Zellian Dettmer

Professor Snyder

IGME-236-05

2 March 2025

Week 7 Writeup – Competitive Analysis

Itch.io

When the website is first opened (in an incognito type) the top of the page the mission statement of itch.io is stated and then a hyperlink to “Add your game”. Itch.io focuses on indie developers and games and keeping the distribution of these games free. After logging in (or creating an account) access to your dashboard is created. The dashboard has all the information for the developer in one clear space. In the projects tab within the dashboard there is a button to create a new project. This is clear on the screen and is not hidden within tabs or at the bottom of the screen. The new project page as everything on it needed to publish a game, as a solo developer. What itch.io does well is not overwhelming developers who are new to the space, everything to publish the project is on one page, separated well, explanations of what they are asking for. However, where itch.io falls short is if a project is made with a team there is no clear “collaborators” option. On a forum (6 years ago) it was discovered that after the project is created you can add admins and there is a “contributor” toggle that allows them to link the project to their page. There are a few things wrong with this, the project has to be created before this can be done, and whoever is the main one publishing their username is what the URL uses and is the username displayed on the discovery page under the game.

GOG.com

GOG.com has a “submit your game” hyperlink at the very bottom of their homepage making it hidden and something that can easily be overlooked. You are then taken to a page instructing you to answer “around 15 questions” to submit your game. However, the questions are given one at a time with no way to look ahead to just get an overview. Question 4 prompts the developer “Do you own a business?” and from how far I was able to explore this process it had no impact on the process that I was able to access. Without an overview of the process, it makes publishing harder to complete and plan out.

Epic Games

Exploring the Epic Games Launcher there is nowhere on the desktop application that implies the ability to publish. Additionally going to the account webpage there is a “Marketplace seller” for selling assets and other similar stuff but not for games. The publishing page is hidden under multiple drop-down menus. The page it brings you to has an announcement that states the EPIC store is “open to all PC developers and publishers”. When clicking the sign-up option, a new page is open prompting the user to “Create your Organization”. Everything else is locked behind this prompt and cannot easily be explored further. This runs into the problem of what single game developers do. If they are known as a specific tag and they use that as an organization that limits what they can do with that name in the future, and specifically with epic the consequences aren’t seen because the rest of the process is locked behind this.

Our Solution

There is a significant gap for new game developers in the publishing aspect of games. While itch.io makes publishing games very easy and simple for a single person, it is incredibly complicated for recognition and distribution for more than one developer. The other platforms have the ability to publish hidden and are not prioritized making a new developer feel disheartened. And in contrast to itch.io they don’t make single person developers self-publishing easy. Currently publishing games are on opposite sides of the spectrum when it comes to developers. Not everyone works solo, not everyone works in an organization, and some people bounce around with other groups, do solo projects, and there isn’t a publishing platform that takes that information into consideration. There is fluidity in this field, but the tools established don’t account for. Accommodating that fluidity will provide more developers and creators into the market, providing more diversity in products and allowing new gamers to find something they connect with which can expand the market further.