Project Initiation Document

The document with all the plans

Abstract

A detailed plan of how the game is going to be made

Project initiation document

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Introduction

This document shall cover all of the ideas and methods that are to applies to this game's development in general terms. Here is where the definition of done and explanations to decisions that are made can be found. However the document starts off with a motivation to explain why this game will be worth developing and, more importantly, worth playing. Covering things from inspirations to current market developments and why this game stays on top of it shall all be covered. The game's basic gameplay elements and mechanics are covered too.

Motivation

Everyone loves the feeling of comradery, and a lot of people love playing video games. Combine the two and you get a recipe for great success. When you look at games like the Super Smash Brothers series they are popular for two main reasons, you get to pit major characters from different universes against each other and, more importantly, you play the game with your buddies, family or strangers right next to you. Every action has not only consequences in the game but in real life too, for the person right next to you. Whether your actions want to make them scream and try to punch you or laugh uncontrollably is up to you of course. But the essence of making and strengthening friendships through picking up controllers and beating each other up in the virtual world is somehow magically wholesome. This game's foundation is exactly that counterintuitive wholesomeness. However there's another, even larger, trend in the video gaming industry: MOBA's and other games with distinct hero characters which all have their own abilities and traits, the combination of the beautiful art style, detailed background story and gameplay is what attracts players from all backgrounds as they all can find a character they sympathize with. Having said all that, it's no surprise that the market is saturated with games based on these premises. There are many games with 'Hero' characters like Overwatch which have saturated the market to the point of making games like LawBreakers flop. And new MOBA's seem to come out every other month while rarely adding any significant gameplay or mechanical changes to the tried and true three lane strategy. Knowing that it's a rather risky part of the industry to release new games into, why bother creating one? The two giants we just mentioned have one distinct difference, one you play with others next to each other on the couch all of you in front of one single TV screen. The other you can play with friends too, but most of the time you play with strangers online with communication via quick chat, normal chat or voice chat. These games are fun to play with your friends but they don't compare to wagering that next bag of chips on the next game. Of course there is one very good counter argument to all this, LAN parties. You play whatever game together with your friends online or local co-op and you still have the feeling of playing together while being physically next to each other. But more often than not all looking at separate screens and being a distance away from each other to prevent those annoying screen watchers from ruining your streak. That is where this game comes in, combining the fun of lazy couch slouching gaming with the 'Hero' characters and the gameplay of a blend of Smash Brothers and MOBA like never done before.

Game

What was just described is what puts this game apart from the other games on the market in some general terms. This next chapter is where this analysis goes into further detail, explaining why nothing like it exists yet and why it should exist.

Mechanics

Playing a fighting game with controllers is nothing new, playing a hero based game is nothing new. Even playing a hero based game with controllers isn't anything new. What is something new is playing a hero based MOBA style game with controllers. The way you control a game has great impact on the popularity of the game. It's one of the reasons that consoles are so popular, if it all came down to how capable the platform was they wouldn't be popular like they are but because they provide a way to play the game while being comfortable in whatever position you prefer on whatever piece of furniture you like. This game focuses on smooth gameplay with as little input lag as possible to ensure that the game feels responsive to your input, creating a better experience overall. Switching from keyboard and mouse to a controller comes with the downside of having less input options. Going down from 104 keys to 22 buttons (including joystick directional inputs) can reduce gameplay depth, however building a game around the idea of a compact control scheme with designated buttons that every character utilizes in a similar manner largely circumvents this shortcoming. Choosing an art style is important for many reasons, one of those being that the art style can determine the platform. High end graphics won't be run on 4 year old technology. That's why for this game choosing an art style that let's the game be run on more dated and low end tech while keeping the quality high is of great importance to its accessibility.

Gameplay

Just like Smash Brothers that this game is inspired by, this game focuses on fast paced, smooth gameplay with short matches between 2,3 or 4 players. All characters feature a distinct look and style to make it easy for the players to figure out who they are fighting against. Recognition being an important factor in not only look of the character but also abilities, all characters will have unique abilities so that when all you see is an arrow fly past you even without seeing who shot the arrow you would still know who you are about to face (Green Ears). While PvP is the main focus of this game, there is still an element of fighting monsters, these monster provide the player with certain bonuses that can only be obtained through defeating that monster.

Products

The different products that will be required for an actual alpha release include:

- A basic game engine to develop the game with, consisting of:
    - A map to play on.
    - Monster NPC's(Non playable characters for players to kill for bonuses).
    - Basic hero interaction such as:
        - Basic attacks.
        - Abilities.
        - Movement of heroes.
        - Countering (possibly)
- Three playable heroes with unique abilities.
- Engine Research Document: A document in which it is researched whether Unreal Engine or Unity is the better development environment.

Definition of Done

To determine when a certain product is finished, certain criteria must be met. These criteria are described below.

Documentation

After a document is written and reviewed by at least one team member and checked for grammar and possible additions. After this is done and confirmed by all team members the document is considered done.

Code

Each functionality is made in a separate branch and once it is considered finished by the person creating it, a request to merge this branch into the main branch is made. This request is reviewed by a team member and only once it has been reviewed is the functionality merged into the main branch. Once it is merged the developer must document this functionality and once that is reviewed and uploaded the functionality is considered done.

Art

Once an art piece/model/texture is created it must be documented by the artist in a character/map/other design document to explain certain designing decisions and to create a stylesheet per subject such as a character. Once this is created and reviewed it is considered done.

Methods and planning

Method

As this project is a hobby and won't be getting a 9 to 5 hours 5 days a week work approach, an improvised version of SCRUM will be used. The progress is tracked by items that are put into a Product Backlog which are then pokered on effort and put into a sprint, a sprint lasting 5 days working on the project (5 days across either a week or a month would both be one sprint). Once an item is put into the sprint backlog the items that are being worked on are put into the Doing list. Once the item is nearly finished and requires testing it is put into the Testing list. Before an item is put onto done it is first put into the Review list where the actions described in the Definition of Done are applied and once those are finished it is put into the Sprint X Done List to track progress per sprint. After a sprint is done all team members hold a sprint review to reflect on the progress and how it is going in the workspace as a whole, this is documented in the retrospective. To demonstrate how a Sprint went a burndown chart of the planned vs achieved effort is used.

Management Tools

In order to keep proper track of the progress in this project, the following tools will be used:

- **Github**: To upload the code unto, and possibly to manage the scrum board on.
- **Trello**: To manage the scrum board, if Github projects is found to be lacking or too difficult to apply.
- **Google Drive**: To upload all documentation/art and other miscellaneous files onto.