

Crystal Cave

Date – 3/22/2008

The Search for an Ancient Underground Civilization

Genre

The genre is an RPG along the lines of Tomb Raider.

High Concept

A quest to find an ancient underground civilization, believed to be responsible for giving the human race music. Each level is a cave where you have to solve a musical puzzle using the crystal formations all around.

Premise

Players take the role of a scientist/explorer who has the lore of the ancient people and wants to find them. Each cave or level has a sound base puzzle to solve the first few simple “Simon Says,” where a pattern of notes will be played through out the cavern in a continuous loop, very eerie and weird. The scientist will need to repeat the sounds using the crystals.

Special crystals will also be used as weapons and they will be needed, because if the wrong notes are played or the wrong crystals stuck, monsters and other traps will be sprung on the player.

The challenges will get more complex towards the end where players will need to figure out how to play unique crystal instruments and re-create complete songs (either rock songs or just children’s songs.) Players should get hints along the way as the challenges should not come out of the blue. Either they are following the footsteps of some other great explorers or getting clues dropped by the ancient people themselves (or both.)

Goal

The goal is to find the ancient underground civilization.

How It Works

Failure to solve puzzles may result in traps or monster battles that can set the player back.

They will have only the crystals and a few tools they find along the way to work with. They must be able to create the right notes in the right sequences to move further. They will need to use some crystals as weapons.

While the player will do some simple “Simon Says” in the beginning, they will need to find the right crystal (color search) on more difficult levels. Or they will need to time the sequence of notes between water drips or some other sound. Accidentally striking certain colored crystals will drop out pieces of the floor or open up areas where monsters live.

The end will be finding a great underground civilization with a flyover of the whole city set to some good crystal music.

Success & Failure Conditions

Success will be finding the ancient civilization or simply opening up new parts of the cave. The player should be led forward by multiple paths forged by future explorers now

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dead in the caves, or by clues like holograms in the crystals, or special sounds/recordings played when certain crystals are struck.

Failure will be not figuring out the puzzle or be thrown back a level by a monster. There should be a life monitor, but there should be a series of bad events to actually die.

Carrot Says:

Title: None

Written by: Creppy

Week 1

High Concept: The current High Concept doesn't grab the reader's attention, it doesn't really make the reader excited to continue reading. Writing the High Concept is hard, no doubt, it is almost always the last thing I write for these things. Once the Treatment is completed, I suggest taking another look at the High Concept; try to capture the essence of the game idea as succinctly as possible.

Critique: This idea really has some potential; discovering and playing sounds in an environment in an attempt to match a pre-determined sound sequence could be a really interesting mechanic. The problem, however, is that the treatment reads more like a brain-dump of notes. The Treatment talks about monsters and traps for a moment, then goes right into discussing the pace of the game, then another mention of monsters, right into example scenarios and back to monsters again. Even though the idea of enemies is addressed a number of times; the concept isn't explored at all, leaving it up to the reader to decide for themselves how sections with enemies plays out.

The next step for the author should be to go back through the Treatment and begin to organize their thoughts. The goal is to make the Treatment flow well so that it is easier for people to read, which in turn makes it easier to visualize the idea. And give the game a title!

"The end will be finding a great underground civilization with a flyover of the whole city set to some good crystal music." - This sentence isn't needed at all; get rid of it.

Remove any extraneous information, anything that isn't required to get the idea across; I suspect that this Treatment, as it stands, can be trimmed almost by half. Focus on the core idea, which is the part talked about in the High Concept, and really detail out how that can work and the various applications for it. The core game mechanic of finding and matching sounds in an environment (which is somewhat a beat-matching system, but still adheres to the rules of this challenge) is the really interesting part of this idea, that's the part that stands out and says "I'm what makes this game unique and different from all the

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other Action-Adventure games out there!” That’s the part that deserves the most attention in this Treatment.

While exploring this mechanic further, you may discover that it might not actually be all that interesting, that it probably won’t be capable of keeping the player’s interest for long. This would be a great time to discuss possible methods of slightly changing things up in the game while still retaining the essence of the core game mechanic.

Fun: C

Presentation: D+

Originality: C

Kaiser Says:

Title: Crystal Cave

Written by: Creepy

Week # 1

High Concept: “RPG along the lines of Tomb Raider” seems like some genre confusion to me, but perhaps that’s the vibe you’re going for. That works for me. So we’re on a hunt for a civilization, and we solve musical puzzles to get to it. Sounds interesting enough. I’m not sure I have a reaction of “whoa, this sounds awesome!” but it’s good enough to keep reading.

Critique: So the first thing I notice here is that you get into fights when you mess up one of these puzzles. Why? If the only time you’re getting into a fight is when you mess something up, it seems unnecessary. You don’t really go into the specifics of what the fights would be like, but it seems like this is just tacked on to add an unnecessary penalty to the game. There must be better ways to penalize a player than having them get into a fight for messing up.

I’m not sure I’m buying into this game, to be honest. The puzzles that you outline don’t really grab me as that great for a game I’d be spending some amount of money to buy. It seems like you may have had a better idea in your head than what came out on paper. I’d suggest gathering your thoughts a little better for the rest of the designs, because this one just hits me as uninteresting.

I can tell that this idea sounds great in your head, and it might be, but it really doesn’t come across as anything interesting or special in this treatment. You didn’t really run into an issue with the page count, so I think it would be worth getting a bit more specific next time. You’ve got that idea in your head, you just have to work on selling it a bit better.

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Fun: C+

Presentation: B-

Originality: C+