

To the Magic Shop Reflection

I wanted to simulate owning and managing a magic shop in a fantasy town by having the player create potions, spells, and magic items. However, I realized that creating all three mechanics might be too much for the capstone, so I decided to focus on the mechanic I was most interested in developing, which was creating spells. This also meant the player would not have to transition to different workstations. To make the game simpler, I decided to combine the front desk with the spell crafting workbench, so the camera would not have to move and all the information the player needs would be right in front of them.

I wanted the player to feel like each order was solving a puzzle with the use of a complex spell crafting system. However, I couldn't envision a clear indication of when the game would be over and how the results would play out with this method, so I decided to pivot the design more towards an arcade-like game feel where the player must finish as many orders as they can using a more simplified spell crafting mechanic. In this design, the player's score would be measured by how much money they make within the time limit, which sets up a clear endpoint and result.

I added a crystal ball to the desk that calls the next customer because I thought letting the player decide when they are ready for the next customer would give more control to the player and make the game feel more realistic.

I thought about how I wanted to set up the dialogue for the game, and I decided to create a system called Orders. An Order consists of the customer's dialogue, the element of the rune they need, and the order of the rune points to create that rune. This way, the information can be easily communicated and compared for later use.

While I was working on creating the spells for each element, I thought it would be cool if some of the spells could be from multiple elements. This way, some orders would have multiple solutions because the player could create a rune for either element. I changed Orders to where they were made up of the customer's dialogue, an array of elements the rune could be from, and the order of the rune points for each element.

After the first playtest, I removed the small reward for wrong answers and made it so that the player loses money on wrong answers. I also added a quota indicator, so the player would be aware of the win condition. Lastly, I changed the clear spell button from a red "X" to a button that says "Clear," making its functionality easier to understand.

After the second playtest, I realized that it was difficult for the players to figure out how to start the game, so I made the crystal ball glow on and off as well as glow bright when hovered over with the pointer. This way, the crystal ball will grab the attention of the player and make the player feel like they can click it when they hover over it. I also added a visual for the timer after I realized the playtester couldn't tell the game was timed and how much time they had left. Lastly, I created a system that figures out what the player did to get a wrong answer, which will then let the player know what they did wrong.

After the third playtest, I noticed that the player had a difficult time telling when an element was selected as well as telling some of the colors apart. To fix this, I decided to adjust some of the colors to make it easier to tell them apart and added some visual effects to the spell book so the

player can always tell what element they are currently set to. After this playtest, I also decided to add a few minor tutorials at the start of the game because players kept having difficulty learning the game.