

15-112 Term Project Competitive Analysis
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The only available project online similar to my game is the original game itself. The original “A Druid’s Duel” is highly advanced in many areas including user interface, AI playing and game design. There are many features for me to include in my program, but I would like to change and improve some of them.

The original game package takes up only about 30 megabytes when downloaded, and it would be even smaller without the additional features. This is because the game does not require a continuous stream of actions from the user or fast-moving animations, but rather implements a turn-based gaming design where the program only responds after the player decides on a move. Nevertheless, the graphics are very appealing, with very vivid ancient style characters and sceneries, and the few animations, such as an archer waving its bow, make the game amusing to play.

The actual gameplay itself is quite complex, though. There are in total four kinds of creatures: the soldier (5 mana cost) moves to an adjacent square once per turn and attacks an enemy creature if there is one on that square; the archer (10 mana cost) can move to an adjacent square or attack a creature with a distance of 2; the executor (15 mana cost) moves twice each turn and can attack once; the wizard (20 mana cost) cannot attack but can move or cast spells 3 times per turn. Each of the four creatures can be transformed using 10 mana to boost its abilities. The mana is generated every turn based on the number of lands the player controls. Whenever a creature steps on an opponent’s land or an unoccupied land, the land is in the current player’s control.

There is an underlying balance between lands and creatures, which must be taken into full consideration in order to play well.

Given the simple but very balanced and advanced gameplay design, I would like to follow that in my own program with a few changes. The executor is a little undervalued so I would increase its transformed power. Also, in the original game a bridge can be built anywhere with 5 mana, but I would add the condition that a creature must be adjacent, and that the creature would spend one turn to build the bridge. In this way the game would be more “realistic” and this feature would not be overused.

As for the UI, I would keep the original druid-style background, creatures, lands and buttons since they make the game attractive to players. The audio and the very detailed animations would not be included because they do not have a huge impact on the gameplay or the user interface. One thing that I do not like in the original user interface is the unclear mana demonstration. I am creating a pie chart to show the mana distributions between players if the turn terminates now, and it would be continuously changing whenever a change in land control occurs. In this way the commands would be less confusing to the user.

The original game has a variety of modes, such as multiplayer on one computer, multiplayer over the Internet, and a story-based campaign. I would definitely implement AI and probably create a campaign or web-based games afterwards. Some ideas not in the original game are design-your-own games, games with turns constraints, games where the winning condition is to reach 300 cumulative mana, etc.

In conclusion, the original “A Druid’s Duel” has a lot for me to learn and adapt into my own program, but there is also room for changes and improvement, which will make my project innovative.