EECS 448: (Fall 2016)
“Team One” Final Project: Two-Player Checkers:
Deployment Plan

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Introduction-

Our project, a two-player Checkers game based on Java Server communication, could be distributed through one of several methods. Chief among these distribution methods include selling the product through online game stores and hosting the product on a developer-controlled website. Using the former would make the product capable of reaching extremely large user bases; while, hosting the game on a website could simplify the task of releasing the game out into the world by giving our group more direct control over the marketing of our final product.

There are additional distribution methods such as store retail, physical disk manufacturing, and self-promotion/live demonstrations at video game conventions. However, given the nature of the product, these marketing options may not be the most effective means of selling our game and could therefore be too costly a means of deployment, both in terms of time and money.

The following pages contain the summaries of our research into the available deployment options and an analysis into the potential success that our group could have with them.

Overview

Online Game Stores-

1. PlayStation Network-
    - Sony allows registered developers to self-publish their games via the various PlayStation platforms. By registering one's company with Sony and completing an online application, one can become a PlayStation Partner and begin developing for the PlayStation platforms.
    - Self-publishing on PlayStation Network allows a developer to set their own price and release data for their game. All digital tiles produced by a registered developer will receive ESRB ratings for free.
    - Since this product is simply an online version of a common board game, a free-to-play deployment would likely be the best choice. Deploying through Sony would allow the developer access to PlayStation's wide audience.
    - The caveat to this distribution method is that the product would need to be redesigned using one of the PlayStation Developer Kits, which can cost upwards of $2,500.

2. "Xbox Live" and Windows Store-

   - Microsoft allows developers to build Xbox One applications through the Universal Windows Platform. Approved developers can receive up to two developer kits from Microsoft for free.
   - The cost for creating a developer account for a company is a one-time, $99 fee. The company account allows developers to have greater access to app capabilities. There is also an "individual account" that offers more restricted app capabilities for a $19 registration fee.
   - The use of a company developer account comes with various legal and security guidelines that developers must follow in order to work with the Windows Store and other Microsoft markets.
   - Selling an application through the Windows Store incurs a 30% fee to be paid to Microsoft for each sale. Pricing tiers range from free to $0.99, $1.29, $1.29, $1.49, $1.99, etc.

3. iTunes App Store-

   - Apple's iTunes App Store allows developers to grow their businesses by reaching a vast number of users. There are many guidelines that need to

be followed before an app can be approved for sale here. Some of these rules include user safety guidelines, interface guidelines, and branding and marketing guidelines.

- The Apple Developer Program for organizations grants users access to beta OS releases, advanced app capabilities, and other necessary tools. Companies can register for this program yearly for $99.

4. Google Play Store-
    - In order to publish on the Android platform, developers have to pay a $25 registration fee to Google, which would grant them access to the "Developer Console," Google Play's main home for app publishing.
    - Google Play charges a 30% transaction fee for applications and other related products that are offered on its platform.

Web Hosting-

- Deploying the game via a developer-controlled website would be one of the more feasible options, at least for the initial marketing of the game.

- Google Domains offers web domains for an annual prices ranging from $12 for common ".com" domains to $50 and $60 for other less common types. This cost would include other developer perks, such as domain management tools and integration of website builders.
- Popular websites like "Squarespace" can help businesses with website designing, which would help the final product look more professional. Monthly prices for this site range from $12 to $26 for personal and business websites.

Conclusion-

The two categories of options listed above would both be feasible options for this group to put its application on the market. Considering that Checkers is simply a board game meant to be played casually, it would likely be unwise to market this game at a price similar to those of other major game titles or perhaps even some of the more expensive indie game titles. PlayStation Network, the Windows Store, and Google Play all allow developers to ship titles for free, which this team believes would be the best choice regarding sale price. A free, online game available for download would also be a great way of reaching the most customers, and each of these three platforms already have wide consumer bases of their own. The only obstacle would be modifying the game code in order to make it work on the PlayStation, Windows, and Android platforms, respectively. Fortunately, each of the companies that operate these platforms offer developers free and/or affordable means of developing products for the systems in question.

Purchasing a web domain and running the product from servers under our group's control is the other option that our group has for product deployment. While maintaining websites, paying for ownership of the web domains, and performing other kinds of related maintenance incur monthly to yearly charges, this option is a far less complicated means of deployment; since, our application, a Java game, could easily be integrated on a website as a Java applet. Cutting out

the middleman, that is to say, avoiding online game retailers entirely and using our own website, may even be a more expedient way of getting our product onto the market.

Sources

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