Computer Games Technology – Fall 2011

Project 3, Group 4

Brandon, Hank, Phil and Ryan

Post-Playtest Plan

We have really learned a lot from the playtest. It was a brutal experience for all of us, mainly because we were not able to make a playable version in time, but it was also a warm experience, for our instructors and fellow classmates still tried hard to provide meaningful comments to the incomplete project.

On game design, we first need to have an instruction screen to let players know exactly what to do in the game, including the control keys and how to proceed in the game, because some players complained they weren't really sure what the game was from their first observance. And we have done the work on improving mouse movement as well as ship movement on the meta-map. We've actually worked out new mechanics for generating new ships on the map. So now a human player first collects resources and builds new ships on the meta-map, and then use their ships/fleet loaded with units to combat with computer player(s) in the mini-games.

On game mechanics, there was some confusion on how ships were made and how the meta-map relates to the mini-game. We've solved the problem and kept the 5-lanes design in the mini-game. We are going to create a hud in the mini-game for lane selection and unit selection. Based on the units they have collected on the meta-map, players will be able to deploy the amount of combat units they have to multiple lanes in the mini-game, and the goal is to eliminate enemy units and destroy enemy fortress in the mini-game, and eventually conquer all enemy ships and factory planets on the meta-map. Now there are 5 classes of nodes on the map: red for face-to-face-attack units/berserker, blue for healing units/priest, and green for ranged-attack units/archer, white for converting units/mage, and black for home nodes/factory.

On game graphics we've made the enemy and player ships distinctive from each other: a red camp for one side and a blue camp for the other. We'll keep the cool rotate-y 2D/3D effect on the meta-map, and try to keep that same effect on menus and the mini-game.

Also, we added the zoom-in and zoom-out function to make the game even more visually pleasant. Beyond that, we've figured out how to add 2D image files to the game, upgraded the node selector with a mouse cursor, and planned on generating cool & rotate-y units and huds in the mini-game. So the game should look a lot better next week than it was last week.

We plan on doing the following things in this grace period:

1) Completed menu options and other things relating to the menu – this probably is the most important and urgent. We really need the menus on startup, pause, and end-game to connect the parts we have now and join them together.

2) Computer AI – on meta-map, computer player (default: 2 players – human vs. computer) at the same time collect resources, expand territory and build new ships; in mini-game, computer player probably just randomly distribute the units it has on each lane for now.

3) Some sort of tutorial or hint system – We'll have some textboxes for game instructions. The huds for generating new ships on meta-map or changing lanes/sending out units in the mini-game should be graphical and intuitive.

4) Addition to textures – this is lower priority on the list. But we'll keep the style on the meta-map and try to apply it to the menus and the mini-game.

5) Huds on mini-game and meta-map – on mini-game, a player need to be able to select a lane to deploy their units, and select a color (1 out of the 4 classes) to send out that type of unit (limited amount); on meta-map, a player needs to be able to generate new ships when the total amount of dark resources they have is equal or greater than the requirement for building a new ship on the home/factory node(s).

6) More polished mini-game graphics – Now we have spheres with different colors as units in the mini-game. It is possible to have rotate-y and zoom-in-and-out-able map in the mini-game, and rotating pyramids or other primitives as the combat units. We'll try to keep the menus, meta-map and mini-game in a similar style.

7) More intuitive game control systems – If the huds or user interfaces are intuitive enough, we might be able to minimize or even skip the textual instructions so players can play around with the huds and learn to master the game by themselves without spending much time reading the instructions we made. We're not yet sure if we can do that, but that's the ideal.

In order to make the game playable and polished, we really do need to request for the no-cost extension till next Wed., 12/21. However, we'll try to hand in the Gold Master as soon as we're satisfied with it before the actual deadline. Thank you so much again for the generous offer.