

DEVIL:ANGEL

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DEVIL:ANGEL — BRING DOWN THE GODS

PROCESS OF DESIGN

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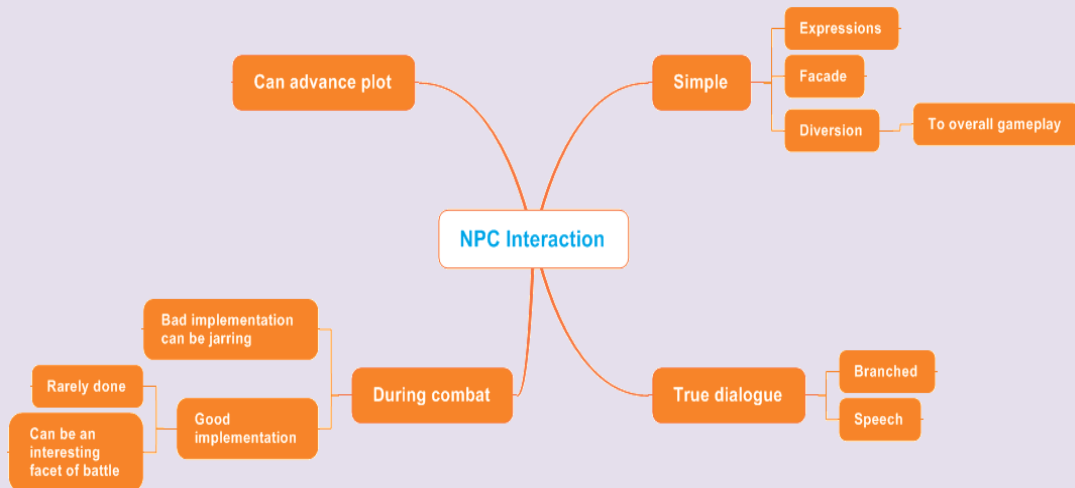
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1.0 Problem

1.1 – Problem Overview

The game envisioned is some form of fantasy adventure/RPG hybrid featuring the opposing factions of good and evil. These two factions are vying for dominance over each other and the innocent populace is stuck in the middle.

The first step is to outline the various problems that arose during the design process; this list would be constantly updated to provide an at-a-glance overview of the creative process.

- Create a concept document for a fantasy adventure game.
- What makes an adventure game?
- Aesthetics
 - Graphical style
 - Camera
 - Environments
- Platform & Target Audience
- Combat
- Focus
- Characters
- Story
- Mechanics #1
- Mechanics #2
- Interacting with NPCs
- Finalising the design

To develop a fully fleshed out concept it was necessary to tackle each area as a separate tier. The first step was to establish exactly which factors form a typical “adventure” game.

1.2 – Problem Tier 1

1.2.1 - What makes an adventure game?

The “adventure” genre is a broad one which encompasses a great many sub-genres. To create a successful game it is necessary to research popular titles within this broad spectrum and define their core components.

- ***Go to Research Tier One (2.1)***

1.3 – Problem Tier 2 – Aesthetics

By the end of this tier, the hope is to establish a firm grounding of the aesthetics of the game, its overall feel and begin to get some indication of which platform best meets these criteria.

1.3.1 – Graphical style

To formulate a fitting graphical style for the game, it is necessary to get an understanding of some of the styles currently in use and which can be best adapted to the game.

1.3.2 - Camera – 3rd person – use a spline during some areas

Though technically a mechanic, the camera ties in closely with graphics and how the game world is perceived by the player. The goal here is not to set in stone the exact mechanics of how the camera will work, but to analyse various styles and see which one best fits the game.

1.3.3 – Environment

Whilst considering the merits of various graphical styles and camera this is a good time to get a handle on what kind of imagery should be present within the game. A key goal of this is to identify typical objects and elements of scenery should be present in the game world. To this end the research will be restricted to only games with the fantasy adventure/RPG remit. This will allow me to make an informed final decision as to the overall game aesthetic and begin to think about how these elements will fit into level designs.

- ***Go to Research Tier Two (2.2)***

1.4 – Problem Tier 3 – Defining the audience

1.4.1 - What platform

With the backbone of the game beginning to take form, now is a good time to discern which platform is actually capable of bringing the game to life. By understanding the specifications and limitations of the intended hardware the complexity of various game mechanics can be scaled accordingly.

It is also important to understand which demographics are usually associated with particular platforms, this information will be used to help finalise the game’s target audience.

1.4.2 - Target audience

In order to move forward in the design process it is necessary to define who exactly will be playing the final game. By deciding upon the game’s primary

audience at this stage it becomes easier to craft an enjoyable experience for that audience. This also helps define the overall tone of the game and how visceral the combat will be.

- **[Go to Research Tier Three \(2.3\)](#)**

1.5 – Problem Tier 4 – Combat

1.5.1 - Combat

From the high-level specification of the game, it is understood that combat will form an integral part of the player experience within Devil:Angel. To provide a rousing and challenging experience for the player it is necessary to research some of the more successful implementations over recent years. Again, a particular focus will be put upon games within the fantasy remit.

These findings will then form the basis of creating the optimum combat implementation for use in the game.

- **[Go to Research Tier Four \(2.4\)](#)**

1.6 – Problem Tier 5 – Focus

The aim of this tier will be to start setting in stone particular facets of the design that will determine the direction and theme of the game, transforming them from the high-level notions touched upon earlier into fully fleshed out concepts.

The decisions made in this tier will allow the rest of the game to be fleshed out in an expedient manner. It will highlight key areas that need to be focused on to create a rounded product. As this tier is about defining the direction of the game itself, it will be drawing upon prior research from previous tiers, thus the process moves immediately to the synthesis stage.

1.6.1 – Game direction

With the cumulative research performed so far, there is now enough information to finalise the overall direction of the game. This stage will amalgamate the decisions made in synthesis to define the direction the game is to take.

1.6.2 - Setting and themes

A convincing setting is crucial to player immersion within the game world. This section will draw upon the environment research and synthesis performed earlier to set out just how the game world will look and feel. It will explore and define key themes that should be conveyed in the game world.

1.6.3 – Structure of the game world

The final step in defining the focus of the game and moving the design process forward is to define just how exactly the game world is set out. By getting a handle on how the game world is set out it will be easier to craft the player experience.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier Five \(3.5\)](#)**

1.7 – Problem Tier 6 – Characters

Having defined the look, layout and feel of the game world, the first step in tackling the focus areas is to flesh out the key characters within the game world.

In order to create convincing characters for the game, there is a need to research characters that could be associated with the notion of “divine” and also those that could be associated with “menace/evil.” The aim here is to identify common elements, distinctive features and/or traits that are shared by such characters so they can potentially be adapted to characters in Devil:Angel.

1.7.1 – The Protagonist

The protagonist should, by design, pose questions that the player wants answering. As a being that can potentially use both divine and demonic powers, the player will want to know how he has gained these abilities.

The protagonist should be something that the player can identify with. There should be an air of mystery surrounding them. The player character should also be something of a “blank slate” in some regards, allowing the player to assume the mantle of the protagonist themselves.

1.7.2 – Major Characters

It is prudent to develop a greater understanding as to why certain character types appeal to players and why some are more forgettable than others. Since Devil:Angel will have a relatively small cast it is essential to understand these factors and build on them.

1.7.3 – Enemies (Major)

There are a small number of enemies that are not technically classified as characters, but are still more important than generic enemies. Enemies that fall into this category are to be detailed here. This list does not include characters that have already been defined as enemies in 1.7.2.

1.7.4 – Enemies (Generic)

The minor NPCs and various enemies need to be mapped out and documented to finalise this section. This stage will focus on the various enemies that the player will face as the game progresses.

1.7.5 – Weaponry

As this section has covered the weaponry some of the characters will be using it is a good idea to further detail these in this section. This final stage will serve to round off the overall character designs.

- **[Go to Research Tier Five \(2.5\)](#)**

1.8 – Problem Tier 7 – Story

This tier will focus on developing the overall story that the player will experience throughout the course of the game. As this tier revolves around the creation of a unique story utilising the assets developed through earlier tiers, it will move directly to synthesis.

1.8.1 – Storyline

Having laid out strong foundations for the game world and the characters that reside within it, the next step is to flesh out the story. This will also provide a rough indication of how the player will progress through the game.

1.8.2 – Game Endings

To round off the storyline it is essential to define some of the possible endings that the player can achieve.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier Seven \(3.7\)](#)**

1.9 – Problem Tier 8 – Mechanics #1

Having laid out strong foundations for the game world and the characters that reside within it, the next step is to define the game rules and set out exactly how various game mechanics will function.

1.9.1 – Overarching Game Rules - Player death & Game over

There is a need to decide upon key elements of the game before proceeding further. Questions such as how player death is handled must be answered in detail in order to move forward in the design process.

1.9.2 – Carrying over equipment & skills / New Game+

Since the game is somewhat cyclic in nature, it is necessary to determine what is carried over to the next cycle when the player successfully completes the game.

1.9.3 – Gaining and maintaining Divine/Devil powers

The protagonist has the unique ability to utilise both Divine and Demonic abilities, as detailed in his back-story. This stage will focus on describing some of the abilities the player can acquire during the game. This notion extends beyond combat however, and a system is required to manage and evaluate the player's actions in the game world.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier Eight \(3.8\)](#)**

1.10 – Problem Tier 9 – Mechanics #2

1.10.1 – The 7 day time limit

As detailed earlier, the game takes place over a period of seven days. In order to facilitate a powerful narrative and craft a unique player experience within these limits it is necessary to plan out just exactly how this seven day system will work in terms of gameplay.

1.10.2 – Horsemen of the Apocalypse

The horsemen of the Apocalypse are tied in with the storyline of the game. They are allied with neither the Divine or Demonic factions yet play a key role in determining the outcome of the game. In this section their role in the game is explained.

1.10.3 – Bounty Hunting

An interesting diversion that the player can undertake is Bounty Hunting. The focus of this stage is to determine exactly how the system works within the game and what its purpose within the game world is.

(Mainly focuses around human-problems like cultists and vampire related problems)

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier Nine \(3.9\)](#)**

1.11 – Problem Tier 10 – Interacting with NPCs

In order to put the finishing touches to the overall design, it is essential to dictate how much interaction is afforded to the player when dealing with NPCs. Since Devil:Angel is to be a streamlined, action-oriented RPG is essential not to tip the scales too far.

1.11.1 – Interacting with NPCs

The aim of this stage is to set out how much scope for dialog will be given to the player and to determine who the player is able to talk to.

1.11.2 – Interacting with NPCs during combat

The final stage of this tier will establish whether there will be any dialog during combat, and whether it is instigated by the player or an enemy character.

- **[Go to Research Tier Six \(2.6\)](#)**

1.12 – Problem Tier 11 – Finalising the design

In order to create a definitive Game Design Document to pushes and underlines the game vision it is essential to detail the unique selling points of the game and also reaffirm the pillars of design that support the game and serve as driving factors during the development process.

As the various game mechanics have now been fully mapped out a control map also assists in conveying how the game will function to readers of the document.

1.11.1 – Unique Selling Points (USPs)

This section focuses on identifying the unique factors of Devil:Angel that set it apart from competing products.

1.11.2 – Core Pillars

The core pillars of gameplay that support the game as a whole are to be explored and detailed in this section.

1.11.3 – Control map

The suggested default control map for the Xbox 360 controller is documented in this section.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier Eleven \(3.11\)](#)**

2.0 Research

2.1 Research Tier One

2.1.1 – What makes a fantasy adventure game? (Research Tier One)

Games are categorised into various genres based on their content. In order to appeal to a wider audience and to deliver the best possible experience, many modern games transcend traditional notions of “genre” by hybridising their core components from many different styles of game. To establish a foundation for the game it is beneficial to gain an understanding of the term “genre” and the understood notion of “adventure” within the scope of videogames:

Definition of game genre:

“A genre is a loose set of criteria for a category of composition; the term is often used to categorize literature and speech, but is also used for any other form of art or utterance. Genres are vague categories with no fixed boundaries, they are formed by sets of conventions, and many works cross into multiple genres by way of borrowing and recombining these conventions.”

*Definition of game genre [Year Unknown] Available from:
“<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genre>”*

Definition of adventure genre:

“...in the context of a narrative, is typically applied to works in which the protagonist or other major characters are consistently placed in dangerous situations... In games, the term is less consistently applied: the term "adventure game" is used in reference to video game that make use of exploration, while role-playing games use the term "adventure" in reference to specific pre-planned segments of gameplay.”

*Definition of game genre [Year Unknown] Available from:
“[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventure_\(genre\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventure_(genre))”*

Fantasy within the adventure genre:

“The adventure genre's focus on story allows it to draw heavily from other narrative-based media, such as literature and film. Adventure games encompass a wide variety of literary genres, including fantasy, science fiction, mystery, horror, and comedy. Nearly all adventure games are designed for a single player, since the heavy emphasis on story and character makes multi-player design difficult.”

*Definition of game genre [Year Unknown] Available from: “From:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adventure_game”*

Having determined the overall remit of the game, the next step is to investigate and document examples of various fantasy adventure games, be they self-styled action adventure titles or hybrid role-players and establish their successes and failings. To achieve this, several existing titles will be analysed in greater depth:

2.1.2 – Fable 2
(One)

(Research Tier

Release: October 2008

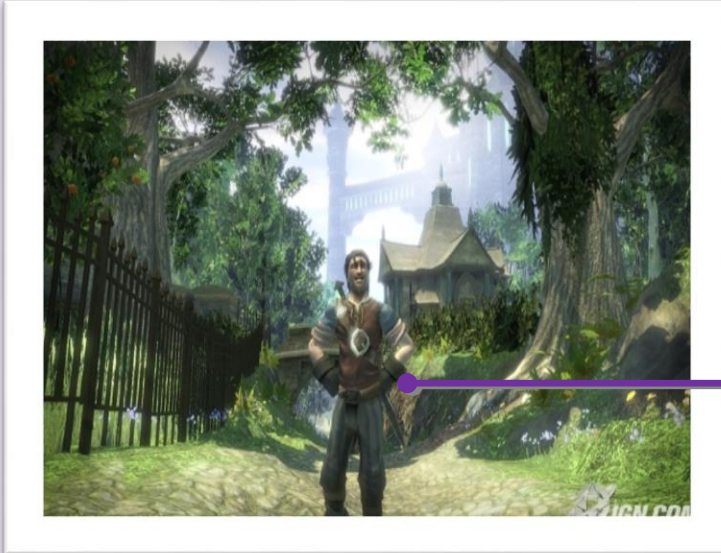
Platform: Xbox 360

Developer: Lionhead Studios

Publisher: Microsoft

USPs: Freedom, customisation, user-friendly.

(1)

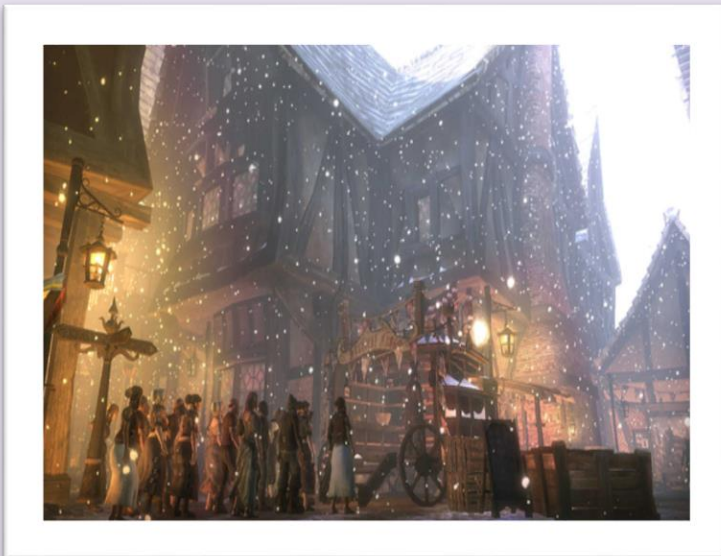


Typically, adventure games feature a vast array of varied locales. Fable II is no exception.

The player is afforded a lot of freedom in a relatively open game world.

The player is free to customise the appearance of their avatar to their liking, buying more clothing, getting tattoos and altering their physical appearance. This allows them to develop a more vested interest in their character and take a greater interest in the game world as a whole.

(2)



NPCs react to the player differently depending on what actions they take during the game.

Different weather effects allow existing locations to be given a new look – increasing their reusability.

Importance of lighting in setting the scene/mood. The street lights here make the overall scene more authentic through simple glow effects, adding a natural ambience to the area and underlining the fantasy style of the game.

(3)



Fable II featured a combat system that was both simple yet surprisingly deep. Melee, ranged and magic attacks were mapped to three separate buttons and can be seamlessly interlinked to form various combos.

This allowed novice players to experience the game without having to learn myriad control nuances whilst simultaneously allowing more hardcore gamers to perfect the system and develop adept fighting styles to quickly overcome their adversaries.

2.1.3 – Overlord

Release: June 2007

Platform: Xbox 360

Developer: Triumph Studios

Publisher: Codemasters

USPs: Play as the bad guy, develop/customise your castle

(Research Tier One)

(4)



Overlord moves the genre in a slightly different direction, requiring the player to utilise a horde of “minions” to interact with the environment.

NPCs react to the player’s actions. Performing acts of evil will make you less popular with the general populace.

Melee combat is a little rigid and clunky; impeding what is otherwise a refined system. Each of the weapons (sword, axe, mace) control identically with only minor differences in strength and speed.

(5)



The player must use “minions” to navigate through the game world and solve puzzles. Without maintaining an army of minions, the player is unable to navigate through the game.

Minion control and micro-management can be awkward since there are 4 different minion types that potentially must be directed separately in real-time.

Despite being advertised as a game where you can be evil, the player was fairly restricted in what they could do.

(6)



The Overlord has a formidable magical arsenal at his disposal, enabling the player to defend and support his minions when in combat.

There are several tiers & schools of magic that the player is able to learn, allowing the player some measure of freedom in choosing how to dispatch their adversaries. This also serves to make the player want to seek out new abilities and become more powerful.

Certain spells are more useful in some situations than others. Fire-based destruction spells are overpowered while some spells are rarely used.

2.1.4 – ICO

Release: September 2001

Platform: PS2

Developer: SCEI

Publisher: Sony

USPs: Narrative, Graphics, originality, videogames as art

(Research Tier One)

(7)



Ico excels in delivering its narrative in anything other than words. That is, the player is able to identify with the protagonists and immerse themselves despite the fact they don't understand exactly what is being said.

Ico is easy to relate to as a protagonist as he is not ridiculously overpowered – he is a boy fighting off enemies with a stick and combat plays out as such. As a result the player approaches gameplay altogether more cautiously, which is in line with the design of the game.

(8)



Ico expertly blends puzzle solving, exploration and combat.

One of the best implementations of a “sidekick” character. The player must escort Princess Yorda through the castle, yet will often be reliant on her (sometimes indirect) help to solve many of the game's puzzles.

Simplicity is one of the game's greatest assets. There are no menu/inventory screens to navigate, nor sophisticated combat systems to master. This allows players to immediately jump into the game on relatively equal footing.

(9)



From the moment the game begins, the player is projected into the game world and the relatively small number of cut-scenes ensures this suspension of disbelief is not broken. This proves that an effective title should consistently involve the player and not rely on extensive cut-scenes as the sole means of rewarding the player.

2.1.5 – Shadow of the Colossus One)

Release: October 2005

Platform: PS2

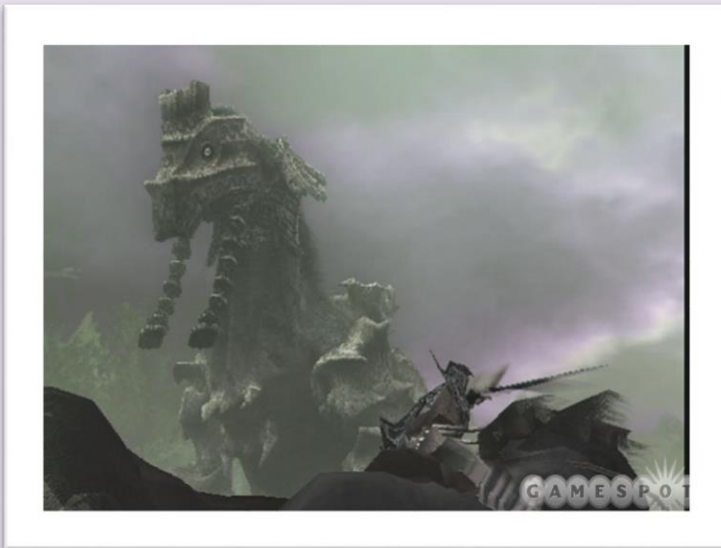
Developer: SCEI

(Research Tier

Publisher: Sony

USPs: Narrative, Graphics, originality

(10)

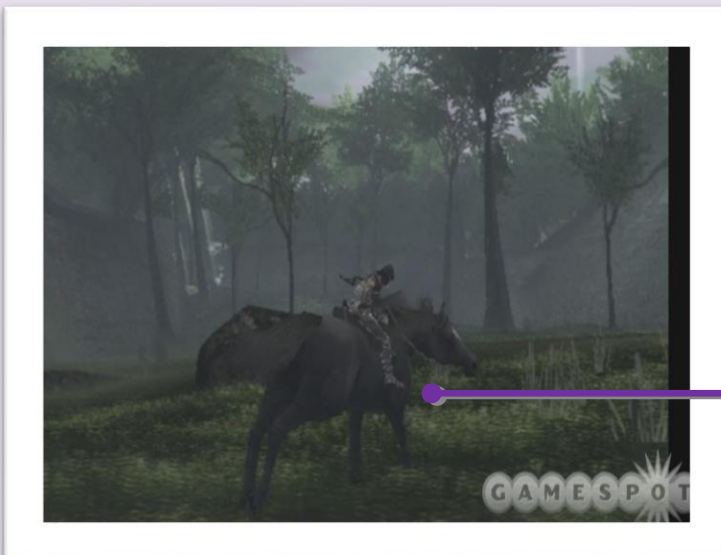


Unique premise and execution in that the game is essentially sixteen boss battles.

Weapons can be mapped to individual buttons to facilitate fluid combat on a player by player basis.

The game was so different that many gamers are unable to appreciate it for what it is, requiring such a leap of faith from consumers so as to render it a failure commercially. This indicates that stepping too far from the perceived norm is not always the best strategy.

(11)

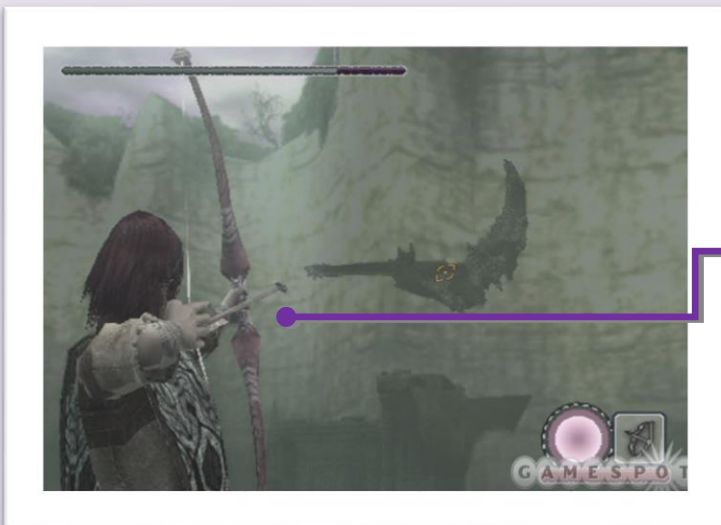


Between battles the game is heavily reliant on player driven exploration. This involves death-defying feats of acrobatics and traversing an aptly sized game world on a horse.

Furthermore, poor controls for your primary mode of transportation further hamper many players' experience with the game.

The game features a powerful and ironic game ending – this demonstrates the importance of providing an end goal for the player that they actually want to strive towards.

(12)



Graphically and stylistically, the game plays to its strengths. Lush plains and forests play host to dilapidated ruins and stunning creatures.

Climactic boss battles that truly test the player's wit and skill. The player is forced to consider how to take down the colossi with their limited weaponry.

Some issues with the camera when battling large enemies up-close, however, in terms of scale alone, the boss battles are epic, with music that matches with the action unfolding on screen.

Platform: PS2
Developer: CyberConnect2
Publisher: Namco Bandai
USPs: Simulated MMORPG

(13)

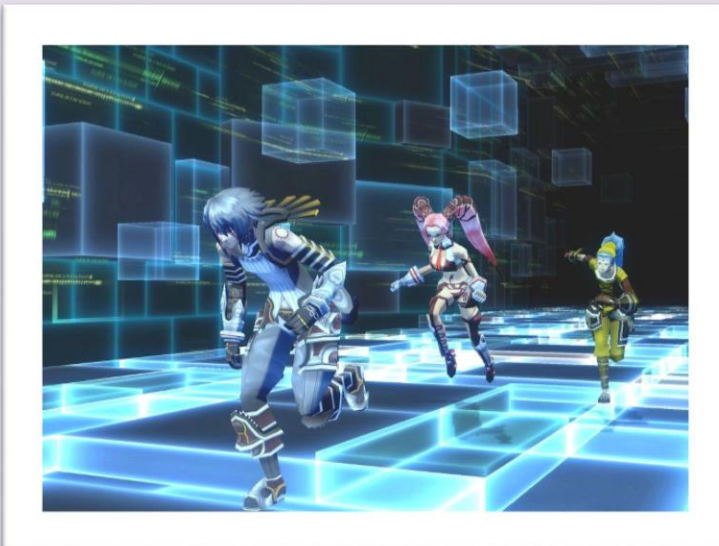


Hybrid RPG / Adventure. Realtime combat and exploration move it into the broader “adventure” category.

Strong narrative delivered through scripted cut-scenes.

Distinctive character designs allow the player to easily identify key characters from generic NPCs.

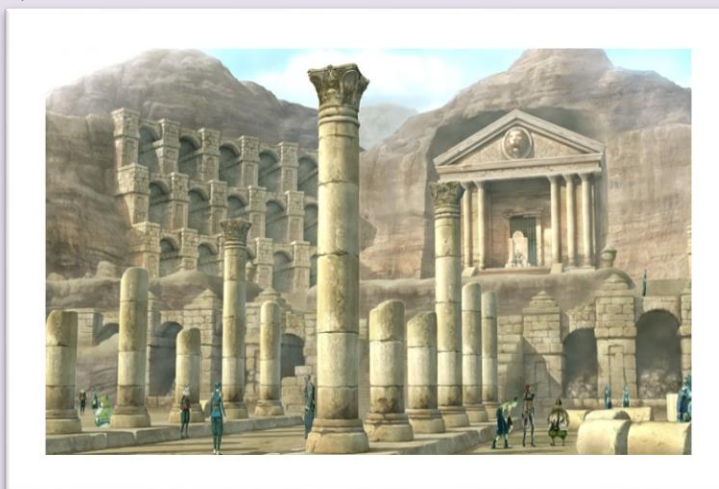
(14)



Fantasy setting in a simulated MMORPG environment. Many varied themed environments serve as dungeons from which the player can collect treasure and equipment. These rewards serve as the incentive to explore optional, randomly generated dungeons.

Special attacks and spells can be set to a skill trigger wheel. This “trigger wheel” is activated with via a dedicated button, and pauses gameplay when used, allowing quick access to up to four special moves. These help maintain fluid gameplay in battle.

(15)



By the third game, the player is able to use up to four different weapons, linking each together through distinctive special moves. This adds diversity to combat – a necessity for lengthy titles that span a considerable number of hours.

There are several spells that can be acquired but these pale in comparison to the melee combat through poor balancing.

2.1.7 – Legacy of Kain: Defiance One)

Release: November 2003

(Research Tier

Platform: PS2
Developer: Crystal Dynamics
Publisher: Eidos Interactive
USPs: Play as a vampire

(16)

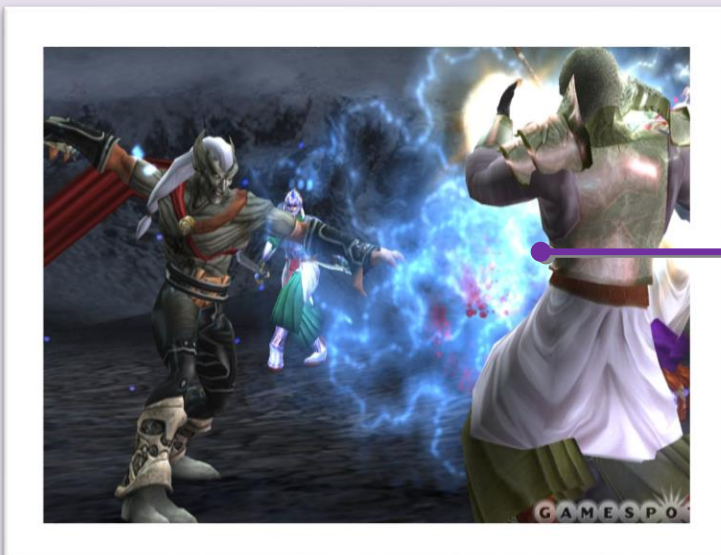


Very restrictive game world with little scope to encourage players to explore. This is actually a step back from the first game in the series..

Relatively linear gameplay, with little replay value for the player.

Most quests/tasks consist of getting from point A to point B to obtain an item, fighting generic enemies along the way. There is little deviation from this baseline which can lead to the player becoming bored of repeatedly doing the same tasks.

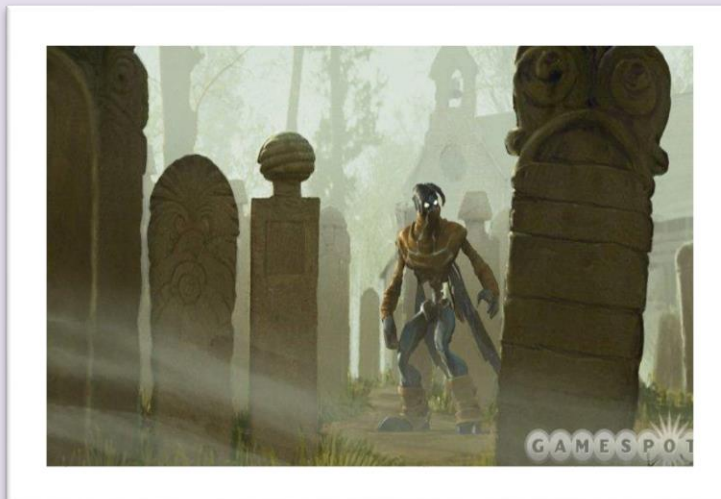
(17)



The player can employ various magic spells such as lightning and telekinesis.

Melee combat is fairly uninspired. The player learns a few additional attacks during the course of the game, which can be executed by combining the D-pad/Analog stick with the appropriate button but most moves are aesthetical changes and serve little strategic value.

(18)



The series features an interesting gimmick in that protagonist Raziel is able to enter a “spectral realm” which shifts and warps the environment in real-time to allow the player to bypass various obstacles.

Outside of cut-scenes the camera is generally locked on a spline path and at most can be tilted up or down very slightly. Therefore, when back-tracking the player is unable to see where he is heading. This can cause considerable frustration when travelling through rooms full of traps and other hazards.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier 1](#)**

2.2 Research Tier Two – Graphical Style

2.2.1 – Graphical style – Folklore - Realism (Fantasy) (Research Tier Two)

Release: September 2007

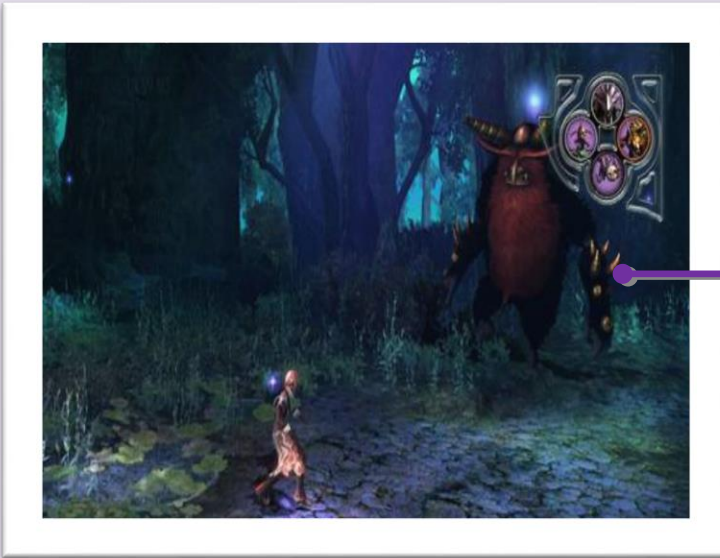
Platform: PS3

Developer: Game Republic

Publisher: Sony

USPs: Highly detailed, realistic graphics, two player characters, varied magic

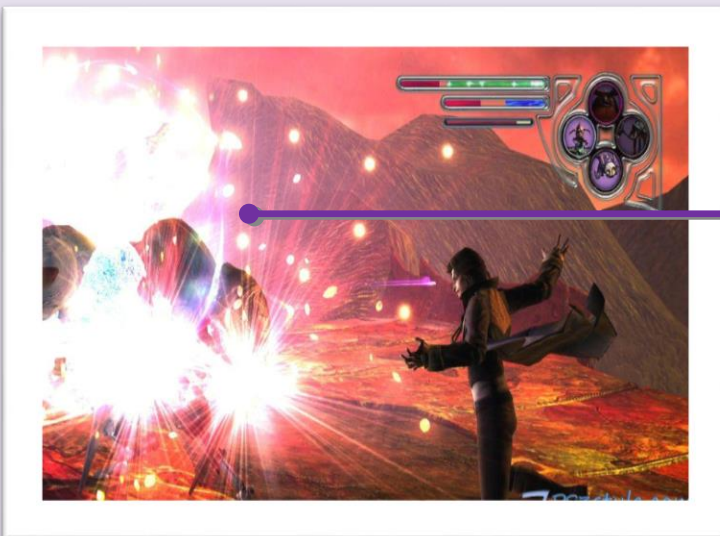
(19)



Folklore features exceptional graphics and is a good representation of what the Xbox 360 and PS3 are capable of within the fantasy adventure mould. The game takes place through a series of fantasy worlds which the player enters through magical gates.

The highly realistic human characters don't always work particularly well with some of the more cartoon-like monster designs. Resulting in something of a mismatch between two graphical styles.

(20)



Vivid colours bring the multitude of game worlds to life and give each environment an ethereal feel.

Spectacular magic effects are used to further the mystique of the game world, many making considerable use of particles and intense glow effects to achieve the desired results.

Current generation consoles and high end PC's are capable of dynamic lighting and shadow effects, these effects come together to form the often ostentatious game worlds, such as the one to the left.

(21)



The PS3 and Xbox 360 have enough power to begin recreating realistic grass/ground effects. In the screen to the left, the grass, brown earth and patch of flowers are distinct and blend together well.

The additional power of the top tier consoles allows for truly unique character designs, dynamically incorporating stylistic effects that are not possible with weaker machines.

2.2.2 – Graphical style – Zelda – Realistic Two)

Release: November 2006

Platform: Wii

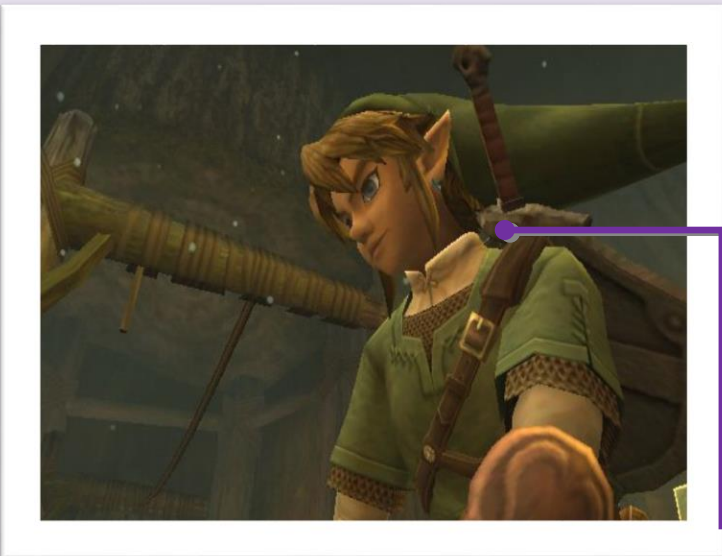
Developer: Nintendo

Publisher: Nintendo

USPs: Continuation of well known IP, high fantasy adventure

(Research Tier

(22)



Twilight Princess is a good example of the power of the Nintendo Wii, which is able to produce stunning game worlds even without the graphical processing power of its rivals.

The developers have achieved a fitting, realistic look that suits the game theme without striving for photorealism, which would likely break the game.

This style is especially well suited to games in the fantasy genre, allowing for detailed textures for the character models while leaving room for artistic scope.

(23)



This style still allows for abstract and memorable character/monster designs and thus is ideal for the fantasy adventure/RPG genres.

The overall aesthetic uses colour sparingly, with shades of grey, green and brown forming the game's palette. This works well - by using neutral colours and adhering to a restricted palette it actually strengthens the overall aesthetic. It is a stark contrast to predecessor Wind Waker's vibrant colour scheme.

(24)



Models are suitably detailed, well animated and in keeping with the style of the game.

The graphics have a more mature feeling than previous entries to the Zelda franchise, whilst still retaining the overall style and theme of the older titles. This also changes the overall tone of the game, perhaps allowing it to appeal to a wider audience than the divisive cel-shading of its predecessor Wind Waker.

2.2.3 – Graphical style- Overlord Dark Legend – Realistic (Research Tier Two)

Release: In development

Platform: Wii

Developer: Climax

Publisher: Codemasters

USPs: Be the bad guy, ransack villages, become more powerful

(25)



Overlord Dark Legend features incredible graphics for both environments and character models, especially when taking into account the technical limitations of the Nintendo Wii.

The graphical style used allows for believable and humorous character designs and expressions.

Highly stylised character designs are commonplace; characters do not necessarily have to be realistically proportioned to be effective.

(26)



The sunlight filtering through gaps in the environment enhances the aesthetic both visually and subconsciously guides the player toward points of interest.

Light is also used to give the game world a hazy, almost ethereal feel,

This style of graphics successfully mixes high fantasy with realistic visuals, making it a suitable style for Devil:Angel.

(27)



It's easier to create a fun and imaginative game world when using non-photorealistic graphics. Overlord: Dark Legend opts for a middle ground, which is effective in realising its high fantasy roots and mixing in stunning visuals.

Ground textures blend together well and help create a believable atmosphere for the game.

Both character and object models are highly detailed, moving with an acceptable degree of fluidity and casting realistic, dynamic shadows.

2.2.4 – Graphical style – Zelda – Cel-shaded Two)

(Research Tier

Release: March 2003
 Platform: GameCube
 Developer: Nintendo
 Publisher: Nintendo
 USPs: Distinct appearance

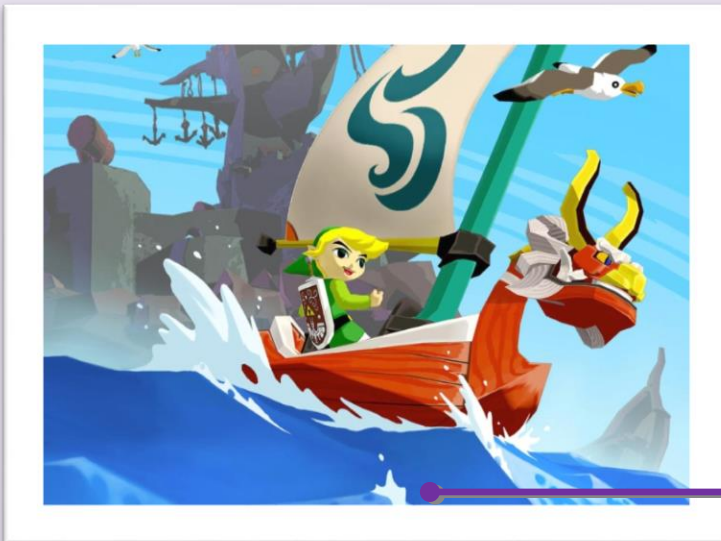
(28)



Cel-shaded games allow for immense scope of creativity. Wind Waker's designs are striking, colourful with considerable attention to detail, despite looking simplistic at first glance.

Cel-shaded visuals allow for expressive and emotive character expressions. Link has an innumerable number of context-sensitive facial expressions which convey information/feelings to the player.

(29)



Cel-shading can be used to create some stunning effects, such as the water in the screen to the left. It could be argued that graphical effects like these are more impressive than photorealism.

Cel-shading is often likened to Japanese anime, as it can be extremely effective in displaying a character's emotions, there are however many variants that come under the umbrella of cel-shading and some of these deviate from this stereotype.

Wind Waker also featured large draw distances, which aided the new direction the graphics took considerably.

(30)



Some variants are very unique and memorable; Wind Waker's billowing smoke effects to the left are very distinct and fit within the overall tone of the game very well.

Cel-shading is becoming more and more popular with all audiences, with many different variants delivering unique results it is becoming more prevalent across all genres.

2.2.5 – Graphical style – SMT: Persona 4 – Cel-shaded (Research Tier Two)

Release: August 2008

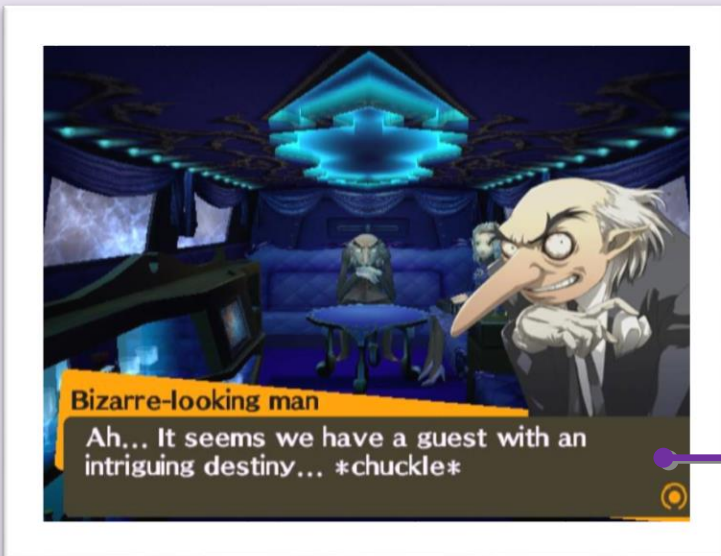
Platform: PS2

Developer: ATLUS

Publisher: ATLUS

USPs: SMT franchise, collection

(31)



Even the menu and interface shows attention to detail, preferring to use a simple, complimentary colour scheme rather than flashy effects to draw the player in.

Persona 4 opts for an overall theme of yellow/orange and black/brown, which is carried through all its interfaces, from the title screen, to all interfaces within the game. This also allows the player to immediately and subconsciously differentiate between the two styles of control required.

(32)



Character models are relatively simplistic but incredibly detailed for a PS2 title, successfully bringing the conventions of Japanese anime to a 3D game. These are backed up with high-resolution character art when a character is speaking.

Distinctive character graphics allows the player to identify with the characters.

Little, if any use of shadows – these are restricted to dark circles immediately below the characters. Aspects of reality like this are not necessary required to create an enjoyable game world.

(33)



Magic and special attacks are suitable and fit the tone of the game without being ostentatious.

Anime-style characters cut-ins occasional pop up during battles, giving the game a unique style, especially when coupled with elements such as emoticons to indicate a character's mood.

2.2.6 – Graphical style – Ar tonelico 2 – Sprite based (Research Tier Two)

Release: January 2008

Platform: PS2

Developer: GUST / Banpresto

Publisher: NIS America

USPs: Visual novel / RPG hybrid,

(34)

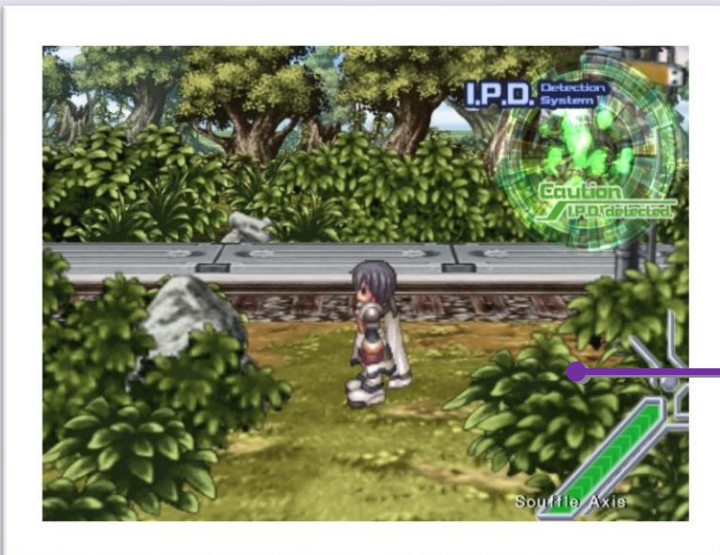


Features detailed 2D sprites. The current generation consoles are capable of handling highly detailed sprites with many different frames of animation. The sprites in use even on portable consoles are far more complex than the 16-bit connotations that are often associated with this style.

A large number of special effects are employed to bolster the splendour and mystique of the game world.

All menu interfaces are of matching styles.

(35)

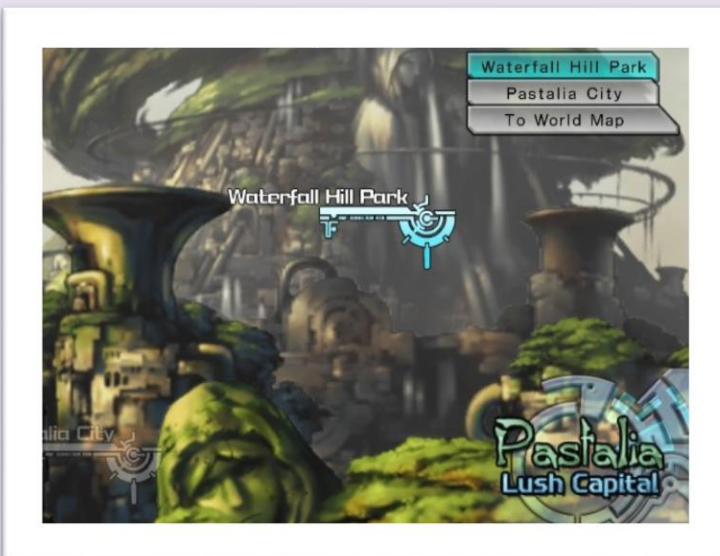


Objects / scenery such as bushes are rendered in 2D and their angle is adjusted relative to the position of the camera – this gives the illusion of pseudo-3D environments.

Since the game uses sprites, it is far less processor intensive than dealing with 3D models.

Various types of information are conveyed to the player via graphic gauges. These match the overall aesthetic of the game so as not to break player immersion.

(36)



Features hand-drawn backgrounds with sprites overlaid. The game world has the potential to be visually stunning but it would take a very long time to construct.

A potential shortcoming of using sprites is that they are not as flexible as polygons – sprites cannot dynamically adapt to various lighting conditions and take advantage of shadows, etc.

2.2.7 – Graphical style – Odin Sphere – Sprite based Two)

Release: May 2007

Platform: PS2

Developer: Vanillaware

(Research Tier

DEVIL ANGEL – BRING DOWN THE GODS

Publisher: ATLUS

USPs: Action RPG, Side-scroller, fast-paced, combat-oriented

(37)



Features incredibly detailed 2D sprites and lavish backdrops. The castle backdrop and ethereal field of stars here beautifully contrasts with the scrolling foreground.

One of only a few games where the character sprites blend seamlessly with the backdrops.

Vivid game world inspires a sense of wonderment in the player. Specifically, the game portrays an “epic” feel despite being restricted to 2D space.

(38)



Considerable attention to detail in regard of lighting to attain an authentic effect. Arguably, this is easier to achieve in a 2D environment.

Elements of the scene are rendered in front of the characters, such as the flowers in the screen on the left. This adds depth to the map and gives the impression of 3D within the limits of 2D space. Player's will always find an environment with perceived depth more interesting and endearing than a flat image.

(39)



Instead of aiming to replicate real life, liberties can be taken to stylise the character design, making them look “cooler” and more appealing to players. This culminates in a truly memorable cast of characters.

Odin Sphere features many stunning special effects, demonstrating that 2D is still a viable option in creating a vivid, immersive game world.

Simple effects such as this arc of crimson light that trails the player's weapon do much to further the graphical impact of the game.

2.2.8 – Graphical style – Okami – Abstract Two)

Release: September 2006

(Research Tier

Platform: Multi-platform
Developer: Clover Studio
Publisher: Capcom
USPs: Originality

(40)

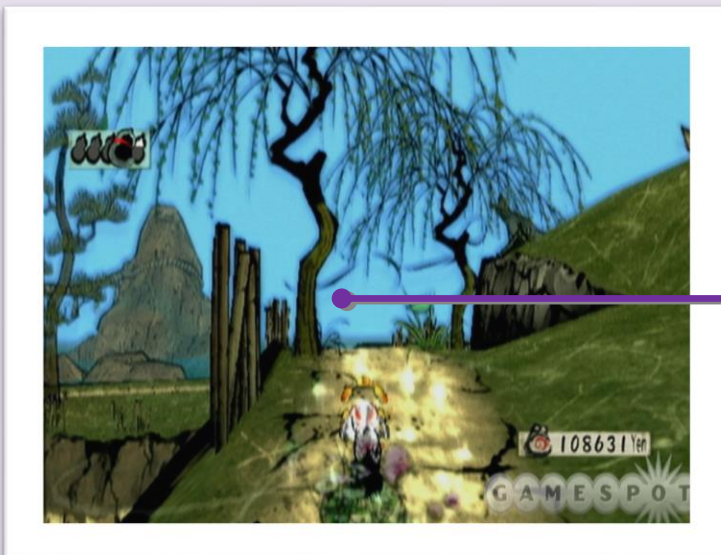


Features a non-conventional graphical style that is akin to a watercolour painting.

Vibrant colours are used throughout to great effect, resulting in a unique appearance for each area of the game, and moreover, the game as a whole.

Well suited to breathing additional life into organic landscapes.

(41)

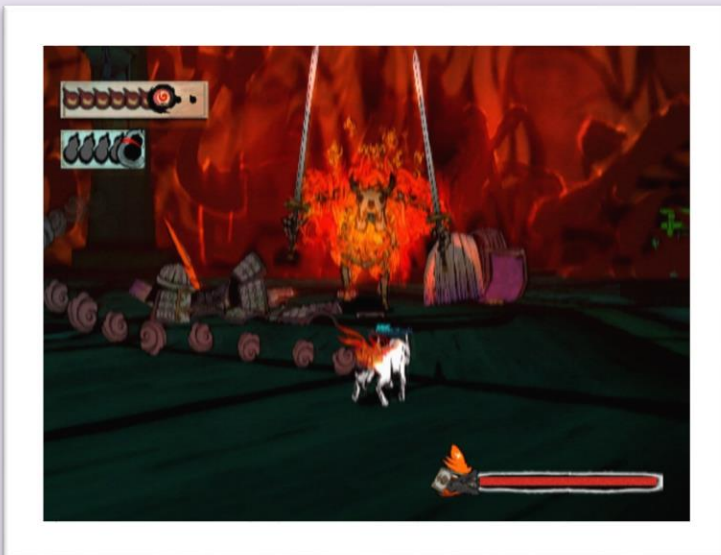


The game's abstract design sets it apart from its closest competitors. This is not necessarily a good thing as Okami was not a great commercial success despite two separate releases.

Environmental objects such as trees and fences feature thick black outlines, helping to define the unique graphic style.

When a lot is happening on-screen the frame rate tends to suffer, indicating that both the Wii & PS2 lacked the power to fully realise the game vision.

(42)



Though difficult to show in a static screen, the game employs a canvas-like filter to the on-screen graphics (similar to the film grain/noise effect seen in modern games) to enhance the aesthetic imagery.

2.2.9 – Graphical style – Valkyria Chronicles– Abstract (Research Tier Two)

Release: October 2008

Platform: PS3

Developer: SEGA

Publisher: SEGA

USPs: Unique graphics, emotive characters, challenging tactical gameplay

(43)



Valkyria Chronicles features a unique spin on the cel-shading technique that gives the impression of each character model being hand drawn or sketched.

Possibly the most effective use of cel-shading to portray character emotions yet seen.

Character eyes are especially well done, extending the expressive anime style to portray a variety of character emotions.

Distinctive character faces, which are important when all characters wear the same uniform.

(44)



Despite the relatively serious tone of the game, the game utilises a self styled sort of onomatopoeia by portraying sounds as cartoon style words - BOOM, etc. The “Ratta Ratta” in this screen designates a machine gun being fired and is an unusual but effective approach within videogames.

The cel-shaded approach was applied not only to characters, but also to the many vehicles within the game, helping to blend the overall game world together.

(45)



A graphic filter is applied across the whole screen to further the hand drawn style of the graphics. This can be used to give the character models and the environments a distinctive and themed appearance.

2.3 Research Tier Two – Camera Style

2.3.1 – Camera style – RE4 – Over-the-shoulder Two)

(Research Tier

Release: January 2005

Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: Capcom

USPs: Unique and involving camera, reinvention of the genre, action based

(46)



Resident Evil 4 pioneered the “over-the-shoulder” style of 3rd person camera.

The camera is effective in deliberately restricting the player’s view and making them feel closer to the action.

The camera is locked a short distance behind the player during normal gameplay.

The camera (and player character) turns slowly – indicating perhaps this style of camera is best suited to games aiming to heighten tension and induce panic in the player.

(47)



Shows off the level of detail quite well by keeping the player’s attention focused centrally.

This camera doesn’t provide much flexibility to the player with regard to surveying the surrounding area. It can also cause frustration when surrounded by multiple enemies. Furthermore, this camera lends itself more to firearms than melee combat. It would be difficult to incorporate a complex melee combat system within the remit of this particular camera system.

(48)



A more dynamic camera is used as appropriate to accentuate bloodletting as shown to the left. It is also frequently used in Quick Time Events to provoke an immediate and panicked reaction from the player.

During cut-scenes, several different styles of camera are used to achieve various results. This is usually done to add another level of depth to the action scenes.

2.3.2 – Camera style – Dead Space- Over-the-shoulder (Research Tier Two)

Release: October 2008

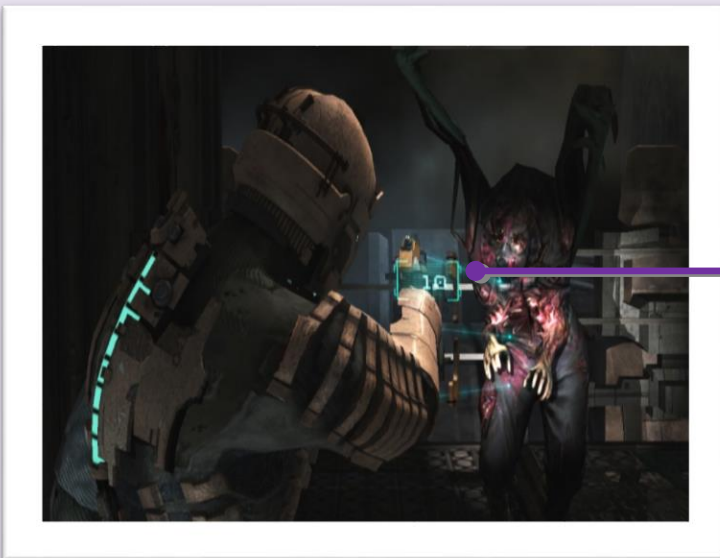
Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Redwood Shores

Publisher: Electronic Arts

USPs: Ambience, tension, atmospheric, non-intrusive menu

(49)



Deadspace adopts the “over the shoulder” 3rd person camera pioneered in Resident Evil 4.

This particular camera works in tandem with Deadspace’s HUD-less USP. Both the player health and current ammunition are part of the player character. This solution is made viable solely through the use of this camera.

A more dynamic camera is sometimes adopted in some of the real-time action cut-scenes. Interestingly this is used to subtly mask certain events from the player – for example when the shuttle explodes at the beginning of the game the player doesn’t actually see it happen.

(50)



The camera only changes from its default position when grappling with enemies or during cut-scenes.

As well as emphasising bloodletting and gore, the change also serves to notify the player that they need to take a different form of action to break free and simultaneously heightens the tension and adrenalin of the player. Elements such as this can be easily transposed to other genres to improve combat.

(51)



In this sequence the player is dragged down a corridor to their demise and must quickly target the weak point of the assailant in order to break free.

The camera adjusts itself appropriately to give the player several chances to target the enemy as the struggle ensues.

This is a good example of a dynamic camera system, adding considerable dramatic impact to a short, scripted event.

2.3.3 – Camera style – Fallout 3 – 1st/3rd Person

(Research Tier Two)

Release: October 2008

Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Bethesda Softworks

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

USPs: Expansive game world, modern reinvention of an old IP

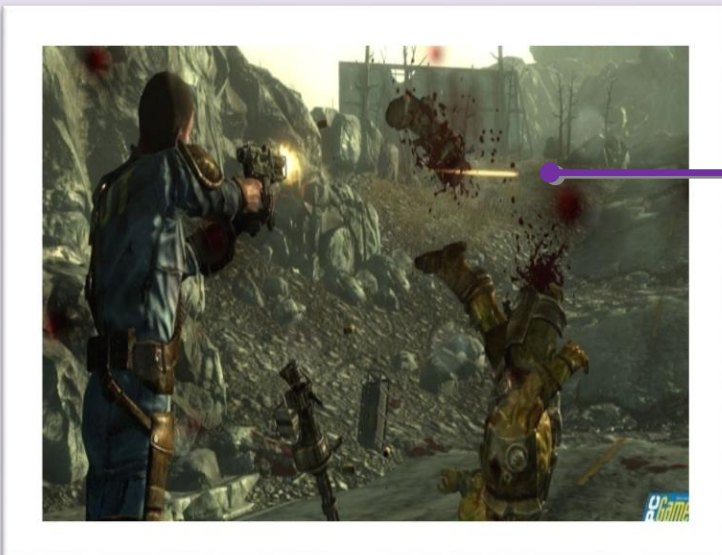
(52)



Fallout 3 offers two camera systems however most players use the first-person camera as the third person doesn't lend itself well to actual combat scenarios involving multiple combatants.

Lack of peripheral vision in first-person perspective means it's easy for opponents to approach from the side without being seen by the player. This has the potential to frustrate the player.

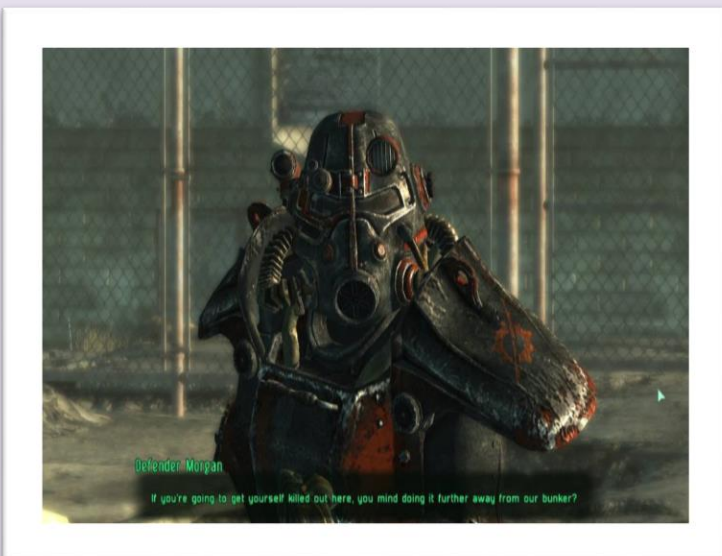
(53)



A dynamic camera is adopted when the player uses the VATS targeting system. The camera actively zooms in and tracks bullets as they close on the intended target.

This is purely used to show off the visuals and emphasise gore as limbs are routinely dismembered and heads exploded. A slow-motion effect is also applied to the action, which culminates in an effective effort/reward gratification system for the player.

(54)



A first-person perspective arguably allows the player to feel closer to the action and become more immersed in the game world than any other perspective would. In first person perspective the player "becomes" the character as opposed to directing an on-screen avatar.

1st person allows the player to inspect the world's fine details and is usually a good choice for games aiming for photorealism. Conversely it also means that low-resolution textures are more apparent to the player, which could detract from the player's immersion within the game world.

2.3.4 – Camera style – Oblivion – 1st/3rd Person

(Research Tier Two)

Release: March 2006

Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Bethesda Softworks

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

USPs: Freedom, sprawling game world, non-linearity

(55)



Similarly to Fallout 3, Oblivion also offers two camera systems - first and third person perspective. The third person camera once again does not lend itself to melee or ranged combat in what is primarily designed to be a first person game.

(56)



The first person camera is particularly effective when dealing with the fantasy realm, with the player able to discern even minor flaws in this knight's suit of armour. Since many aspects of the fantasy genre deal with ornate minutia such as this, a first person camera is also a viable option for the game. As a counterpoint to this it means that all surfaces need relatively high resolution textures.

(57)



Melee combat was effective within Oblivion because of its first person camera; enemies could block the player's attacks with their shield, causing the camera to shake in unison with the controller's vibration to simulate the recoil. Factors such as this allow the player to become a direct participant in the action, becoming the character themselves, as opposed to directing an on-screen avatar.

2.3.5 – Camera style – Fable II - 3rd Person

Release: October 2008

Platform: Xbox 360

Developer: Lionhead Studios

(Research Tier Two)

Publisher: Microsoft

USPs: Freedom, customisation, user-friendly.

(58)



Fable II features a traditional 3rd person camera which automatically tracks the player whilst remaining a few feet behind their avatar at all times. The player is free to rotate the camera as desired by using the right analog stick and can also zoom in on their avatar to get a closer look. This is especially important as Fable II sells itself through extensive character customisation and trait building.

When the player is in motion the camera smoothly returns to its default position behind the player's avatar, this does not require any action on the player's part.

(59)



When moving through narrow corridors and other cramped spaces the camera adjusts itself and moves along a spline to ensure it doesn't clip through the environment.

The high degree of flexibility afforded by this camera style allows the player to better appreciate the game world, showing of the high quality textures and models to greater effect.

(60)



During combat the camera pans out by default and moves overhead, giving a better perspective of the overall battlefield. The camera moves around the battlefield with the player, always ensuring that both the player and the currently targeted enemy remain in focus. This facilitates face paced combat and keeps the player abreast of the action.

If the player uses ranged weapons they are able to enter "aiming mode" whereby the camera is positioned behind the player as shown to the left to facilitate precision targeting.

2.3.6 – Camera style – Overlord - 3rd Person

Release: June 2007

Platform: Xbox 360

(Research Tier Two)

Developer: Triumph Studios

Publisher: Codemasters

USPs: Play as the bad guy, develop/customise your castle.

(61)



Overlord utilises a traditional 3rd person camera which automatically tracks the player whilst remaining a few feet behind their avatar.

When the player moves or takes action the camera smoothly returns to its default position behind the player's avatar. As the game involves some element of micro-management, this provides the player with the best overall view of the action.

Since the player needs to keep track of many factors, it is important that the camera maintains a certain distance from the player.

(62)



By "targeting" a specific enemy, object or point of interest the camera adjusts itself to allow the player to direct his "minions" to the desired target, always ensuring that the player character and the current target remain in view.

Specifically, the camera adopts a more dynamic angle that brings the player closer to the action.

(63)



The player can rotate the camera as desired and is able to zoom in on their avatar to get a closer look. This can allow the player to gain a greater appreciation of the game world and the characters within it, should they desire.

The "chase" mechanic of the camera is non-intrusive – i.e.: it does not immediately snap back to the default position as soon as the player releases the relevant button.

2.4 Research Tier Two – Environment

2.4.1 – Environment – Overlord Two)

(Research Tier

Release: June 2007

Platform: Xbox 360

Developer: Triumph Studios

Publisher: Codemasters

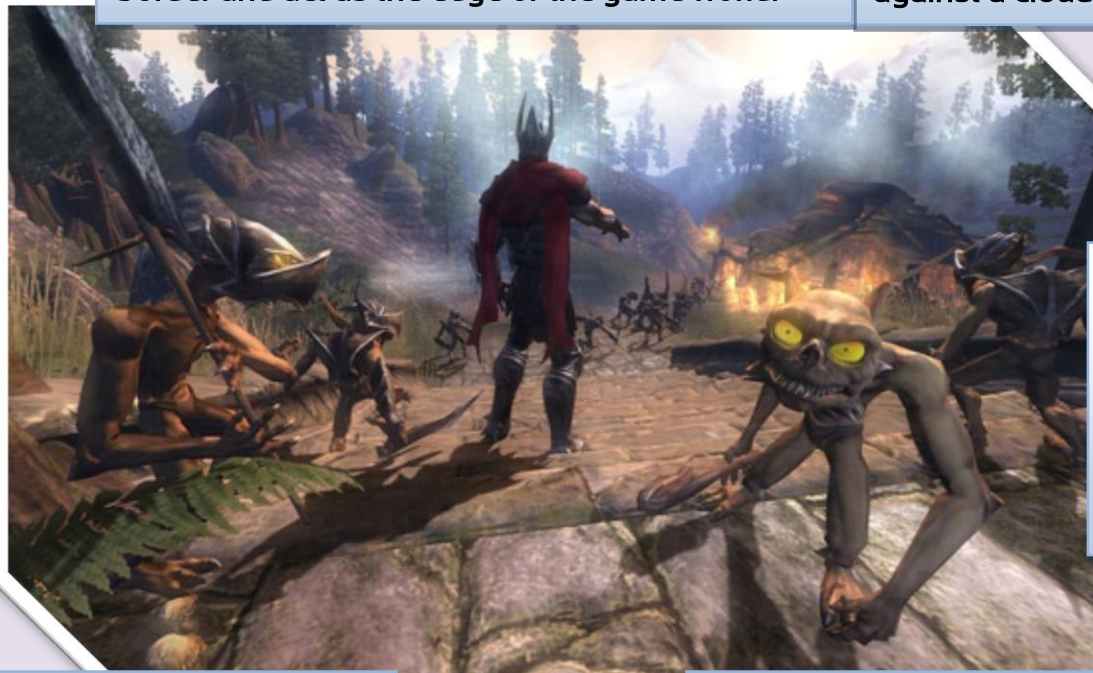
USPs: Play as the bad guy, develop/customise your castle.

The environments within Overlord closely mirror some of the prospective imagery within Devil:Angel, making it a good title to research.

(64)

1: Trees sit atop raised hills - these form a natural border and act as the edge of the game world.

2: Burning buildings against a cloudy backdrop.



3: The stone stairs end in a natural curve toward the rest of the town.

4: Cobbled steps lead down toward the town.

5: Player's position gives a place to survey the town that they are ransacking.

As noted earlier, lighting plays a crucial role in the environment. In the above screen it is the soft light cast down from the mountains, filtering through the trees that give the area its natural ambience.

1: Use natural scenery such as hills to mark the physical edge of the playable game area as much as possible - this helps to guide the player whilst masking the actual borders of the world. The trees atop this raised ground blend naturally with the skyline, accentuating the natural look of the area whilst supporting the design.

2: The buildings within Overlord can be ransacked by the player's minions. Seeing villages fall into chaos and buildings go up in smoke as the village is besieged provides immediate gratification to the player.

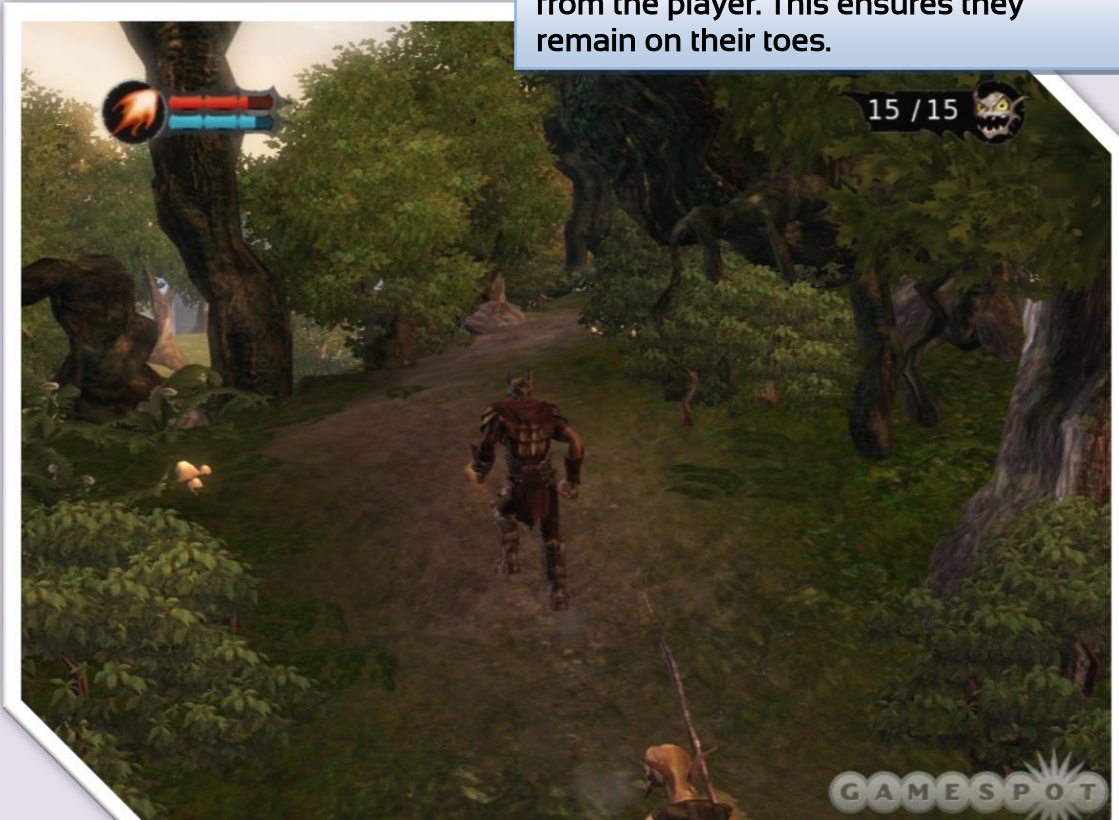
3: A curved environment feels more "natural" and fluid to the player rather than an environment that is solely comprised of unnatural right angles. This adds to player immersion within the game world and overall believability.

4: The cobbled steps mark the entrance to a “man made” area of the game world, subconsciously indicating to the player that a change of pace may be advisable. Ferns and grass also serve as edging to the steps, helping the two environments blend together.

5: Structuring the environment in such a way as to give the player the best view possible. The player is able to form deductions on how best to proceed and is afforded more gratification from acts of destruction as they command their minions to pillage the town.

(65)

1: Greenery used to obscure the road from the player. This ensures they remain on their toes.



2: Trodden dirt path blends with the grass, guiding the player without being intrusive.

3: Again, trees and bushes are used to subtly mask the edge of the playable area.

In this example, there are no man-made aspects in the environment. This is a good representation of the kind of look the world would have in Devil:Angel, with a distinct emphasis on the natural world.

1: Hiding the immediate environment from the player helps build suspense as the player progresses through the forest. Never knowing what might await around the next corner, the player must remain cautious or risk being caught unawares.

2: The primary means of guiding the player through this environment is a brown dirt path. This is a subtle and commonly used tactic throughout the game and is probably preferable to having an arrow or similar pointing toward various goals. This method neither breaks the game aesthetic or the fourth wall.

3: Once again, the game uses natural scenery to create a “soft boundary” around the playable area.

2.4.2 – Environment – Oblivion
Two)

(Research Tier

Release: March 2006

Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Bethesda Softworks

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

USPs: Freedom, high fantasy, expansive game world

Oblivion features an expansive game world where player freedom and exploration is of paramount importance. However, as a trade off, Oblivion’s edge of world is handled in a less than optimal manner, with the message “You cannot go any further that way, please turn back.” Though considering the epic scope of the world it is likely the only feasible solution.

(66)

1: Buildings are all of similar architecture and structure.

2: Castle walls surround the town proper, giving a sense of scale.

3: Trees intersperse the overall design.



4: A bridge hangs over the river that encircles much of the town.

There are very few obvious boundaries to the playable area; the relatively open plan layout of the town encourages players to explore. The overall aesthetic is lush and believable, encapsulating the essence of escapism that is strived for in role-playing games.

1: Oblivion uses a restricted palette to create a convincing game world; specifically most buildings are comprised of tones of brown and white in keeping with the overall aesthetic. Since all the buildings are of the same style, the environment meshes together nicely, is more convincing and ensures nothing sticks out that may break the suspension of disbelief.

2: Castles are hallmarks of the medieval era and commonplace within the fantasy genre. The castles within Oblivion are sufficiently epic in scale so as to inspire a sense of awe within the player.

3: Trees add variety to the overall design and man-made structures blend in with nature.

4: Using a bridge provides the player ample perspective to admire the impressive water effects and reflections used in the game.

(67)

2: Dynamic alterations to the weather also occur. The player hears unnatural thunderstorm effects and the whole sky turns red.

3: The crimson ambience gives pre-existing game areas a completely new look and feel, underlining the nightmarish alternate world of Oblivion.



1: Oblivion plays with the idea of demonic forces invading its game world through portals called "Oblivion Gates." The environment around the gate becomes dark and twisted, with deadly spikes jutting out from the ground.

1: The idea of "Oblivion Gates" are highly applicable to Devil:Angel, with environmental changes such as these being good reference material for the Devil's forces.

2: Dynamic alterations to their immediate environment subconsciously indicate a change of pace to the player as well as inspire a sense of foreboding in the player.

3: The use of deep red is employed to actively threaten the player through the environment. The very environment itself seems hostile toward the player. These sudden changes force players to make a decision either to prepare for combat or possibly leave the area.

2.4.3 – Environment – Tales of the Abyss
Two)

(Research Tier

Release: October 2006

Platform: PS2

Developer: Namco Bandai

Publisher: Namco Bandai

USPs: Fast paced real-time combat, character interaction

Tales of the Abyss is set in the world of Auldrant, as the story progresses the world begins to collapse through the actions of the antagonist. Due to its premise of a world in dire straits and since the game features a heavy fantasy setting with a strong focus of swords and magic it is an ideal candidate for further research. The image below is a “castle town”, i.e.: the town is surrounded by the castle walls and its inhabitants live in relative safety.

(68)

1: Strong aesthetic for man-made architecture.



2: Paved roads fit with the design and designate the playable game area.

3: Objects such as carts imply that the city does conduct trade, etc.

1: All the buildings within the castle grounds look similar; with a distinct brown and grey theme. The general look of the city provides the player with both a sense of familiarity and safety.

2: Similarly, paved roads within built-up human settlements contribute to the overall artistic design whilst showing the player where they can move within the current area.

3: The presence of objects such as these are both in keeping with the fantasy setting and also give the impression of a living city environment that goes about its business, as opposed to just being a collection of buildings surrounded by a castle wall.

(69)

1: Natural features are used to create boundaries to the playable area.

2: Light filtering through the trees adds ambience to the area.

3: Pathway is a slightly different colour.

4: Trees and fallen branches.

5: Flowers and ferns.



1: “Soft” boundaries are created through the use of natural scenery such as trees and other foliage. Objects such as this would not generally impede a person in real life however the actual playable boundaries are cognitively understood by the player relatively easily within the context of the game world.

2: Sparse use of lighting allows for some variance in the restrictive colour scheme of the forest. Effects such as this enhance the visual appeal and help mitigate the player becoming bored by travelling through large areas that look very similar.

3: The pathway the player is expected to follow is a slightly darker shade of green to subconsciously guide them without compromising the integrity of the environment. This works in tandem with point 1.

4: Moss-covered trees and fallen branches add to the authenticity of the environment. Whilst adding little to actual gameplay, non-interactive scenery such as this adds an air of authenticity and helps the environment feel less artificial.

5: Flowers add variety to the environment. Since the majority of the environment is comprised of flat, textured surfaces, sparing use of individual patches of ferns/grass that sway in the wind help add depth to the flat-textured grassy environment.

2.4.4 – Environment – Valkyrie Profile: Silmeria
Two)

(Research Tier

Release: September 2006
Platform: PS2
Developer: tri-Ace
Publisher: Square Enix
USPs: Unique combat

Valkyrie Profile features a lot of imagery designed to invoke a divine, ethereal feel within the player. The denizens of the game world are under oppression from the capricious Odin, lord of the gods and thus it is a highly applicable game to research.

(70)

1: Use of light across the skyline to accentuate ethereal / divine feeling.

2: Cold white light shines across the grey masonry.



3: Restricted palette (white and grey) further promote the cold feeling of the city.

1: A powerful white skyline gives the upper area of the city a hazy glow, solidifying the “holy” feeling of the city. This, and similar effects are used in many areas of the game. Specifically, light is used to accentuate the “divine” feeling of the city.

2: Further to point 1, the use of the piercing, uncaring white light compliments the grey stonework and masonry of the city. The buildings are strong, tall and dominate the environment. The imposing presence of fully-armoured guards further cement the cold feeling of the environment, giving it an air of inherent menace.

3: As noted in point 2, the restricted palette adds to the tone of the environment. There is a distinct white/grey /blue feel to the environment with both light and shadows coming together to form a powerful aesthetic image.

In this example there is a run-down city. This could be applicable to the aftermath of villages that have been ravaged by battling angels & devils in the final game.

(71)

1: A powerful skyline adds natural ambience to the scenery and background.

3: Trees are battered and bent out of shape.



2: Buildings are dilapidated, matching the landscape.

4: Restricted palette used again to great effect.

1: As with the previous example, a powerful skyline produces a majestic aurora like effect, bathing the area in an attractive orange hue. Subtle tones are used to blend the background with the foreground.

2: Buildings are dilapidated, characteristic of cities on the frontier. The crumbling homes of the residents imply a civilisation struggling to survive.

3: Even nature bears the brunt of the harsh environment, with trees battered and bent out of shape.

4: Again, a restrictive palette is used - the yellow, beige coloured give this city a dusty look and feel. The glowing skyline blends with the dusty mountains, creating an attractive natural, glowing aura.

2.4.5 – Environment – Fable II**(Research Tier Two)**

Release: October 2008

Platform: Microsoft Xbox 360

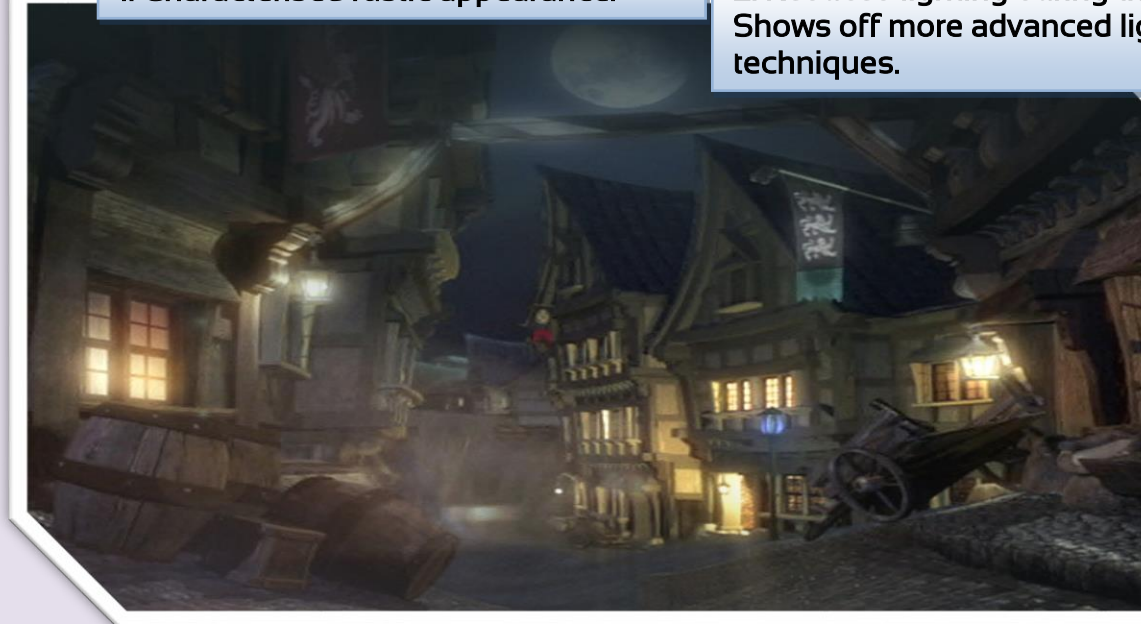
Developer: Lionhead

Publisher: Microsoft

USPs: Freedom, customisation, user-friendly.

Fable II takes place in the world of Albion and features a vast array of fantasy locales, many of which are highly applicable to the style of DEVIL:ANGEL. The imagery used within towns and cities is particularly noteworthy.

(72)

1: Characterised rustic appearance.**2: Reduced lighting during the night. Shows off more advanced lighting techniques.****3: Lighting from inside buildings and oil lamps give the environment a gentle glow.****4: Wooden carts add to authenticity.**

1: The overall design epitomises the rural environment of the world of Albion. The city is cramped together, rustic and simple in its appearance. All buildings share a common aesthetic and architecturally they are identical. Of particular note are the disproportionate roof and the exaggerated curve/incline of each building. Taking liberties such as these produce a believable, pseudo-realistic environment, allowing the designer to be more creative, add their own flair and ultimately craft an environment that is visually more interesting than one grounded in the trappings of reality.

2: Fable 2 features a dynamic day and night system, allowing the same environments to take on completely different looks during different times of day. It can also serve the purpose of imposing upon the player and masking potential threats.

3: Further to point 2, the use of glows for interior lighting looks particularly impressive in the dark, night environment. The atmosphere feels authentic and the various flickering lanterns and in keeping with the environment. Furthermore it provides a unified aesthetic to the area.

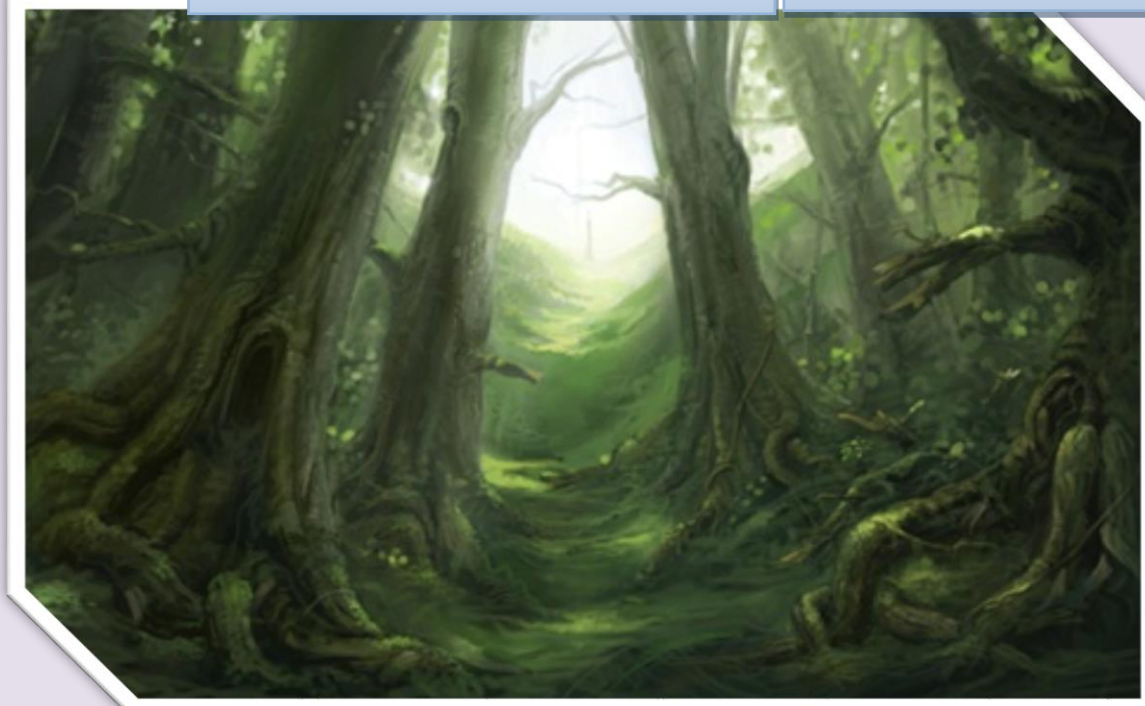
4: As noted earlier, the presence of barrels, crates and produce carts add to the believability of the area.

It is also worth examining some more Fable 2 concept art, this time examining the kind of outdoor environments that the player will be exploring.

(73)

1: Importance of light as a focal point within the environment.

2: Distinct green and brown theme.



3: Single pathway that winds through the dense forest.

4: Copious, deep-set tree roots give the trees an aged look.

1: Light plays an important role in the natural world, as in the above example where the topmost area becomes blurry and out of focus. The source of light here is centric to the environment and is highlighted to the player as an area of interest. This serves to guide the player and also to further the ambience of the environment.

2: Adherence to an appropriate colour scheme results in a more effective final environment. Even this small example does enough to inspire epic visions of sprawling forests in the observer's mind.

3: Note the pathway is bordered by trees on either side. Light used to guide the player. Further to point 1, light is being used to guide the player and add to the ambience of the environment.

4: The sheer abundance of roots present in the above image does much to emphasise the aged look of the forest, resulting in a more believable environment.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier 2](#)**

2.5 Research Tier Three – Defining the audience

2.5.1 – What Platform (Research Tier Three)

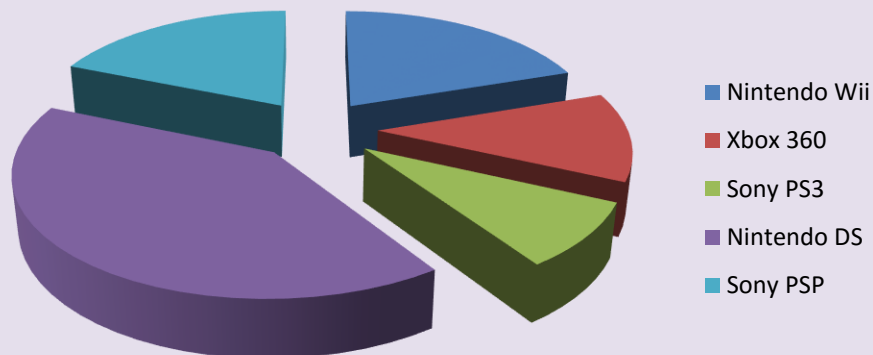
(Research Tier Three)

In order to choose the development platform that best meets the requirements of the game, it is necessary to research some of the current generation consoles on the market. Making a decision on the platform at this stage allows the scope of the project to be adjusted accordingly and also dictates how complex the game can be with regard to the capabilities of the platform.

The first step is to examine the sales figures of each individual console:

Console	Units sold Japan	Units sold USA	Units sold Others	Units sold Worldwide
Nintendo Wii	7.95	22.70	18.43	49.08
Xbox 360	1.01	17.00	11.75	29.76
Sony PS3	3.04	8.29	10.22	21.55
Nintendo DS	26.28	33.47	41.10	100.85
Sony PSP	11.96	16.65	17.90	46.51

Units sold Worldwide



The next area to focus upon is trying to gauge which demographic is most associated with each particular platform. The best method to do this is examining the top 10 selling games across current platforms.

Current Top 10 (across all genres, all regions)

Nintendo Wii	Units sold
1. Wii Sports	44.50M
2. Wii Play	22.77M
3. Wii Fit	17.89M
4. Mario Kart Wii	15.38M
5. Super Smash Bros Brawl	8.51M
6. Super Mario Galaxy	8.01M
7. Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games	6.97M
8. Mario Party 8	6.47M
9. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	5.26M

10. Guitar Hero 3: Legends of Rock	4.12M
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Xbox 360	Units sold
1. Halo 3	9.40M
2. Call of Duty 4	7.21M
3. Grand Theft Auto IV	6.95M
4. Gears of War	5.87M
5. Call of Duty: World at War	5.24M
6. Gears of War 2	4.75M
7. Assassin's Creed	4.47M
8. Guitar Hero 3: Legends of Rock	4.15M
9. Forza Motorsport 2	3.98M
10. Lego Indiana Jones	3.20M

Playstation 3	Units sold
1. Grand Theft Auto IV	5.53M
2. Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	4.12M
3. Metal Gear Solid 4	3.89M
4. Resistance: Fall of Man	3.57M
5. MotorStorm	3.47M
6. Assassin's Creed	3.34M
7. Call of Duty: World at War	3.13M
8. Gran Turismo 5: Prologue	3.00M
9. Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	2.32M
10. LittleBigPlanet	2.13M

Nintendo DS	Units sold
1. Nintendogs	22.09M
2. New Super Mario Bros	18.47M
3. Brain Age	17.33M
4. Pokemon Diamond/Pearl	16.79M
5. Mario Kart DS	14.56M
6. Brain Age 2	13.87M
7. Animal Crossing: Wild World	10.67M
8. Super Mario 64 DS	7.31M
9. Big Brain Academy	6.09M
10. Mario Party DS	5.59M

Sony PSP	Units sold
1. Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	5.58M
2. Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	3.05M
3. Grand Theft Auto: Vice City Stories	2.93M
4. Monster Hunter Freedom 2	2.63M
5. Dexter	2.27M
6. Need for Speed: Most Wanted	2.11M
7. Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	2.00M
8. Tekken: Dark Resurrection	1.87M
9. God of War: Chains of Olympus	1.67M
10. Star Wars Battlefront II	1.63M

The initial research shows that mainstream titles or titles with mass appeal tend to sell the most across all consoles. Another notable aspect is a large

number of titles present in these charts are those that have been repeatedly marketed to target consumers via dedicated marketing campaigns – Wii Sports, Call of Duty, Grand Theft Auto and Halo 3 all had a significant amount of marketing and exposure in the mainstream media when they launched. This probably contributed to their success, as the vast majority of titles released do not receive this amount of publicity in non-specialist forms of media.

These findings will be analysed in greater depth in synthesis to enable an informed decision to be made. The next step in the process was to define the primary audience for the game; this would also be a factor in determining which platform to opt for.

2.5.2 – Target Audience Three)

(Research Tier

Due to decisions made in Tier 2 regarding Devil:Angel's aesthetic appearance, both the PSP and DS are incapable of delivering the kind of visual appearance required by Devil:Angel, which will likely require the power of a home console to properly deliver the experience to the player.

The Wii has proven to be a viable candidate, both in terms of graphics and an ever-expanding audience. There are concerns however as to the viability of launching a new intellectual property on the Wii that is aimed at a traditional audience. Whilst it seems the new breed of non-games are enjoying considerable success on the platform, there seems to be a gap in catering for the more traditional gamer. This could represent either an opportunity to capitalise on this gap in the market or could present a significant risk for launching a new title on the platform.

Likewise the PS3 has made backwards steps this generation, pricing out a large portion of its old audience from the PS2 generation and losing a number of exclusives to its competitors, there seem to be no benefits to developing a title solely for the platform.

The Xbox 360 is primarily catering for hardcore/traditional gamers. The console provides the graphical and multimedia capabilities expected from a current generation console and combines it with a modest price tag. The console features a wide library of games that cater for audiences of varying ages.

The high number of both western and Japanese role-playing titles on the Xbox 360 show that there is already a sizeable audience for this type of title. The relatively small number of role-players/adventure titles on both the PS3 and Wii indicate that perhaps much of this audience has migrated to the Xbox 360. Despite having a high number of adventure/role-playing titles, few are held in particularly high regard by the fan base (mainly due to their derivative nature), and the general consensus is that the PS2 is still the preferred platform for the genre. This represents an opportunity to provide a unique, modern take on the genre, and capitalise on the gap in the market.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier 3](#)**

2.6 Research Tier Four – Combat

2.6.1 – Combat – Final Fantasy XII (Research Tier Four)

(Research Tier

Final Fantasy XII hybridised the core mechanics of an MMORPG with its traditional Active Time Battle (ATB) system. **Health bars show current HP at a glance.**

All combat actions, from melee attacks to magic and item use are driven through the battle menu.

The game also features a complex AI-customisation system (referred to as Gambits) that allows players an incredible amount of flexibility in how ally characters respond to threats. Between the Gambits system and



the MMORPG-like combat, the battles in Final Fantasy XII are highly streamlined, facilitating relatively fast-paced encounters and allowing a considerable amount of strategy.

The overall flow of combat is made extremely clear to the player through the use of coloured line arcs that lead from the character to the enemy. Each colour represents a type of action such as healing or offence. This simple system makes it extremely simple for the player to co-ordinate characters during battle.

The main issue with this combat system is the fact that everything must be selected through the battle menu, thus if the player wants to cast a spell in the heat of battle, they must hurriedly navigate through a series of sub-menus to find the appropriate spell or ability. Novice players can get around this by choosing “Wait” mode which pauses gameplay whilst any menu is displayed.

Spells and abilities each have varying “charge times” requiring the character to wait for a short period before the spell can be cast. During this period the character is vulnerable to attacks from enemies. Getting struck by an enemy’s attack will deplete HP but will not cancel the charging spell.

Different species of monsters may also fight amongst themselves, which the player can use to their advantage when deciding whether to engage the foes

or avoid them altogether. Subtle elements of incidental strategising such as this are rarely used but are nearly always popular with gamers.

2.6.2 – Combat – Fable 2 (Four)

(Research Tier Four)

In the words of its creator, Fable 2's combat is "deliberately simplistic." It was designed to be as pick up and play as possible, while still offering considerable depth to seasoned gamers. Players are able to seamlessly interlink melee, ranged and magical offensive abilities simply through the controller's face buttons. This facilitates fast and fluid combat. The nearest enemy defaults as the current target, and the player character moves around the targeted enemy, allowing them to strafe around and otherwise out-maneuvre their adversary. The targeting system provides a clear, at a glance visual representation of the current enemy being targeted by highlighting the current target with a red aura.

Consumable items such as food and restorative potions can be consumed mid battle, these can be quickly accessed by pressing the appropriate direction on the d-pad.

There are several schools of magic that the player can utilise, each can be developed through several levels and gain increased effectiveness when upgraded.

Red aura helps player identify current target.



(76)



When casting spells, the player must hold the relevant button to begin "charging" the spell meter. The longer the player holds the button for, the more power is charged, when the charge reaches a certain amount, the next level (more powerful) of that spell begins charging, and so on.

While charging a spell, the player is extremely vulnerable to attacks and getting struck by a foe causes the spell to dissipate. Thus, a certain amount of strategising is required when decided to use magic. Each spell has two distinct variants – releasing the charge button whilst holding the analog stick in a direction will unleash a focused variant of the spell in that direction/toward a target. If the player releases the charge button without holding the analog stick, an area of effect spell is unleashed that harms enemies immediately around the player. This is a good example of streamlining a complex system into only a few buttons on the controller. Physical attacks also have similar variations on this mechanic to allow the player to mix up their melee attacks.

Overall, Fable 2 encapsulates the mechanics of a complex battle system into a simple & coherent pick up and play user interface, one that still allows for complexity when used by advanced players.

2.6.3 – Combat – Zelda – Twilight Princess Four)

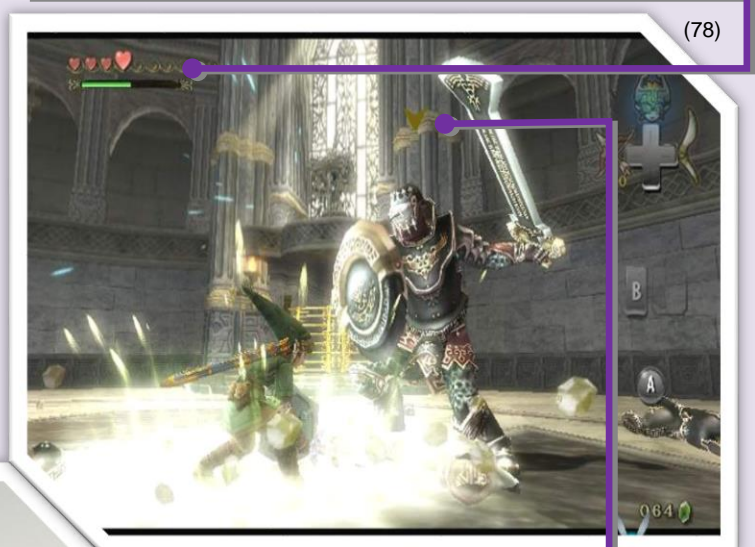
(Research Tier

Zelda: Twilight Princess features a similar combat system to Fable 2, however there is considerably more of a bias toward melee combat. The player's current Health Points (HP) are denoted by a variable number of "hearts" that are displayed in the top left corner.

Player's current health and magic clearly displayed in an easy to read manner (no numbers/statistics)

When the player is struck by an enemy or otherwise takes damage, a heart is deducted from this meter. This provides the player with a simple method of gauging their current health and assessing risk.

The ability to do battle on horseback adds variance and ensures combat doesn't become stale.



(78)



The game features strong melee combat, focusing on the lock-on system first pioneered in Ocarina of Time. After locking on to an enemy, all of the player's movements become relative to the position of that enemy. This enables the player to focus on one-on-one combat with a particular enemy.

Enemies are able to block and parry the player's attacks using their own swords and shields. In order to overcome these enemies the player can either attempt to break through their guard or alternatively, utilising the lock-on, roll around to their side and try to attack from the rear.

Likewise, the player is armed with a shield of their own to enable them to block/parry enemy attacks, additional functionality has been added to this mechanic and the player is able to use the shield's limited offensive capabilities by executing a short jab with the Wii Nunchuk.

To add some variety to the combat, the player obtains various weapons as the game progresses, such as the bow and boomerang, allowing the player to attack from a distance. Ranged combat is particularly responsive due to the reliance on the Wii Remote. Overall, the one on one combat within the game has considerable depth and there is plenty of room for strategising.

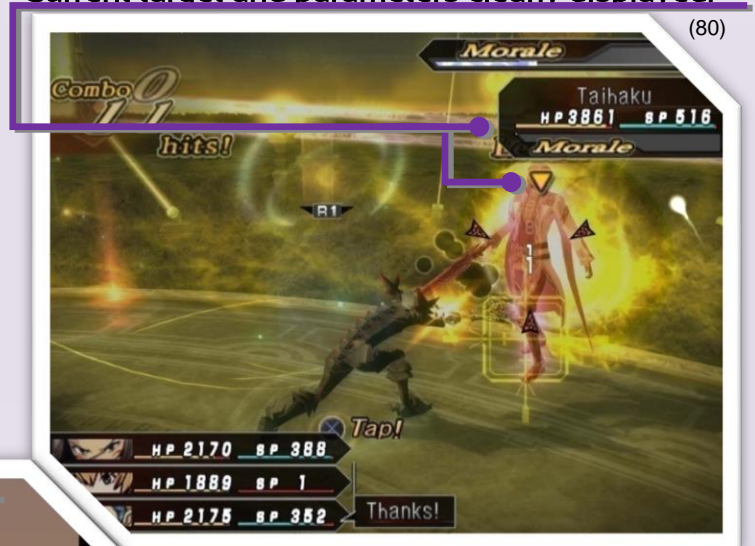
2.6.4 – Combat – .hack G.U Four)

(Research Tier

The .hack G.U series features a combat system that is very close to the anticipated system for Devil:Angel.

At its core, combat plays out in similarly to Final Fantasy XII, only faster paced. The player is able to freely move around and attack at will, with basic physical attacks executed via the relevant face button on the controller. Whichever enemy was struck last is designated the “current target” and all attacks will be directed against them by default. Each character has both Health Points (HP) and Skill Points (SP). When HP drops to 0 that character is Knocked Out (KO). SP is used to perform special attacks and cast spells.

Current target and parameters clearly displayed.



Characters engage in banter both in and out of battle, helping to build the story.



When participating as a team, all members share a “morale” gauge which builds steadily based on the party’s actions. Once this is completely full the player is able to unleash their ultimate attack, which inflicts severe damage on all enemies.

The player can assign up to four skills to a “trigger wheel,” which is invoked through the R1 button. From here the player can use the face button associated with the skill they want to use. When a character activates a skill, all participants are frozen while the skill is executed and damage is calculated. The character is invulnerable whilst executing the skill and normal gameplay resumes after the skill animation has finished. This allows combat to be fast paced and streamlined, unlike most RPGs where the player must navigate through a cumbersome menu to select the skill they want to use.

As the game progresses, enemies become more adept at combat and block many of the player’s physical attacks, forcing them to alter their strategy.

Unlike many other titles, .hack G.U utilises an intriguing “arena” system for its battles. Whenever the player comes into contact with an enemy (or a group of enemies) a circular boundary appears around all combatants and the battle begins. Participants are “locked” within this boundary for the duration of battle, and can freely move within its confines. This serves to make each battle more

dramatic and also prevents the player from getting swarmed by hundreds of enemies at once.

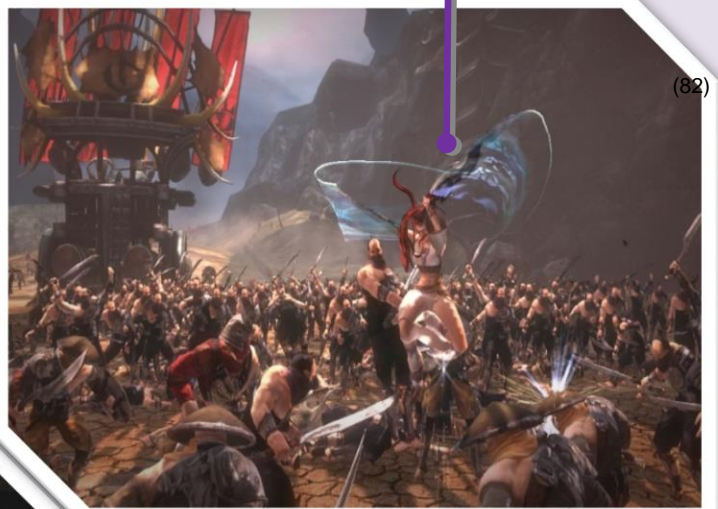
2.6.5 – Combat – Heavenly Sword Four)

(Research Tier

Heavenly Sword utilises a bespoke game engine that allows for an incredible number of enemies to be on-screen at any given time. Due to the combat-oriented nature of the game and its climactic boss battles it is an appropriate title to research. The main focus of the game is combat – armed with the “Heavenly Sword” the player is able to mow down legions of enemy forces with ease, giving them immediate gratification and a sense of invulnerability within the game world.

The player is armed with a single weapon yet is able to wield it in up to three separate “styles” – *Speed*, *Ranged* and *Heavy*. Each style has a specific colour associated with it – speed is blue, ranged is yellow and heavy is dark orange. The player is able to

Player is able to dispatch the horde of enemies with ostentatious special moves, providing a constant “high”



switch between these styles on the fly and mix and match them as the situation demands. These colour-coded styles also affect enemy attacks and a skilled player is able to block/counter enemy attacks by holding the relevant button for that specific colour. There is also an element of rock/paper scissors in that each style overpowers another. This is

another good example of a highly complex and intuitive combat mechanic simplified to only a few controller buttons.

Combat is extremely visceral, with the highly realistic graphics accentuating the player’s immersion in the bloodletting. The game also incorporates a unique counter attack system whereby if the player successfully times their attack to match an enemy’s they can completely avoid the incoming attack instantly defeat the enemy in question. A cinematic camera is often used to portray this sequence and it typically ends with an attack the knocks down or harms the surrounding adversaries.

Quick Time Events (QTE) often occur during boss battles, requiring the player to press the button(s) displayed to gain advantage over the boss or avoid a particular attack.

- **[Go to Synthesis Tier 4](#)**

2.7 Research Tier Five – Characters

2.7.1 – Characters – Menace: Pyramid Head

(Research Tier Five)

Pyramid Head wields two weapons – a giant sword or a spear. It stalks the player at key points during the game and is very difficult to defeat. Its twisted, deformed appearance evokes a gut reaction from the player - urging them to run rather than fight. Pyramid Head is a constant source of menace throughout Silent Hill 2, lumbering towards the player character but attacking with alarming speed. He is a perpetual threat to the player.

Characterised by imagery of death and suffering- portrayed as a harbinger of doom.

Absence of a face makes it hard for player to judge his intentions/actions and furthers menace.

Abstract yet simple character design

Muscular appearance gives impression of power

Wields a large sword

Bizarre pyramid head is the focal point of the character.

No striking features across the body, keeps the focus on the face.



2.7.2 – Characters – Menace: Overlord: Dark Legend (Research Tier Five)

The Overlord plays on the notion of a stereotypical evil tyrant. Features of note include full armour and glowing eyes, all designed to accentuate the sense of “cool” in his design. The Overlord in Dark Legend is more convincing than in the original, emphasising a distinct “metal” and grey/red theme. No flesh is displayed to the player; this characterises him as an evil entity - adding to the sense of mystery and making the Overlord seem less human.

Helmet is a striking feature of the design - focal point. Spiked protrusions are associated with the notion of pain & suffering.

The only facial feature that is visible are the Overlord’s eyes. Darkness is used to portray a sinister protagonist. Also allows the player to become the Overlord themselves.

(86)



Layered metal plates stylistically enhance “evil” aesthetic

Crimson coloured mantle contrasts with grey metal

(87)



Ornate design on breastplate

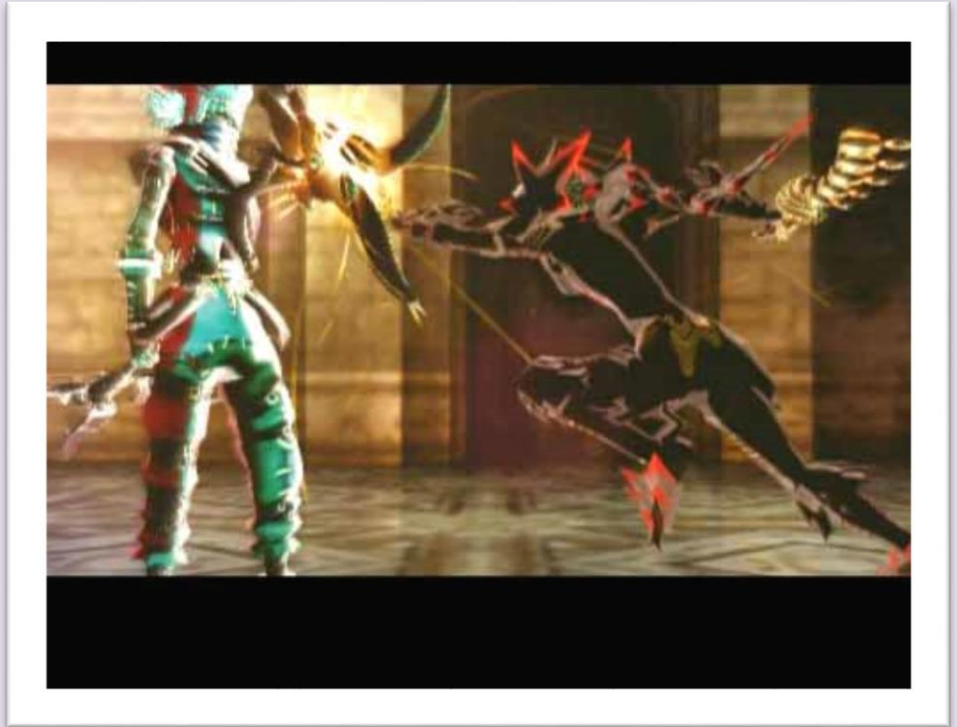
Overall design exudes power

2.7.3 – Characters – Menace: Tri-EDGE (.hack//G.U) (Research Tier Five)

Tri-EDGE is a good example of a character that can inspire menace as he looks nearly identical to the protagonist from the first series of .hack games, and thus he is immediately recognisable to fans of the series. He is known as a legendary Player Killer (PK) and players defeated by him never log back into the game.

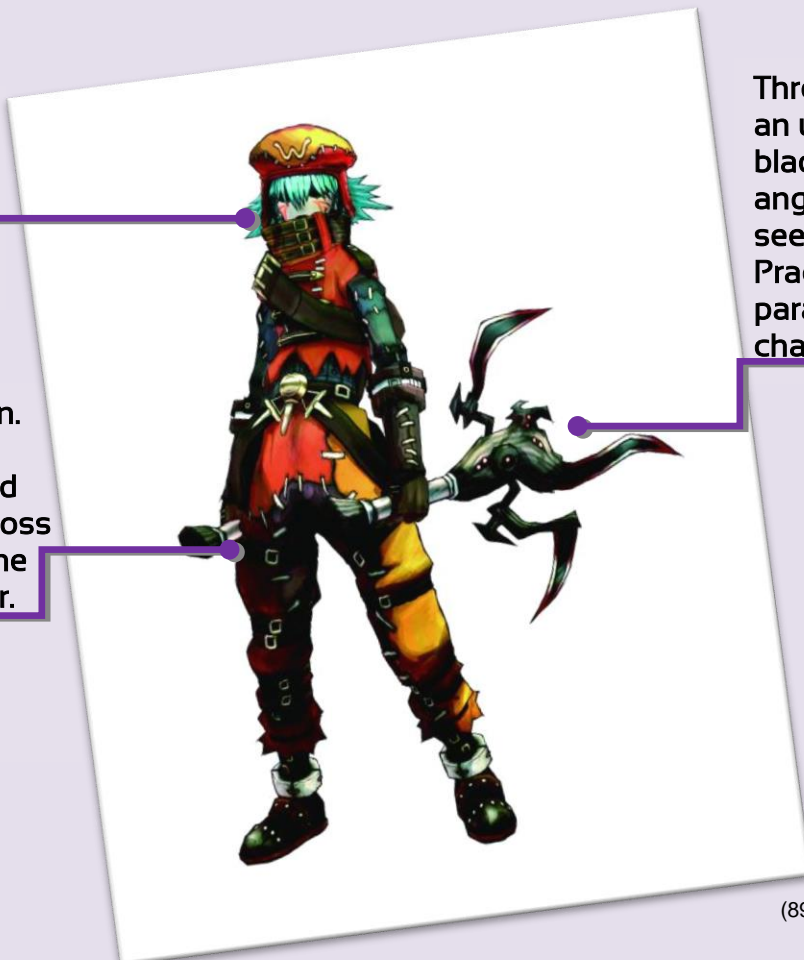
(88)

Mere moments into this new series, Tri-EDGE defeats the player, and returns him to a level one character. This establishes him as the main antagonist for a while and catching/defeating Tri-EDGE provides an immediate goal for the player to achieve, the player fights against him at several points during the game.



Face is obscured by leather straps. Typical of many villains/evil archetypes.

Unique character design. Tri-EDGE looks like a "patchwork" player, held together by stitches across his body. This adds to the menace of his character.



Three-bladed weapon has an unusual design, the blades are at specific angles to make the weapon seem more dangerous. Practicality is not always paramount in styling a character.

(89)

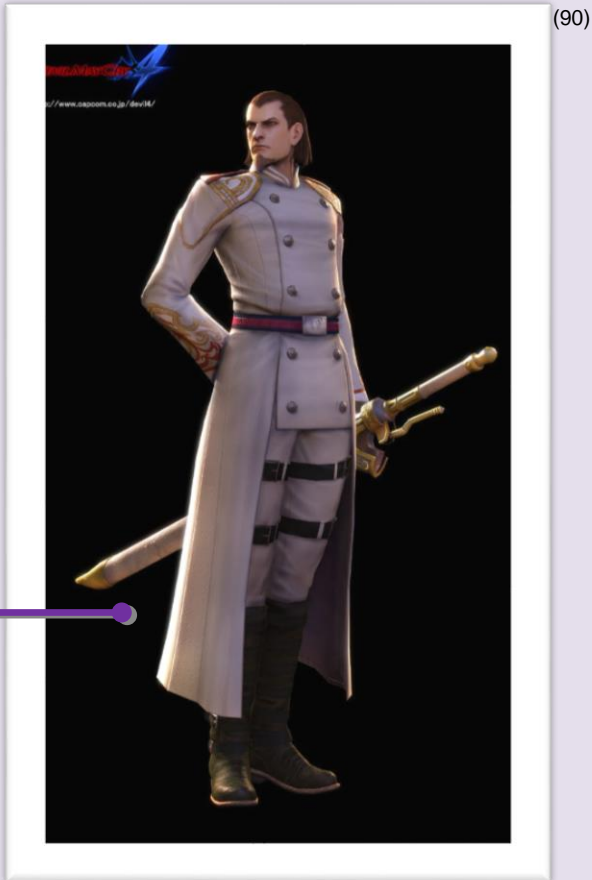
2.7.4 – Characters – Divine: Credo (Devil May Cry 4) (Research Tier Five)

Credo is the leader of the Holy Knights of Fortuna. Devil May Cry featured a large cast of characters masquerading as angels. Certainly, the design emphasises white and the sword and shield typifies fighting for one’s beliefs. Credo’s character design further evidences the notion of divine, white purity.

His costume and colour are distinctly white. His stance and mannerisms are somewhat conservative, yet self-assured.

Also noteworthy in his design are the hybrid angel wing and shield in his “angelic” state. This is very close to the kind of look some of the higher-ranking divine enemies should aim for in Devil:Angel.

Self assured stance exudes notion of confidence in his own skill.



Angel-themed wing adds to the overall “divine” aesthetic.

Shield possesses its own aura-like glow.

Hybrid shield seems like it may be an extension of his own body, exuding the notion of divine protection.

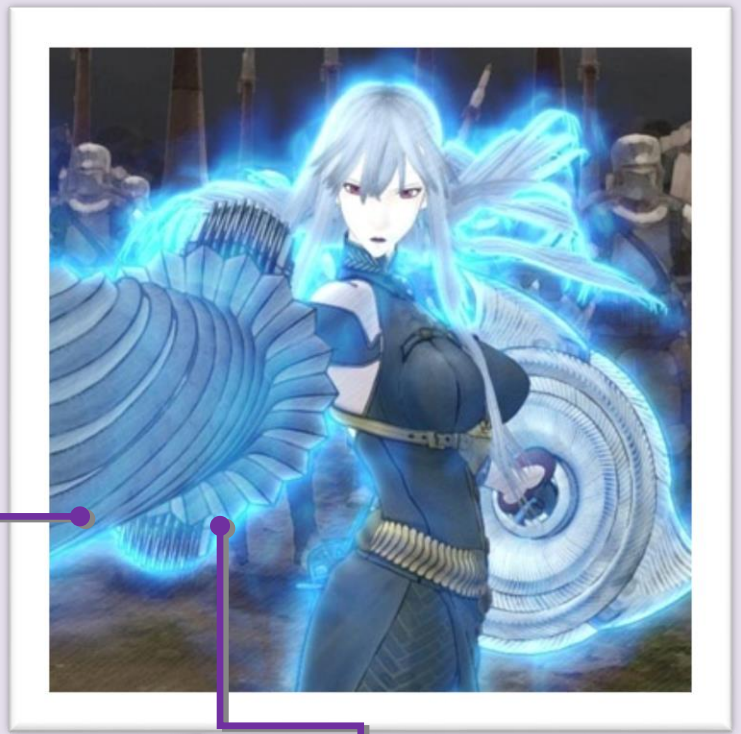
(91)



2.7.5 – Characters – Divine: Selvaria Bles (Valkyria Chronicles) (Research Tier Five)

Upon her introduction to the player, Selvaria is flagged as a very real threat.

Completely invulnerable to all attacks and wielding enough power to decimate a tank, she appears on the battlefield and rapidly advances towards the retreating player. As one of the Valkyries of legend, she is elevated to a godlike status within the game world, with a cold blue aura and distinctive weaponry denoting her unusual appearance. Common to this type of character, she thinks of herself as being “above” others, making her the ideal subject to examine further.



(92)

This is the kind of enemy that would appear at key points of the game to challenge the player.

Cold blue aura implies supernatural power.
Adds to overall appeal.

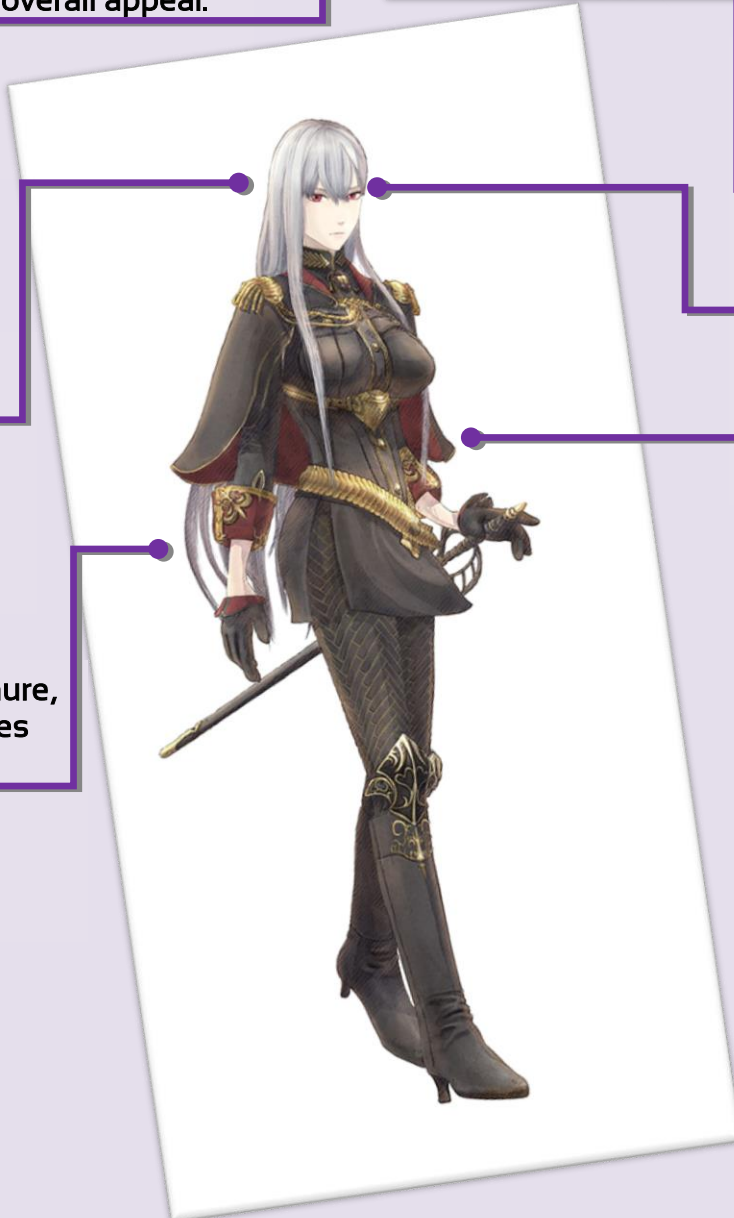
Unique lance and shield allow for unparalleled offensive and defensive capabilities.

Red eyes imply hidden power / abilities.

Flowing silver hair accentuates femininity.

Usually calm and demure, her personality changes dramatically in battle.

Sleek, formal uniform emphasises and underlines authority.

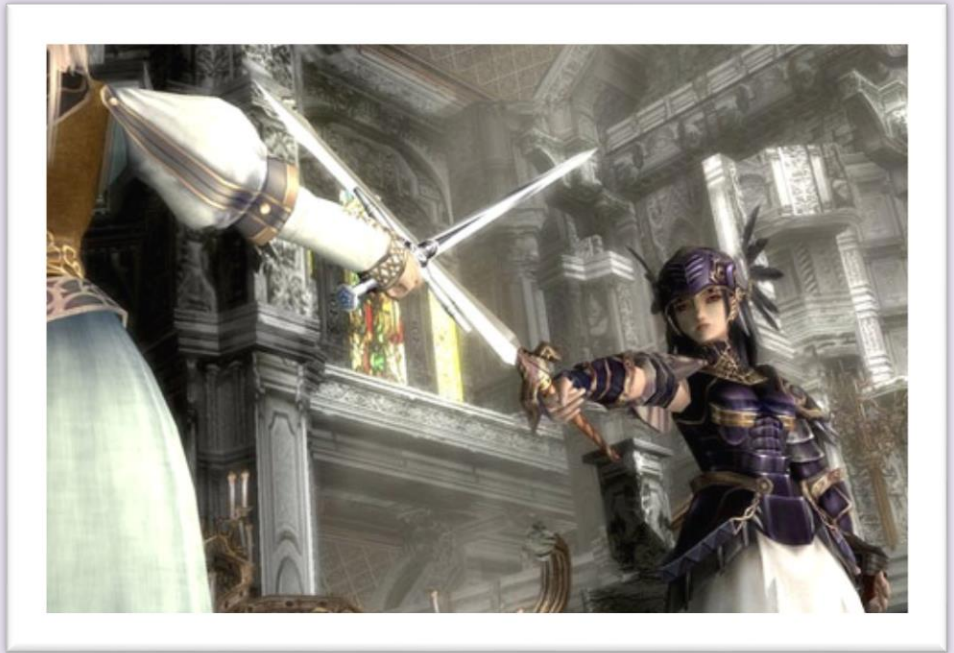


(93)

2.7.6 – Divine & Menace: Hrist Valkyrie (Valkyrie Profile series) (Research Tier Five)

Hrist serves Norse god Odin, carrying out his will and terrifying the populace of the world. Able to wield either a sword or halberd, Hrist prides herself on her battle abilities and on carrying out her mission with ruthless efficiency.

The valkyries within the series are based upon Norse mythology. Hrist is the eldest of three Valkyrie sisters and is the most loyal and domineering of the three. She is a good character to research further due to her attitude towards mortals – taking a very dim view of those who seek to disrupt what she deems to be natural order.

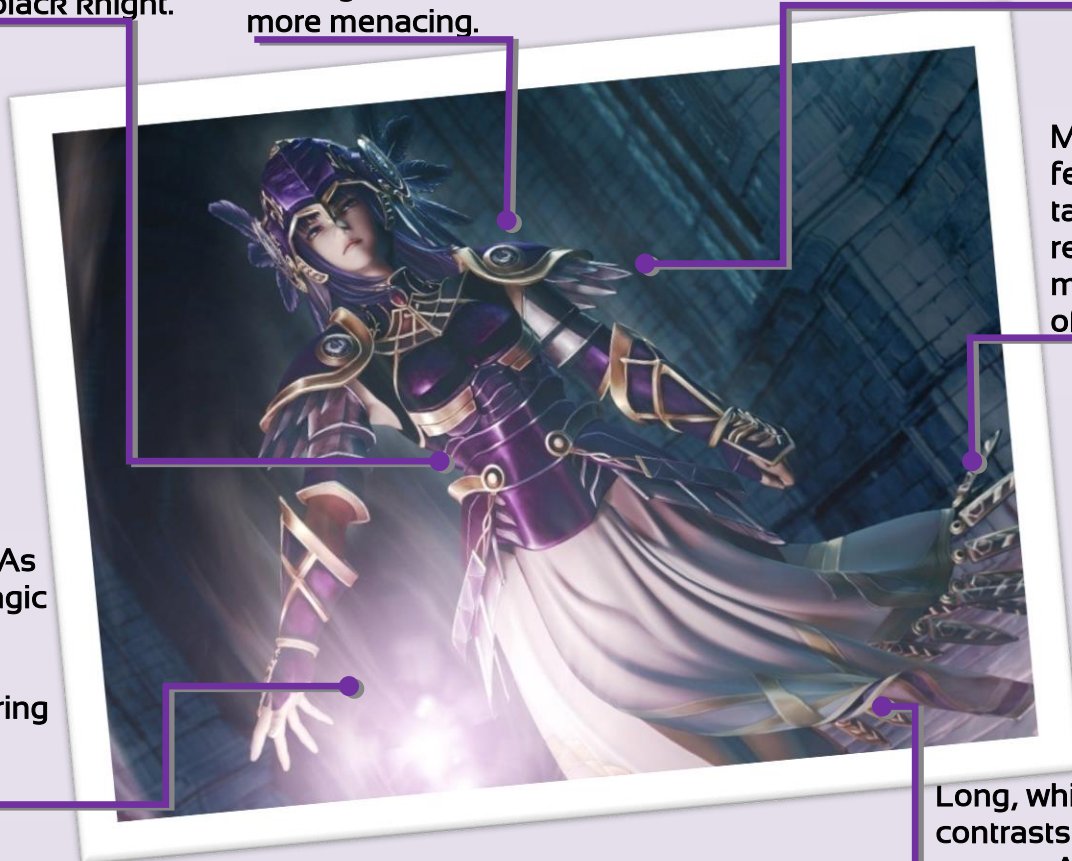


(94)

Dark black/purple armour. Hrist plays on the typical notion of a "black knight."

Whilst the current trend in gaming is for females to show off at least some flesh, Hrist is fully clad, making her less feminine and more menacing.

Feathers are interwoven with the character design. Furtheres the notion of grace & beauty associated with the Valkyrie.



Metal featherlike tassels reinforce the menacing side of her character.

Use of magic. As a goddess, magic is inherent in Hrist's overall design, furthering the air of mystique.

Long, white skirt contrasts with dark armour. Adds some measure of femininity.

(95)

- [**Go to Synthesis Tier 6**](#)

2.8 Research Tier Six – Interaction with NPCs

2.8.1 – Interacting with NPCs – Fable II

(Research Tier Six)

Release: October 2008

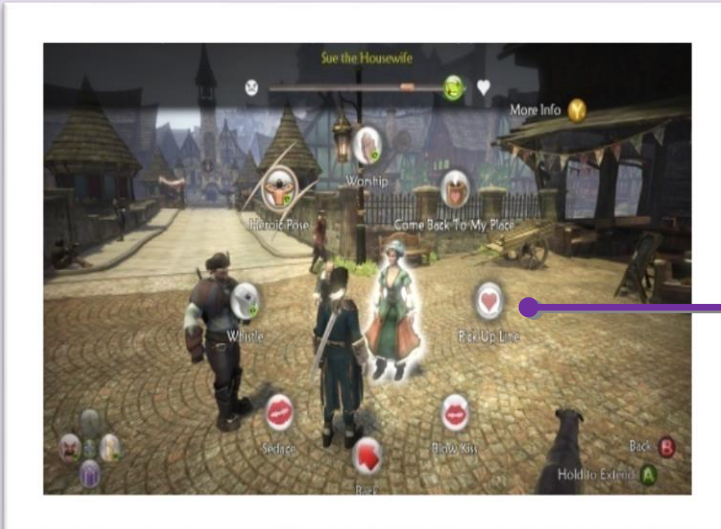
Platform: Xbox 360

Developer: Lionhead Studios

Publisher: Microsoft

USPs: Freedom, customisation, user-friendly.

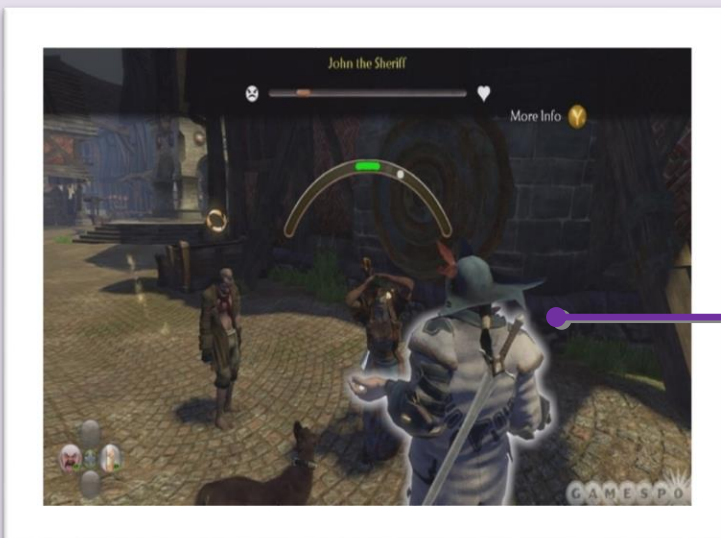
(96)



All direct NPC interaction within Fable 2 is handled through the “expression wheel.” An “expression” is essentially a contextual way of interacting with an NPC. Players can employ a variety of actions – seducing, threatening or even dancing as the situation requires.

The expression wheel is invoked with the relevant button on the controller and the player moves the analog stick in the desired direction to convey the “expression” to others. Each branch of the expression wheel expands into sub-menus, allowing even more flexibility in choosing how to interact with NPCs.

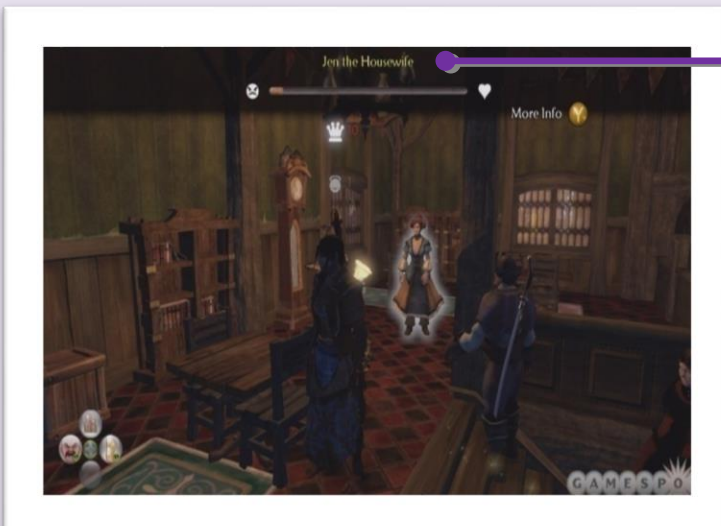
(97)



“Expressions” can be “targeted” against specific individuals (as shown with the guard highlighted to the left) or alternatively can be executed without a target.

Though there is considerable scope for interaction, there is little actual dialog within the game outside of scripted cut-scenes. The majority of NPCs serve no real purpose other than to offer a diversion to the player.

(98)



The game keeps track of NPC reactions to the player and displays them as a series of icons and numbers. Whenever the player takes an action, any changes in an NPC’s opinion of a character are displayed. For example, flirting with an NPC may cause a heart icon to appear with either a negative or positive value beside it.

Each NPC in the game world also has their own meter which gauges their overall opinion of and relationship with the player character.

2.8.2 – Interacting with NPCs – Oblivion

(Research Tier Six)

Release: March 2006

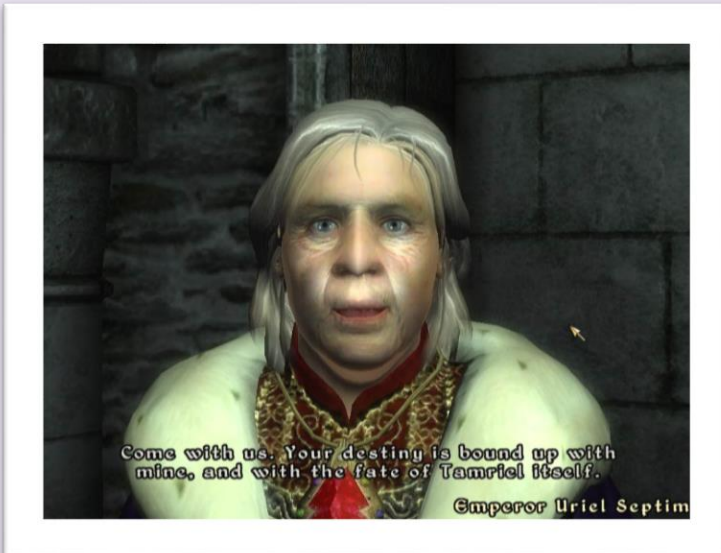
Platform: Multi-platform

Developer: Bethesda Softworks

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks

USPs: Freedom, sprawling game world, non-linearity

(99)



Oblivion handles NPC interaction by pausing gameplay and zooming in on the NPC's face when the player is engaged in conversation with them. All other gameplay such as combat is frozen when the player is conversing with a character.

This rule does not apply to NPCs conversing with each other, who can have “overheard” conversations between themselves when within a specific vicinity of each other.

Every line of the game is voiced, drawing the player deeper into the game world.

(100)



Conversations can be instigated either by the player or they can be “forced” by an NPC – for example an imperial guard can forcibly start a conversation with the player in order to arrest them.

Conversation progresses through an expansive dialog tree, which allows the player to dictate the course the conversion follows. This can lead to further sub-branches as the conversation progresses.

(101)



During combat the player is not able to interact with NPCs, any attempt to do so will display a message informing the player that the NPC will not engage in conversation with them.

Some NPCs allow the player to “yield” through a specific button combination. If successful the NPC will sheath their weapon and will be susceptible to conversation once again..

2.8.3 – Interacting with NPCs – SMT: Nocturne

(Research Tier Six)

Release: October 2004

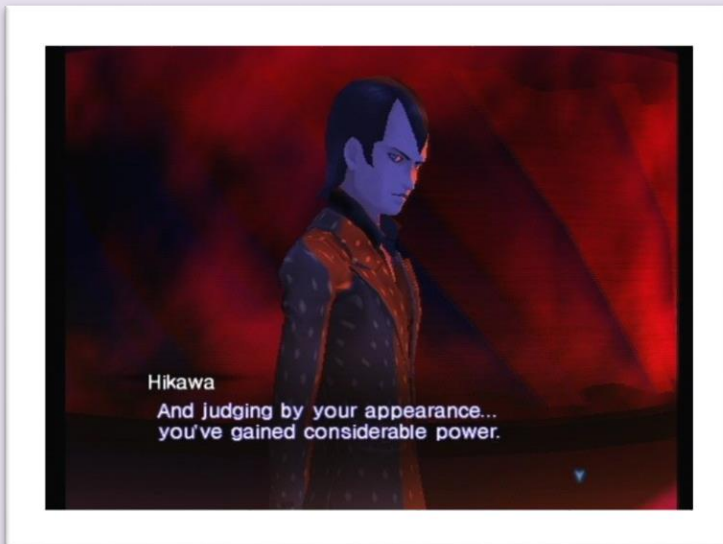
Platform: PS2

Developer: ATLUS

Publisher: ATLUS

USPs: Unique game world, world inhabited by demons

(102)



In Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne the player is able to freely interact with the various NPCs in the game world.

Conversation is instigated by approaching the relevant NPC and pressing the action button. During conversation all other elements of gameplay are frozen. Dialog does not automatically progress, the player must manually advance the conversation by repeatedly pressing the action button.

(103)



When speaking to NPCs, key points of interest to the player are highlighted in colour. These represent terms, characters, places or objects that may be of further interest to the player. It is useful in making the player take note of a specific term and somewhat breaks the potential monotony of reading large blocks of text.

(104)



The player is also able to interact with enemies during battle (combat is turn-based). If the player chooses to do this, the flow of battle is paused while the player answers several questions posed by the enemy.

This can result in several outcomes – the enemy can join the player, the player may be given money, or the enemy may become enraged and attack the player. Overall the game presents an interesting take on a facet of combat that is rarely explored.

- [**Go to Synthesis Tier 10 \(3.10\)**](#)

3.0 Synthesis

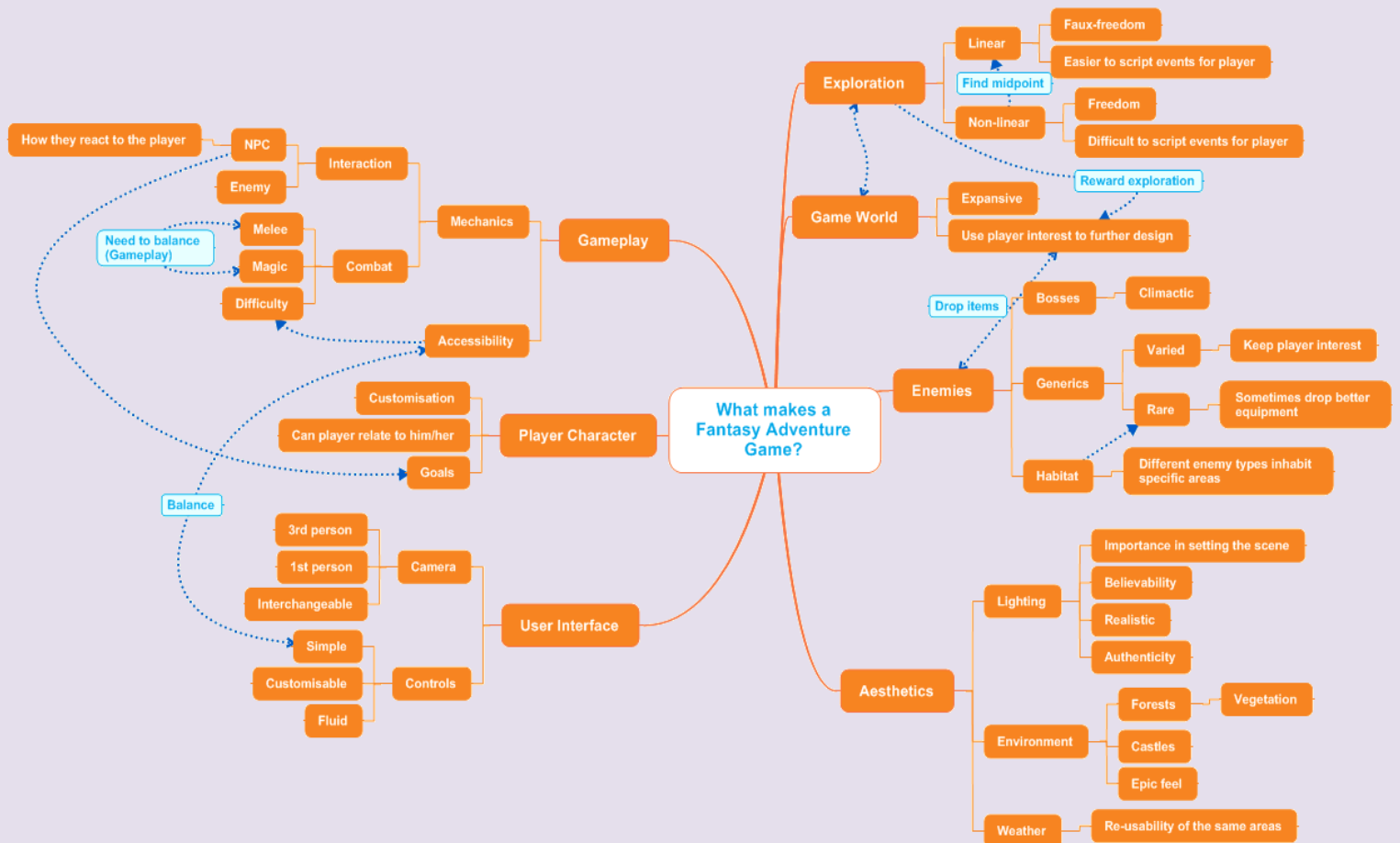
3.1 - Synthesis Tier One

3.1.1 - What makes a fantasy adventure game? (Synthesis Tier One)

Thoroughly researching the genre has identified several key areas to focus on to create a successful final product:

- Aesthetics
 - Graphical style
 - Environment
- Mechanics
 - Combat
 - Interaction within the game world
 - Camera
 - Controls
- Characters
 - Protagonist
 - Enemies
- Story
 - Pace
- Target Audience

Mind map representing key areas of a typical “fantasy adventure” game:



It was noted that “fantasy adventure” games tend to sit on the fence between typical RPG and adventure genre stereotypes. Thus the intended game could

arguably be categorised as some form of hybrid between various genres though the most apt description would likely be an “action RPG.” There are also some elements that are common to all titles in “adventure” genre:

- exploration
- interaction

Focus areas such as the camera fall under multiple categories, specifically mechanics and aesthetics.

Each area will be tiered and tackled systematically. Having identified these focus points, it was clear which factors were common to all games within this remit and also apparent where gaps in the market exist to allow for new USPs to be developed.

- **GO TO PROBLEM TIER TWO**

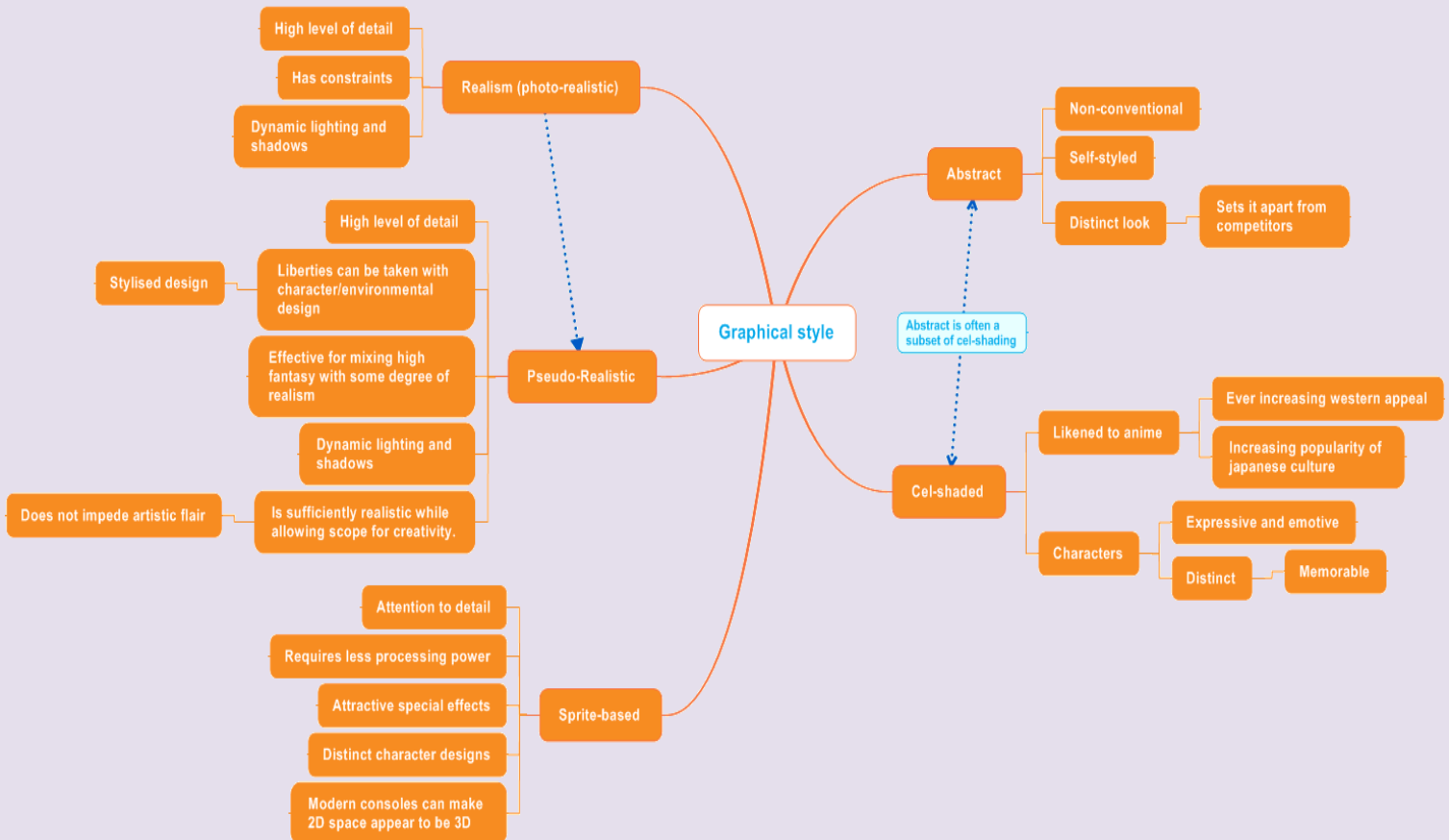
3.2 - Synthesis Tier Two - Aesthetics

The research conducted in this tier was threefold and was intended to narrow down and decide upon the overall game aesthetic before going any further.

3.2.1 - Graphical style

(Synthesis Tier Two)

The first step was to mind map the findings of the research to begin gauging which style was the most appropriate for the game to adopt.



After evaluating the pluses and minuses of the various graphical styles, the findings indicated:

Realism: A powerful style that is extremely effective in reproducing real-life environments and characters. Unfortunately by its very nature it has self-imposed limitations with regard to proportions that inhibit creativity.

Pseudo-Realistic: A highly appropriate style for the final game, bringing all the hallmarks of “Realism” and allowing liberties to be taken with regard to character proportions and design, etc. This style is often seen in use in fantasy settings, such as Overlord, Final Fantasy and many other titles.

Sprite-based: Another powerful style that is worthy of consideration. This style allows for an incredible amount of detail for both character and environment designs.

Cel-shaded: A relatively new style with many sub-branches and individual takes on the central theme. It is especially effective in portraying character emotions and cel-shaded games often garner considerable attention simply for their visual appeal.

Abstract: Potentially the most powerful style of all. The negative stigma is that titles can set themselves too far apart, which has resulted in titles such as Okami being overlooked despite being launched on two separate platforms. This indicates that perhaps some form of artistic concession is still necessary to appeal to the widest possible audience.

Ultimately the most appropriate style to adopt for the game is a pseudo-realistic look. This allows for highly detailed and stylised character designs, keeping the player's interest through imaginative game worlds and characters, allowing for true escapism from the real world. This perhaps captures the essence and goals of fantasy adventure/RPG most coherently whilst meeting the needs of the player.

Titles such as Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 4 also highlighted the important of styling the game menu and other graphical user interface elements to match/compliment the game world. These elements should be in keeping with the overall game aesthetic and should not have a jarring effect on gameplay and immersion.

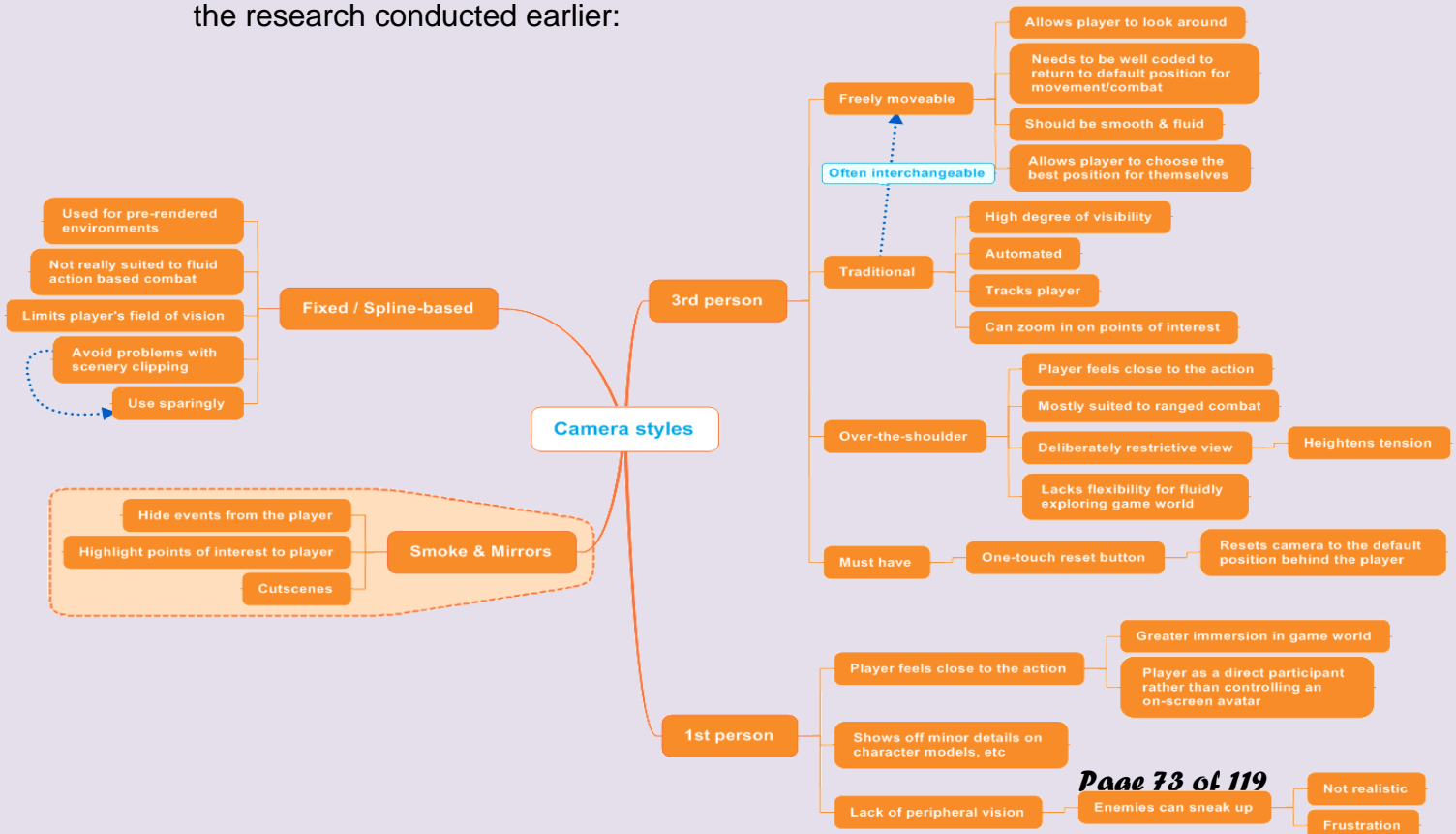
With the graphical style decided, the next step is to determine the best method for displaying the world to the player - the camera.

3.2.2 – Camera style

(Synthesis Tier Two)

As one of the user's primary means of interfacing with the game, choosing the right camera is crucial to the game's success. The camera is the player's window into the game world and as such should be both flexible enough to accommodate their needs and sufficiently automated so as not to distract the player's attention from the game world.

The first step in identifying an optimal solution is to mind map the findings of the research conducted earlier:



Having examined and evaluated the various methods, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1st person perspective: A strong style of camera that allows the player to feel close to the action, arguably more so than other styles as the player actually “becomes” that character as opposed to directing an on-screen avatar.

Considering the style of combat that Devil:Angel is likely to use (large scale battles featuring many opponents), locking the player into a first-person perspective is not a wise choice and so it is not the most suitable choice for the game.

3rd person perspective (traditional):

The high degree of flexibility and visibility allows the player to keep track of several things at once. It is a highly effective and adaptable camera that is suited to a broad spectrum of genres. In most games it features some degree of automation and generally will track the user from a short distance behind them.

The best implementations allow the player to alter the angle to suit their needs. This style of camera can also be used to zoom in on an area of interest (for instance a switch the player needs to activate can be highlighted when the player enters an area) and be locked at a particular angle/distance from the player.

3rd person perspective (Over-the-shoulder): An innovative and exciting new take on the traditional 3rd person camera. So far, this style of camera has only seen usage in the survival horror genre, where the deliberately restricted field of vision heightens player tension. While it would be interesting to see this camera style adapted to a melee style game, it does not seem to be the best fit for Devil:Angel, mainly due to its lack of flexibility.

Fixed / spline-based movement:

This style is best suited for pre-rendered environments or 2D games. Spline-based camera movement is also effective when the player is within a cramped environment as it can prevent clipping through objects and scenery.

An alternative to using a spline can be to temporarily make the offending surface semi-transparent to allow the player to see their character through the scenery.

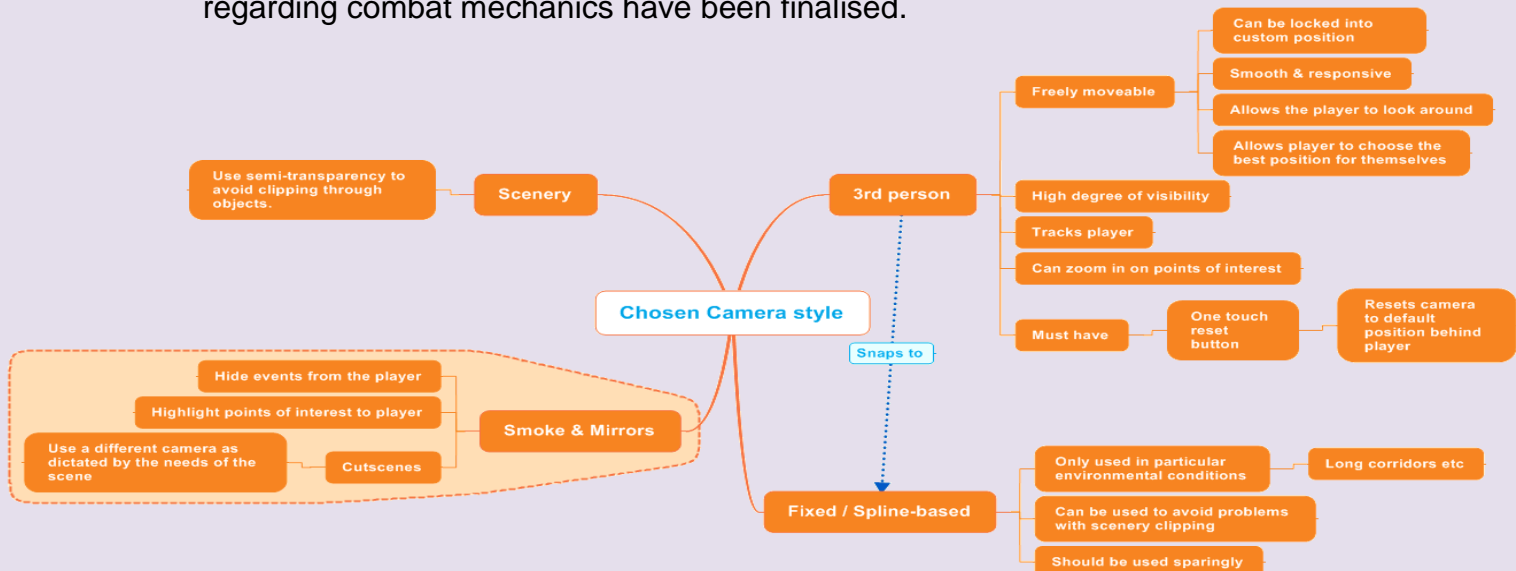
Must haves:

The player must have the ability to quickly and conveniently reset the camera to its default position via a single button press. There are many instances during all games when the player needs to quickly face a given direction so this should be accommodated.

The best overall solution seems to be a traditional 3rd person perspective camera that automatically tracks the player. The camera will also be able to snap to a spline in narrow corridors/other cramped conditions to prevent clipping scenery.

- Under normal circumstances the player will be able to rotate the camera to whatever angle they require. They can also zoom the camera in and out as required.
- One button should be reserved for quickly resetting the camera to its default position.
- Player movement will be relative to the camera's current position.

The overall implementation for the camera was mind-mapped, this will be revisited and fleshed out further at a later stage, specifically when decisions regarding combat mechanics have been finalised.



Having made a mind map for the high level implementation of the 3rd person camera, the final stage in determining the game's aesthetic look is to consolidate just exactly what imagery should be present in a fantasy adventure game, and begin to apply these trappings to the high level notion of Devil:Angel.

3.2.3 – Environment Two)

(Synthesis Tier

Since the player will spend the vast majority of their time exploring the game world in one form or another it is important to build up reference materials in order to produce authentic, believable fantasy environments that the player wants to explore. The research has indicated several areas of focus when planning the environments:

Overall aesthetic: Several themed areas were identified to focus upon:

- **Natural world** – forests, plains, etc
- **Man made** – Castles, villages, etc
- **Demonic** – Hellish scenery, twisted landscape, etc
- **Angelic** – Divine, white themed, ethereal, etc.

Identifying some of the prospective environments and imagery that is envisioned for the final game has helped to get a handle on both how to go about structuring the environment and also provided a basis to judge which platform best meets the needs of the game.

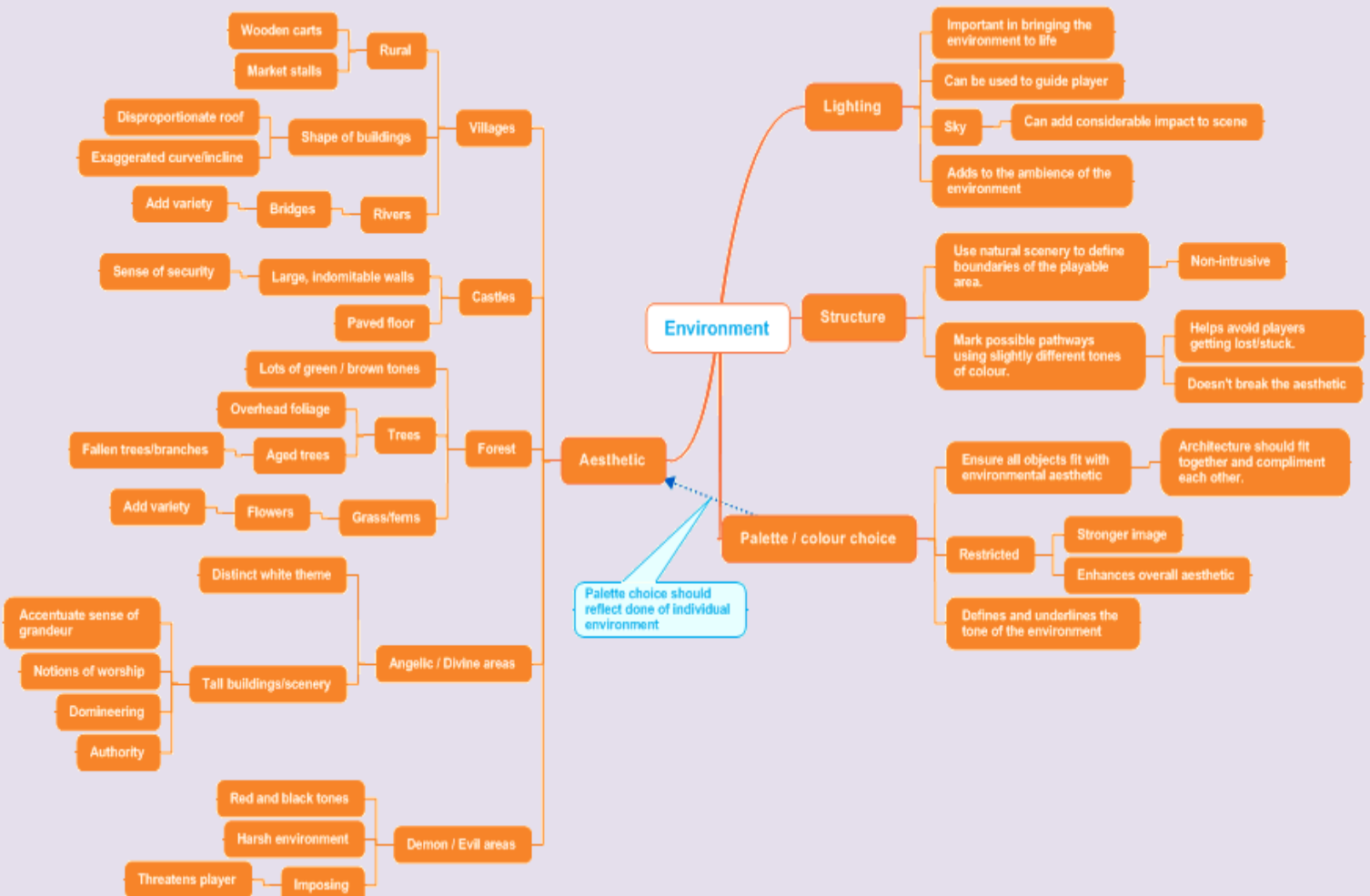
Palette: Each environment should have its own limited palette which conveys the tone of the area to the player. Green, brown and grey will be especially prominent in castle, village and forest environment. White/grey should be used in divine, angelic environments and red/black suits demonic

environments well. Examining successful environments across several games has shown that the most visually impressive worlds are achieved through strict adherence to a limited set of colours. This simultaneously serves to define and underline the tone of the environment, Valkyrie Profile illustrates this with its expert use of white, grey and a powerful skyline to denote the cold, uncaring city of Crell Monferaigne.

Structure of the environment: The best environments naturally guide the player through them using subtle clues and scenery. The boundaries of the game world should be both relatively obvious and blended within the environment itself. The use of fallen trees and branches to create soft boundaries that dissuade the player from deviating from the set route is an effective way of defining the playable boundaries without compromising the look of the environment.

Lighting: The research indicates that the lighting goes a long way in setting the tone of the environment. When used correctly it can add to the ambience and even be used to subtly guide the user down a particular course of action.

An overall mind map of how various parts of the environment fit together and the functions they serve is below. Preliminary ideas for the overall aesthetic image each themed area should take were drafted and set out below. This gives a high level image of how some of the human, angelic and demonic themed environment compare with each other.



Having established a solid foundation for the look and feel to be targeted and made some important decisions regarding the camera style to be used in the

game, the next step is to define the platform. This is also the time to determine which platform best meets the needs of the finished product.

• **GO TO PROBLEM TIER 3**

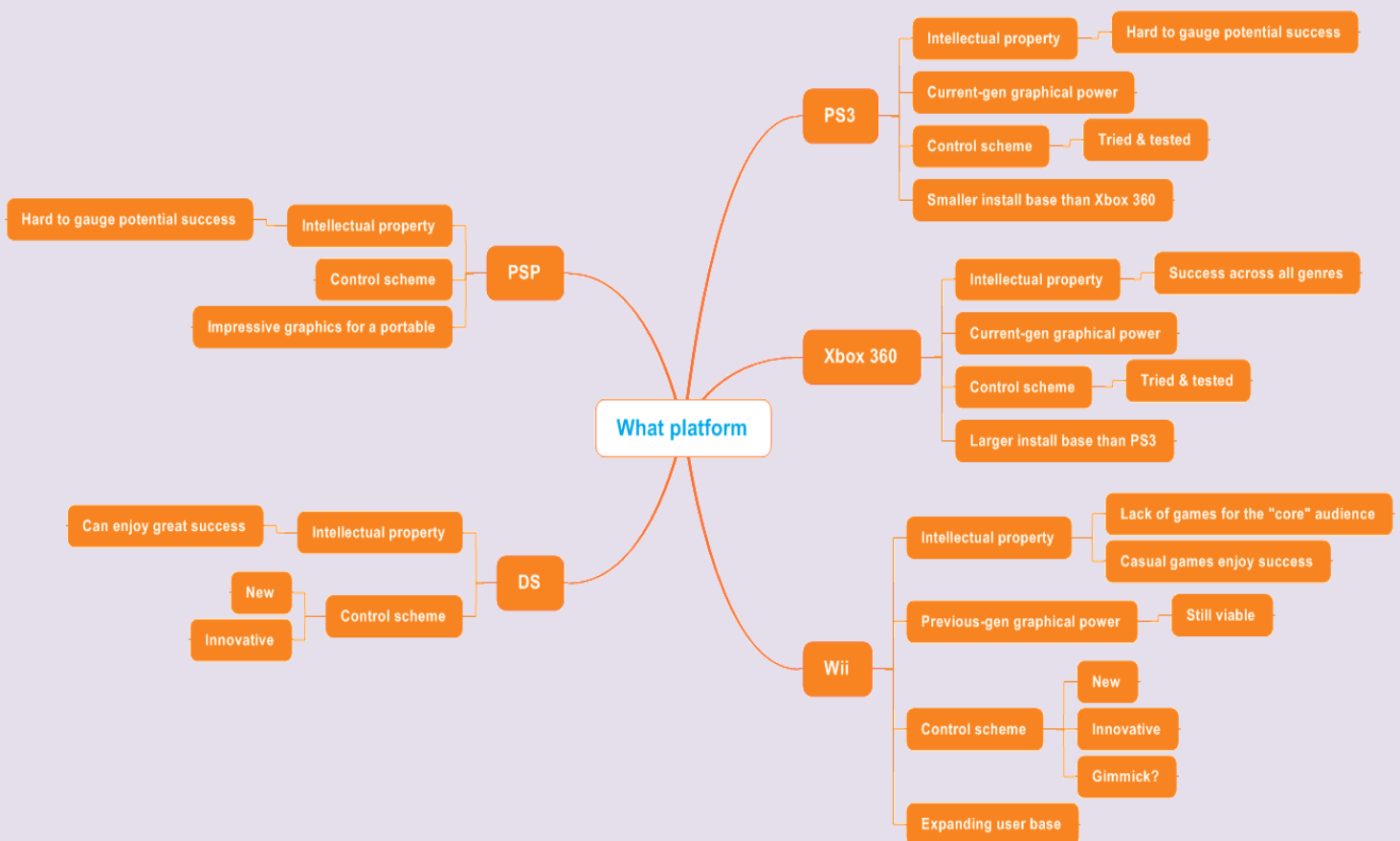
3.3 - Synthesis Tier Three – Defining the audience

The research conducted in this tier was split into two parts and was intended to determine which platforms were best suited to the game, both on a technical level and with regard to the target audience. By understanding the capabilities and limitations of the platform, it will be ensure the core mechanics of the game fall within the technical boundaries of the console.

3.3.1 - What platform

(Synthesis Tier Three)

The first step to deciding upon the platform is to mind map the findings of the research to provide an at-a-glance breakdown of the strengths and weaknesses of each potential development platform.



Nintendo Wii

The Nintendo Wii plays host to a good number of family-oriented and casual titles, however the number of titles catering for the traditional audience continues to grow. The Wii also proves that marketing a product to appeal to a given audience can result in dramatically increased sales.

The Wii doesn't have the graphical capabilities of its next-generation rivals and the shift in Nintendo's primary audience is reflected in their software library. It does however feature a unique control scheme that facilitates greater interaction between the player and the game world. Few new non-casual intellectual properties have been launched on the system, making the commercial viability of launching a new title difficult to gauge. Nintendo also

appears to be making questionable decisions regarding catering for traditional gamers, having recently declined to publish Fatal Frame 4 outside of Japan. Due to these myriad factors various questions are raised regarding Nintendo's commitment to providing core-audience titles on their console and it could be argued their primary focus has shifted to their extended market.

Xbox 360

The Xbox 360 features a large number of shooters, however the presence of titles such as Assassin's Creed indicate this is not the only genre that enjoys success and proves that a new intellectual property can be successful on this platform. The Xbox 360 also has the largest number of Adventure/RPG titles out of all the current generation consoles, and western releases such as Oblivion and Fallout have achieved considerable success on this platform.

With regards to the console's technical capabilities, it is more powerful than the Nintendo Wii and tied with the Playstation 3, making it a good choice when targeting the traditional/hardcore gamer.

Playstation 3

The Playstation 3 features a more diverse array of titles in its top 10; however it continues to be hampered by a lack of exclusive titles and comparative high price of the console.

Intellectual properties can enjoy some degree of success, however the potential mass market success is somewhat impeded by the relatively small install base of users. Indeed, the current trend seems to be choosing the Xbox 360 as the lead development format, and the Playstation 3 port is adapted based off this version. Since it rests on equal footing with the Xbox 360 in regard of its graphical capabilities, there is little reason to choose the Playstation 3 over the Xbox 360.

Nintendo DS

The DS utilises a unique Dual-screen setup for displaying information to the player. This provides the opportunity for new USPs solely through innovative use of this feature. To solidify its appeal, the DS also has touch screen functionality, providing a new way for players to interact with various games. It has been noted that there is a tendency for some titles to force a touch-screen control scheme upon the player, using it for the sake of it rather than to expedite gameplay.

Whilst not as powerful as the PSP, the DS sports a large catalogue of games that cater for all genres and is the most successful console in terms of sales. New intellectual properties can enjoy a great deal of success on the platform, particularly if they take advantage of the dual screen/touch screen facilities.

Sony PSP

The PSP is the DS's main rival in the portable gaming market (discounting the emerging iPhone, which is not a dedicated gaming platform.) Its top 10 games are the most varied of any console and represents a wide range of different genres. The PSP is known to get a high number of PS2 ports and is generally seen as a risky platform for launching new intellectual properties.

In terms of graphical power, the PSP easily outperforms the DS and is capable of delivering more believable environments than its rival. The platform

has also faced criticism regarding its awkward controls due to the lack of a right analog stick. Due to this, many titles (particularly those viewed in the third-person) are let down by camera-related problems as there is no optimal method that allows the player to simultaneously manage camera positioning and navigate through the game would.

After weighing up the merits of each platform, the best fit for Devil:Angel is the Xbox 360. Whilst the Wii was also an attractive choice with its larger user base, there was a significant disparity between the sales figures of family-oriented and traditional titles that meant it was difficult to quantify just exactly how successful the game could be on Nintendo's console.

There are numerous reasons why the Xbox 360 is the best choice:

- Proven track record for new intellectual properties finding success
- Graphical power to bring the game world to life
- Large audience

The final step of this tier is to define a primary audience for the game. This will serve the purpose of helping to craft the mechanics of the game, so they can be tailored to match what the audience is looking for.

3.3.2 – Target Audience Three)

(Synthesis Tier

Taking into consideration the various advantages of each console the game will target a primarily male audience. Whilst the implementation has not yet been defined, a large focus of the game will be combat. The game would feature both death and violence as prominent key themes and so would not be suitable for a younger audience.

As the Xbox 360 caters for a wide audience and features many violence-oriented titles there is a proven audience on that platform. The Xbox 360 also has a great many role-playing and adventure titles, many of which are now beginning to tailor their content toward a more mature audience. Microsoft themselves have shown their commitment to breaking into the Japanese market through the role-playing genre, broadening their perceived "hardcore" market and to providing gamers with the largest variety of titles possible.

After considering the above factors and taking into account the existing demographic on the chosen platform, the minimum age to be targeted is:

16+ year olds.

With the primary audience now defined, stronger decisions can be made regarding the focus of the game. The final area to be tackled before delving into the mechanics is what role combat will play in the game and how will it work.

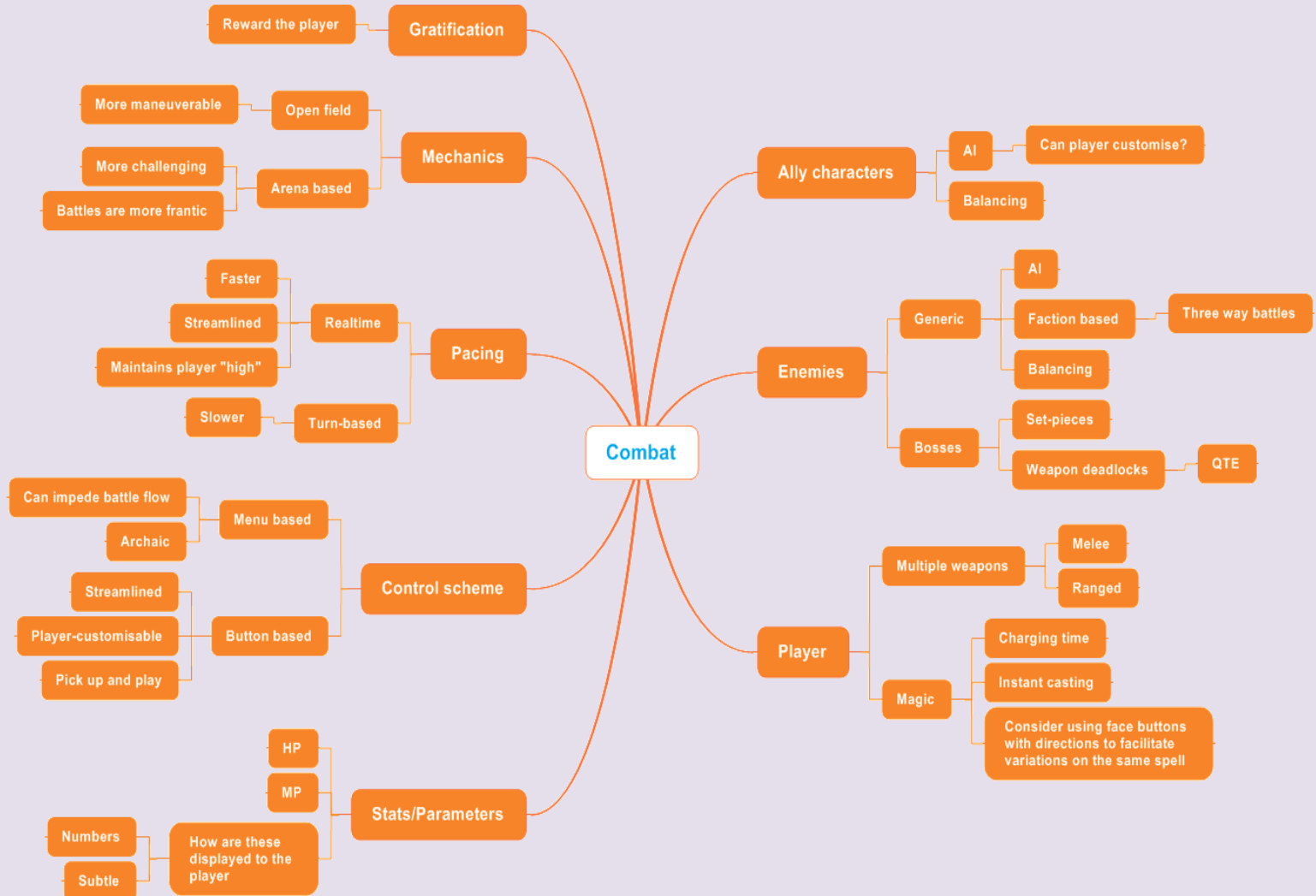
- ***GO TO PROBLEM TIER 4***

3.4 - Synthesis Tier Four – Combat

3.4.1 – Combat (Synthesis Tier Four)

(Synthesis Tier Four)

The first step in planning out the high level overview of combat is to mind map the various findings of the research.



Fable 2 features perhaps one of the best modern adaptations a of battle system within the western adventure/RPG genre, hybridising magic, ranged and melee combat into a stylised and simple interface.

Examining Final Fantasy XII’s combat also highlighted another key facet of battle that is often left unexplored – three way battles. As noted in the research, the various species of monsters within the game will sometimes fight against each other – a sort of natural predator system. This is something that will be adapted for Devil:Angel.

Battles featuring participants other than the player are popular with the player simply because they always include the element of chance. The outcome is never certain and the player must make allowances and preparations for whatever the outcome may be. This is an area of combat that needs to be examined in greater detail.

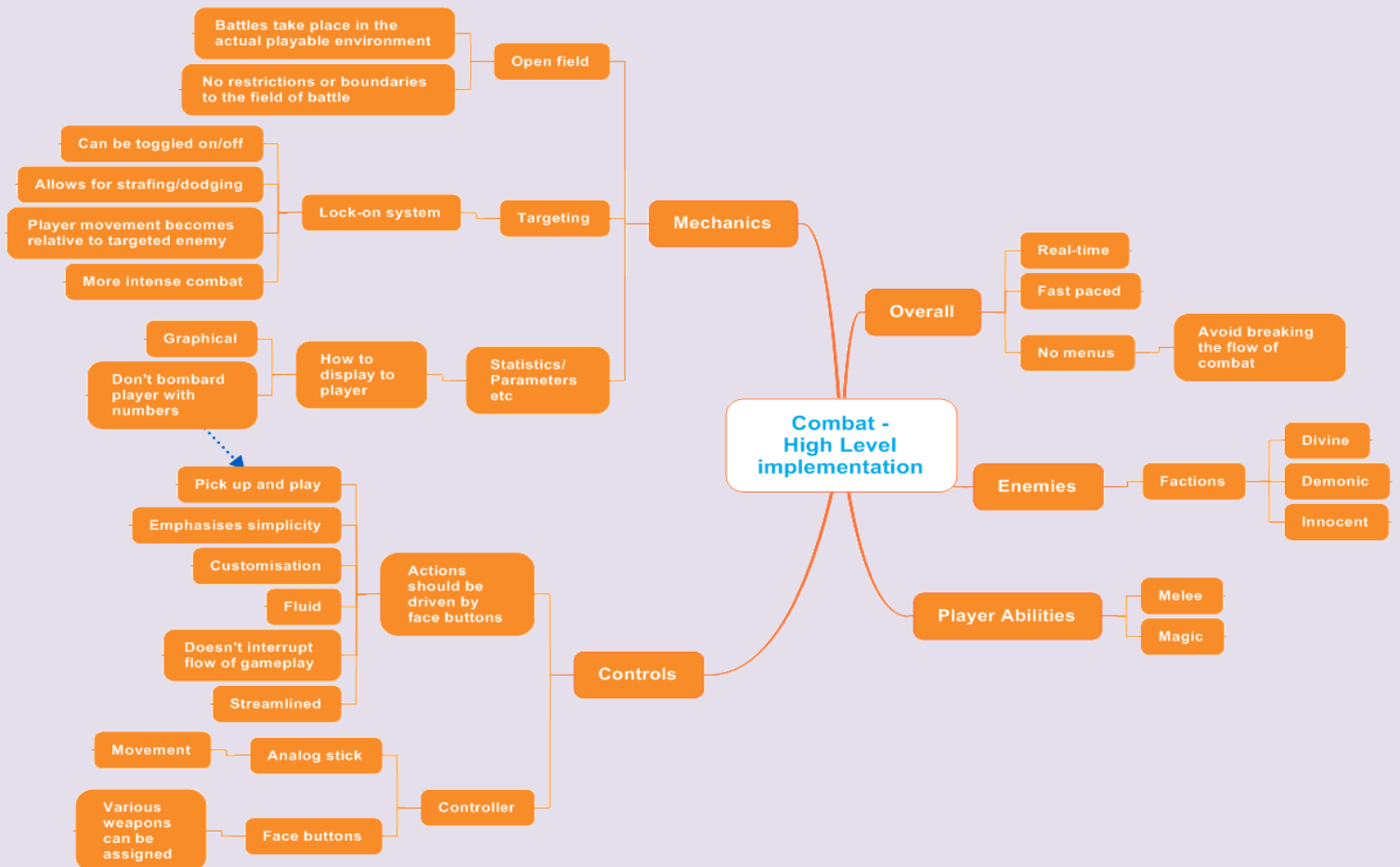
It was also apparent that the reliance on any form of popup menu mid-battle to select commands etc would having a jarring impact on the flow of gameplay..

Thus, in order to facilitate the most fluid combat system, Devil:Angel will adopt a similar control method to Fable 2, which allowed for varied combat without any breaks in gameplay.

Therefore Devil:Angel’s combat at a high level will operate as follows:

- Combat should be real-time and relatively fast paced, operating in a similar manner to Fable 2/Zelda.
- Combat should utilise a lock-on system that can be toggled on/off.
- Whilst locked on, player movement should be relative to the position of the targeted enemy.
- Player actions should be directly driven by buttons rather than through menus.
- Numeric representations of statistical data are old school. Data on character health etc will be represented via a graphical bar or similar.
- The player will be able to utilise both melee and magic abilities.
- Bosses will represent climactic battles and will feature Quick Time Events (sparingly.)
- The inclusion of Ally characters will be determined at a later stage of the design process.

The following mind map shows a high level implementation of the overall combat system. This will be evolved further in a later iteration of the design cycle.



While the combat is taking shape, there are particular aspects and nuances that cannot be completely fleshed out until the game’s focus has been finalised.

- ***GO TO PROBLEM TIER FIVE (1.6)***

3.5 – Synthesis Tier Five – Focus

The overall focus of Devil:Angel is to create a stylised and streamlined modern action-RPG that is pick-up-and-play. It is important to provide the user with a powerful narrative without burying them in reams of text/dialogue.

The emphasis is on creating a shorter, action-oriented title with extensive replayability – to hone and craft a title that can provide a different experience with each playthrough.

One way to achieve this is the notion of multiple endings/branches – these allow the player to see more than one side to the same story, affect its outcome.

3.5.1 – Game direction

(Synthesis Tier Five)

Throughout the research process it has become clear that the vast majority of adventure/RPG titles are focused around telling a lengthy story over a considerable period of time. They require a significant investment of time from the player in order to fully deliver the experience. There is a significant gap in the market for a game that delivers a dramatic narrative and provides a significant amount of character growth.

Devil:Angel will attempt to fill this role, selling itself as an action-oriented RPG with a shorter narrative with immense replayability. The game will feature an easy to pick up combat system that will still offer considerable depth to adept players.

Since the game will be aiming to deliver a shorter, more powerful experience than the average title in this genre, it is important not to dilute the experience with an excessive amount of underdeveloped characters. With this in mind it is perceived that Devil:Angel should focus upon a small core cast of characters, whose motivations are strong enough to set them up as adversaries to the player.

The protagonist will have special divine and demonic abilities; these will be centric to both combat and progression through the game. These abilities will be fleshed out in a subsequent tier.

A key focus will be on keeping the game world relatively simple, this will allow a better experience to be crafted for the player.

By keeping the game world simple and delivering a fleshed out experience it is possible to:

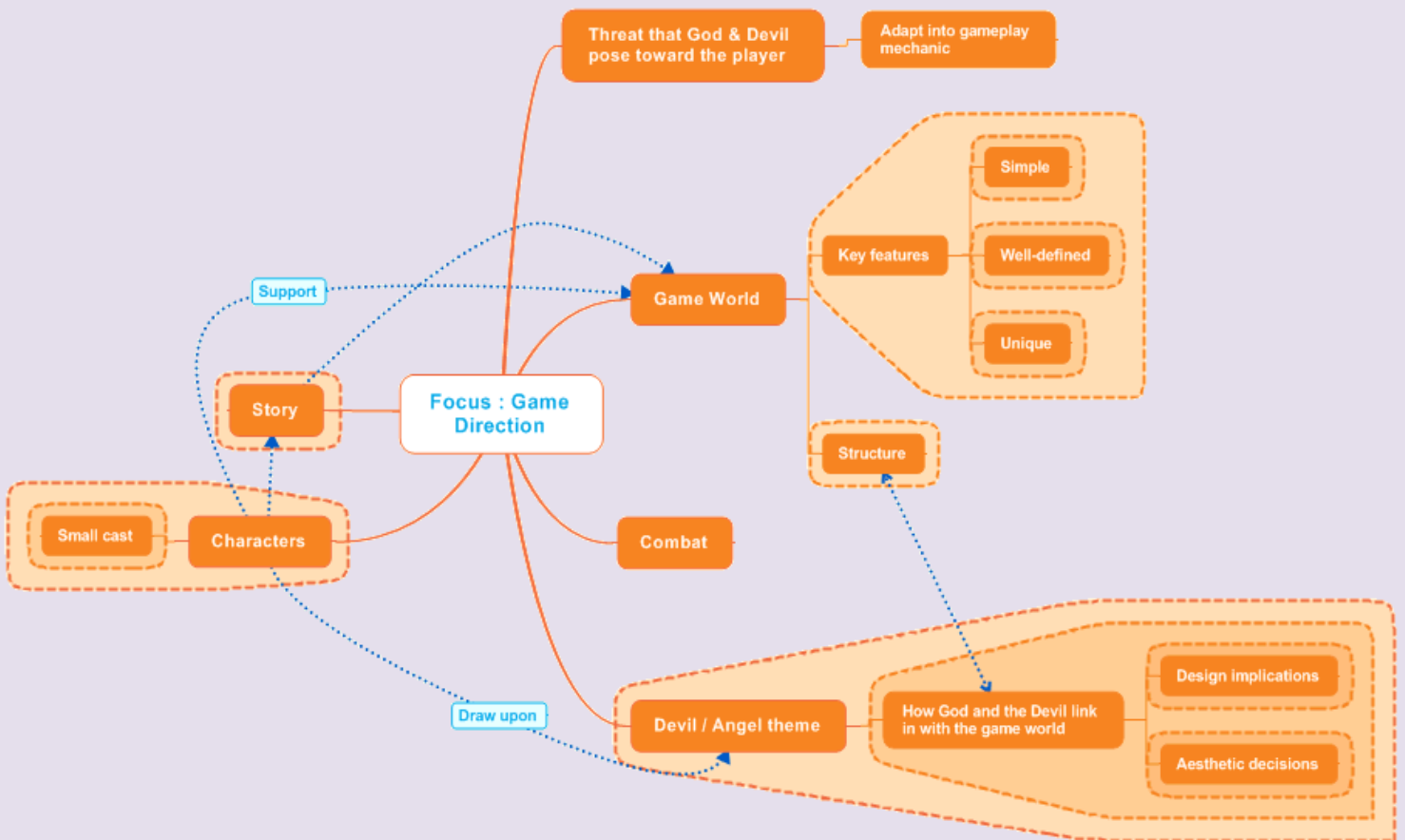
- Craft an intricate and unique experience for the player
- Deliver an exciting new take on an established genre
- Focus on fleshing out the core pillars that will support the game

Looking back at the high level ideas generated during Tier 1, the following areas have been identified as focal areas that could be developed as potential core pillars to support the overall game:

- The Devil/Angel theme and how this links in with the game world.

- The structure of the game world
- Characters
- Combat
- The threat that God & the Devil pose to the player
- Story

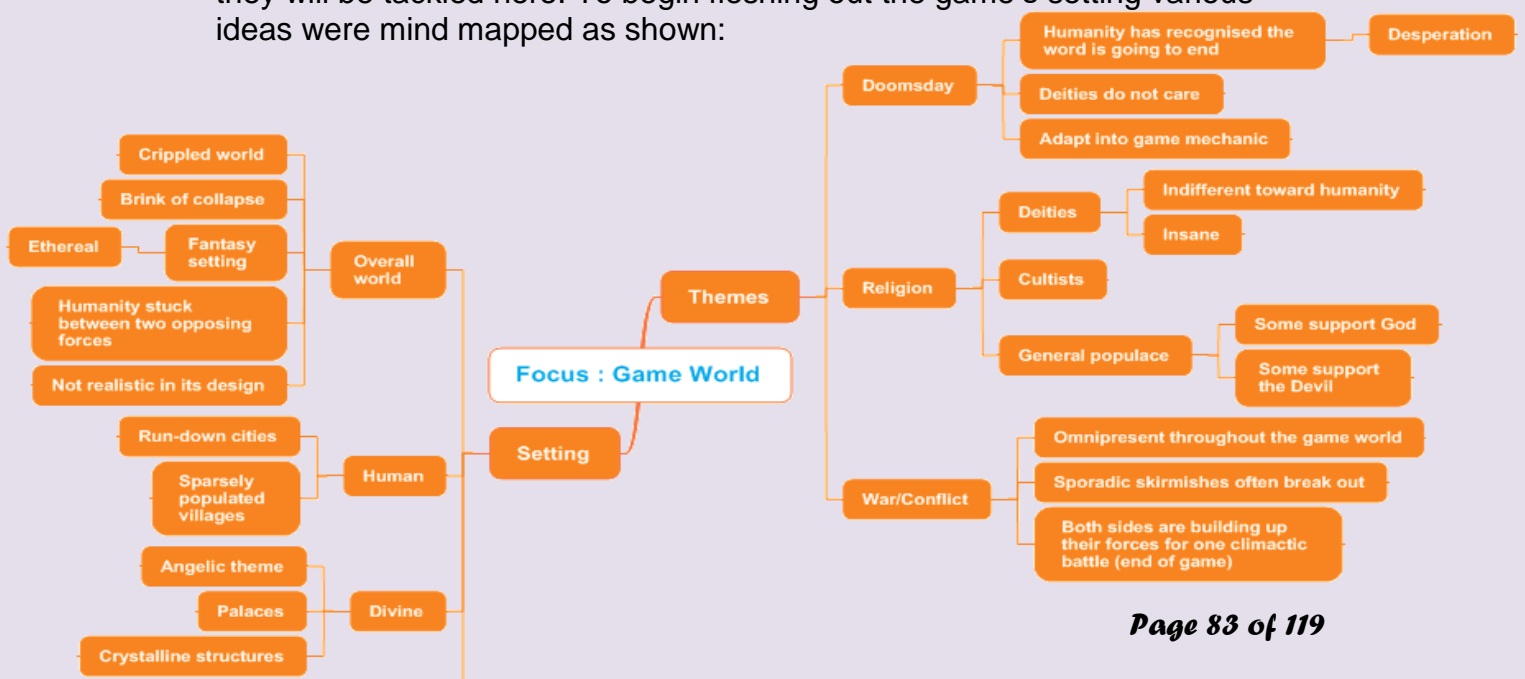
These were mind mapped as shown to understand how they interlink and contribute to the game as a whole. The next step is to fully flesh out these concepts to finalise the game vision.



3.5.2 – Setting and themes

(Synthesis Tier Five)

As the setting and theme of Devil:Angel are such a centric part of the game, they will be tackled here. To begin fleshing out the game’s setting various ideas were mind mapped as shown:



Setting:

The world of Devil:Angel is named Aesha, and is a conjoining of three separate worlds; the Human world, the Divine world and the Demonic world. God presides over the Divine realm and the Devil rules over the Demonic world.

Since the world's inception, the realms of the two deities have been in a state of constant conflict and the human world has been caught in-between. This battle has raged for so long that its proponents, God and the Devil have gone mad, becoming a threat to the stability of the world itself.

As the player begins the game, the world has but a mere seven days remaining before complete annihilation. Both deities are pooling their forces, intent on one last push to secure victory.

The world itself will not be realistic in its design, for the purposes of Devil:Angel an abstract game world that fully supports the underlying themes and back-story is the best choice.

The overall world should look like it is on the brink of collapse as a result of the perpetual wars waged by the two deities. The overall makeup of the world is as follows:

The Human world:

- Run-down cities – typical medieval architecture
- Sparsely populated villages
- Abandoned forts

The Divine world:

- Distinct angelic theme
- Palaces
- Crystalline structures
- Lots of light-based imagery (glows, etc)

The Demon world:

- Burnt, ravaged scenery
- Twisted landscape
- Fire & ash pervade the atmosphere

Themes:

The game world should convey a feeling of a world resigned to its fate. Mankind has been left to its fate whilst the servants of the gods tirelessly fight in an endless battle for supremacy. With only seven days until the end of the world, the situation is looking increasingly desperate and people are looking for salvation.

Religion: (Devout worshippers)

Some people look to the two deities for salvation, becoming cultists and seeking to convert others to their cause, completely unaware that the deities

they worship have gone insane. Whilst progressing through the game the player will have to overcome these devout denizens of Aesha.

Doomsday: (cultists)

Doomsday, or the notion of the end of the world is dealt with throughout Devil:Angel and is a central theme to the game. It affects every human within the game in some way, Divine and Demonic faction members are unfazed by the impending destruction.

A human cult has been established to welcome the coming apocalypse, and is growing at an exponential rate with each passing day. They see doomsday as divine providence brought about by the two deities and consider those seeking to forestall/prevent it to be heretics. The cultists will work to impede the player's mission throughout the game.

War/Conflict:

These play a key role within the game and will form the driving force behind the events of the game.

With the overall setting and theme that is to govern the game world decided upon, the final step in this tier is to define the actual areas that form the game world.

3.5.3 – Structure of the game world (Synthesis Tier Five)

The game world, Aesha, is a world crippled by the constant wars between angels and devils. The human race has been caught in the crossfire for generations and the few remaining bastions of civilisation are hard pressed. Thus the overall design of the game world should feature a human civilisation positioned centrally in the game world, with the Divine and Demonic factions surrounding them on either side. It should be somewhat surreal in its design to underline the mystic/ethereal feel of the game.

Taking the above into consideration, the world is to be divided into three main areas:

- The Divine Realm
- The Human World
- Abyssal Depths (The Demon Realm)

Areas that make up the game world:

- **The Divine Realm**
 - ***Stairway to Heaven***
A crumbling stairway of light that leads to God's realm.
 - ***Fount of Bliss***
The throne of God and the seat of his power in Aesha.
 - ***Nature's Bounty***
An expansive forest that borders the human/divine world.
 - ***The Lord's Mercy***
A large temple complex. Trains holy knights.
 - ***The Monolith***
The fortress of the Sacred Ones.
- **The Human World**
 - ***Rent-a-Hero Inc HQ***
Central headquarters for handling bounties and miscellaneous quests.

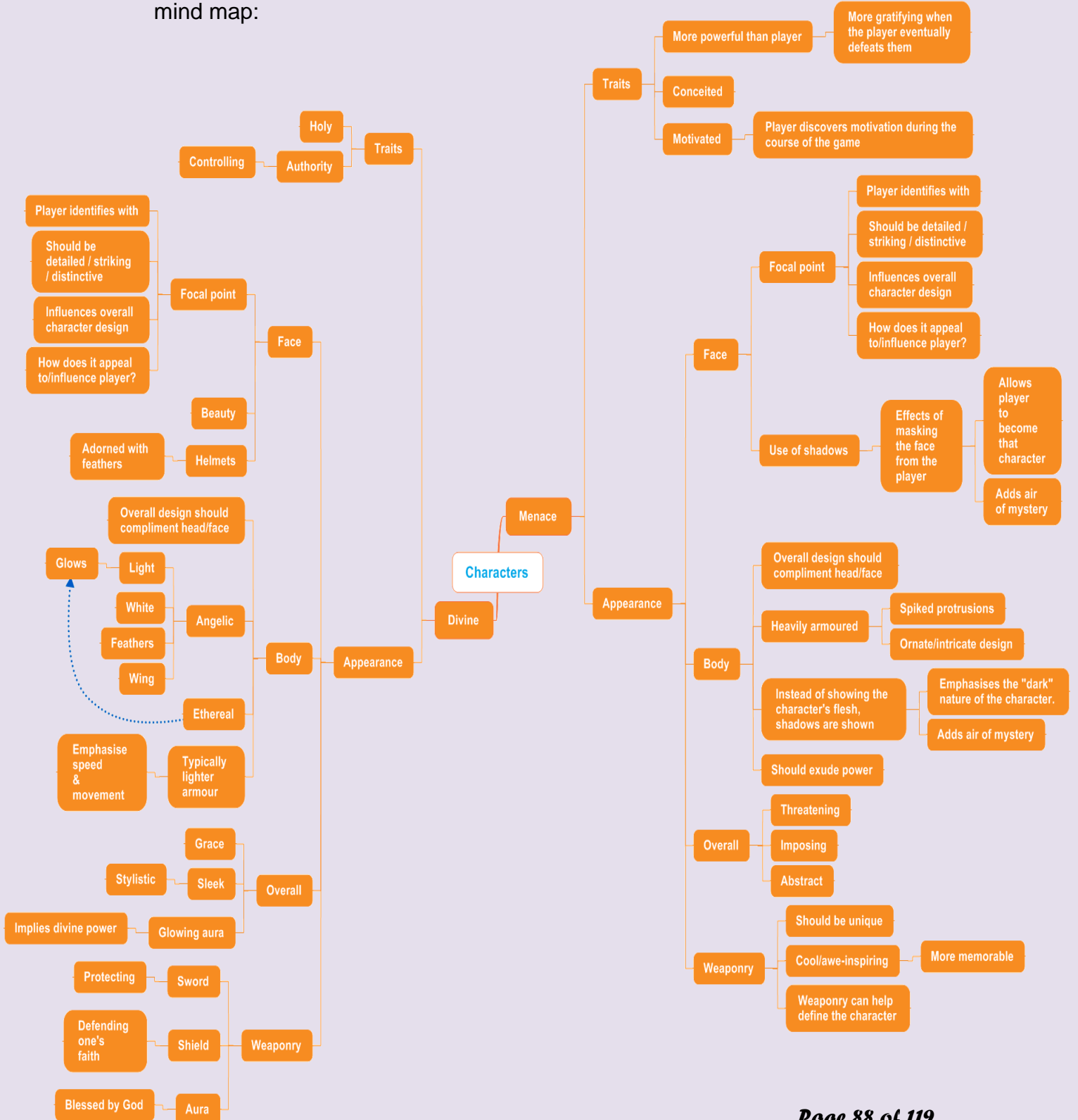
- **The Citadel**
The largest remaining remnant of civilisation.
- **Golden Lands**
An area of the human realm that is showered by the blessings of God. The fertile land is bathed in a soft golden glow and is ideal for agriculture. Battles often break out here however the land and crops recover so quickly the threat is usually negligible.
- **Polluted Lake**
A large lake situated in the centre of the world of Aesha.
- **Seer's hermitage**
Provides hints to the player on which plot paths are available.
- **The Hollow Cross**
God's "Devout worshippers" base of operations.
- **Yggdrasil**
A large, ruined tree, the site of frequent battles.
- **The Forge**
A large smithy where the player can upgrade their weapons.
- **Abyssal Depths**
 - **Necropolis**
The city of the dead, filled with necromancers and reanimated corpses. Humans allied with the Devil reside here.
 - **The Manacle**
An immense chain that extends from the Abyssal Depths to the Divine Realm. All attempts to destroy this chain have ended in failure. (The chain passes straight over the human world and battles often spill over.)
 - **Rapture's Grasp**
A sprawling temple complex. Succubi reside here. The Devil's "Devout worshippers" tempted by succubi also reside here.
 - **The Burning Forest**
A magical forest where flames grow in place of leaves. The forest gets chopped down often as the wood has strong magical properties, yet it somehow always rejuvenates itself overnight.
 - **The Hellgate**
Communal area for denizens of the demon realm. The Black Hand HQ is located in this area.
 - **Devil's Maw**
Seat of the Devil's power in the world of Aesha.
- **Miscellaneous**
 - **River Styx**
The River Styx runs through the entirety of the game world. The corpses of the dead are thrown into this ethereal stream to allow them to enter the cycle of karmic rebirth.
- **[GO TO PROBLEM TIER 6](#)**

3.6 – Synthesis Tier Six – Characters

The research conducted has highlighted several important factors in character design.

It was noted that the character's face is a focal point from the player's perspective. The face also dictates the overall character design and is arguably the most important aspect of the character.

The next step was to define some of the traits that should be inherent across the characters in the game, i.e.: all “Divine” characters should share a somewhat similar aesthetic look, as should the “Demonic” characters. The best way to account for these common factors in design was to produce a mind map:



With a greater understanding of how the two major types of character would look, it is now possible to move forward and produce conceptual art and descriptions of how the characters might look.

3.6.1 – The Protagonist

The protagonist should, by design, pose questions that the player wants answering. As a being that can potentially use both divine and demonic powers, the player will want to know how he has gained these abilities.

Sex: Male

Faction: None

Weapons: Various

Description:

The protagonist wears a shroud around his head, it is impossible to see his face due to the mask that he wears (not pictured). His body is mostly covered by a full-length mantle. Depending on whether or not the player is in Devil or Angel mode he will have one of two characteristics:

In Devil Mode:

- A single bat-like devil wing sprouts from the player's back

In Angel Mode:

- A single pure white angel wing sprouts from the player's back.

Back-story:

The protagonist's goal is to bring down the two insane gods before the world ends. The player is not immediately aware of this goal – they must explore the world, interact with people and trigger cut-scenes to begin to piece together the protagonist's role within the game world.

The protagonist was born through forced Karmic Reincarnation, after having been killed by Fex his body was brought to the Necropolis by Fex, who passed it to her ally, Mortimer. (The two had been investigating ways to break free of their unjust masters for several years by this point and a chance encounter on the battlefield made them allies on opposite sides.) Seeing a strange potential in this corpse, Mortimer surmised that this shell was a reincarnation of Lucifer, and theoretically could wield the power of a Devil and an Angel. Reviving the corpse, Mortimer and Fex explained the situation and their plan to the protagonist. Given a chance to live once again, the protagonist agreed to their terms, and was put to rest once more so the plan could be set into motion.

Shortly thereafter, a ceremony was performed in secret and the protagonist's body was cast into the River Styx. Two years later a being appeared that could wield the power of both deities. The long years had not been kind and the being's memory was patchy, the only thing that he could remember was that he had an important mission to accomplish. The plan had begun...

3.6.2 – Major Characters

The next step was to define the details and looks of the other major characters in the game.

3.6.2.1 – Major Characters – Fex

Fex is the second-in-command of the “Sacred Ones” – God’s personal guard.

Sex: Female

Faction: Divine

Description:

Second-in-command of the “Sacred Ones” – God’s personal guard.

Her hair is wreathed in golden flames, giving her a striking presence. A pair of white wings can sprout from her back (though she can hide them at will in order to blend in with the human civilisation.) These wings can be used for flight and also act as impenetrable shields in combat. She typically wears a long red dress, the bangles on her arm can transform into large halos that deflect attacks.

Weapons:

Wields the Magna-scythe.

Back-story:

Fex is one of the three individuals responsible for the plan to free the world from God & the Devil’s insanity. Working with the protagonist and Mortimer they enacted a plan the wrest the world free from the deities. The plan is in motion from the beginning of the game, but Fex cannot openly assist the protagonist and thus the two will be forced to battle if their paths cross.

3.6.2.2 – Major Characters – Ray-en

Sex: Male

Faction: Divine

Description:

Leader of the “Sacred Ones” – God’s personal guard. A giant of a man who stands unbeaten in combat. Very muscular in appearance, he has wings yet can no longer fly. Very exaggerated proportions. Frontal attacks against him are suicidal due to his weaponry. When enraged his red hair erupts into searing white flame.

Weapons:

Wields the Sacred Plume – a huge chainsaw with feather blades.

Also wields the God Hand.

Back-story:

Ray-en has served God for generations and often leads raids into the demonic realm. He is fiercely loyal to God and will act as one of the final obstacles the player must overcome. He harbours a growing distrust towards subordinate Fex, who he suspects is working with the enemy - this is expounded upon during the course of the game.

3.6.2.3 – Major Characters – Spirit

Sex: Unknown

Faction: Divine

Description:

A spiritual being formed of pure energy. It can take any form and mimic it with one to one accuracy but is most commonly seen in the form of a young male child. Referred to simply as “Spirit”, even the Sacred Ones know little about it. Spirit does not speak, though it may communicate via other means.

Weapons:

Forms weaponry by shape shifting its own body

Back-story:

The player does not learn Spirit’s identity until the very end of the game, where it is subtly implied that Spirit is a manifestation of a fragment of God’s will before he went insane.

3.6.2.4 – Major Characters – Luceid

Sex: Female

Faction: Devil

Description:

Leader of the Ménage à trois, a squad of succubi. The Ménage à trois is a subsidiary of the Nightmare Ensemble, thus Luceid serves as one of the Devil's personal guard. Scantly clad with a bizarre almost mummified appearance, she can also fly and has chains attached to her wrists and ankles. Usually resides in Rapture's Grasp, a sprawling temple complex filled with succubi.

Weapons:

Chains of Servitude.

Back-story:

Has the power to cause hallucinations in her enemies. Uses the Chains of Servitude to embarrass, confuse and debilitate her foes, forcing them into compromising fictitious situations mid-battle before delivering the killing strike. She has no qualms seducing males or female alike. She can only cause hallucinations in people situated nearby.

3.6.2.5 – Major Characters – Kraze

Sex: Male

Faction: Devil

Description:

Leader of the Nightmare Ensemble – the Devil’s personal guard. Co-ordinates the war effort against the Divine faction. Heavily armoured – his armour is stained red with the blood of the thousands he has slain. Unmatched in the Demonic Realm, he seeks to destroy the Divine faction by any means necessary.

Weapons:

Devil’s Embrace – a huge flaming sword that takes the form of a serpent of flame when attacking.

Back-story:

Seeks to bolster the ranks of the Demonic faction through the wholesale slaughter of the humans, whom he plans to enlist as undead warriors with Mortimer’s aid. As the story develops Kraze becomes more desperate, ordering subordinates Luceid and Mortimer to enact various schemes to push the war in his favour.

3.6.2.6 – Major Characters – Mortimer

Sex: Male

Faction: Devil

Description:

Human necromancer who has lived for thousands of years. He lost an arm whilst experimenting on the undead. After transcending his mortal coil, Kraze became aware of his existence and Mortimer was invited to join the Nightmare Ensemble. Dressed completely in grey, he resides in the Necropolis, tirelessly experimenting on the dead. Pale complexion and looking less human each day – his face looks especially disfigured and he is inclined to hide it when travelling outside the Necropolis.

Weapons:

Staff of the Dead.

Back-story:

Mortimer is one of the three individuals responsible for the plan to free the world from God & the Devil's insanity. Realising that if things continue on their current course, the world will end and there will be no subjects left to experiment on. Working with the protagonist and Fex they enacted a plan to wrest the world free from the deities. The plan is in motion from the beginning of the game, but Mortimer cannot openly assist the protagonist and thus the two will be forced to battle if their paths cross.

3.6.3 – Enemies (Major)

The player will face numerous enemies as they progress through the game. Some of the adversaries they may face are below:

Major enemies do not have back-stories but act as “sub-bosses” during the game and a key to player progression.

Divine Avenger & Demonic Avenger

The Divine and Demonic Avenger enemies will be tied into a specific game mechanic; this is detailed further in the next tier of synthesis.

Horsemen of the Apocalypse

There are four separate horsemen. They all share a similar look but are armed with separate weapons. The function of the horsemen will be detailed in the next tier of synthesis.

3.6.4 – Enemies (Generic)

These are the enemies the player will spend the most time fighting. There will likely be various “re-colours” of the same enemy, possibly having subtle differences in their overall design to add some variety.

Legion (*“Legion” encompasses all generic “Divine” enemies*)

- Angel
- Arch Angel
- Judge
- Sacred One Templar
- Sacred One Messiah
- Holy Knight

Horde (*“Horde” encompasses all generic “Demonic” enemies*)

- Demon
- Fiend
- Fallen Angel
- Vampire
- Succubus
- Nightmare Ensemble Elite
- Nightmare Ensemble Fighter
- Black Hand Assassin

Human

- Devout worshipper (*God & Devil variants – see 3.5.3*)
- Cultist
- Bounty Hunter
- Vampire Hunter
- Knight
- Generic Male Townsperson
- Generic Female Townsperson

The final step in the character design is to set out some ideas for the various weapons that some of characters (and the player) may use during the course of the game.

3.6.5 – Weaponry

The chart below shows a breakdown of some of the weapons that will be present in the game. It is foreseeable that this list may grow to include new

weapons / variants as the game is developed. All weapons can be upgraded at “The Forge” which allows them to grow more powerful.

Powering up weapons will require the player to expend their own EXP (see 4.2.3) thus careful consideration must be given before deciding which weapons to upgrade.

Weapon Name	Usable by	Description
Claws	Player	Default weapon.
Club	Player	A basic wooden club.
Rusty Sword	Militia Player	On old rusty sword.
Spiked Mace	Holy Knight Player	A large, heavy duty mace that can crush armour... and skulls.
Iron Discus	Black Hand Assassin Player	Pair of heavy discus that allow the player to attack from a distance. They don't travel far though.
Burning Lance	Arch Angel Player	A spear wielded by powerful Arch Angels.
Granseal	Player	A spear used to seal a powerful demon.
Dantess	Player	A seven bladed sword
Special Weapons	Usable by	Description
God-Hand	Boss - Ray-en Player	A fist weapon that delivers immense power upon contact with an enemy. A living weapon that grafts itself to the user's fist.
Sacred Plume	Boss - Ray-en Player	A large chainsaw-like weapon with shining feathers as its blades.
Magna-Scythe	Boss - Fex (potential ally) Player	Scythe with a detachable, magnetised blade.
Violator	Demonic Avenger Player	Responsible for wholesale slaughter of angels since time immemorial. Only obtainable from the Divine Avenger.
Lasher	Divine Avenger Player	A blessed whip used to punish sinners. Only obtainable from the Divine Avenger.
Chains of Servitude	Lucied - Boss Player	Heavy-duty chains used to ensnare targets. Confuses the target by causing hallucinations
Staff of the Dead	Boss - Mortimer (potential ally) Player	Mysterious staff with a skull at its top. Can revive recently defeated foes, who will then fight in the wielder's name.
Devil's Embrace	Boss - Kraze Player	A huge flaming sword that takes the form of a serpent when attacking foes. This allows in to actively bypass the enemy's defences, making it one of the most powerful weapons in the game.

As the chart shows, the player is able to use of the special/unique weapons held by the boss characters. In order to acquire these weapons the player would need to go down specific plot branches and trigger events to allow them to kill the wielder. The player would then complete the game and carry over the equipment to their next cycle.

This adds another facet to the game's replayability as it is likely many players will want to acquire all of these unique weapons.

Upon completing the character designs it has become apparent that there is a need to better define each of the factions within the game world.

- **GO TO REFINEMENT TIER 1**

3.7 – Synthesis Tier Seven – Story

3.7.1 – Storyline Seven)

(Synthesis Tier

Drawing upon earlier stages of synthesis, there is now sufficient information to fully develop the overall storyline the game will follow. It is beneficial to refer back to the protagonist's back-story (see 3.6.1) to better understand his role in the game.

The game world, Aesha, is a world crippled by the constant wars between angels and devils. The human race has been caught in the crossfire for generations and the few remaining bastions of civilisation are hard pressed. Some see the forces of light as saviours; others turn to darker powers for salvation. Precious few know the truth – that the two deities have gone insane and care little for humanity and even less for the doomed world.

As the player begins the game, the world has but a mere seven days remaining before complete annihilation. Both deities are pooling their forces, intent on one last push to secure victory.

A select few have enacted a plan to bring down the gods and rescue the world from its fate. Joining together with humans, devils and angels, the player must work quickly to avert disaster.

As stated, the game will unfold over a period of seven days and the remainder of the story can unfold in one of many ways depending on the actions of the player.

The overall idea of the game is to:

- gain favour with both God & the Devil by utilising the Eye of God Mechanic (see the relevant tier) to expand the skills available in combat.
- achieve specific goals such as gathering artefacts etc by the beginning of the sixth day.

On the sixth day, the horsemen of the apocalypse descend on the game world. By this point the player should have eliminated key figures in the Devil & Divine factions, if not they are “locked out” of the best ending.

A large scale battle also begins between the Divine & Demonic factions on the sixth day (This is what the player is working to avoid.) This persists until the end of the game, ensuring that there will be constant fighting during the final period of the game.

By following the above guidelines the player would be able to achieve the “best” ending. Of course a major part of the game is replayability and it is highly unlikely that a player will achieve the best ending on their first attempt. To accommodate this, the game is to feature several endings, and also have subtle variations on each on, as affected by the player's actions.

3.7.2 – Game Endings Seven)

(Synthesis Tier

Best ending: The player achieves all defined goals and defeats the Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The Devil & Divine factions are both routed through removal of key figures (Sacred Ones & Nightmare Ensemble.) The player is then joined by both Fex and Mortimer as they attempt to break free from the deities grasp. This culminates in the hardest battle in the game, and the player needs the support of these two characters to succeed. Upon victory the protagonist must then release the two deities' power back into the world, restoring equilibrium.

Usurper ending: Follows the same structure as the Best ending, however after winning the final battle against the deities, the player chooses to kill Fex & Mortimer and usurp the deities' power for himself.

God ending: Achieved on the seventh day. The player defeats the Devil, and kills all characters affiliated with the Devil faction. The horsemen leave the world without incident. The world returns to a pseudo-stable balance, the human world begins to experience rapid expansion however it is very much an indoctrinated state with little freedom.

Devil ending: Achieved on the seventh day. The player defeats God, and kills all characters affiliated with the Divine faction. The horsemen leave the world without incident. The world stabilises and the immediate threat of doomsday is lifted. Soon thereafter the world falls into anarchy as the Devil faction continues to expand its influence, subjugating the weakened Human forces.

Doomsday: Through either inaction or their death, the player has failed to steer the fate of Aesha one way or the other. The Horsemen of the Apocalypse succeed in their mission and the world ceases to exist.

With the overall storyline set out, the next step is to set out the various game mechanics. Some of these were touched upon at a high level and now need to be fully developed to round off the game.

- **[GO TO PROBLEM TIER 8](#)**

3.8 – Synthesis Tier Eight – Mechanics #1

3.8.1 – Overarching Game Rules - Player death & Game over (Synthesis Tier Eight)

When defeated in combat the game is over. The player is given the option to either:

- Retry from the beginning of that area.
- Begin a new game, retaining a portion of their current equipment
- Return to the title screen

“Retrying” resets everything to the way it was when the player entered the current area. The player is able to “retry” a maximum of 3 times per chapter. (1 chapter is 1 “day” in game terms.) If the player dies a fourth time they are returned to the title screen.

Beginning a new game is a safe alternative for less skilled players, allowing them to retain some of their current equipment and skills on their next playthrough. Key items such as those relating to plot events will not be retained under any circumstances.

3.8.2 – Carrying over equipment & skills / New Game+ (Synthesis Tier Eight)

Upon reaching one of the many game endings the player is able to restart the game and carry over all of their equipment, skills etc. Key items such as those relating to plot events will not be retained under any circumstances.

3.8.3 – Gaining and maintaining Divine/Devil powers (Synthesis Tier Eight)

The protagonist has the unique ability to utilise both Divine and Demonic abilities, as detailed in his back-story. A breakdown of some of the abilities the player can acquire is below.

The player must be in the correct “mode” to utilise magic, i.e.: to use Divine magic, the player must be in “Angel” mode. Switching between the two is instantaneous and will be assigned to a dedicated button on the controller.

Spell Name	Affiliation	Description
Morning Plume	Divine	A burst of magical light scorches a single enemy.
Divine Assault	Divine	Several Spears of Light pierce the enemy
Guardian Angel	Divine	Summons a Guardian Angel to protect the player
Final Judgement	Divine	Searing white light damages enemies in the immediate vicinity
Wreathing Flame	Devil	A trail of flames extends from the player’s hand to the desired target.
Bury Alive	Devil	Buries the target in the ground.
Death clock	Devil	If it hits a target, they have 30 seconds to live.
Consuming Flame	Devil	Scorching fires deal severe damage to a group of enemies.
Special Abilities		
Angel Shift	Divine	Instant switch – enables player to utilise Divine magic.
Devil Shift	Devil	Instant switch – enables player to utilise Devil magic.

A system is required to evaluate, reward and punish the player based on the actions they make in the game world – specifically combat.

This will involve refinement of the existing high-level combat system in order to implement the mechanic into the game. This refinement was planned earlier in synthesis and having now developed the dependant sections of the game sufficiently combat can be revisited.

- ***GO TO REFINEMENT TIER NINE***

3.9 – Synthesis Tier Nine – Mechanics #2

3.9.1 – The 7 day time limit

(Synthesis Tier Nine)

In order to facilitate a powerful narrative and craft a unique player experience, Devil:Angel will adopt an innovative seven-day plot progression mechanic. This mechanic will assist in producing a streamlined game and a powerful, branching narrative.

The player is given a total of seven days to wrest the world back from the two demented gods.

Each day is divided up into the following periods:

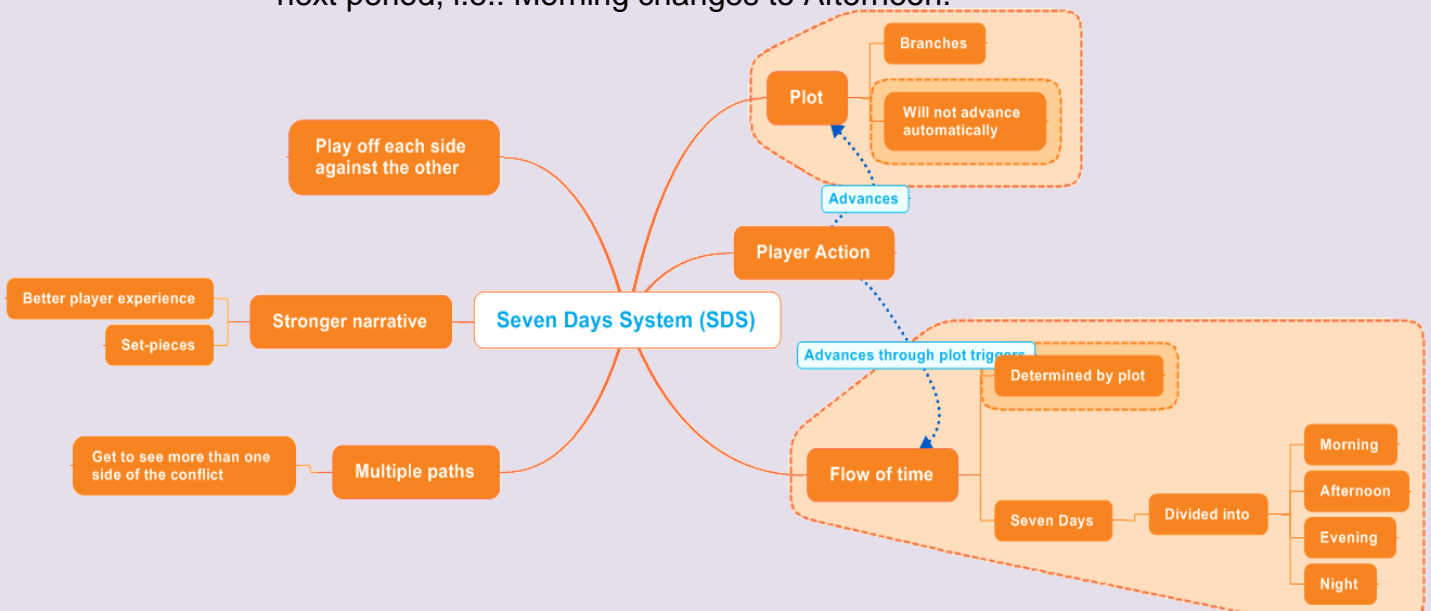
- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
- Night

During each period, the player’s goal is to seek out and activate various plot triggers/events by travelling through the game world. Every “period” of each day has at least one event that the player can trigger to advance the plot.

Therefore, under normal circumstances the player is always able to instigate a single plot-advancing action during each period unless the current period is designated FREE (this will be shown on the player’s HUD).

Key features of the Seven Day system:

- Time will not advance until the player activates a plot trigger. The player must search within the game world to find these triggers.
- Due to the nature of the game, there will often be numerous separate triggers/events open to the player, each leading down a potentially different plot path.
- “Free” means that there are no plot triggers/events currently available for the player to activate.
- During “Free periods” the player has a specific amount of time (in real world minutes) to take on such as bounty hunting or level up in combat.
- Advancing the plot via a trigger/event will also move time forward to the next period, i.e.: Morning changes to Afternoon.



3.9.2 – Horsemen of the Apocalypse

(Synthesis Tier Nine)

The horsemen of the Apocalypse are tied in with the storyline of the game. They are allied with neither the Divine or Demonic factions. In this section their role in the game is explained. (Descend on the sixth day)

On the sixth day of the game, four horsemen will descend upon the game world. Based loosely on the horsemen in the Bible, these horsemen represent some of the final challenges in the game.

The horsemen's role in the game is to enact doomsday at the end of the seventh day.

The choices the player makes with regard to the horsemen will have a strong impact on the outcome of the game. If left to their own devices (i.e.: the player continues along with the war between the Divine & Demonic factions) then the successfully enact the doomsday ending at the end of the seventh day so long as:

- **The player has not achieved the God ending by ending the war before the end of the seventh day**
- **The player has not achieved the Devil ending by ending the war before the end of the seventh day**

Achieving either of these endings means the world is re-stabilised and the horsemen's presence is no longer required in the game world.

Each of the horsemen has a particular role in enacting doomsday:

- The White Rider is tasked with destroying the Divine faction (located on the "Stairway to Heaven.")
- The Black Rider is tasked with destroying the Demonic faction (located in "The Burning Forest.")
- The Red Rider is tasked with destroying the Human faction (besieging the human "Citadel.")
- The Pale Rider only appears when the other rider's have been defeated. (located in Yggdrasil.)

Pale Rider is special in that his power is based upon how many humans the player has killed during the course of the game. If the player has killed many humans, Pale Rider will be nigh-unbeatable.

The horsemen can be thought of as the final keys that unlock the "best" ending. It is necessary to defeat the four horsemen immediately upon their appearance on the morning of the sixth day. If any of the horsemen remain when the seventh day begins the player cannot achieve the best ending.

3.9.3 – Bounty Hunting

(Synthesis Tier Nine)

RENT-A-HERO INC runs and maintains a list of wanted bounty heads. The player is able to undertake various missions over the course of the game to receive rewards and sometimes advance the plot.

The player is free to undertake Bounty Hunting missions at any time during the game (even at the expense of foregoing plot progression). Bounty hunts fall into three categories:

- Divine faction problems – undertake jobs for the Divine faction

- Devil faction problems – undertake jobs for the Devil faction
- Human faction problems – undertake job for the human faction and eliminate threats to the human Citadel.

Participating in a bounty hunt from start to completion will advance time to the next period.

RENT-A-HERO facts:

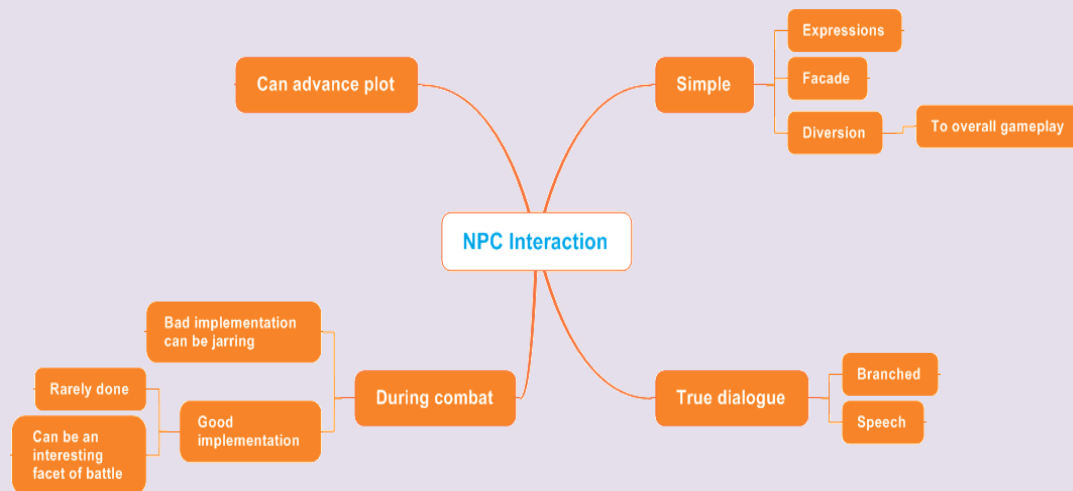
- RENT-A-HERO is unaffiliated with either of the factions and will provide bounties to the player relating to ongoing plot events.
- RENT-A-HERO is located in the human Citadel.
- Bounties range from buffed & re-coloured normal enemies to sub-bosses and plot-related enemies.

Since Devil:Angel will feature at least some interaction between the player and various NPCs there is a need to define how this will operate in-game.

- **[GO TO PROBLEM TIER TEN \(1.11\)](#)**

3.10 – Synthesis Tier Ten – Interacting with NPCs

Researching NPC interaction has provided an insight as to the various techniques that can be employed to facilitate interaction between the player and NPCs. The first step was to mind map the findings of the research:



One particularly interesting title was Fable 2. Its “expression wheel” system could be categorised as a façade or diversion due to the fact there is no genuine dialog between the player and the NPCs. Conversely however, the way NPCs react to even the smallest action taken by the player makes it an incredibly believable method of handling interaction.

3.10.1 – Interacting with NPCs

(Synthesis Tier Ten)

Similarly to Fable II, the vast majority of NPCs within Devil:Angel’s game world do not serve to further the plot of the game and are there merely to give the impression of a large populous. The only NPCs that the player is able to interact with in a non-violent manner are those NPCs that offer a service, such as:

- RENT-A-HERO Bounty Office Employees
- Blacksmith at “The Forge.”
- Specific NPCs related to plot-progression.

Any NPC that the play can interact with via dialog will be highlighted to the player. Dialog can be initiated with these NPCs by pressing the appropriate button when within range of the character.

3.10.2 – Interacting with NPCs during combat

(Synthesis Tier Ten)

Unlike many RPGs, Devil:Angel will allow the player a limited amount of dialog options whilst in battle. Typically, only two or three options may be available to the player. This ability will be limited to key adversaries and an icon will be displayed on-screen when the player can initiate conversation.

As with normal dialog, once the menu pops up, all other action is halted until the player chooses an option or cancels. The system also facilitates some plot branches, with the player able to ask NPCs to rebel against their cause, etc.

To finalise the overall game design, the final stage is to identify the unique selling points and core pillars that will drive the game through the development process.

- **[Go to Problem Tier 11 \(1.12\)](#)**

3.11 – Synthesis Tier Eleven – Finalising the design

3.11.1 – USPs (Synthesis Tier Eleven)

(Synthesis Tier Eleven)

The key unique selling points of Devil:Angel are defined as:

- Combat oriented streamlined RPG
- Faction-based combat
- Unique Seven Day System – the decisions the player makes make determine the plot path
- Player driven narrative with even minor events affecting the plot
- Branching paths
- Defeat God & the Devil

3.11.2 – Control map (Synthesis Tier Eleven)

(Synthesis Tier Eleven)

The controls for Devil:Angel are defined as shown below:



Left Analog – Movement

Right Analog – Camera (see nuances)

D-pad – Weapon / Magic menu navigation (see nuances)

Back – Can instigate a conversation at key points in battle. (see nuances)

Start – Pause the game

X Button – Melee strike, multiple presses results in a combo

Y Button – Special attacks, can be linked with melee strikes

B Button – Magic attacks, can be linked with melee strikes

A Button – Defend/Parry

LB – Devil Angel Toggle (see nuances)

LT – Lock on to a specific target. Pressing again breaks the lock-on.

RB – Weapon switch (see nuances)

RT – Magic switch (see nuances)

Control nuances:

Camera movement – the camera can be rotated via the right analog stick. Pressing the button causes the camera to reset to its default position behind the player.

Weapon switching – the player can switch weapons by holding the RB button. This brings up a menu displaying the player's currently held weapons. The player uses the D-pad to navigate through this menu and select the weapon. Releasing the RB button finalises the switch.

Magic switching – the player can switch magic by holding the RT button. This brings up a menu displaying the player's known spells. The player uses the D-pad to navigate through this menu and select the desired spell. Releasing the RT button finalises the switch.

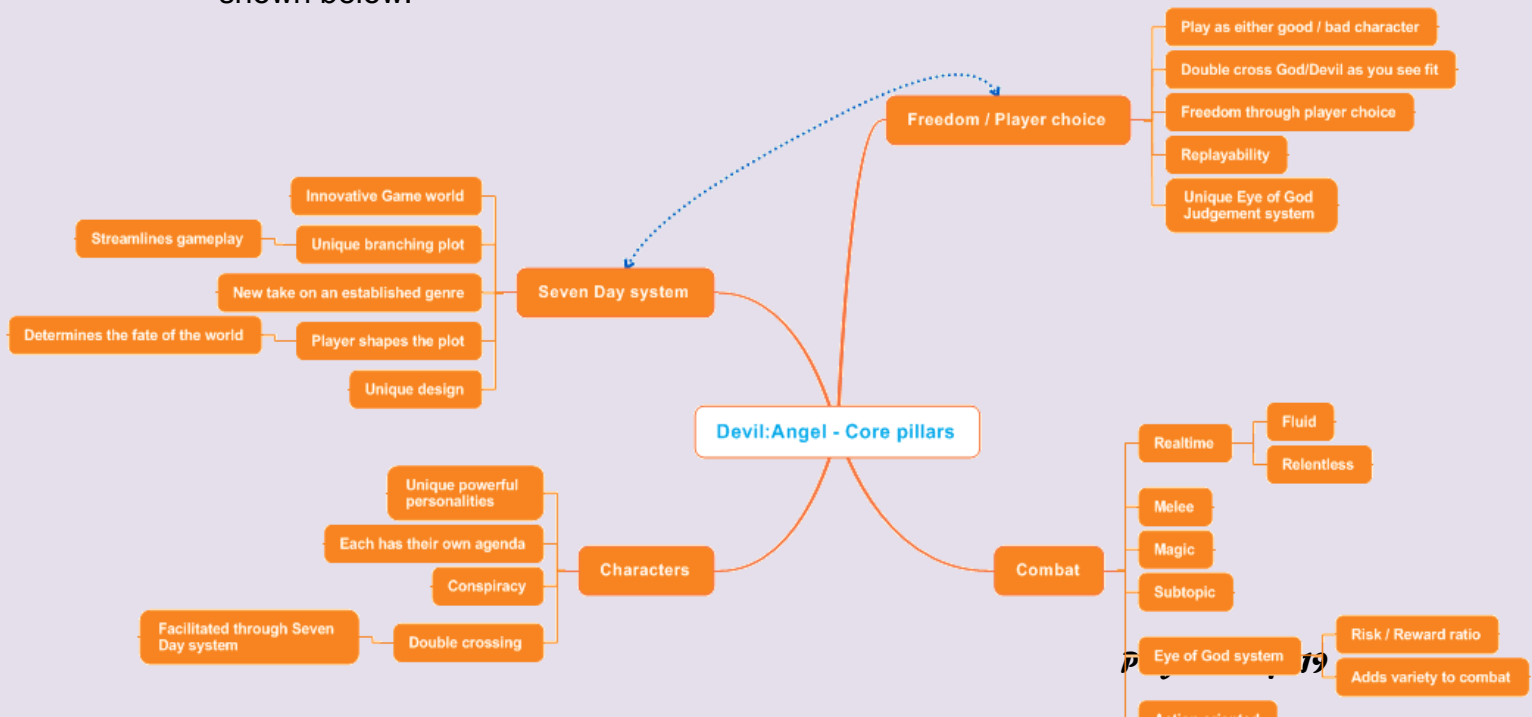
Devil/Angel Toggle – The player can switch between the two distinct combat modes by pressing the LB button, granting immediate access to the two separate sets of abilities. The change is instant as is central to the Eye of God mechanic.

Conversation – During several key battles within the game (scripted events) the player may be given an opportunity to converse with their opponent. To achieve this, the player presses the Back button, a small menu pops up and the player can select a choice from the menu.

3.11.3 – Core Pillars Eleven

(Synthesis Tier)

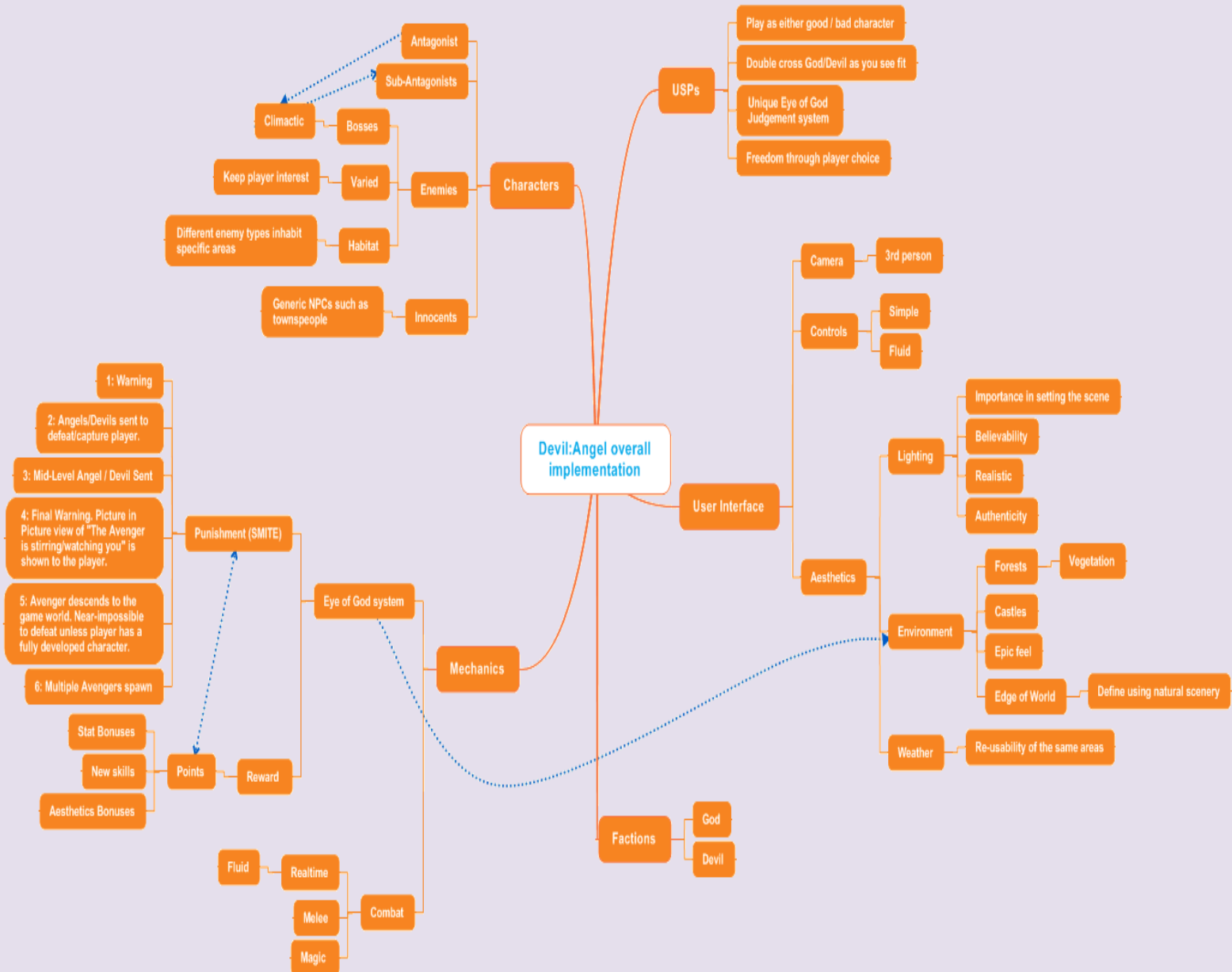
The core pillars of gameplay have been established and mind mapped as shown below:



3.11.4 – Overall implementation (Eleven)

(Synthesis Tier)

The overall implementation of the various facets of Devil:Angel's design are shown below:

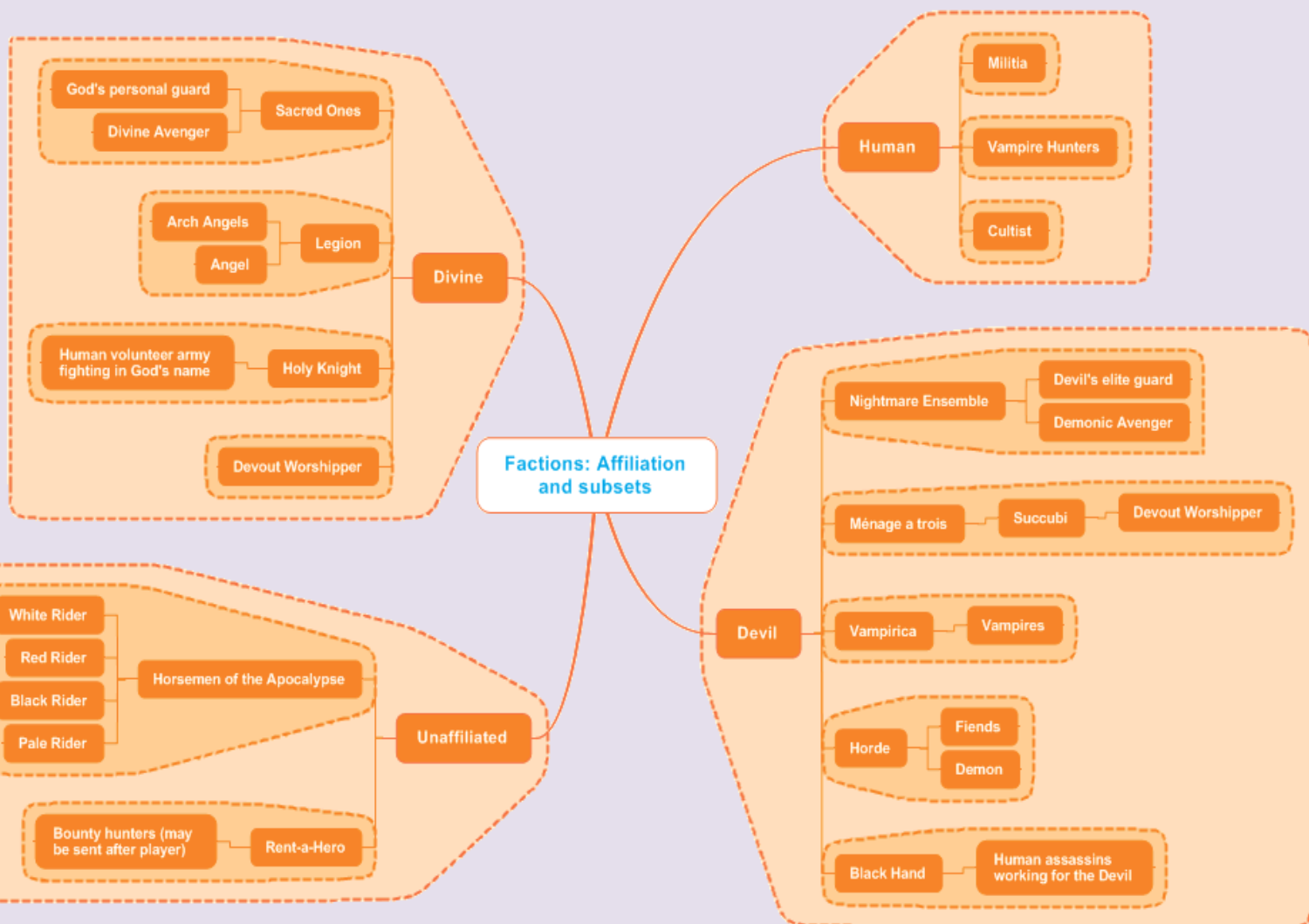


4.0 Refinement

4.1 – Refinement Tier One – Characters & Factions

4.1.1 – Defining the Factions (Refinement Tier One)

Several different characters and enemies have now been defined, in order to better understand the structure of the various within the game world a chart will be created to illustrate the members of each faction. This involves evolving the high level ideas from the initial overall implementation and applying the work laid out in synthesis.



Breakdown of Factions:

Divine:

- Sacred Ones – God's Personal Guard.
- Legion -- Generic Divine enemies etc.
- Holy Knights – Human volunteers that fight in God's name.
- Devout Worshippers – God's devout human followers.

Devil:

- Nightmare Ensemble – Devil's Personal Guard.
- Ménage à trois – Succubi squad, subsidiary of Nightmare Ensemble.

- Vampirica – Vampire sect that preys upon humans. Allied with the Devil.
- Horde – Generic Demonic enemies, etc.
- Black Hand – Human assassins in the Devil's employ.

Unaffiliated:

- Horsemen of the Apocalypse – Special enemies, detailed in Synthesis Tier Seven.
- Rent-a-Hero – Bounty hunters that roam the land. May sometimes be after the player.

Human:

- Militia – Group of humans that have banded together into a united militia to fight off the threat posed by the gods.
- Vampire Hunters – Specialist group of humans that patrols the human cities at night, keeping a watchful eye for their mortal enemies.
- Cultist – A constant presence in human-populated areas. These individuals preach about the coming apocalypse and will frequently cause riots and other disturbances.
- ***GO TO PROBLEM TIER SEVEN (1.8)***

4.2 – Refinement Tier Two – Evolving Combat

4.2.1 – The Eye of God System

(Refinement Tier Two)

The Eye of God System (EGS) is centric to combat within Devil:Angel. EGS is a mechanic to judge, balance, reward and punish the player's actions in line with the overarching rules of the game.

During the game, one of the two deities is “watching” over the world (and the player) at any given time. This deity presides over all the player's actions for a given period of time.

The player must strive to perform actions in combat that the currently presiding deity would deem pious. For example, if the Devil was currently presiding over the game world the player might seek to kill members of the Divine faction.

Obviously, slaughtering angels and other divine-affiliated creatures does not appease God, and any such transgressions result in invoking the SMITE mechanic.

This judgement system also extends to the protagonist's core skills. For example, utilising Divine-based physical and magic attacks pleases God and can be used to counter potential penalties to a limited extent.

To succeed and progress through the game the player must be able to constantly adapt their battle strategy as during the later stages of the game switchovers happen very sporadically and may require the player to alter their strategy mid-combo.

There are six separate aspects of the Eye of God system; these are explained in greater detail below:

- Levelling up
- Gaining skills and abilities
- Bonus system
- Combo / Variety system
- SMITE system
- Avenger system

4.2.2 – Levelling up through the Eye of God system (Refinement Tier Two)

Appeasing the current deity will reward the player with points applicable to that deity, these points are shown in a gauge on the player's HUD and serve as “experience points” (EXP) in the context on the game. The player maintains two separate EXP bars and two separate levels at all times:

- One level for Angel EXP
- One level for Devil EXP

The player's level is displayed in-game at all times and is shown as AA/DD, with AA and DD representing Angel Level and Devil Level respectively.

Whenever the player levels up, their maximum Health Points (HP) and Magic Points (MP) are incremented slightly and the respective gauge is lengthened slightly. Other statistics such as attack power, speed and defence are also increased however these statistics are invisible to the player.

4.2.3 – Gaining skills through the Eye of God system (Refinement Tier Two)

As the player gains levels through the acquisition of EXP points, as soon as combat is concluded and the game determines there are no threats in the immediate area the player is automatically taken to the skill acquisition tree. This tree allows the player to acquire physical attack skills and magic from several different “schools.”

The player is given access to this tree whenever their level hits a power of five. The player must select one physical attack or one magical attack to be allowed to leave the skill tree menu.

By maintaining a good standing with both the deities, the player is able to retain and bolster their repertoire of abilities.

(The SMITE system can take away these benefits when it deducts EXP points.)

4.2.4 – Eye of God - Bonus system (Refinement Tier Two)

The points system is developed further and can be exploited by the player for extra gain. Whenever a switchover occurs between the presiding deities a message is displayed detailing a particular action which will curry more favour with that deity.

For example, God becomes the presiding deity and the current “favour target” is changed to “Defeat Succubi” or “Use Skill X.” Under these circumstances the player would receive an additional bonus for fulfilling the condition. A normal bonus would still apply for defeating enemies of the opposite faction.

4.2.5 – Eye of God - Combo / Variety system (Refinement Tier Two)

Another way for the player to quickly increase their standing with the current deity is to perform attacks in rapid succession. After finishing a combo on an enemy there is a brief period allowing the player to initiate another combo on the same or a different enemy. When the combo finishes, the player is awarded points based on the total number of hits in the combo.

4.2.6 – Eye of God - SMITE system (Refinement Tier Two)

Naturally, there are downsides to the Eye of God system. The SMITE system is a mechanic that punishes the player for violations under the current deity’s rules. As established in 4.2.1, committing transgressions against the current deity will result in a punishment – that is the essence of the SMITE system. This mechanic links in with the idea of the protagonist trying to conceal his true mission from the two deities.

The SMITE system encapsulates the idea of **the** Devil/God striking the player down if he is discovered to be actively betraying or defying them. It fits in with the overall mantra of the game –the Eye of God sees all, and both deities are becoming more paranoid by the second.

An invisible “transgression count” is in operation and when it reaches certain levels, it triggers the following penalties based on the cumulative severity of the transgressions.

Breakdown of how the SMITE system works:

- 1st – Player is warned.
- 2nd – Standard Angels/Devils despatched to defeat the player.

- 3rd – Mid level Angel/Devil despatched, a small number of EXP points will be drained.
- 4th – Final warning – Picture in Picture view of “The Avenger is stirring/watching you” is displayed to the player. The screen darkens/brightens depending on who the player is fighting against. Holy Knight/Black Hand Assassins despatched. A medium amount of EXP points will be drained.
- 5th – Avenger despatched. Very difficult to defeat, the player becomes unable to leave the current area.
- 6th – Multiple Avengers despatched. If these are defeated the SMITE mechanic is reset.

The SMITE system essentially dynamically lowers the player’s level until they play within the rules of the current deity. It also serves to make combat more taxing for the player and imposes harsh penalties for repeated transgressions, with the ultimate penalty being the descent of an Avenger-type enemy.

In order to lower the current transgression count, the player must play within the rules of the game – fulfilling the expectations of the current deity.

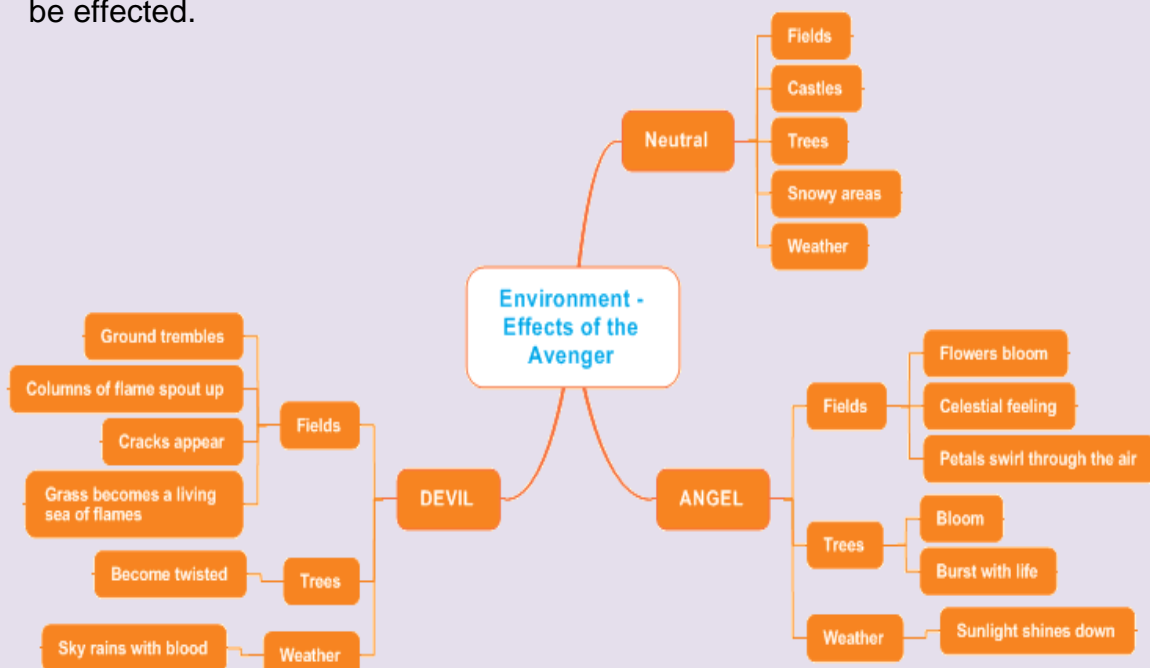
When a switchover occurs between presiding deities the transgression meter is reset to normal – any enemies that were despatched to punish the player remain however.

4.2.4 – Eye of God - AVENGER system (Refinement Tier Two)

The Avenger is the ultimate penalty for disregarding the smite system. Once an Avenger descends to the current area the player becomes unable to leave the area until it is defeated. This ensures that the player cannot abuse the system.

Each faction has its own Avenger – the Divine Avenger and Demonic Avenger respectively. They look different but serve the same purpose – punishing the player.

The environment dynamically twists and shifts when the Avenger is close to the player, this mind map illustrates some of the ways the environment may be effected.



DEVIL ANGEL — BRING DOWN THE GODS

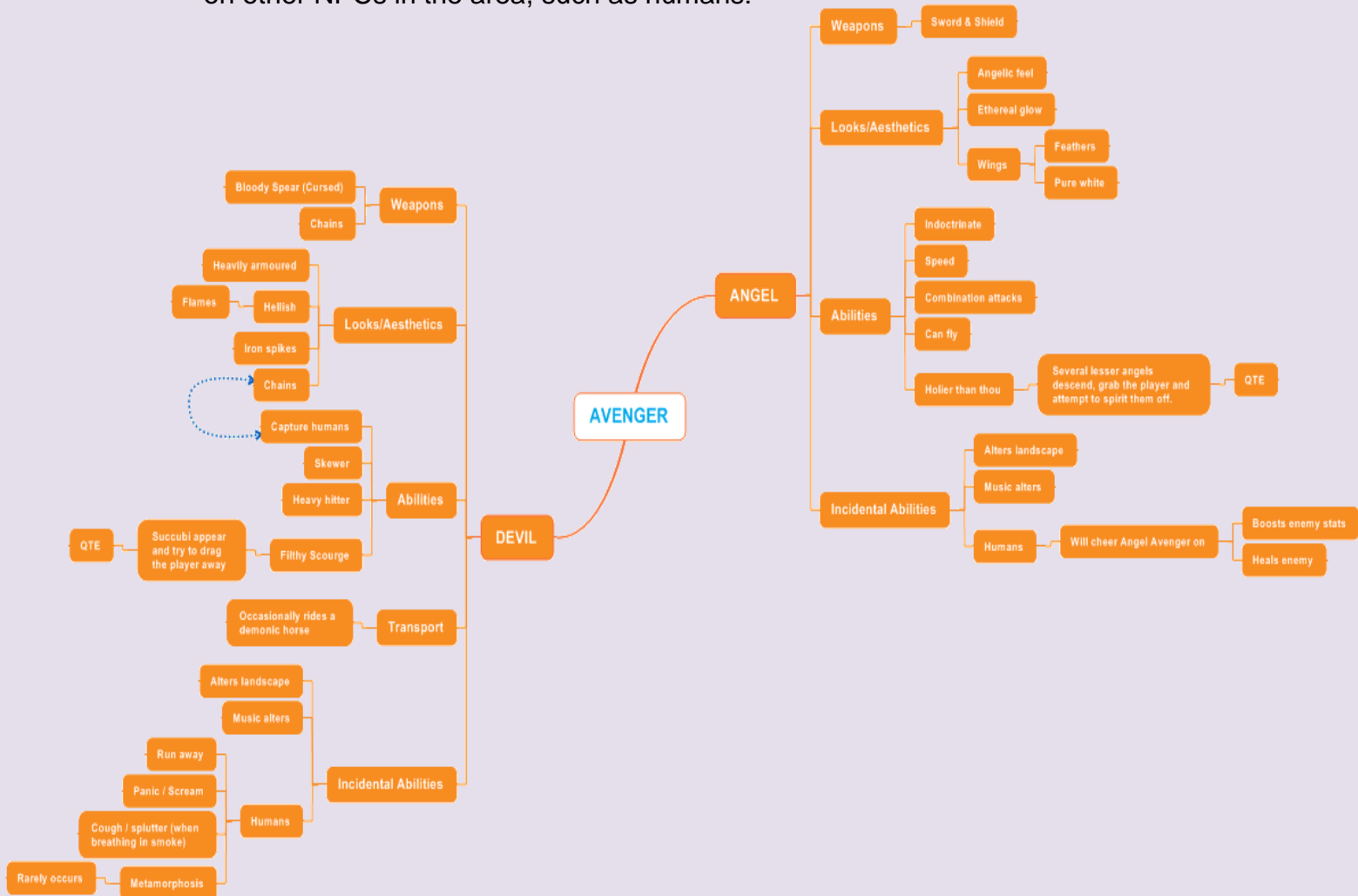
On first contact between the player and the Avenger, the camera zooms in on the Avenger to emphasise the threat they pose. The SMITE mechanic has already provided a dramatic build up to the descent of the player, who will be aware of the danger of this enemy.

There are advantages however to going against the current deity. If the player is able to successfully defeat the Avenger enemy:

- They will receive a large number of points from the deity they are defying. These are forcibly extracted from the Avenger's corpse.
- They have a 20% chance to receive a rare Avenger-only piece of equipment. This equipment is the best in the game.

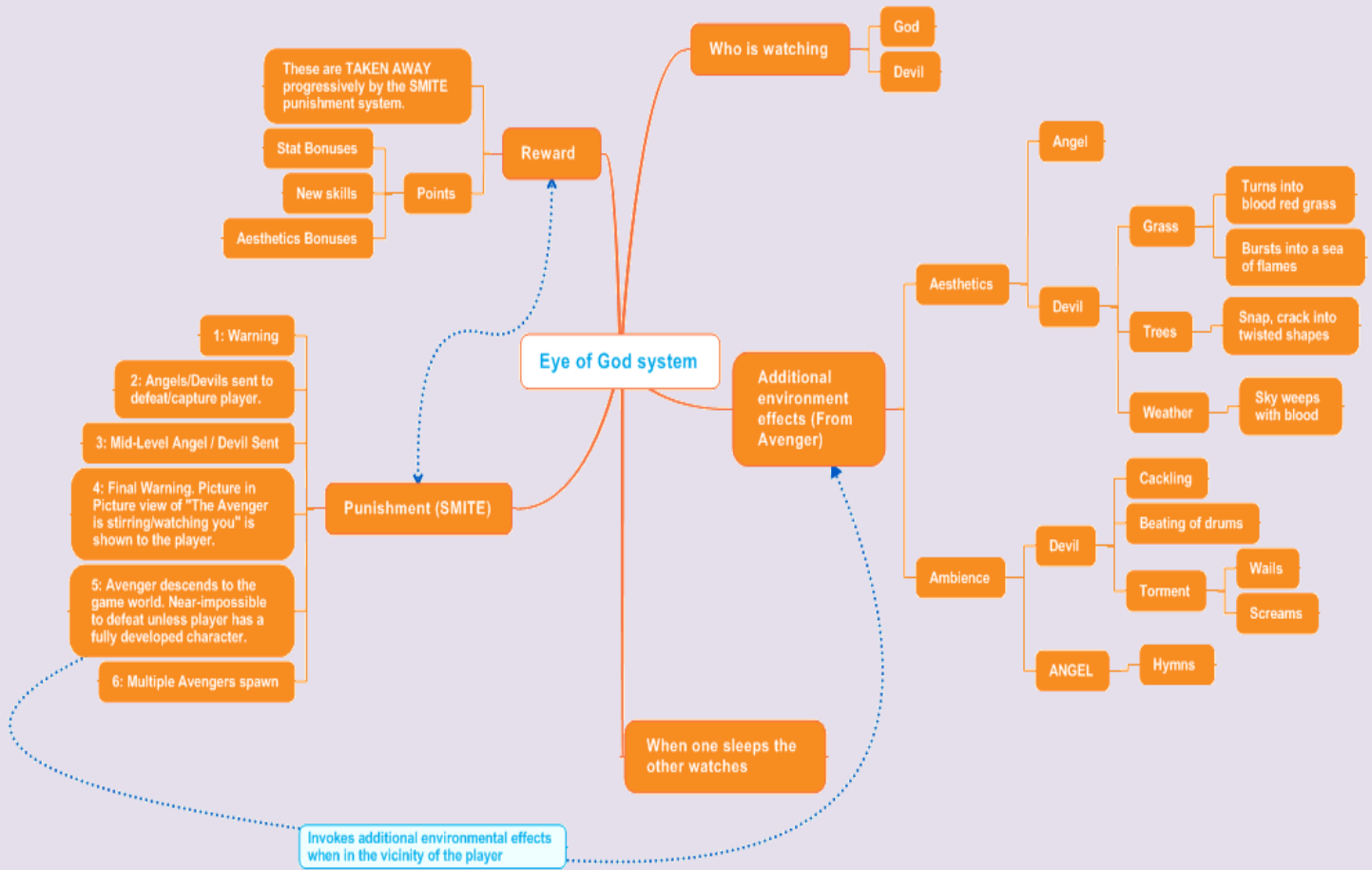
Naturally, this is something that only high level players would want to attempt, as after defeating a single Avenger; continuing to commit transgressions may result in multiple Avengers descending, resulting in a very difficult battle.

An overall mind map of the Avenger is below, this also describes effects it has on other NPCs in the area, such as humans:



4.2.6 – Eye of God – Overall mind map

(Refinement Tier Two)



With the Eye of God mechanic now integrated within combat, there is a need to finalise a few remaining nuances of combat before progressing further.

- ***GO TO REFINEMENT TIER THREE (4.3)***

4.3 – Refinement Tier Three – Misc Combat Tweaks

4.3.1 – Combat – Weapon / Magic Switching (Refinement Tier Three)

The player will be able to cycle through their various weapons by repeatedly pressing a specific button on their controller. Likewise, with magic, the player will be able to efficiently move through and select various magical abilities by holding a specific button and navigating through a list via the directional buttons.

4.3.2 – Displaying information to the player (Refinement Tier Three)

Numerical information on individual an individual enemy's statistics such as HP should be hidden from the player. Displaying lots of numbers on-screen at once does not fit in with the overall flow of the game – to that end the player should be able to easily gauge their foe's HP at a glance.

When the player targets an enemy, their current HP should be integrated within the targeting system – most likely colour-coding the targeting reticule so it turns from a healthy green to red as the target loses health would be the optimal implementation.

4.3.3 – How enemies appear on the field of battle (Refinement Tier Three)

As Devil:Angel features three-way battles that can take place at random in the various game areas, it is necessary to set out how some of the various factions will appear on the field of battle. This will serve to enhance the overall visual appeal of the game.

Random battles between factions primarily take place during “free periods” (see 3.9.1) in areas that currently have no trigger events. Upon entering these areas, the player may find them to be empty or occupied by Divine or Demonic faction members. Another possibility is for the two factions to be clashing as soon as the player enters the area. Human faction members may also be present, albeit rarely. On occasion, the player may also find key story characters engaged in battle.

Each faction should have a themed entrance which marks their entrance to the area:

- Divine faction members such as angels will swoop down from above in a shower of feathers before engaging enemies (or the player.) A showering of sunlight would also be used to mark their entrance into an area.
- Demonic faction members should appear from fiery portals that open up at random.
- Human faction members can only enter areas through designated entrances/exits to the area.

As the battle progresses, more reinforcements may appear for each side, until a “hard limit” is reached. The battle will progress regardless of whether the player takes action or not.

With the combat finalised, the various mechanics that make up the game can continue to be developed.

- **[GO TO PROBLEM TIER NINE \(1.9\)](#)**

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