Glatitude

Weekly Newsletter #3 - February 3, 2012

Iteration and Rapid Prototyping

The team's goals this week were to begin to categorize ideas so as to move closer to a solidified design upon which to iterate, while meeting with various experts to obtain their perspectives.

A crucial consideration at this point in the design phase has been the issue of extrinsic rewards in games vs. the intrinsic motivational nature of the Pay-it-Forward concept. The team brainstormed different types of game models and mechanics that can be motivational in different ways, as well as psychological factors underlying charity missions. This provided a useful foundation upon which to brainstorm.

The most prominent concept being discussed right now is that of a network building game where resources feed into each other in a cyclical way, powered by performing kind acts in real life. The visualization of connections created and the impact of one deed extending far beyond its initial momentum is a key part of this project's vision, and this game concept has the potential for providing such a visualization. Players essentially exchange "Seeds" and "Sprouts," different types of deed cards - Sprouts produce Seeds, and Seeds grow into new Sprouts, but only through the process of giving. A Web portal design has been mocked up, and the features of this model are coming into focus. But the team is continuing to file away any ideas that do not fit into this model as a contingency plan.

Outreach

In concert with their design efforts this week, the team has been obtaining perspectives from several professionals, including Clay Heaton of GameAid, Charley Johnson of the Pay it Forward Foundation, game and visual design expert Evan Hirsch, ETC Professor Drew Davidson, and Mary Beth Campbell of Boom Boom Cards.

These meetings have been extremely informative, providing feedback about all areas of the experience that is to be designed. Many questions have been answered, concerns resolved, and inspirations formed, and the team is still in the process of sifting through all of the new information.

Moving Forward

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From here, the goal is to commit to an idea and develop a sort of business plan for it - outline how the experience should motivate players and keep them interested. The team will be working on that next week as well as resolving key design decisions. Additionally, an official logo has been created, and will be incorporated into a poster design by Monday.