HCI – Final Project Proposal

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# Introduction

Video games is a form of entertainment that has gradually gained popularity over the last 30 or so years. One very significant genre of video games is Role Playing Games (RPG), there has been many different takes on the genre from sci-fi to fantasy. One aspect that is often overlooked by fans of the genre is that these games all originate from the original RPG games, table top games. Probably the most well-known table top RPG is Dungeons and Dragons (D&D). For those unfamiliar, table top role playing games are played face to face around a table with pencils, paper, and dice. Unlike a video game where all your character stats, inventory, and spells are saved as part of the game, table top games require the player to keep track of all these attributes and items. To do this most players use a character sheet most of which is filled out at character creation but is edited throughout the course of the game.

The application we are proposing will allow users to bring the character sheet into the digital world. This will aid the user be more efficient and organized with their character sheet. When creating a new character, some attributes (which are numerical values) are mathematically derived from others, our app will be able to take care of these calculations for the player. We plan on calling our character sheet application “Role Slayer”.

# User Interaction Requirements

### Character Creation

The most obvious user requirement is the fact that the player will need to create a character. As table top games are not always as concrete as a video game, for example the group could decide on different rules or make up some of their own, we want to give as much flexibility as possible. To achieve this, we plan to offer the player a guided or unguided character creation tool. Guided creation tool will prompt the user for specific values and character information such as skill points or biographical info. The unguided approach will simply create a blank character sheet and allow the user to modify at their leisure.

### Character Expansion

During the course of the game a player learns new skills and abilities (e.g. spells). Role Slayer will offer a dedicated interface to expand and keep track of these skills. Once a new skill has been entered, there will be a textbox to allow the user keep pertinent details or notes.

### Inventory Management

Another important part of the character sheet is the ability manage the players inventory. Throughout a game the user will receive, use, sell, or even lose items. Role Slayer will provide the player with a dedicated inventory space which will facilitate inventory management. The app will let users sort items by type (weapon, armor, consumable, etc.), or alphabetically. The player will be able to choose from a pre-existing list of items or create them as needed.

### Character Notes

As some of these campaigns can last anywhere from one session to multiple years, it is important to keep track of story events. The character notes area will simply offer the user with a screen to keep different notes about the campaign. This section will have an add button to create new notes as needed.

# Interaction Concepts

### Cognitive

External Cognition: Role Slayer’s primary function is to help a player keep track of the various statistics, events, and calculations that are important throughout a roleplaying campaign. This reduces the stress inherent in trying to recall information or make calculations by having that information readily at-hand on a mobile device.

The option to be guided through character creation or not facilitates new players’ learning of the character creation process and the rule system.

### Social

Coordination: Role Slayer allows users to have their character sheets – normally left at home or wherever you play – on them at all times. With busy schedules, most roleplaying groups can only play every week or two, but Role Slayer allows players to plan and discuss the campaign on the fly, enhancing the game when the next session does happen. If every player in a particular campaign is in the same place at the same time, it may even lead to an impromptu session!

### Emotional

Expressive Interface: Recent popularity of video games has led to a lot of gamers taking the step from the controller to the tabletop, but it can be an intimidating process to give up a graphical interface and simply use one’s imagination. Role Slayer helps ease this process by including icons and graphics common in the video gaming world to represent different menus, attributes, and items.