Monio MMORTS.

**Terms.**

MMO. Massive Multi-player Online.  
RTS. Real Time Strategy.  
JRPG. Japanese-style Role Playing Games. Think Pokemon or Final Fantasy.  
Kingdom. An alliance or guild in game of players.  
Monio. Creatures of power that are used as Generals leading your troops into battle.

**Background.**This will encompass principals of an MMO free-to-play game, principals of a JRPG game, and an overview of our entire game. Discussed will be business strategies and gameplay strategies.

**Free-to–play MMO principals.**

**Cash shop.**  
Ironically the corner stone of a free-to-play game. A good cash shop encourages cash players to spend real life money, and a good game encourages cash players to continue to do so. Our cash shop is not revolutionary, and focuses on all the tried and true methods found in other free to play games, such as: being a shortcut to large numbers of expendable troops, resources, speed-ups, rare items and troop items, buying Monio, and other general items essential for active gameplay.  
Additionally, players will be rewarded with ‘specials’ for certain tiers of crystal purchased, which can include cumulative rewards of ultra-rare Monio and items.

**Rewards.**  
Rewards keep a game interesting and give structure to a player’s gameplay. Rewards exist for battling Monio, having high troop levels, making purchases, completing quests, training troops, ranking in arena, skirmish, or global competitions, or even completing goals together as a kingdom.

**Activity.**  
Activity is key. Encouraging activity keeps spenders spending. All players have daily rewards for meeting conditions such as fighting with their Monio, gathering Cards, farming resources, and training troops. Rewards exist for global competitions as well.  
An active game is a financially lucrative one. Keeping all cash players and free players active ensures competition remains rife. Even small drops in competition can have knock on effects, similar to an electric company’s death-spiral scenario.

**Competition.**  
A key component to a successful MMO game is competition. This encompasses both players who pay and players who do not.  
Without competition, an MMO will die. If you’re on a server with no one else, nothing changes, and nothing grows. With competition, you have a desire to continue to prove yourself against those who grow more powerful at the same rate or different rates as you. Active alliances or guilds will focus on their enemy guilds, continuing to improve themselves and attack others.   
Specifically, several things in our MMO encourage competition:  
Arena. Where your collected Monio come to fight other Monio. This is a chance to show off your Monio to others and decimate them in battle. There are a number of free battles everyone gets each day, and points are awarded for participation and wins. Those inclined to spend money can do so to get extra battles, proving themselves superior. Rewards include point rewards for gaining a certain amount of points each day, experience which levels your Monio, and a rank reward at the end of each day for the top scoring battlers.  
Skirmish ground. A place where kingdoms come together to pit even numbers of troops against one another to determine who has the superior troops. Whole kingdoms will work together on their troop levels to gain a foothold in the rankings here, declaring their supremacy over the server. The skirmish ground encourages kingdoms to farm the lands and enemy players to maintain their edge over other, lesser, kingdoms.  
Global competitions. This is a much more individualistic competition, where players gain rewards for how many troops they train and/or purchase, how much power they’ve gained, how many troops they’ve killed, and so on. Taking a lead in a competition is a quick way to assert your power and dominance, and cash players will often out-spend each other to deny an opposing kingdom the win.  
Cardhouse. To a lesser extent players will compete with each other over the rarity and levels of their cards. Cards buff Monio, bases, troops and resources, and good cards mean solid advantages are to be had over the enemy.

**Restriction vs freedom. (Premature death)**  
Most MMOs heavily practise a restricted style of gameplay. Usually, you can only get troop levels so high and in a set timeframe, buildings to max levels in a restricted timeframe. The idea here is those impatient with the slow progress will spend money to gain an immediate edge over their competition, and, also to elongate the timeframe of the game without having to constantly add content. A restrictive game however, eventually loses appeal, especially among free-to-play players. It takes too long to get anywhere, and heavily favours cash players, so much so that free players are outclassed everywhere they go. While a cash player should be able to enjoy a healthy advantage over a free player, losing free players drastically reduces the activity and the competition of the server. A dead server has no appeal to a cash player, and whole servers and games can die this way.  
Our strategy is to have an unrestrictive gameplay, which exponentially increases. Troop levels for example start out easy to farm, and quickly require higher and higher levels of items to gain. This encourages cash players to spend for rare items that drastically improve the acquisition of levels, and yet, when new levels and troops are released, drop rates can be increased to allow free players to catch up. An expansive, unrestricted gameplay also means those players who have time, and no money, can farm resources lucratively for those who have money, and no time, which adds a real economy and opportunity for players or kingdoms to exploit, regardless of being a cash player or free player.

**Catch-up strategy.**  
Our catch-up strategy is present in every aspect of this game. A catch-up strategy means heavy spenders are rewarded handsomely for spending large amounts of money, but as time goes on and new levels are released, free volumes of items are increased to assist free-to-play players to ‘catch-up’ to the previous maximum levels. This encourages a perpetual cycle of heavy spenders to continue to spend to maintain their edge over everyone else.  
In arena battles, Monio gain levels over time with each enemy defeated. Experience, however, is scaled dependant on level. Extra experience is gained from defeated higher level Monio, a feat relatively easy and planned to be achievable through an expert understanding of elemental weaknesses. This means those at the top, usually the heavy spenders, will pay for extra battles to gain an edge over their competition, but those below will gain extra experience from defeating higher level Monio.  
For troop levels, with successive releases of game stages, extra troop levels may be unlocked. When this occurs, the drop rates for items required to level your troops will be made more plentiful. This means free-to-play farmers will be able to catch up to previous levels really only available to those who spend. This ensures spenders continue to spend to maintain their edge.

**JRPG principals.**

**Collecting.**Collecting things is an essential appeal of JRPGs. Having to collect all Monio creatures, for example, will encourage players to every corner of a game to achieve this goal. In this game, upon successive staged releases, a large number of Monio are attainable, plus many rare items for Monio and troops. Additionally, the Cardhouse adds a whole new layer of collecting, giving free cards (and you can pay for more) of all types and uses, for base defence, troop marches, or resource production.

**Levelling.**  
Another key part of a JRPG appeal is levelling. A stronger character able to do more damage gives a sense of accomplishment, and encourages further growth. Cards can be levelled (and evolved), Monio gain levels, and armours have different grades achievable for different people. Troops can be levelled, buildings can be levelled, and research can be levelled. Quests can be levelled as well.

**Scaling.**  
Drop rates and levelling are scaled exponentially. This means an ‘End Game’ doesn’t need to be restricted… frankly, it will take an infinite amount of time to achieve. This also means ultra-rare game-breakingingly powerful items aren’t so game-breaking in the long term. It also means when new levels are released, drop rates can be scaled up and cash rewards scaled up to bring into reach the new levels.  
Times to build higher levels of buildings are scaled harshly as well. This encourages a savvy player to research intelligently, unlocking the potential to build multiple buildings at once, and encourages a cash player to spend to get ahead.

Game overview.

**The RTS bit.**In the world view, you can see your city, and the lands that surround it. You’ll also see your enemies’ cities, and the cities of your allies, who reside in the same Kingdom as you.  
From here you can send marches of troops to conquer resource sites found on the map, giving a boost to your domestic resource production, or you can send troops to an enemy, to ransack their cities and take their resources. Alternatively, if your ally is being attacked, you can reinforce them to starve off the marauders.  
With higher technology you can also see all marches within range of your cities, allowing you to attack them. This way, you may intercept troops on their way to attack an ally or conquer resources near you, or, perhaps more lucratively, you can attack a caravan, loaded with resources, travelling to an opposing kingdom’s players, bank, or between a single player’s multiple cities.  
The cost of higher research levels and upgrades to buildings, and of course of raising more expensive and stronger troops, encourages more activity on the world stage as time progresses.  
Strategies wait to be implemented- troops can be sent to any section of the world map, to aggressively attack any passers-by or to hide, lying in wait for a lucrative strike. Roads criss-cross the world stage, bringing faster transport but also dangerously funnelling fat merchants together on their race between cities. Mountains block ground troops, but may leave a city vulnerable to air attack. Kingdoms of players occupy swaths of land, making all outsiders unsafe within their controlled sections of land. Elemental resources spew forth riches in a timely manner, locked down and farmed by only the strongest Kingdoms, and sold to other kingdoms or even to other servers. Walls of troops can be lined up in choke points to a kingdom’s lands, or reinforced onto a kingdom’s resource stronghold. A bankrupt kingdom may have their bank go unprotected, victim to any other strong raiding players.

**The JRPG bit.**  
Inside your own cities, you manage with a much less broad sweep.  
You need population to work on your resource sites, and to train for troops to protect your cities. Citizens also produce gold, which you can use to trade for items with other players.  
You can rally your troops at your rally point, recalling stationed troops, viewing and sending intercept troops to detected parties, and upgrading your building to increase your capacities.  
You can research at your library, allowing you to increase the teams of workers at your disposal for multiple researches, buildings, training, and mining. You can also research upgrades to everything from troops to resources, to buildings and Monio.  
You Champion Quarters allow you full customisation of your Monio. Here you can equip armours and Cards, sort your Monio into teams, dismiss and purchase from market, and upgrade their skills.  
The Arena allows you to pit your Monio against other players, earning point and rank rewards and respect.  
The skirmish ground allows you to show off your powerful troops against other players, earning rank rewards.  
Global competitions allow you to directly compete with other players on power and troop growth, and even troop hunting.  
The marketplace allows you to trade your items (most things are tradeable), which will allow you to buy crystal or buy other items. Players can farm resources to sell to the rest of the server.  
The armoury allows you to gather your materials and create strong armours for your Monio.  
The blacksmith allows you to upgrade skills of your Monio, levelling up the power of their attacks.  
The opera provides necessary entertainment for your citizens, allowing you to increase the tax rate without negative effect.  
Storage silos safeguard a set amount of resources against raiders intent on the resources you work so hard to create.  
The centrepiece of a feudal society: the barracks allows you to train your loyal soldiers, to march for the might of your cities and whatever kingdom you are a part of.  
Houses increase your population, allowing you to open more resource sites or train more troops.  
A tower stands watch over your city, bringing benefits such as alerts of incoming troops and awareness of troop movements on the world map.  
Your wall protects your city and gives a defensive advantage to troops protecting your cities.  
A magical mine, dug deep into magical soil grants you daily random objects, which range from resources, to speed-ups, to armour materials.  
A crystal mine pays out daily crystal, and additional crystal if certain purchases have been made.  
The Cardhouse brings together all actions you can perform with your Cards. Here you can obtain more, upgrade and level them, equip them to Monio or your base, and more.  
Your element upgrade stone. Each server has a skew on dominant elemental resources, and each of your cities has a dominant element, which gives troops and Monio of the same element large defensive and offensive bonuses. Your upgrade stone is also where you upgrade your troop levels.  
Your farms, mills, quarries, and mines all produce resources for your cities, essential for growth and troop recruitment.

**The Kingdom bit.**Your kingdom is your alliance, your guild. Together you can secure lands safe for your people to plunder for resources. Together you can take down opposing forces, and together you can bank resources to help out the lower members.  
From your kingdom menu, you can view your kingdom stats, view current placings on cooperation in global competitions, arena, and skirmishes, you can view reports of members who have attacked or been attacked, and you can donate to the bank to keep it protected and to keep the resource transports protected. Here you can also access inter-server markets, which sell elemental resources between servers, as all servers are skewed with dominant resources.  
Cooperation will also be needed within Kingdoms to secure elemental resources, which pay out every 6 hours and can be sold for gold to other servers.  
Inactive accounts can be forcefully moved by paying 1 crystal to randomly warp them a set distance away. A player can respond with a yes or no, but if they do not respond are automatically moved within 48 hours. Kingdoms can achieve ‘blocks’ this way to physically control territory, and to force enemies some distance from resources or elemental resources, leaving enemy troop marches more susceptible to intercept should they try to loot controlled territory.