

Analysis of Mechanics

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Title: *[Path of Exile]*

Released: *[2013]*

Author: *[Grinding Gear Games]*

Primary Genre: *[Action RPG]*

Secondary Genre: *[Player Trading, Theorcrafting]*

Style: *[Dark fantasy]*

Analysis

Genres

"Path of Exile," released in 2013 by Grinding Gear Games, is an Action RPG. With intense combat, vast character customization thanks to its expansive (often overwhelming) passive skill tree and skill gem systems. Often requiring many third-party applications for players to plan out their characters properly.

I've chosen the secondary genres as "Player Trading" as the game is can only be played online and while not exploring maps a vast majority of time is spend on the game's market selling and buying items from other players. Another genre I'd mark, in which mostly only very experienced players indulge in, is "Theorcrafting." Players often spend hundreds of hours putting together characters, trying to find the best items, passive skills to make their character work.

The genres interact very well with each other as players often choose with which part of the game to interact with based on the current economy. Some players run boss encounters, fishing for rare, high-value items, others just run maps, farming high amounts of items in bulk to sell, all farming some kind of items to fund their characters and provide the player-driven economy with much needed items.

Style

Continuing the trend set by earlier adaptations of the genre, mostly Diablo and Diablo II, the game offers a very dark and gruesome fantasy setting. The game's style significantly contributes to its atmosphere. The grim and foreboding visual design, coupled with eerie sound effects and body horror immerses players in a world filled with danger and mystery. The dark fantasy style enhances the overall experience, aligning with the game's narrative and tone.

Gameplay

Every character has to complete the game's story, comprised of ten acts, each act tells a story of a different part of the world and its people and is ended by a big boss fight. Upon completing the acts, players move into the main part of the game, the "Endgame."

Every three or so months the developers add new gameplay mechanics, items and other things in a "Challenge league", these leagues add flavour to the core game and some of them are added to the core game afterwards. Upon starting every league players start completely from scratch, their previous characters moved to "Standard league." After the years the core game has a vast majority of mechanics people can interact with but the main part are the "Maps".

The maps are different layouts filled with monsters, randomly generated core and league mechanics and end with a map boss encounter. They make up most of the endgame content having their own skill tree, in which people can customise which mechanics they want to see more/less in their maps, focusing on certain ones to make profit.