is chosen by most players for their loadout. Sniper rifle has low ammo storage and low DPS, but has almost unlimited range, very high headshot damage and best accuracy.

Players need to combine different type of weapons with different Gear Sets. For example, Gear Set called fire cannon allows players to mark enemies and give extra armor after killed the marked enemies by head shot. Designers believe that players will choose sniper rifle for this Gear Set, and many players followed the way that designers believed. But some of the players will choose the rifle to get better view and improve headshot damage by attributes on armors to achieve the similar effect. Design like this lead to a ramification that many players' goal will be changed and they will get a clear direction for loot. But this is not a compulsory requirement for players, players still have freedom to choose their own style. I believe this is a very excellent design.

The impact on dynamics of this design is many players will choose to get weapons base on the Gear Sets they got, but they can also have other choices. In some missions, dynamics will be complex because players can choose many different Gear Sets and weapons to finish the mission. The impact of this design on experience is players can choose weapons suit to their Gear Sets to enhance themselves a lot. For example, another Gear Set called hunter allow players to recover armor by SMG or shotgun kills and make enemies around 10m dizzy. Which is very useful in legendary missions.

Dynamics

Dynamics of weapon and armor system base on player's choice and different mission. Players can choose different styles for same Gear Sets and weapons. For example, Gear Set called striker's allow players to get 1% extra weapon damage for each hit and maximum is 100% if players equipped 4 raiders armors. Some players may want to have a striker's Gear Set with all weapon damage attributes to get highest weapon DPS. But that will make them difficult to survive in legendary mission. So most of the players will choose extra armor perk on 4 armors in all 6 armors they can equip and weapon damage perk for 2 armors, then choose shield ability to reduce the damage from enemies in front of them. But if players just play normal mission or have a good team in legendary missions, they can still choose to have weapon damage perk on all 6 armors. What's more, players can also combine the ability enhance and weapon damage perk as their choice. They can still get a solid shield, powerful ability and good DPS on weapons.



[Striker's Gear Set information page shows the gear set talents and natural talents. Normally, natural talents on gear set armors can enhance the 4-pieces gear set talents a lot.]

Dynamics can impact the design by the investigation of designers and the feedback from players about the dynamic environment of the game. The designers of this game will do the balance testing and balance some parts of weapons and armors. And they will take dynamics into the consideration when they design the contents. Dynamics can influence the experience because it ask players to change their armors and weapons to get best experience in different missions.

Experience

Experience of weapon and armor system is good for most players. Combination of 2 systems have very clear direction and easy to learn, players can understand how to use the abilities on Gear Sets and weapons easily. With correct Gear Sets and weapons, players should be able to finish all missions easily even the legendary missions and raids. If players just focus on basic value but use unmatched weapons and gear sets, they will find this game very difficult even in a normal mission.

Experience influenced the design because the designers will adjust weapons and armors based on the feedback from players. And designers will consider player's weapons and gears for all new contents to give an appropriate difficulty for players.

Ability system Analysis

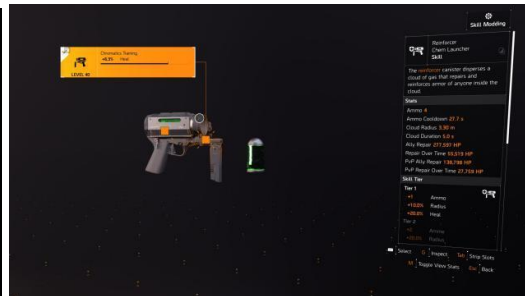
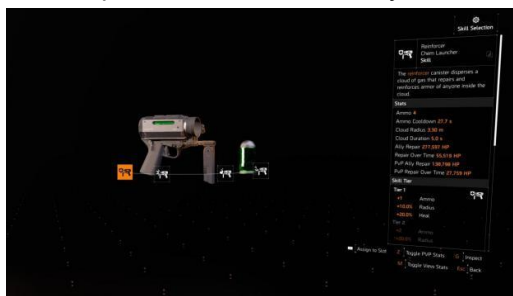
Design

For the design of ability system, all skills in ability system have 3-5 different branches for different combat styles like damage, healing or debuff(dizzy, shocked and others). All skills have 2-3 mods, players can choose different mods for different branches. But the strength of skills(except shield) only base on the skill tier of players(strength of shield can be improved by extra armor attribute on armors and skill tier). Players can only improve their skill tier by the attributes on armors. Which means they need to lose some weapon damage or extra armor. Usually, support players in a team who always need to heal teammates or players using the gear sets that can enhance some skills a lot will choose high skill tier. Some of them even choose skill tier attribute for all 6 armors they equipped.

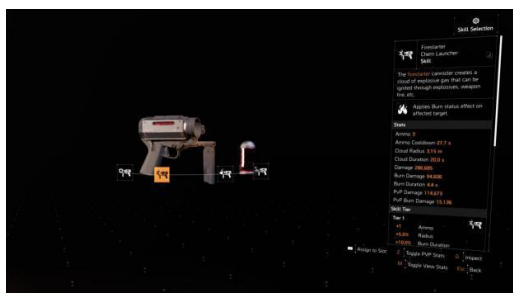
For players choose extra armor and weapon damage attributes on armors, they can choose shield, scanner or healing drone as their skills. They just need to consider the functionality of skills rather than strength. I believe this is a very good design. Skills need the skill tier but no compulsory, functional skills as tools can be useful even you have no skill tier.

Design like this influenced the dynamics because players have more solutions for different levels. Debuff like dizzy is necessary in legendary missions, in this case players can choose more radical strategy cause the pressure from enemies is much lower than before.

Influence of this design on experience is that players with any loadouts can choose the skills suited to them. Players can still have good experience even if they have no skill tier. Skill tier is important but not necessary.



[For chem launch skill, this branch called Reinforcer can repair armor for players. So players need to choose the mod that can improve the healing effect.]



[Firestarter branch can apply burn status effect on affected target, which can be a damage skill and good debuff tool. Players need to use the extra burn strength mod for this.]

Dynamics

Situation in levels is complex, and players need to choose different skills for different levels. For example, a legendary mission called gym includes many elite enemies with heavy armor. Players cannot kill those enemies easily, then skills with dizzy or interference to stop them temporarily will be necessary. Players can also cooperate with different skills. After a player in team made enemies dizzy another teammate can use explosive drone or explosive hive to attack the dizzy enemies.

The impact of dynamics on experience is the dynamic environment will force players to use some skills to get better experience otherwise they cannot even finish the missions. I don't think this is good, dynamics should not force players to choose skills. All levels should have at least 2 solutions for players to choose.

Experience

Overall experience of ability system is fine. Almost all skills are useful and players with any loadout can find the suitable skills. But this system still includes some skills that are useless if you have no 6 skill tier. Designers actually force players to have 6 skill tier for some damage skills which means they will lose weapon damage and extra armor, then they will be difficult to survive in legendary mission. Ability system still has unbalanced elements in game experience.

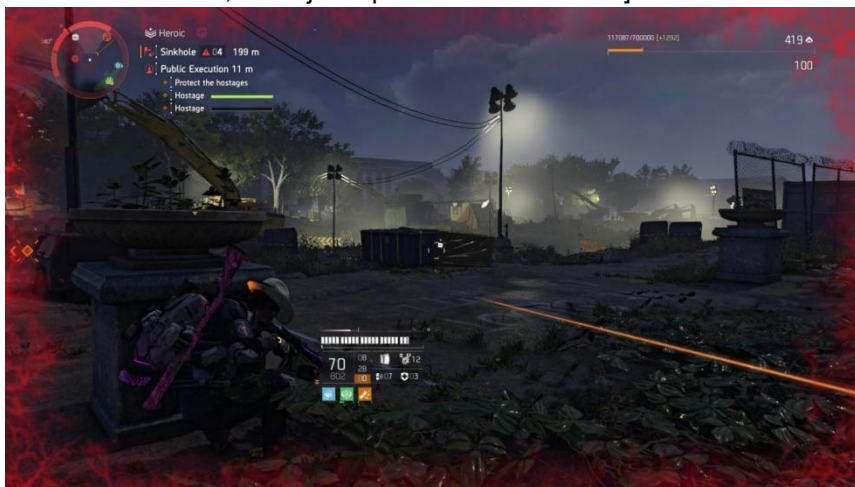
Overall combat system Analysis

Design

Overall combat system of The Division 2 includes third person shooting and level mechanics. I will start with third person shooting to analyze the design. Third person shooting is the core combat experience of this game. Players use weapons to kill enemies and hide behind cover if they have no shield. If players just fight out of cover without shield, they will be killed by enemies' firepower in a few seconds. Players with shields should also be careful because the shield can only block the damage from enemies in front of them. Some enemies have their own skills to limit players, which is dangerous.



[Players with shields can fight out of cover but shield cannot block the skills from enemies. In this screenshot, the player is limited by enemy's chem launcher. Players also need to focus on the health of shield, which just up on the armor value.]



[After the shield is broken, the player's armor and health will be easy to break. At this time, players need to find the cover. The edge of screen will become red to warn players when their health is very low.]



[Some enemies have skills like machine gun drone,players should be careful with it.]



[Elite enemies will drop the legendary loot for players.]



[Players need to make sure they won't get too many debuffs at once,otherwise they can almost unable to survive.]

For level mechanics of The Division 2, this is actually not the most important part in most situation. But mechanics in raids levels is compulsory, otherwise you cannot finish the raids. In a raid called Dark Hour, the first level ask 8 players to work together and kill a boss which cannot be killed at most of time. 1-2 players need to use the machine gun in this level to break the bag behind the boss, then other players need to destroy the healing module in front of this boss. Then all players need to do damage to kill the boss. I believe this design is appropriate, because this is the first level of Dark Hour and it cannot be difficult. Players need time to learn and get familiar with levels. But it do need all players work together. The balance of difficult and experience is good.

Influence of combat system design on dynamics is designers need to adjust the difficult of this game by the time. Because players will be stronger after they get familiar with this system. But designers don't need to adjust it frequently because players always have risks in

every combat even they already familiar with the system. Their armor always easily to break even with 4 extra armor attributes.

Influence of combat system on experience is players always need to focus in mission. Which is very tired, but easy missions cannot give any good reward for players. This is not a good design for experience, game experience is too stressful in combat. Designers want to achieve a stressful experience but I believe this system should players to take a breath in levels.

Dynamics

Dynamics of combat system base on the levels and player's status. For example, a level in a mission includes many EMP device which can interfere players and then they cannot use any skills. In this case, if players' gear sets based on skills they have to destroy the EMP devices at first. For players who mainly use weapons, EMP devices is not priority. They can kill enemies at first then destroy EMP device to use their shield. The form of combat not always same even the core of this system always is third person shooting.

Impact of dynamics on experience is players need to prepare many different loadouts for different situations and get familiar with different environments.

Experience

Experience of combat system is interesting but stressful. At first, players need to prepare a lot of loadouts to fit different situation. What's more, players always need to care about their position, enemies' position, armor value, skills and level mechanics. Players have to consider a lot of things in combat and they cannot make mistakes if they have no teammates. But missions will be more difficult if players get more teammates. I believe designers of The Division 2 should give players a chance to take a breath. Some easy missions include medium rewards should be good for experience. Players will get tired if they always stressful in combat and lose interests later.

Conclusion:

Findings

My first finding is designers should give players a clear direction for their targets. Players need to know what they can do to improve their game experience. In The Division 2, players can know how to choose suitable weapons by read through the information page of armors or gear sets. For example, for striker's gear set players will choose to get weapons with high fire rate to get maximum effect quickly. Then the gear set talent of striker's can be powerful. I also should tell players what they need and how can they improve themselves in my prototype.

Second finding is the level design should take the players' ability into consideration. In The Division 2, players can choose many powerful skills from ability system. So designers designed some levels that ask players to use specific skills, or some levels with powerful enemies to make sure players with skills cannot finish that easily. This is a part of balance and I believe this kind of balance in The Division 2 is fine. Actually you can still finish some levels without using skills but that will be very difficult. For example, in a metro level the space is narrow and players need to face a lot of enemies at the same time. Of course players can just use damage skills and weapons to kill all enemies. But a debuff skill which can limit the enemies is better, players don't need to take high risks in this case.

Third finding is the UI of The Division 2 is very clear and looks cool. Players can easily access any details of their weapons and armors, in combat UI also shows the armor, health, buff, debuff and ammo storage clearly. What's more, tips in game also very obvious and easy to understand. I like the design they have especially the position of character basic value like armor, health, ammo storage and buff status. They put the basic information at in the middle of the screen, then players can always focus on their own status and choose different strategies for next action.

Last finding is how to make different functions for same object. Branches under different skills is very interesting, a chem launcher can heal teammates or break enemy's armor. This is very cool and can save a lot of source on development. But the balance will be difficult to adjust, many branches almost impossible to be chosen by players in The Division 2. For example, healing launcher effect is much stronger than healing drone and healing balls. So no

support players will choose healing drone or healing balls. Almost all of them will choose healing launcher and healing hive.

Application

In my party game prototype, I am planning to apply 2 findings from my analysis.

The first finding I want to apply is design the level base on the prototype of player's ability. This is a good choice because our group want to give players some interesting skills. For example, we want to allow players to jump very high if they have boost skill. In this case I will design a jumping puzzle which ask players to use the boost skill. Another example is we are trying to make a skill that allows players to destroy some objects in game, so I will design some breakable walls and doors in levels.

Another finding I want to apply in my party game prototype is UI design. I also want to give basic information at the middle of screen then players can notice it easily in combat. Also I want to use the text block as less as possible to give a clear UI. My plan is give the health bar and status at the middle of the screen just near the players, and skills they have just under the health bar. Then just show a little text content on screen and the tutorial of our party game will be combined with the level environment.

Findings unable to incorporate

The first thing I cannot incorporate with my game is to give direction to players by the combination of weapons and armors. Because this is difficult to balance and I am not going to include many RPG elements in my party game prototype.

Another finding I cannot incorporate with my game is make different functions for a same object. We do want to make an object with many functions but I don't want to give totally different styles for each function. Because our next prototype is a party game and objects with many different styles will make players confusing. We may just give the different ammo types for player's weapon and different ways for them to use some skills. For example, the range of destroy skill can be adjusted by players. Players can choose to destroy the whole area or just an object in level. This is easily for all players to understand.