

Critique of “Dungeon Trawler” Treatment

September 2004 by Mario Georgio for IMGD 111x

Summary

In the *Summary* section, you mention that Dungeon Trawler is a combination of Gauntlet and Diablo, but it is not clear what parts of the gameplay will be drawn from each game. It would be good to add something that indicates what you will take from each of these classic games. Also, the list of features could use a bit more detail for each of the bullets, as what you have leaves a lot of questions: Why have multiple heroes? Dungeon Trawler may have RPG elements, but what elements will you include? Will it be a skill tree like Diablo? Will it be levels like D&D? How will the player get items and equipment? Why will the player bother solving puzzles if this is an action game?

Overview

The *Concept* section is good, but again it would be good to capture what you hope to take from each of the games you are drawing ideas from. Also, in some places the text is unclear, for instance when you say “Within the dungeon lie untold riches, magical secrets, and powerful arsenals – if you survive,” it sounds like that stuff will only be put in the dungeon if you make it out alive. This is kind of confusing, considering the treasure is what you are going into the dungeon for in the first place, right?

The *Genre* and *Player Motivation* sections really need to be expanded. For the *Genre* section, “Cadash” is a 2D Action/RPG but it is nothing like either Gauntlet or Diablo. Add some brief description that gives us a better idea of where in the “2D Action/RPG” genre it falls. For the *Player Motivation* section, it is not clear why this game will be exciting, and what will keep that player coming back to play a second and third time. We’re not sure how you wish to achieve this, but you need to find a way to justify the replay value.

The *Novel Features* section of course has the same problems as the feature list in the *Summary*, although you do mention that each Hero will have different abilities. This feature list should be even more detailed than your revised list in the *summary*.

The *Target Platform* section is mostly good. It is clear that the game is meant for modern budget-PCs, and that it will require no special input devices. But you should probably mention what input devices it will use, such as will you use the mouse to play, and if you want to use a joystick will you be able to?

The *Design Goals* section gets the point across, but the language sounds more like notes taken at a meeting than clearly stated design goals. We would re-word this section to elaborate a bit and make the goals clearer.

The *Game Play* section is good but again the details could be more elaborate. Where will all these monsters be coming from? If the projectiles that the player fires will be based on his weapon, what is the difference between the different heroes? Do all the exits from a room go to the same place? Will the player be able to shop and save his game at any time? More details!

Production Details

This section looks fine. You might want to add not only your team members' backgrounds, but also how they will contribute to the project.

Game World

We really like the back-story. Even so, maybe some flavor text to give it a little more atmosphere - like what the fearful townspeople say about Gatloppus.

The *Character* section is really good. The back-story for each character makes them all sound very exciting. It is good that you finally mention the differences in what equipment they can use – you should probably mention this earlier in the document as well. The descriptions of each hero's strengths and weaknesses are also good. One thing we found missing, and maybe this could go in the "Game Play" section, was a description of how the game play will be different based on which hero you choose, as well as how their strengths and weaknesses affect their game play.

The section describing the different weapons and armors is good – it gets the point across of how these will affect game play. The *Items* section is ok, but you don't mention anywhere in the document how items will be used, so it might be good to add it here.

The *Monsters* section needs a bit of work. You describe what the monsters are, but not how they will act in the game. What methods do these monsters use to deal damage to the player? How do they behave when attacking – are they crafty, or aggressive, or cowardly?

Final Notes

Overall the Dungeon Trawler Treatment gives a good overview of the game, but we find it lacking in a few ways. Firstly, some of the details are unclear, or only mentioned in one place. Risking a bit of redundancy would be Ok if it makes sure the point gets across. Secondly, the descriptions and language are a bit brief and unexciting in some places. We'd go over the document once more and try to make the wording as attention grabbing and exciting as possible to make sure that this document sells the idea of your game.