ADVENTURE QUEST SURVEY RESULTS REPORT

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Introduction

The game chosen for this survey is called *Adventure Quest* which is a game that was created in 2002 by Artix Entertainment. It is a single-player flash game with a bare-bones, turn-based combat and exploration system design with a point-and-click system. The game was created initially to run on a browser only, in the hope that the user was using a Microsoft Windows PC or a Chrome OS. Today it requires that users download a launcher before the player can gain access to the game. Additionally, the game has maintained an active player base composed of thousands of players with the majority being unsurprisingly interested in continuing to play this game for nostalgia reasons.

Over the years, the game has had two iterative releases in addition to keeping the classic version up to date. The first iterative release game in 2008 in the form of *Adventure Quest Worlds*. The game is a more modern 2D variant with mobile support and a focus on multiplayer-oriented gameplay and story as opposed to the classic version, which focuses on single-player content.

Regarding the third iterative remake, the game is called *Adventure Quest 3D* a game released in 2016 and inspired by MMO games. This 3D version additionally adds hardware support for phones, tablets, and iPads. Also, it was released in various middleman services such as Steam, Google play, and the Apple store as opposed to the other two games which are only accessible via company-specific game websites.

In terms of differences, each game is the best thought of as essentially, alternative realities of the same content, resulting in varying levels of differences, all for different experiences across the many different company focuses. In this survey, the goal is to have players primarily playtest *Adventure Quest Classic* systems from interface to controls and other

aspects. As a secondary goal, the survey also tries to gauge player engagement with regards to whether they would rather continue with the classic version or jump ship to the alternative version *AQ Worlds* as an ending comparison.

The research wants to see how much the player is impacted by the extremes of the microtransaction system from a free player standpoint The biggest interferences with creating this specific survey for this title is the time that the players were willing to participate, the willingness to try different things after being shown the survey questions ahead of time and the players own personal experiences with regards to other RPGs. These will ultimately add weight to the value of data collected for each question and follow up question.

The researcher makes many interfaces that would normally be addressed and mitigated by experienced veteran RPG or JRPG players which are the target testers. One big concern was the equipment load-outs from taking on nodes that were not requested, as they can and will affect class choice, ability choice, and other factors which make this testing even harder because a limited number of questions was created that could reasonably be asked.

Survey Results

Ten survey questions were asked on Survey Monkey about the game test and presented to game test participants during the study. Seven results were received. The participant demographics were one female and six males. Five participants were from the United States, four of the participants were from Kansas and one from Minnesota, and one participant was from China, and one participant was from Taiwan.

On the first question: Please rate the controls from 1-4 and describe what you like about the controls or any issues you come across? None of the participants were dissatisfied with the controls. Fourteen percent (1) of participants rated the controls as a 1 and were not satisfied with

them. 42% (3) rated the controls as a 2 and were satisfied with them, 28% (2) were very satisfied, 21% (4) suggested that there were other issues that they needed to deal with when playing the game. On the second question: How much did you enjoy the game compared to your expectations before playing? No participants enjoyed the game more than they expected, fifty-seven percent (4) enjoyed the game as much they expected and 28% (2) enjoyed it less than they had expected to and one participant did not respond to this question. On question three, what is your stance on the interface of Adventure Ques? Did the interface provide enough information or too little? What could be improved on? Fourteen percent (1) of participants were dissatisfied, forty-two percent (3) was not satisfied, twenty-eight percent (2) were satisfied, and fourteen percent (1) were very satisfied. On question four, please rate the tutorial system. Was it overbearing, did it provide enough information, or did it leave you confused with what to do afterword? Twenty-eight percent (2) participants said that the tutorial system felt natural and intuitive to them, twenty-eight percent (2) said it took getting used to and they would get it eventually while twenty-eight percent (2) said that it was extremely difficult, and the game was unplayable. One participant did not respond to this question. On fifth question, before you quit, what level did you make it to (1-12)? Twenty-eight percent (2) of participants reached level 3, fourteen percent (1) reached level 4, fourteen percent (1) reached level 5 and fourteen percent (1) reached level 8 and twenty-eight percent (2) reached level 12. On question six, select the area that needs most improvement, fourteen percent (1) said that HP/damage/item Balance and game balance, twenty-eight percent (2) said the game's tutorial system, fourteen percent (1) said that the leveling experience, fourteen percent (1) said user interface and twenty-eight percent (2) reported that there were other issues that needed to be addressed in the game which needed improvement. On question seven, adventure quest style selection rates, fifty-seven (4) percent of

participants chose to play as mages while forty-two percent played as rogues. The researcher expected this choice. On question eight, what is your view of the microtransaction system? Eighty-six percent of participants did not use it or investigate, while only fourteen percent (1) did feel that there was enough content provided connected to this system. On question nine, twenty-eight percent (2) said they would rather play Adventure Quest 3D, fifty-seven percent (4) said that they would prefer to play the classical Adventure Quest, while fourteen percent (1) did not want to play either game again. Players had been playing this game since 2004 but appeared not to like the game even after playing the game in the past. On question ten, what is your experience playing rpg's and jrpg's in years, fourteen percent (1) had ten to fifteen years of experience playing, twenty-eight (2) percent had fifteen to twenty years of experience, forty-two percent (3) had twenty to thirty years of experience and one had thirty years or more of experience playing videogames.

Body

Usability & Playtesting

The game is provided as a solo experience. These were veteran players that had played the game before. They did not record their responses but chose to answer the questions in Survey Monkey. The players complained that the game tutorial did not provide players with enough information. There were specific player expectations, since it appears that they were expecting more from the play, but because it was an old game it had much to be desired. Participants complained about spacing and focal points in the game and that information was squeezed into small spaces in it. System interaction in the game was very confusing and would have been extremely difficult if these players had not been veteran players in the game.

What is this game?

Adventure Quest Classic is a traditional turn-based action RPG released for play on a browser or via a downloadable client launcher. The objective of the game is to pick a starting class and then progress through the open-world via a node-driven point and click world map with clickable events highlighted as red or green buttons with descriptions. The map itself for new players will have most of its locations pre-identified and blocked from player access unless the player completes a prior questline, gained levels in a class, multiple classes, and or has paid a one-time user microtransaction for an updated account status that is being to set to a guardian.

Hypothesis

There were four hypothese that were developed at the beginning of this study. The first hypothesis was that players would have enough content to progress through the game without being significantly impacted by reminders and blocks of the microtransaction system when it came to accessing content.

The second hypothesis was that people will always choose the same two at the start of the game and will probably ignore attempts. out of a desire to master one class first or because of issues such as time constraints and to prevent confusion with how the game works, if too much is tried too early.

The third hypothesis was that players will attempt to grind out levels in the same area as opposed to trying out different locations in the game.

The fourth hypothesis was that players would rather continue with the classic version as opposed to jumping ship to the other iterations of the game because the oldest version would have the most content.

The researcher would normally expect players to be easily swayed by modern improvements such as multiplayer, graphical increase, interface overhauls, variation of play across different devices, and other features. I want to see if nostalgia and or content holds more value to players of the game and why this is the case.

After analyzing this survey, all four original hypotheses submitted on the PowerPoint draft were accepted.

Analysis of Methods

This project survey was created by this researcher alone as opposed to being done by a team. As previously stated, the researcher targeted veteran players to mitigate much of the risk or possible interferences with the results that were hoped for. In the initial submitted draft, the researcher mentioned that they would make a request for game testers on school discord but changed this due to not knowing the kind of content some of these gamers played and how much of a veteran any of them were. As such, the researcher decided to target game testers on Facebook, My Indie Team and groups such as Linkedin, and Steam. The survey results were then judged based on the comments below each question in addition to what they had selected in question compared with other survey takers. The researcher wanted to gain a grasp of people's stances were on controls, interfaces and how long it took them to level a class. A couple more metrics were what players found to be problematic with the UI, interface or combat with regards to it being broken, unpolished, easy to use, confusing, and its effect on their leveling experience. Would this cause a player to drop the game early or was it because the dropped the game because of time constraints? What is the similarity and difference between players, what is right and wrong with the game and would the data stand against my hypothesis?

Data Analysis Results and Inferences

The game was not considered to be very friendly to new players. Although the interface was not completely bare, players were confused about costs and statistics and how these worked in the game and how this affected play. They were also concerned about the effectiveness of elemental weaponry in the game combat and how well it was working. Based on player comments, the point and click system in the game was easy to use except in the shop and the trees and there were some major concerns the art and that there was not enough space in the game. When it came to tutorials, these were very limited in the game, although there were participants that skipped them when they started their play. Some participants found the tutorials that were being offered in the game tiresome, while others found that it did not help them with the game. Participants suggested that the levels needed more balancing and that the leveling matching with enemies in the game, did not work, since there was a level mismatch. Testers suggested that the game itself, its graphics, micro and its adventure lists could be organized better.

Limitations

In designing this study, the researcher did not develop questions that provided enough demographics for this study. Only two demographics were included as an after-thought, and they were the sex of the seven participants and their country of origin.

The researcher limited the questions asked during the game test to ten. If more questions had been asked, or other questions had been asked, the study results may have been different and with more questions, additional information about the game test and how it really went could have been gathered.

Validity Limitations

There survey had good construct validity because it was able to test the game for which it was developed and measured what it purported to measure quite well. Although the limitations that existed were often due to the wording that was used to construct the test questions. The survey had reasonable internal validity, since when looking at the answers given by participants about playing the game, these could be compared with objective events related to the game experience, some of the time. External validity for the survey would be problematic, since no statistical calculations were done that could determine the degree of confidence to which the causal relationship tested was being influenced by other variables.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was determined that veteran players of *Adventure Quest* do not care about graphics in the game, but they do care about the content and interface in the game that draws the players in. In moving forward, major improvements would need to be made to both the *Adventure Quest and Adventure Quest 3D* games so that players can use the game in the future and choose not to quit playing them too early in the future.

References

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