

Crafting a PVE and PVP Friendly World

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My Background

- ▶ Senior Game Designer @ Red 5 Studios
- ▶ Designing and crafting the dynamic world of Firefall
- ▶ Credited Products:
 - ▶ Guild Wars: Factions
 - ▶ Guild Wars: Nightfall
 - ▶ Guild Wars: Eye of the North
 - ▶ Guild Wars 2
 - ▶ Microsoft SQL Server 2005

One Game, Many Players

- ▶ MMO games have a huge potential player-base
 - ▶ Can you satisfy all their needs and wants?
- ▶ PVE and PVP players have different needs
 - ▶ Don't make gamers play a game type they don't find fun
- ▶ It's okay to focus on one aspect
 - ▶ Many PVP or PVE only games are successes

Game Focuses

- ▶ PVE Focused
 - ▶ Everquest
 - ▶ Vanguard
 - ▶ Lord of the Rings Online
- ▶ PVP Focused
 - ▶ Darkfall
 - ▶ Dark Age of Camelot (late game RVR)
 - ▶ Shadowbane

Game Focuses

- ▶ Both PVE and PVP
 - ▶ World of Warcraft (arena, battlegrounds)
 - ▶ Warhammer Online (scenarios, RvR)
 - ▶ Star Wars: Old Republic (warzones)
 - ▶ Guild Wars 2 (hot-join, tournament, WvW)
 - ▶ Firefall (TDM, Sabotage, Harvester)

SWTOR: Warzones



SWTOR: NPC Conversation



Why both PVE and PVP?

- ▶ Larger player base potential
 - ▶ Critical mass is extremely important for an MMO
- ▶ Variety and Options
 - ▶ So your players have more to explore
- ▶ Crossover players
 - ▶ Players can be taught to play something they aren't usually comfortable with
- ▶ Spectating Audience
 - ▶ PVE player maybe interested in watching high-end pvp

PVE and PVP Challenges

- ▶ Splitting your development resources
- ▶ Balancing game play for PVE and PVP
- ▶ Messaging your game to players correctly
- ▶ Fulfilling the needs of both types of players
- ▶ Creating one cohesive world and experience

Needs of the PVE Player

Player Versus Environment

- ▶ Experience shows that there are a lot more PVEers than PVPers
- ▶ PVE is less threatening and friendlier to new players
- ▶ PVE does not equal casual
- ▶ PVE can be a solo activity
- ▶ Many social opportunities as well
- ▶ Gameplay balanced for fun, not fairness
- ▶ Every player of all skill-levels can “win”
- ▶ Easiest place to convey a storyline

Bartle's Character Theory

- ▶ Achievers
- ▶ Explorers
- ▶ Socializers
- ▶ Killers

PVE Explorer

- ▶ Yearns to discover knowledge about the world
- ▶ Reward Map Exploration
- ▶ Deep and Extensive World Lore
 - ▶ NPCs to talk to
 - ▶ Books and recordings to find
 - ▶ Creatures to catalogue
- ▶ Narrative Storyline to follow

PVE Achiever

- ▶ Completionist, wants boxes to check to “beat the game”
- ▶ Level progression
- ▶ Weapons, gear, items to chase
- ▶ Crafting systems to master
- ▶ Achievements to attain
- ▶ Bosses / Dungeons / Quests to complete
- ▶ Leaderboards

GW2: Map Appeals to Explores and Achievers



PVE Socializer

- ▶ Enjoys the interaction with other people or NPCs
- ▶ Robust and full featured social systems
 - ▶ Friends list, guilds, zone chat, mail
- ▶ Trade Systems
 - ▶ Direct trade, Auction House
- ▶ Social Interactions
 - ▶ Game events and holidays
 - ▶ Emotes
 - ▶ Gifts
 - ▶ Developing relationships with NPCs

PVE Killer

- ▶ Wants to grief and /or destroy others
- ▶ Enjoys overcoming challenging opponents
- ▶ World versus World game type
- ▶ Open World Skirmishes
- ▶ Challenging and exciting enemy fights

Firefall: Thumper

- ▶ The thumper appeals to a bit of all the PVE wants



Casual versus Hardcore Needs

- ▶ Casual PVE Player
 - ▶ Good introduction into the game
 - ▶ Bite size session achievable goals
 - ▶ Ability to play with friends who invest more time
 - ▶ Log on and have fun anytime, without commitment
- ▶ Hardcore PVE Player
 - ▶ Prestige items and titles to chase
 - ▶ Difficult raid dungeons and bosses to overcome
 - ▶ Huge world with lots of exploration and collection mechanics
 - ▶ Long term goals that can take hundreds of hours

Needs of the PVP Player

Player versus Player

- ▶ Competition with social implications
- ▶ Skill over time
- ▶ Bragging rights and prestige
- ▶ The most challenging and intelligent opponents
- ▶ Ladders, Tournaments, and Spectators
- ▶ Fair and balanced game play
- ▶ Instant action! No barriers to competitive play

GW2: Hot-joinable Structured PVP



PVP Achiever

- ▶ Wants to claim and show off victories
- ▶ Game Statistics
 - ▶ Win / Loss Ratio
 - ▶ Kill count
- ▶ Ladders and Leaderboards
 - ▶ Especially measured against friends
- ▶ Prestige Items and Ranks
 - ▶ Unique skins
 - ▶ Special previlages

PVP Explorer

- ▶ Desires deep knowledge of the game mechanics
- ▶ Needs a combat and skill system with depth
- ▶ Enjoys experimenting with different builds and combos
- ▶ Wants game modes to help explore combat
 - ▶ Dueling
 - ▶ Training rooms

GW1: PVP Equipment Builder



PVP Socializer

- ▶ Enjoys being part of the competitive community
- ▶ Thrives on working with teams and guilds
- ▶ Wants to organize tournaments
- ▶ Loves to spectate matches and discuss them

PVP Killer

- ▶ The essence of the PVPer
- ▶ Demands game modes that allow competition with others
- ▶ Needs balanced and fair game mechanics to show off skill
- ▶ Enjoys the opportunity to gank and grief others
- ▶ Rewarded by satisfying victories and visceral death animations

Casual versus Hardcore needs

- ▶ Casual PVPer
 - ▶ Easy to learn basic game mechanics
 - ▶ Get right into the action
 - ▶ Short and satisfying matches
 - ▶ Low investment of time needed to play
- ▶ Hardcore PVPer
 - ▶ Game mechanics offer high skill play
 - ▶ Evolving meta-game to keep the game fresh
 - ▶ Ladders and tournaments to work towards
 - ▶ Observer mode to learn from past matches

Firefall: Spectator Mode



Balancing Conflicts

Development Resources

- ▶ Make sure you aren't developing two separate games
- ▶ Emphasize that both PVE and PVP are equal priorities
- ▶ Make sure both PVP and PVE teams communicate with each other
- ▶ Leverage the reuse of assets
- ▶ Playtest the game as a whole, be aware of balance changes

Messaging

- ▶ Make sure players understand your game offers both types of content
- ▶ New player experience must introduce both PVE and PVP
- ▶ Allow players to decide how they want to play the game
- ▶ Make it easy for players to find the content they want
- ▶ Market your game to target both audiences

Player Needs

- ▶ Offer players options and roles they can fulfill
- ▶ Let them play the game mode they want
- ▶ Balance the rewards so they don't favor PVE or PVP
- ▶ Allow players to progress their characters no matter their play style
- ▶ Find a compromise if you can, but create separation if you must

Cohesive Gameplay

- ▶ Whatever style you play, it should feel like the same game
- ▶ Make use of world lore to establish common themes
- ▶ Keep the visual language of the game consistent
- ▶ Reuse game mechanics when possible
- ▶ Create relationship between the PVP and PVE community
 - ▶ Trade of unique rewards
 - ▶ World events causing impacts
 - ▶ Spectator mode

Game Balance

- ▶ Don't let PVP constraints stop you from trying crazy PVE things
 - ▶ There can be PVE only items and abilities
 - ▶ The same thing can act slightly different based on game mode
- ▶ Keep the feel of the game the same
 - ▶ If something acts differently in PVP, make sure it still feels the same in PVE
 - ▶ Players should feel it's still the same game
- ▶ Balance changes must be communicated
 - ▶ A change for either PVE or PVP could upset gameplay elsewhere
 - ▶ Changes must be tested for game wide impact

Gear and Progression

- ▶ Separate Gear and Progression for PVP
 - ▶ Can allow players to PVP without leveling
 - ▶ Battlefield is more level and fair
 - ▶ Might be confusing for new players to learn
- ▶ No Separation
 - ▶ Players who value progression are really rewarded
 - ▶ New players have time to learn complex game mechanics
 - ▶ PVP players may despise character grinding in order to be competitive

Creating Player Crossover

- ▶ Introducing PVE players to PVP
 - ▶ Spectator Mode
 - ▶ Including PVP maps in PVE gameplay
 - ▶ Giving reward incentives to try PVP
 - ▶ PVP Training Zone and WvW
- ▶ Introducing PVP players to PVE
 - ▶ Intrigue players with story tidbits
 - ▶ Give out item rewards that draw players into PVE
 - ▶ Create a PVE/PVP crafting dependency
 - ▶ Have PVP queuing take place in the open world

Firefall: XP Incentives and Spectator Menu



GW2: World versus World



One Game to Rule them All

- ▶ A great game is one where all the systems work together
- ▶ Offer options for all your players to play the game they want
- ▶ Let them find their role and excel at it
- ▶ Know who your audience is and don't try to do everything
- ▶ Establish your key themes and design philosophies and don't compromise



Thanks for coming!

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