

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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AND PRINCIPLES

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Final Report

PLAYER'S VANTAGE

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1 Introduction

For this project, we set out to create something for the Fortnite gaming community and the growing competitive gaming scene. Statistics were our main focus and we wanted to give players the ability to access information otherwise hidden within the Fortnite interface. These stats provide valuable information to those who wish to bring their skills to the next level. Through stats, we are able to show a player their growth using hard numbers and facts.

Whether it's purely for bragging rights, or for scouting purposes for esports organizations, our service is valuable. Through the use of the Fortnite API and the design of a clean minimal UI, the users are given valuable information to aid in their goals.

2 Design Problem

We created the brand "Player's Vantage" with the idea of creating a service used to provide statistics to video game player bases. Ultimately, we decided to focus on the game known as "Fortnite". Many modern multiplayer games track detailed statistics of each player but do not explicitly display them on the game's UI. Statistics displayed will often have no context. The game simply gives you a number but will not tell you how your achievements stack up against others. Is getting 3 kills a game considered "good"? These statistics are valuable to those looking to improve and track their improvement. This is the problem we set out to solve.

3 User Research and Findings

Before getting into a detailed look at how our products are going to look like, our group decided to conduct user research to further explore the views of the concept. There are two research methods that we utilized and both of them helped us build a concrete vision of our design.

The first research method that we chose to conduct was Flow Analysis. This method was performed by looking at pre-existing websites and learning about the setup they implemented. This method was very informative in the way that it focuses on every small detail that users could interact with the website from the front page to the end. By conducting the methods, we were aware of the possible outcomes and how different value assigned to a variable might propagate.

The second research method that we chose to conduct was Secondary Research. At the stage where this method was conducted, our project was still in early development, so researching other pre-existing websites was beneficial to the development of our own site. Looking at other websites and learning about their features, designs, and user experiences they offered was helpful in a way that it reshaped and improved our own products.

4 Design and Justification

We wanted to provide news and statistics in a clean and direct way to our users. Through cutting out clutter and unnecessary means of navigation we could use this as a selling point as to why our service should be put to use.

Through minimalism and an attractive colour palette, we were able to make our website aesthetically pleasing and easy to use. The colours chosen are flashy and highlight important areas but are easy on the eyes. Our tab for cosmetic in-game items cuts the useless information and gives the user a preview of what they could expect and the price. We had a core focus on functionality for our website. The biggest advantage and disadvantage our model of service provided was the fact that the "barrier of entry" for our product is very low. All it takes is a few seconds for a user to start utilizing the features we have on our website. In its current stage, Player's Vantage has no user account systems. This means that there is little need for a user to commit to our website. After an initial visit, they can immediately leave and never use our service again. By focusing our resources on creating a functional design, we hope to present a user with variety of functional tools that are genuinely useful so they keep on coming back for more.

5 Heuristic Evaluation and Findings

We sent out our prototype for evaluation and got the following feedback:

5.a Visibility of System Status:

Our evaluators found some inconsistencies with our "News" page which presents new changes coming to the game. Our lack of a progress bar and manual scrolling bar gives the user no clues as to how many news articles there are when they could see the next page. Upon searching for a player's statistics, there is no clear dialogue explicitly stating that the name is valid.

5.b User Control and Freedom

As explored before, there are no controls provided on the "News" page, so user freedom is restricted. This problem must be resolved to provide the best experience for our users, as time is precious and waiting an extra few seconds for the news page to automatically scroll is a lot in this context.

5.c Consistency and Standards

In general, clarity is an issue for our website. Aside from a few issues with typography, there are issues with our sorting system within our skins and weapons tab.

There are problems regarding the grouping of certain items which have the chance to confuse the user and complicate the process.

5.d Error Prevention

Within our prototype, there are no implementations of error prevention which stop the user from potentially making the wrong inputs. This could be frustrating and could cause the loss of users due to inconvenient results.

5.e Flexibility and Efficiency of Use

It was recommended that we implement search options within our “Skins” and “Weapons” tabs to speed up the process. As there are many entities on the page, a search feature would cause a great improvement in efficiency.

5.f Aesthetic and Minimalist Design

The way we chose to display the weapons and skins in their respective tabs, is cluttered as we chose to display all of the entities provided to us. It was recommended that we implement some toggle options to reduce screen clutter.

5.g Help and Documentation

We did not include any documentation or help page to aid the user in navigating the website. This would be a great improvement in getting new users acquainted with how the site works.

6 User Testing and Findings

6.a User One:

Upon providing the user with the link, the user accessed the site and input their Epic Username bringing them to the main site. The user proceeded to the items tab and they claimed that they did this to look at what is currently in the store as they have not seen what is in the daily store. To continue our testing, we asked the user to proceed to the statistics page and locate how many kills the player “Ninja” has achieved. The user successfully completed the task and we asked the user to go to the weapons tab and count the number of legendary assault rifles there are in the game. The user began scrolling down until we instructed them to use the filter options as they complimented the convenience of the feature. Upon completing our basic task criteria,

we allowed the user free use of the site. To conclude the testing process, the user went to the skins tab and scrolled through the list.

6.b User Two:

We provided the user with the link and they accessed the site with no problems. They were instructed to look up “Ninja’s” profile to see how many kills he has recorded. The user did this with ease so we moved on to the next test and instructed the user to count the number of legendary assault rifles in the weapons tab. At first, the user did not use the filters provided and began counting the weapons. We instructed the user to use the filters and the user completed the task with ease. The user brought up a recent purchase their friend has made within the game and wanted to show us what skin their friend had just purchased. They went to the skins tab and attempted to look for the skin. Since we made the user use filters prior to this, they wished there was the same feature or a search bar to make the skin search easier. The user ended up finding the skin named “Raven” and we concluded the testing process.

6.c User Three:

Upon testing with people more familiar with the game Fortnite, we wanted to see if we can have the same reach with casual players. We contacted this person and provided them with a link to the site. With the task list provided, we gave the user a brief description of the site and what we would like feedback on. The user contacted us back along with an outline of his experience with our website. According to the user, they had an easy time navigating the site and he appreciated the minimalistic styling we used when constructing the design. They found great value in the information we provided on the site as it gave him a better look at his in-game performance and how he could improve to match the skill level of their friends. To conclude, the user provided us with the right numbers we were looking to receive which answer the questions we gave.

6.d User Four:

We looked to further investigate the casual player base to see if they find value within our site and how they would describe their experience using our tool. One of our representatives from our team provided a laptop to the user to run through our task list. Looking through the stats page was no problem for this user but they had problems locating the assault rifles filter and chose the hunting rifle filter instead. This prompted the user to answer that there are zero legendary assault rifles. We allowed the user to look around the site on their own. The user’s friend’s birthday was coming up so the user wanted to look through the items tab to see what he can purchase for his friend. Looking for a skin was a hard task and the user ended up forgetting about what they wanted to find. We concluded testing and found out that there could be problems with the casual audience.

6.e User Five:

Since we covered the advanced and casual player base we wanted to see how our site would fair against someone who has only watched Fortnite gameplay and has only a little bit of knowledge of the game. All this person knew was the basic premise of a “battle royale” game. We guided the user through our list of tasks and the user did well. They found Ninja’s profile and used the filters within the weapons tab which is most likely due to their online shopping habits. The user showed no interest in navigating through the rest of our site. We concluded testing from there.

6.f User Six:

To wrap up testing we chose someone who had zero knowledge of the game Fortnite, and the only exposure they had to the game was hearing the name in passing. Again, we asked the user to complete the tasks we have compiled and the user looked up Ninja’s profile. The user was thrown off by all the numbers and statistics thrown at them but easily found how many kills Ninja has recorded. Going through the weapons tab and using the filters was not a problem for the user. They recommended the use of a search bar to speed up the process. The user showed no further interest in our product so we concluded testing.

6.g Conclusion:

In conclusion, there is some quality of life updates we could introduce to our website but all in all, we provide the information people want and we do it cleanly. Our product is not a hit with the casual player base and non-fortnite players but the product appeals to the advanced/competitive player base as intended. Basically, our site could work on speeding up the process for returning users. As a user continuously uses a site they will want shortcuts to access the information they want to see and filter out what is not important to them. In our next iteration(s) we will introduce ways of speeding up the process by adding shortcuts and sorting features.

7 Recommendations for the Next Iteration of Design

Moving forward, as a brand we would like to expand our creation to create more depth and develop a community of active users. Since we are still in the early stages of adoption, we are looking to adjust the design of our website.

7.a Fancy Visual Design:

It’s unfortunate but true that people want what they use to look aesthetically pleasing. Even though an application presents the user with great features, a non-attractive appearance can ward off potential users. We want to create a more unified colour palette and create an identity for our brand. Colours are great for identifying a brand, so we wish to develop a colour palette that will distinguish us from the competition.

Aside from colouring, we want to include more animations within our UI to give users a visual hint as to what they can explore. The subtle movement of objects on the screen aid the user in choosing what to do. A change in their profile or new news about the game accompanied by a small animation gives the user more information without being obtrusive. For example, some users could find value in notifications of their improvement within the game, whether it be a new average kill personal record or an improved survival rate.

7.b Accounts System:

Since the beginning, we wanted to implement a feature where the user could create their account to track their statistics and manipulate this data. This feature would help the user save certain settings and it helps us retain a user base. Through saving settings, this allows the user to use our site at an accelerated pace. Shortcuts are then able to be accessed and put to use to eliminate some keystrokes and inputs from the user. Also, this feature ties into our friend system.

7.c Friend System:

We looked to implement a friends system into our website to find and add friends to easily access each other's stats and compare them with one another. This helps create a community and a loyal user base as it gets users to create accounts. Also, this opens up many potential expansions, such as hosting tournaments on our website or finding members for an incomplete squad. Implementing this feature would be a gateway to many attractive features that would separate us from the rest.

7.d Multi-Game Support:

If there is interest in a new game, we wish to include them into our statistics distribution service. Multiple games mean a more diverse user base and potential exposure of this audience to different games. If done the right way, this could be a success commercially and practically. We need to make sure that the coverage of multiple games does not ward off users who stick to one of the many games. The games included in our system must be separated enough where single-game users are not obstructed from what they want. Aside from that, this gives our account system a greater incentive as stats could be compared across multiple games.

8 Conclusions

This project came to fruition through the passion of a group of individuals for video games and aiding players in their competitive endeavours. We sought to enter the scene of gaming statistics with a new tool which would bring the community together. We did not only want to give the player a visualization of their improvement but also create a competitive environment for like-minded individuals seeking improvement. Through examining the existing sites and evaluating what they currently give and lack, we were able to plan how we would build on these ideas to create a

better experience.

Moving on from the planning phase, we sought feedback from potential users and users of the internet to give us more general feedback of our site's functionality and appearance. The differentiation in test cases exposed problems from the different point of views which allowed us to then pick and choose what we should change. Even if our site has a certain audience, it was valuable to choose non-users to see if they could still navigate through our UI. If anyone could use the UI, it is most likely put together quite well.

We look to continuously build and improve on what we created using the feedback achieved through the development of this hi-fi prototype. Prototyping is a significant step in putting together a product. Engaging in this activity gives clients and users a glimpse into the future as to what they can expect. This foresight gives the designers and programmers ways in which they can improve and fix glaring issues. Also, the identification of a worthy design problem is important before putting hours of work into a project. If there is no problem, then there need not be a "fix". In conclusion, get to know the user, and you will create something worth the time.