Identity

One Identity

A High Concept Document

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Short Description: Identity is a science fiction action RPG in which you create a character that is unique, only to be places side-by-side with a clone of yourself. Traveling though a war torn galaxy, you will engage in shooter combat, space flight, and interactive cinematic sequences as you attempt to learn more about your past and define yourself.

Tone words:identity, perspectives, mystery, action, jealousy

I. Game High Concept

Identity is a science fiction action RPG in which you create a character that is unique, only to be placed side-by-side with a clone of yourself. The story is a mystery inside of a war zone, as coupled with the mystery of being two people, you must also deal with a murky past as neither of the clones knows what happened to them since being one person two years ago.

The mechanics are divided into three distinct types of interaction: flight simulation combat (flight combat), shooter style combat (ground combat) and RPG-style cinematic scenes.

The player will fight on the ground shooter-style, side-by-side with their clone. Switching between first and third person as well as various other triggers will switch the player from between the perspectives of the two clones.

This allows the player to feel in control of both and less like they are playing one clone and the computer is playing another. It enhances the sense of their being someone right next to the player who is already thinking and acting on the same things.

In space, one clone pilots and the other mans the guns. The clones sit side-by-side in the cockpit and each look out the view port. The pilot cannot choose where to shoot and the gunner cannot chose where the ship is facing so they must get used to working within the constraints of this position. When flying the player can be either red or blue and either red or blue can man the guns or fly.

Having space flight makes the different planets in the universe seem more connected and provides a sense of continuity. Having the player be side-by-side with the clone demonstrates how they look through the same view but focus on it from different perspectives.

The final style of interaction is through RPG-styled cinematic scene where the player can directly influence the story. Through Major Decisions, the player decides who they will interact with, which direction they will travel in, and even which order to experience events, creating a sense of agency over the story. Major decisions will also have a strong effect on the story's ending.

In addition to major decisions, the player is able to make various minor decisions about their character: name, gender, physical appearance will all be chosen t start up. Various aspects of the character's life (childhood pet for example) will have minor impacts on the story and conversations the player has with other characters. Additionally, the player has the ability to direct conversations, as questions (from a set of choices), even chose how to react to different news.

This gives the player a further sense of agency over their character and also allows the player to build and define the character's Identity, furthering the story's overall theme.

Together, the mechanics all work to build a sense of Identity and pull that sense of Identity apart by splitting up between Red and Blue.

II. Development Scope

This game is projected to be a large scale AAA game. Available for PC, Xbox and Playstation, the stunning graphics, compelling story line, and dual perspective mechanics will make this the must-have game of the 2010 holiday season.

Expected design team will include 12 programmers (3 specifically devoted to AI), 8 artists (3 level designers, 3 modelers/animators, 1 interface design, 1 sound), 2 designers/writers and an expected development time of 2 years with a budget of 5 million.

Product placement can recoup many of the expenses as there will be many opportunities for product placement with the variety of settings. Urban and suburban war zones will be more realistic with familiar branding on posters and billboards. Opportunities can be further developed by having both characters use competing brands (say Red prefers Coca-cola while Blue prefers Pepsi)

III. Business case

This is a science fiction game about cloning and defining yourself while fighting a shadowy alien race across a war torn landscape.

In terms of character definition, Identity is a big winner. Because the player can identify with the character, it can target a wide audience. It is specifically designed to allow a broad range of players to identify with the main character. For example, by allowing the player to decide if Jordon is a boyfriend or a girlfriend, it allows players of different genders and sexual preferences to identify with their character. The ability to design a character rather than play a character that is designed already is a popular feature seen in many MMO's.

In terms of game play, it should have points that interest fans of various genres. Players who enjoy playing a character they design, such as MMO players, will like the control they have over the character. It allows players to choose appearance, fans of role playing games will like the expanded control over the story the player has in the decision sequences and fans of shooters will enjoy the combat. And fans of flight simulation will appreciate the space action sequences. And RPG players will like the control they have over the story and their ability to play the role of the main character(s) rather than playing a part already written for them.

The game has a strong re-playability factor because of the decision making which can change the course the story takes. Additionally the dual perspectives mean that even making the same decisions can still offer different results depending on which perspective the player sees. On the whole, this will make the game not just re-playable because it's fun but because players will want to try to have every different experience that the game offers.

Because of the three modes of game play, Identity appeals to fans of various genres: shooter, RPG, and simulators. Because of the player's ability to define their character, the story should appeal to both men and women of a broad age range. While the game should appeal to a broad audience, the core audience will be fans of the shooter genre. Shooters are the top selling games for the Xbox, Xbox 360,

Games that have various similarities to Identity include Halo 2 &3, Mass Effect, Star Wars: Republic Commandos, Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic, Lunar Knights, and Army of Two.

Halo 2 & 3 (Xbox, 2004 and Xbox 360, 2007)

Halo 2, the immensely successful science fiction first person shooter features a grand story and tells it from two separate perspectives: the human Master Chief and the alien Arbiter. The story alternates back and forth between the two perspectives and allows the player to experience two sides of the story up until their worlds collide at the end of the game. In the next game, both characters play side by side but the player only has control of one.

Identity maintains the science-fiction atmosphere and many combat levels are similar in visual appearance to the urban war zones present in the Halo series. But while you never experience the dual; perspectives of bother characters at the same time, Identity pushes that as the main feature. And while in Halo, you fight as super soldier cyborg, the Master Chief, in Identity you fight as two soldiers simultaneously. Lastly, in Halo, the main character, the Master Chief is a mysterious figure you know little about. There is little identifying with the character. In Identity, the player is the main character and the focus is on identifying with that character.

Halo 2 and 3 were immensely successful selling over 8.3 million copies each.

Star Wars: Republic Commandos (Xbox, 2005)

Republic Commandos is a first person shooter where you are a single commander of a unit of several other commandos. In playing, you play as one character but you control several others. It gives the sense of being more the one person, and provides for an example of how you can command and control multiple characters from one perspective.

Unlike Republic Commandos, the player won't be giving orders to their clone but will be controlling and managing him. And unlike commandos, you will be able to control both characters, switching back and forth between either at will.

(No sales data available)

Army of Two (Xbox 360/PS3, 2008)

Army of Two is a third-person shooter where the player directly controls one character but has a myriad of ways of interacting with and controlling the other character. The sense of control over both characters, the ability to interact with them and the ability to gain information from both perspectives is a major inspiration to the shooter combat Identity will have.

Sales on both consoles combined are approximately 2.3 million world wide.

Mass Effect (Xbox 360, 2007)

In Mass Effect, the player has significant control over the main character who is an elite soldier in command of an elite squad. Mass Effect is similar in structure to Identity, allowing RPG-style cinematic scenes where the player directs the course of conversations and how the main character deals with different characters he meets. Additionally, it alternates between the RPG sequences and the combat scenes which are FPS similar to the intended style of Identity.

In terms of story-telling style, Identity is close to Mass Effect. As an action RPG, alternating between story-telling sequences and action sequences, Mass Effect is an excellent example of the style we intend to create with Identity.

In terms of control and the combination of RPG and FPS elements, Mass Effect is a great example of the feel we are going for with Identity. Mass Effect has nothing related to the altered and parallel perspectives of the character's having clones and places less emphasis on the theme of Identity.

Mass Effect sold 2.7 million copies worldwide.

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (Xbox, 2003)

Is an example of how the player's choices throughout the game can impact the direction of the plot. In KotOR, whether or not the player falls to the dark side depends on various choices they make throughout the game. Additionally, the player even has the option of killing characters or sparing them much the way the player has the option of killing or sparing Enlee (an enemy/ally the player will encounter).

The choices the player makes in KotOR largely only affect whether or not the player is a light or dark Jedi. There are only two endings and the choices a person makes along the way are pretty easily seen as light or dark allowing the player to predetermine the game's outcome.

In Identity, the choices the player makes are less clear in how they will affect the outcome. This makes it more unpredictable and gives the possibly for more variations in the alternate endings.

KotOR was very successful, selling 1.95 million copies worldwide and has been praised as one of the best RPGs for the Xbox

Lunar Knights (Nintendo DS, 2006)

Lunar Knights is an action RPG about alien vampires and two young men who team up to fight them. It is relevant both because it features dual main characters and also because it features three different forms of interaction: space flight sequences, real-time fighting on the ground, and RPG cinematic.

The game, in part because of the platform, is limited in terms of graphics and depth of game play. The action sequences are hack and slash rather the shooter style mechanics and the flight sequences are handled external to the ship rather than from the cockpit perspective. Also, the RPG sequences are limited in terms of graphics and impact of the player's responses to the game. So while Lunar Knights has all three of the interactive mechanics that Identity does, it does each of them in a more limited fashion.

In terms of having two main characters that the player can play as, the primarily similarities are when the characters split up and both experience the same time span from different perspectives. Even when they are together, the player only controls and sees one of them, though they can swap out at anytime.

(No sales data available)