Portmortem – Reputation (Game of Power)

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IMGD 5099 – Game Design Workshop

December 18, 2014

**What went right?**

* The twitch mechanic involving recovering from the immediate attacks is implemented correctly.

It helps to keep the players to stay longer in the game, as well as making the players laughing.

* Borrowing game mechanics from other successful games can be useful.

We solved a few problems that arises during the design process by using reference games and tweaking the mechanics a bit, so that they can fit into our game. It has a tremendous effect of solving issues that we weren’t able to fix sometimes.

**What went wrong?**

* The removal of the Health Points system.

To explain what went wrong, we need to first explain the basic mechanics of the two important elements of our game, the reputation points and the health points. The reputation points affect how many cards the players are allowed in their hands at the end of their turns. The health points only tells you if you are still in the game or not, and when you lose them all, you are out of the game.

Both may seem to be two separate elements at first, since they do not relate to each other at all, but instead, they actually counter each other. And that is a good thing.

Let’s say a player has high reputation points in the game at some point. With so many reputation points, the player can easily draw a large amount of playable cards from the deck each turn. This affects the gameplay, and causes it to be very unbalanced as it continues. The chance of bringing down the reputation points is slim, since it requires all the player’s opponents to team up and attack the player. The chance is even slimmer by the fact that everyone is uncertain about themselves, because they do not really know who is on their side, or they do not know if they are attacking other than the player with the highest reputation points.

If a player with the highest amount of reputation points has an equal amount of chance of losing the game as everyone else, then it is easier for most of the player’s opponents to form a strategy to target the player, even if it is not apparently known about their roles in the game. Plus, they feel like they are actually making someone to lose the game, which is fun to see it and play it in action, according to the feedback received.

Due to this, we feel that removing the health points system from the game is totally unjustified, therefore, we brought the mechanic back.

* Obtaining different audiences feedback on possible flaws from different perspectives.

Since our primary playtest group is comprised of students who are also adults by law, we couldn’t be able to see and test if our game mechanics would work for teenagers and children.

In our game, one of the various ways to attack an opponent is to use an Assassin card. For teenagers, this may be a bit acceptable, since we are not sure. We do, however, note that having the Assassin card shown to children would not be advisable, and may have to suggest a different terminology for the game. Of course, each of us designers of this game have different opinions on this matter, as such we decided to leave it in for now. In the future, if such debate arises, we can discuss more about it by then.

**What we learned?**

* Ink and paper is an issue in paper prototyping games, especially card games.

If we really wanted to make perfect prototypes, we could resort to use glue sticks to glue paper cutouts onto the back of the prototype cards so that the ink will not be seen from the back. But we chose not to do so for our insanity and budget.

* Falling back from an iteration is not always a bad thing.

If the games we designed based on past feedback is not what we wanted, stepping back is a good idea. It was apparently recommended strongly by others on our second prototype feedback, and they wanted the old version of our game so badly that we scrapped our second prototype immediately into the trash bin. It is that bad.

Going with a most recent successful iteration of all iterations, however bad it may be, is still good.

* It is inevitable that when a player is out of a game, that player will look sad.

We have not come up with a good solution for making players who are out of the game still be able to enjoy it with all others playing. We feel this is a tough question such that only more play-testing and feedback gathering will inevitably lead us to the answer.