

# Homework 1 - Analysis on Dota 2 Design

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In Dota 2, the players interact with each other in a team competition, or Multiplayer Online Battleground Arena (MOBA) fashion. The players here are to interact with both the system as well as the other players during the lifetime of their gameplay. In the interaction with the system, players will try to gain resources such as “gold”, the currency of the game, as well as “exp”, which increases the player’s character and would allow for the character to gain more skills or increase the power of already existing ones. The Objective of Dota 2 is to “Destroy” the other team’s “Ancient”, which is a term denoting the structure closest to the initial spawn location of the players. This serves as a point of conflict between the 2 teams. All other possible actions in the game are actions which would help to achieve this objective by “Collecting” resources or “Killing” other players. However, in the main game and not the arcade or mod versions, the ultimate goal is to destroy the “Ancient” since this sole objective will cause the game to be over and is achievable without completing any other objectives as a prerequisite. This opens up the possibility for various strategies punishing teams who are not focused on this overall goal, such as a quick victory by destroying all towers fast and reaching the opponents’ Ancient in a short time.

The procedures of Dota 2 are as follows: to start the game, each player has a limited time to choose a hero from a pool of available heroes for that game mode. This hero will be the main character that the player will then be in charge of advancing as for the rest of the lifetime of the game. An option to choose a random hero is also available, which serves as a function to increase the amount of gold players start with in exchange for the ability to control which hero the player is to start with. The game can then be progressed or advanced by several ways which include: killing creeps travelling within 1 of 3 lanes available, killing other heroes, or killing neutral units in their camps within the “jungle” area, which are areas outside of the lanes. Every action taken during the advancing of the game is to increase the amount of resources held by players in the form of “exp” or “gold”. The former would increase the number of skills a hero has, or increase the power of the skills. The latter is a resource which could be used for several functions such as resurrecting the player from death or buying “items” from the shops in the game which would increase the overall power of the heroes. A special procedure within the game is the conflict with “Roshan”, a special entity which drops unique items on defeat. These items could turn the game in favor of the team that defeated him, such as automatically bringing one hero back from the dead or

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refreshing all the skills' cooldowns of the hero which uses the item. These effects thus acts as an incentive for players to complete this special procedure to give them an advantage while trying to complete the goal. The procedure to resolve the game is to destroy the Ancient of the opponent team, which would result in an end game sequence stating which team won the game.

Dota 2 has many rules with regards to movement and the use of skills and items, as well as the costs of the resources needed to acquire or use them. Dota 2 has a tutorial stage in which each of these controls are taught to the player, which smoothens the learning curve of a new player. One of the main points which draw players towards the game is the combination of skills available per hero within the game, all of which are easy to learn but difficult to master since it is possible the items and skills to interact uniquely with others' skills. Some of these interactions include the ability to dodge a projectile-type skill by disjoining the skill, or increase the effectiveness of a skill.

Dota 2 is a genre of game which falls under the specific sub-genre of "Real-time Strategy", which incorporates elements of main genres such as "Online", "Action", and "Strategy" due to the ability to play online, requiring real time decisions and fast reflexes, as well as the need to manage limited resources to come up with strategies and outwit your opponent. Since Dota 2 involves micro managing a hero unique to the player and also allows the hero to increase in strength and ability over time during the lifetime of the game, it also has some elements of a "Role-Playing Game". However, since the attribute of having a huge world with an unfolding story is absent, it cannot be fully considered a "Role-Playing Game".

From Octalysis, the core drives present here are "Scarcity", "Social Influence", "Ownership", "Unpredictability", and "Accomplishment". Firstly, "Ownership" is present due to the introduction of custom skins, which allows a player to change the appearance of their heroes and courier such that it feels unique to the player, allowing them to feel a sense of ownership over the particular hero. These skins can be obtainable through normal gameplay and accumulated, allowing players to accumulate "wealth" throughout their game lifetime. Secondly, some degree of "Social Influence" is present here due to the nature of the game, as it is a multiplayer game where the player competes in a team. This promotes social play where a group of friends can play together in a team with or against each other, fostering companionship and competition. This gives players a reason to encourage those within their social circle to play DotA with them, thus making the game a social activity. The skins in the game also involves "Scarcity" and impatience since their drop rate is random, which makes it possible to not be able to obtain a particular skin unless it is bought. This makes certain skins rare, increasing its value to the player. The "Unpredictability" portion of the game stems from the competition between players, since online

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gameplay involves random matchmaking, which makes every game unique with a different combination of players in each team, therefore making every game's outcome unpredictable. Lastly, "Accomplishment" is achieved due to the competitiveness nature of the game. This makes it possible to always win against less experienced or less skilled opponents, driving the player to better himself, giving him a sense of accomplishment when he does overcome a particular opponent.

Some of the obstacles I have faced personally are skill-based obstacles as well as psychological obstacles. This is because initially the game mechanics are difficult to pick up, and later hard to completely master, which could lead to a negative social experience when playing against other players instead of AI, which instills a sense of dread or fear against playing with others. However this could also be what drives most players to continue playing, since it allows them to feel a sense of accomplishment every time they prevail against the opposing team.