WSOA3003A/Micro Project Analysis 1

Turn-Based Combat Game

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Turn-based combat games follow a specific structure where either a player combats an integrated AI or (if the game is multiplayer), a second player. Players take turns delivering specific actions such as attacking, defending against an attack, or healing oneself and/or other players against enemies. This system of turns continues until one is victorious or defeated. This system relies on a collection of data and how this data interacts with each other in order to form the system. In order to achieve a game to this with this specific structure, inspiration from other games and a careful pre-planning of data which would be used to generate actions from the player.

The goal of this project was to create a turn-based RPG combat video game, where the player explored a 2D platformer space in order to collect artifacts/collectibles and/or avoid enemies. By bumping into an enemy, the player would then exit the explore state and enter a state of combat against said enemy. The scope of the game, due to time constraints, was kept simple. The player would be able to collect healing potions to keep in an inventory, and would be usable during battle in order to restore the player's HP. The player's combat abilities would vary in three different types of attacks – a normal attack, a strong attack, and a special attack, which would only grow stronger through the player levelling up by defeating more and more enemies. The game also would also have theme – a doll roaming a land filled with distorted monster toys trying to find a way to escape the world she was in. The attacks would also be themed and named in parallel with the main character. If the player lost, they would receive an instant game over, but if they won, they would be able to exit the battle mode and re-enter the explore mode, where they would continue to bump into several monsters and collectibles as they continued to look for a way to escape the world. The game was mostly planned around the concept of a turn-based game, and the theme was added to make the game feel more immersive.

In order to develop the game, an iterative approach was taken. Each feature added to the game was playtested, and often times replaced or entirely removed due to fear of over-scoping. Time, scope, as well as unforeseen unfortunate events were extremely challenging

obstacles faced during the game's development, *especially* time constraints. The turn-based system integration was not inherently difficult to implement, but rather tedious due to the amount of data that had to be plugged in, and because of this and the time given to uphold the brief, many features (such as collectibles and variety of attacks, and many other over-scoped ideas) had to be entirely removed. Since the game had a theme, very simple visuals had to be included in order to include immersion. This, however was also extremely time-consuming despite the simplicity of the sprites, as a colour theme had to be chosen, character designs had to be picked, ways to make the player immerse themselves into the narrative had to be drawn up – this inherently counted as over-scoping regardless of the chosen first draft designs. The simplicity of the prototype is the result of many hashed ideas to keep up with the brief while also being able to deliver it on time. The prototype itself is unfortunately not up to par with the plan and contains a bug where the healing the player is able to achieve heals the enemy instead of the player. The prototype succeeds in only a few of the goals created for it, and while certainly not a complete failure, is more of a disappointment when compared to the original idea.

Many things about the development of this prototype could be changed. While its theme has potential to be good base to tell a story, it was far too complicated considering the time given and in parallel to the brief. The theme and visuals were also elements that should have been attended to last rather than in the middle as the turn-based system was far more time-consuming and difficult to implement. Other elements such as collectible potions should have been part of the prototype due to how it carries over from the explore mode to the battle mode. This would have made the game more immersive and show better communication design; the player would also have the choice to use as many or as little potions as they wished. This would have also improved overall gamefeel. This project, however, was not a complete failure and still meets the requirement of the brief despite its few flaws and concentration on game elements not focused on in-brief.

Overall, this was not an inherently difficult prototype to create, but many factors made it difficult. While the game remains on-brief, there are still massive changes that could be done and many elements that could be added in order to improve gameplay.