The Road to Enlightenment!

Explanation Paper

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The Idea:

Create an off brand version of Settlers of Catan which can teach the ideas and struggles behind industrializing and modernizing a nation.

The Design:

I originally wanted to make some form of usable product. Something that people could use and wouldn't get left behind as simply a nice idea. I thought that the easiest way to do this would be to create some sort of game based on course content. I wanted to not only design the game, but also provide a working copy.

Using a web application I design and built previously, I redesigned the Settlers of Catan game to represent the course content from this semester. By incorporating key terms and ideas from the class, it changed into a game about nations competing for resources and technology.

The Learning:

This project required me to stretch in many ways. I am not naturally good at user interface design and changing the interface on this Catan project proved to be a challenge. In completing this project, I learned how to modify HTML, CSS and JavaScript code. While I have had experience in JavaScript previously, the JavaScript used on the user interface was much more complicated than I was used to.

I also learned how to use photo editors in order to change and add new images to the User Interface. I discovered that the easiest way was to use the web application at pixlr.com. Photo editing was completely new to me and I had to learn how to remove backgrounds, resize images, and modify content of images.

The History:

Each element of the game is in someway related to course content. Some examples of these changes and my reasoning are below. In addition to these examples, looking at the "How to Play" document on the website will also display many of the other historical aspects of my project.

Innovation: I decided to change the brick resource to innovation because it is one of the most basic components of creativity.

Railroads: Being most basic building, this replaced roads .It costs one innovation and one Raw Material. Which is meant to show one can be creative with simply a good idea and something to work with.

Cantons: I changed settlements to become a more specific name. It costs innovation, raw material, art and science. This is meant to show that there are many different parts to making up a successful community.

Factory: By changing City to Factory I was able to direct the focus of the game from simply gaining large population centers towards building a strong economy. To create a factory it required both science and manufacturing resources.

Privateer: I thought that Privateer was a much more appropriate term than robber for this

development card. This card steals a resource from a player and prevents them from receiving more of that resource. Similarly, the Privateers employed by Elizabeth helped the government obtain resources and hurt their enemies. Also the Privateer Development card increases the size of your navy (which would be army in the original game). Likewise in history, Queen Elizabeth's Privateers were an important part of her navy when the Spanish attempted to invade.

The Creativity:

Much of the linear creativity of this project was in creating and modifying it. It heavily drew on my programming knowledge and skill. Lateral creativity is displayed in the breadth of the subjects that my project touches. Although I heavily focused on the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution chapters, I took something from almost every chapter in the book in some way or another.

In our textbook, Creativity is often described in the VINE acronym. I believe my project meets these criteria. I believe this project has value in its educational content. I tried to give the player a feeling of really being placed as a ruler of a developing country in the 1700s. My "How to Play" document includes historical facts to help spark the player's interest in history. Because the project is a fully functional game, it also has entertainment value. The project was Intentional as I put steady effort into creating this game. The project is Novel. The ideas of this project were completely my own. I put great effort into coming up with the best interpretation of course content within the restrictions of this game. Finally I believe my game to be Excellent. I put weeks of effort into creating this game and making it what I wanted it to be. It is not half-baked or incomplete.

Disclaimer: I did not create this entire Catan web application for this class. In a previous class, I was required to create the web application for Settlers of Catan as a group project. For this project, I adapted this previous project to match my new idea.