

Benjamin Cook Prototype Evaluation Report 40537620

Process of Making (Blade of the Deep)

Asset Gathering

To start my project, I needed assets. So, I headed to the assets store of Unreal Engine and started digging through assets that could help build my game. This being, A cave setting, Horror character Elements and Props for a cave. I was successful in finding these assets and began adding them all into on project. The “Deep Elder Caves” Collection became the basis of my project, and using all the meshes and blueprints within. After finding a basis, I needed a character with interactive elements that would be useful. I found this pack called “First Person Horror Template” and used the character within as this character had sound, tilt, jump and crouch, along with a sprint and exhaust mechanic, but for a price. Finally, I just needed additional assets just in case, and found some free packs, like “Soul Cave” and “Medieval Dungeon”, which were useful for world building.

Map Expansion and lighting

I began to expand the original map, creating side paths and new areas that my player will use in the game, especially for the puzzles. I started by making a spawn area where the character will begin their path through the cave. This then leads to the side paths I created where two puzzle rooms reside that lead to the Sword. After this, I started to litter the map with scarier elements like skeletons, lights, gold, and idols. Once this was done, I began ensuring that all the lighting was immersive and realistic. I also added additional lighting where needed, to complement an area, and to highlight key items.

Adding Interaction

There are two unique types of interactions that the player has with the environment, other than triggers. Firstly, the player can grab certain objects that are used for a puzzle, this being used for the first puzzle where the player must find a glowing Idol and offer it to the door for it to open. The next interaction is the ability to interact with notes. There are many notes scattered throughout the cave, and the player can read these to learn what happened to the expedition crew before him and get some hints on the secrets of this place. The player can also interact with the 3rd puzzle using the same system.

Adding Events

Once the player, map and interactive elements were done, I wanted to add little events that happened to engage the player with the game. These being little audio cues, the monster moving around the cave and Rocks falling.

Additional Sound

Once I was finished with all the above, the last thing to add was sound. I began with adding cave ambience to build the atmosphere of the game. Next, I added small sounds for events like doors opening and the note pickup. Finally, I gave my character a voice, with triggers that play the voice once when stepped in by the player.

Cutscene

I wanted a cool cutscene at the end of my project. So, once I had finished everything, I implemented the end of my game. I created a cut scene using Blender, a program I am already familiar with, and played it over the screen once my player interacted with the final door.

Reflection

Strengths

- Lighting – One of the best parts of the level design, in my opinion, is the lighting. I used strong lighting to help build a dark and eery cave lit by only candles, flora, and light peeking through the cracks of the cave. I used light to help guide the player and to highlight key items like the key and the notes.
- Interaction – I used lots of interactions throughout my level. Examples include, object interaction, puzzle interaction, notes, unique character movement, trigger boxes for dialogue and events and dynamic sound.
- World Building – I used many objects to create my level. Starting from the cave given to me in the elder cave pack, I built up the puzzle room and the start point, adding all sorts to flesh out the environments to truly engage the player and immerse them into the game.
- Cutscene – My enjoyment and familiarity with Blender allowed me to create a cutscene to add an ending to the prototype. This being the player encountering the sword. The cutscene turned out well and complemented the gameplay.

Weaknesses

- Dialogue – While I only included this for an example of what it could be like, the acting and audio quality was poor. At times the dialogue missed its key moment of action. It really did immerse me while testing the game.
- Torch – I hated the torch that was attached to the player as it appeared to be floating and stuck in place, killing the immersion of being a living character. I had no idea how to get the dynamic movement of the torch and failed to do so.
- Pace – I feel that the game should have been longer, with more antagonistic behaviour, but I didn't have the time to put this together. I feel the sword was found way too quickly to be this all-legendary weapon, and the "Dragon" wasn't used enough.
- Sounds – I feel that I could have added additional sounds to add to the cave's immersion, like rats, or rocks falling in the distance, to name two. This would have really added to the player's engagement to the game, I believe.

Changes I would make.

- Expanding the level – To improve pacing and "Importance" of the sword, also to give the dragon an antagonistic role.
- Sound – add additional sounds to give the cave more life and improve player engagement.
- Sword Room – Instead of a quick cutscene, I would import all the meshes and textures used to create the video and have the player experience their treasure real time.
- Torch – I would make the torch toggleable, and add dynamic swinging, overall improving the exploration immersion.
- Dialogue – A professional voice actor will be used, in a young male medieval voice, for immersion and world building.
- Death – The player would have times they can encounter death, via a trap, or the dragon. This will be used to add some sense of emergency, ultimately improve engagement and enjoyment.