Game Design Document

Game Title: Final Fantasy Combat Prototype

Dev: Michael Partridge

Overview

Game Elevator Pitch:

This prototype is a recreation of how combat would work in the games Final Fantasy 7: Remake with it also being combined with some elements from other final fantasy games.

Design Pillars:

The design pillars for this prototype are: Strategic Gameplay and Action packed fights.

Project scope:

The game will be loosely developed over the course of a couple months at least, with highly varying work hours.

Platforms:

The platform for this prototype will be PC, most likely on the itch.io website.

Target Audience:

The target audience for this prototype will be fans of JRPG's who enjoy the Final Fantasy series.

Gameplay Overview

The prototype takes heavy inspiration from the way that gameplay functions in the game; Final Fantasy 7 Remake. Like FF7R, the player will take control of between one to three playable characters, each with slightly varying stats and play styles from each other. The player will be free to switch between each available character at any time, and the player must use these characters to defeat enemies with their own different stats.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #1: Controllable Characters

The first core mechanic of this game will be the base that each controllable character will be built off. This character should be able to be moved around the arena, attack the enemy, block incoming damage, switch role, cast magic, use special moves, and use items. The player should be able to move the character around and look around with ease while performing other tasks, whether the player is using controller or keyboard & mouse.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #2: Quick Character Switch

The second core mechanic of this prototype will be the ability to quickly switch between available characters, similarly to how it works in FF7R. The player will use this mechanic to quickly issue commands to other party members and strategically destroy enemies.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #3: Role Switching

The third core mechanic of this prototype will be how the player will switch each characters role during battle. Taking inspiration from other Final fantasies more in this mechanic, each character will have certain roles available to them, where the characters will specialise heavily in a role and others will overlap with other characters. These roles will specialise in certain areas of a combat scenario and will help to dictate what other characters should be focusing on when not player controlled. Main examples of roles would be roles like: Commando (flat damage focus), Mage (Magic damage, stagger gauge focus), Healer (character healing), Shield (Attracting enemy attention, taking less damage) etc.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #4: Enemy Stats

The fourth mechanic of this prototype will be how the enemies being fought by the player will be affected by certain types of attacks, and by certain debuffs. The player will have to experiment with attacks to find out what that enemy is weak/resistant to and the once known, the game will attempt to auto-sort attacks to the most useful ones first. The player can speed up this process by using a special attack/spell called “Scan”, which will reveal certain information about the enemy.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #5: Enemy Stagger Gauges

The fifth mechanic of this prototype will be enemy stagger gauges. Each enemy will have a stagger gauge which will fill up when attacked. This gauge is made up of a percentage, that starts at 100% and when raised will directly affect how much incoming damage is multiplied by. When being attacked by standard physical attacks, the stagger gauge will rise slowly, but will fall back down slower. When attacking with magical based attacks, the stagger gauge will rise faster but fall back down faster unless the enemy has already been attacked recently by a physical attack. Enemy stats that can affect gauge fill speed are gauge size and gauge resistance. Once the gauge is fully filled, the enemy will be staggered and will receive a damage multiplier based upon how much the gauge is currently filled and further increasing the percentage will be made easier from the stagger. Based upon how fast the gauge was already falling, the full stagger gauge will start to empty. As the gauge is emptying, the percentage can still be raised to deal higher damage, but when the bar is fully emptied, the damage percentage will lower itself to 100% and the process can repeat.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #6: Gaining Items

The sixth mechanic of this prototype will be the encompassing mechanics of how the player gains items in the game. The most basic way this will be achieved is through loot chests. These chests are a one time open and display differently based on the loot that is inside. The next way players can gain items is by defeating enemies and gaining loot once they defeat them, this can be separated into common and rare items that have specific chances to drop upon defeat.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #7: Character XP

The seventh mechanic of this prototype will be the XP values that characters gain and how the XP values are used in the game. The way that characters gain XP in the game is through defeating enemies in combat. This XP will level the player up and will also be stored into a separate value where the players can use saved up XP to gain new unlocks in the upgrade screen.

Core Gameplay Mechanic #8: Upgrade screen

The eighth main mechanic found in the game is the upgrade screen from which the player can upgrade the abilities and stats of each character. The player will use the character's saved up XP points to choose the upgrades they want to unlock, which will all cost a set amount of XP.

Designer Experience

Something that I wanted to do with this prototype is to make sure of multiple things in relation to creating a product that could be used within the industry:

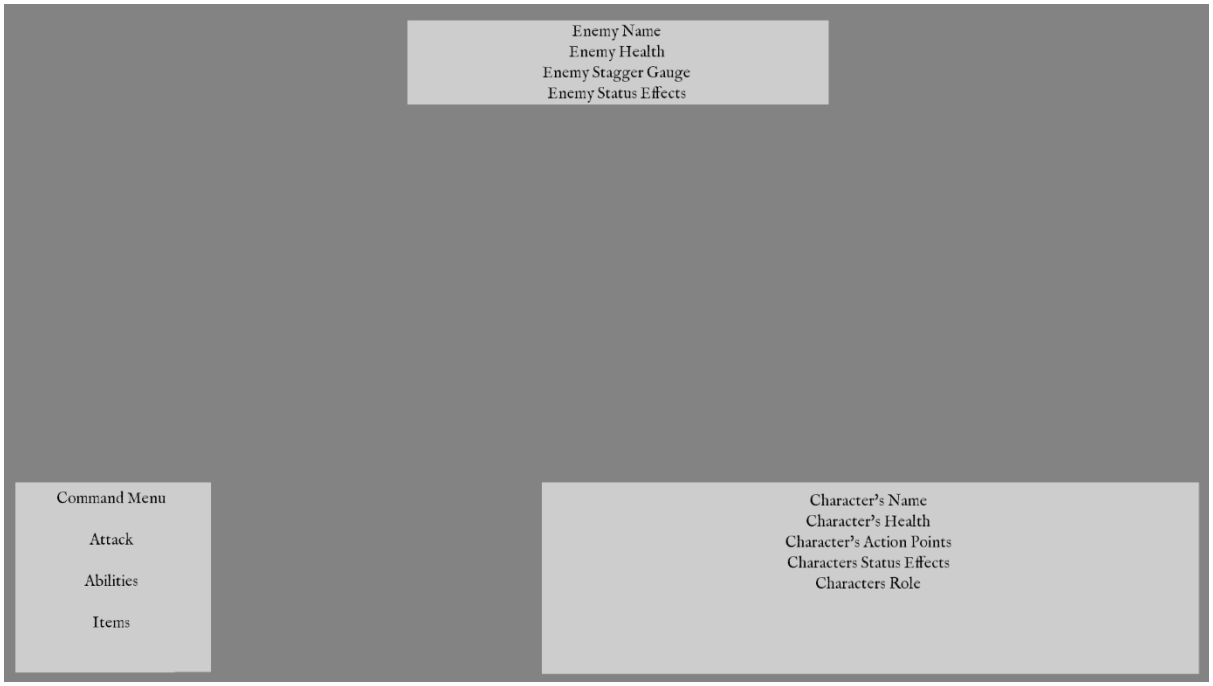
1 – Make sure that the blueprints created by myself for this project are easily readable and understandable for anyone looking to look into the project. This will also help train me to make code I create while in the industry easily accessible to other roles needing to use it. This means having everything commented with useful information and explained further when needed.

2 – Make sure that anything I create has easily interchangeable parts and can easily have additions made when needed, e.g., In the case of this project this could mean if an animator were to create a new set of animations for an attack combo, a system should be created that easily allows them to create a new combo set for it when a player attacks. Then another role should easily be able to change damage values for when each animation connects with an enemy.

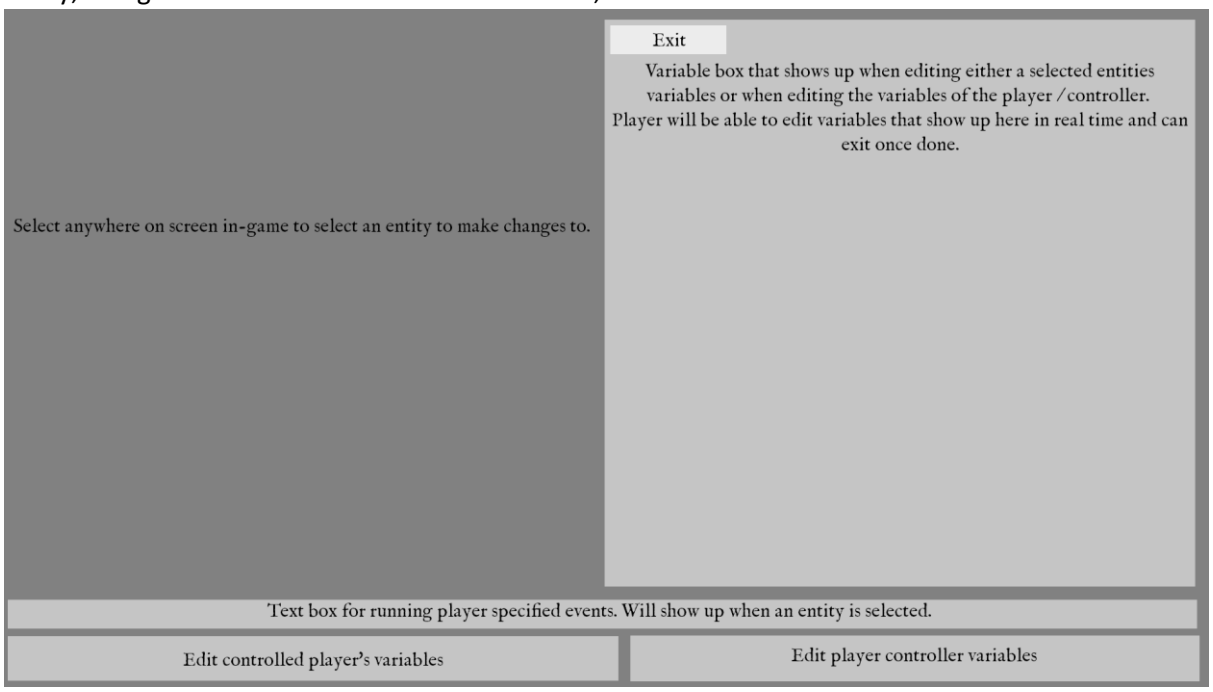
3 – Make sure that the experience when debugging is as simple as possible for the person making changes, e.g., having intuitive debugging screens that easily allows the person editing to make quick changes to any entity or object on screen.

Interface Experience:

For the prototype the interface will attempt to be streamlined and show as much as possible without being confusing or overbearing on the player. For the base fight screen here's how it might end up looking:

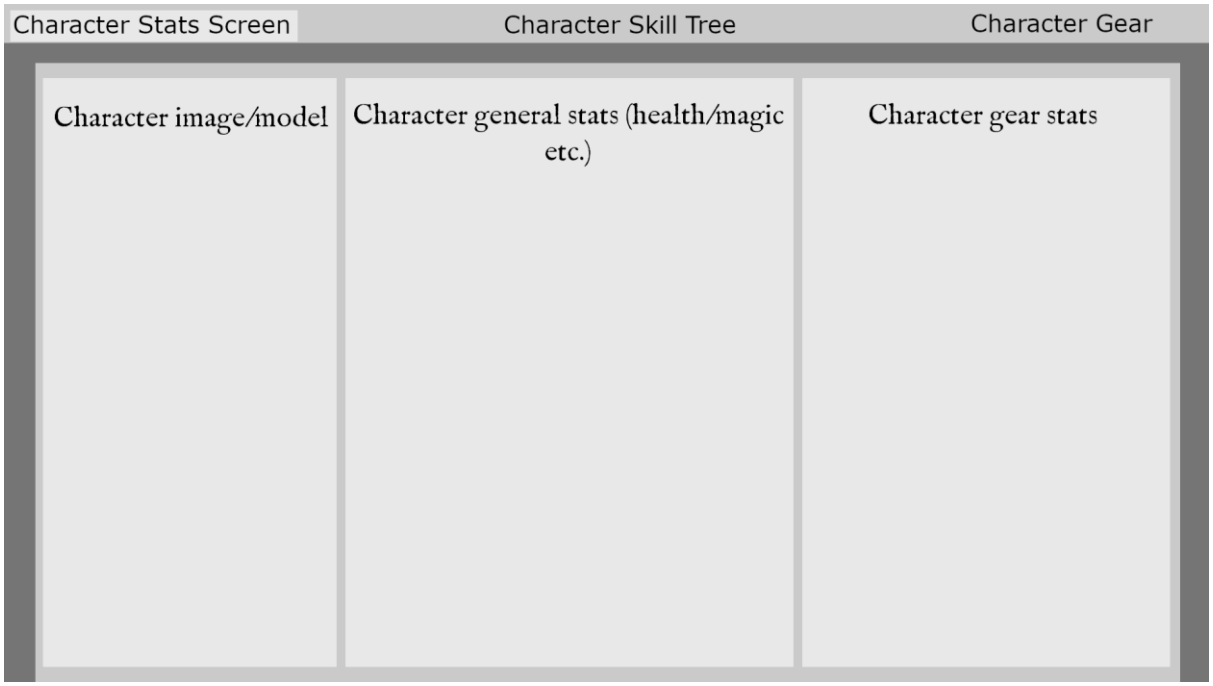


Next for the interface is the debug menu. I hope to make this as useful as possible for making quick changes while in-game to test new things out and find out what works best. For this screen I thought about copying how I roughly remember the console screen looking in Skyrim, as it was easy to select actors and enter commands to change things related to the actor you had selected. However in this screen I also want to have a screen appear showing the available variables that can be changed easily, along with a command line that can be ran;

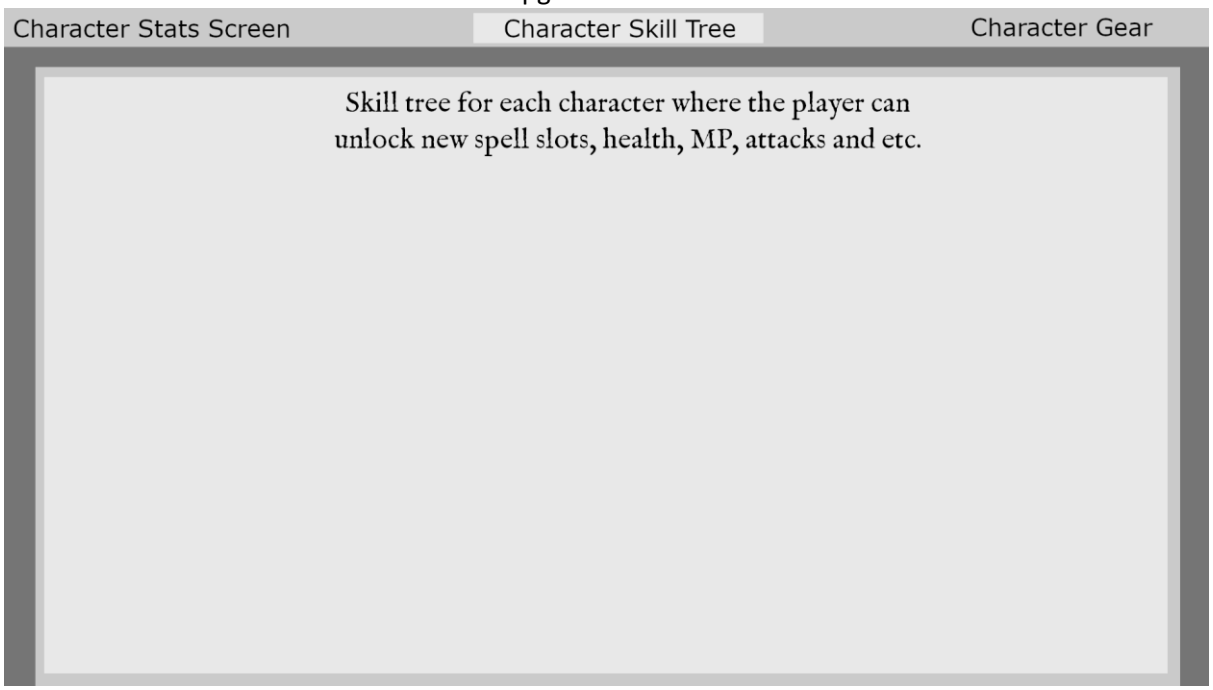


The player will be able to open a menu using the menu key ("M" on KB/M, and options button on controller) and from here they will be able to look up and change certain things about their characters;
First off, the player will be put into the stat screen for the character that they're currently

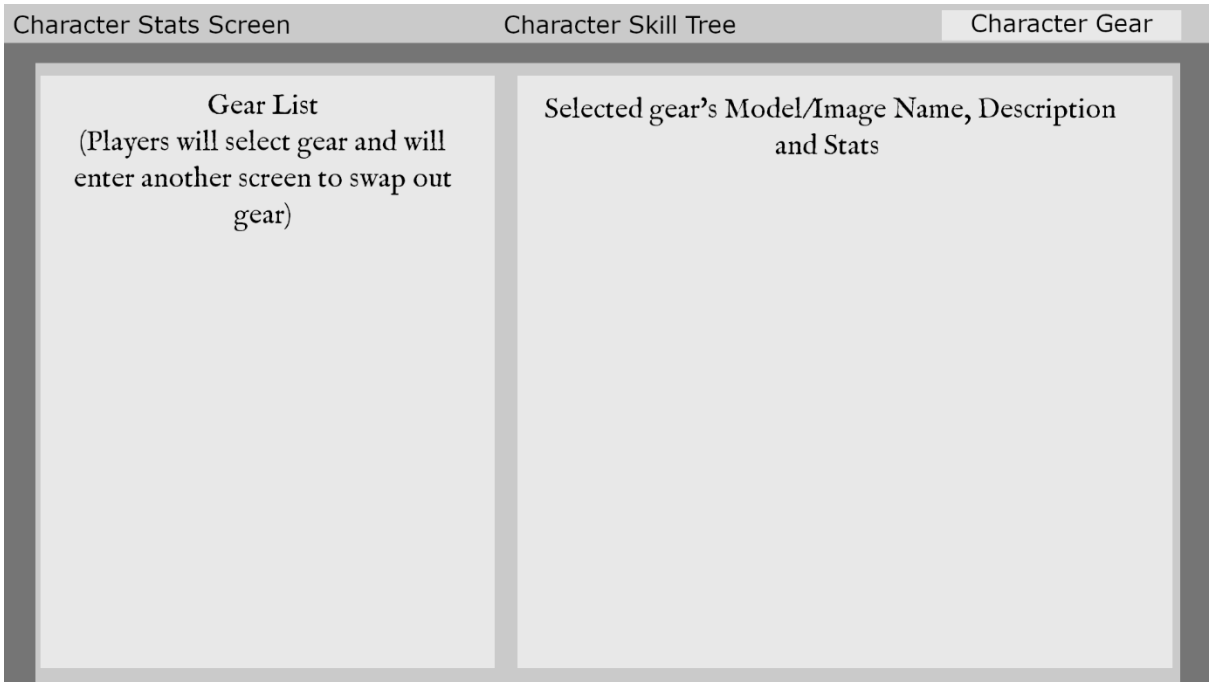
controlling:



The player can switch between each characters stats with the d-pad or “Z” and “X” on KB/M. Pressing on the buttons on the top row or using “A” and “D” will change between screens (Or on controller using the shoulder buttons). On the character skill tree screen, the player will be able to unlock new attacks for that character and upgrade their stats:



once again, using “Z” “X” or the d-pad will quickly change to another character’s skill tree.
The last screen available on this menu is the “Character Gear” screen. On this screen the player can choose the gear available for the characters, such as the characters weapons, accessories, and magic (similar to Materia in FF7):



Once again, by using “Z” “X” or the d-pad, the player can switch between each characters equipped gear.

Game Controls: