

Skill Master

RPG meets FPS

Date – 4/6/2008

Genre

First-Person Shooter Online Role Playing Game

High Concept

Skill Master is an instanced RPG with the freedom of movement and attack of an FPS.

Premise

Skill Master is designed to be an entirely online game with no story behind it. Players create characters in one of the four base classes and level up, gaining class changes at levels 10 and 25 and new skills every 5 levels. The four selectable classes are Fighter, Thief, Mage and Cleric. Each class will have 2 options per class change at each class change option. This gives a potential total of 16 final classes, but in actuality there are only half as many due to overlap. The path taken to the final classes is what separates one from another.

Players will form groups and take on instance dungeons with their parties. The entire purpose of the game will be to show your skill on various ranking boards for each dungeon available. The rankings will include speed, damage taken, number of characters, and average level of characters. Better overall ranked performances will yield a better reward for dungeon completions.

Goal

The goal of Skill Master is to create a team of players that can create and use their characters with enough skill to dominate the leaderboards.

How It Works

Players will control their characters in First-Person with complete freedom to move around with arrow keys and mouse movements. The player will also be able to change what keys are assigned to movement, as well as binding his skills to keys as he sees fit. The combination of this control scheme with the character building elements makes for a more complex gaming experience.

Skills/Spells

Each class will have a unique set of skills and spells that will be more or less effective depending on how well the player using that character plays. Where most RPGs will have a player clicking on a monster then selecting a skill to execute, skills will have to be played through to completion. For example, a thief may want to execute a backstab on an unsuspecting foe. In order for this to happen, he must sneak up behind him and then activate his ability and click on the foe's back. A more skilled thief will be able to execute a backstab without sneaking in at all. He can simply charge forward, feint to one side, sidestep quickly to the other, turn 160 degrees and sidestep again, angling himself around to the back of his opponent, who is hopefully still stuck in an attack animation. The thief can then make a successful backstab. Another example would be of a fighter executing a multi-strike against his opponent. If a fighter is able to connect with this skill, his opponent is paralyzed and he is given free reign to attack without any limits on speed for 3 seconds. The limit is instead placed on the location that you can attack. With each

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attack made, the location that the next must occur is shown with a thick line on the screen. The more precise each swing, the more damaging it is. A more skilled player may be able to outperform a better equipped ally by slashing faster and more accurately.

Controls

As already stated, movement will be controlled much like a standard First-Person Shooter. The mouse keys will be bound to separate functions. One may be a normal attack while the other is defense. You can bind keys on your keyboard to alter what your mouse buttons are mapped to. Depending on the skill chosen, the execution will differ. A basic attack will be performed by holding the attack button and moving the mouse across your screen. The backstab explained earlier uses a click as it is focusing on a single point. A cleric's cure spell is executed by clicking and dragging in order to make a circle. The wider the circle, the less effective the spell, however all within the selected area are healed. Whether a cleric is able to communicate to his team members to form up, or simply times, sizes and places his spell perfectly depends on the situation.

Leveling

Experience is only given at the completion of an instance. Thus a player can only gain new skills after finishing a dungeon. He can then go to a training area to practice his newly acquired abilities and go through a quick explanation on how to execute it. This allows for fair ranking, where a group that enters a dungeon at a certain level is guaranteed to finish at the same level and not gain new skills on the very first encounter. It also prevents players from being confused by gaining new skills in combat and slowing down the fast action to allocate stat points and re-bind keyboard keys. Leveling allows you to increase your core stats as well as putting points into skills. Skill points used are reflected in diminishing returns. The first few will do much to make your skills more effective while each subsequent point will increase your skills' powers less and less. 5 core stat points and 5 skill points are given on each level up. Each skill is dominated by one core stat. Using the previously mentioned skills, backstab gains power with agility and multi-strike gains power with Strength. Agility also determines how quickly you move and dodge. Strength determines the overall power of your physical attacks. Intelligence determines the speed with which you cast spells and use abilities. Toughness increases your health and makes you more resistant to status ailments.

Classes

The base classes were given and some mention was made as to class changes. Each base class will have two companion classes that they can aspire to. If you represented the classes as tokens and placed them on the four cardinal directions of a circle, the companion classes for each class would be the two that are closest. Some of the combinations that are possible are a Thief moving towards the Mage skillset and becoming an assassin or vice-versa. Likewise a Fighter could move to the Cleric skillset and become a Crusader. Moving towards a skillset and then back away from it creates a class that is "pure". So a pure fighter might move towards Cleric on his first class change, then towards Thief on his second. This differentiates him from the other pure fighter option that moves towards Thief on the first class change then away from it on the second as some skills are gained in the intermediate levels.

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Carrot Says:

Title: Skill Master

Written by: ShinobiAC

Week 3

High Concept: The High Concept does indeed get across the type of game; but it doesn't do a very good job at making said game sound interesting. Try using more action words to explain the title; they help make it seem more dynamic.

Critique: When I read the subtitle, RPG meets FPS; I thought to myself, "Oh, this sounds interesting". While I read the rest of the Treatment; I kept asking myself, "Where is the shooter part of the FPS?" From what it sounds like; *Skill Master* is attempting all the traditional sword and sorcery fare but in a first person perspective, which is a concept that I like on paper, but have had a hard time enjoying while playing the real thing.

There is one glaring issue that I can't quite figure out; the Treatment goes into a lot of detail about how spells and attacks are done, for example;

"A cleric's cure spell is executed by clicking and dragging in order to make a circle."

Now; if the game controls a lot like a standard FPS (as is stated in the Treatment), then the camera would be attached to the mouse movement and performing the move detailed above would cause the camera to move in a dizzying circle. This basically says to me that in order to perform attacks, the character must wag their head around like a bobble-head doll. I know quite a few people that get motion sick just by playing standard FPS games; I think this sort of mechanic would about kill them.

While it isn't explicitly stated; I think that what I wrote above wasn't the intended function of the attacking mechanics. I think that what happens when the attack key is held down is that the player view becomes stationary and is no longer controlled by the mouse; instead a reticule appears on screen that is controlled by the mouse movement, allowing easy spell creation. If this is in fact the case; then I think it needs to be better explained in the Treatment.

The presentation is generally ok; but the Treatment suffers from massive walls of text that make it appear daunting, paragraphs generally do best at four to six sentences (nothing wrong with less). Something that will help alleviate the wall of texts is to whittle down the needless details, the Treatment delved too deeply into character classes and example attacks, things better left for the larger Design Overview document.

Skill Master, despite the highly generic name, sounds like it has great potential to be a fun game. I would like to see more integration between the elements that define a first-person shooter and the elements that define a traditional role playing game, right now the game

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just sounds like an RPG played in the first person. Come up with some interesting mechanics that intimately twist the genres; and this could be a winner.

Fun: B-

Presentation: B

Originality: C-