Executive Summary – Life of Unknown by Harry Thompson

Life of Unknown is a single player narrative adventure game that features a recurring theme of "A Life" with elements of a horror game. The game puts the player in the position of a forgotten soul who has found himself at the bottom of a dungeon, in which he needs to escape. He will face challenges, puzzles and will need to complete quests for npc's who may be able to help him uncover his identity and escape the dungeon.

Target Devices

The game will be made for the pc and to be sold on the steam platform until a community and interest is formed on other platforms to assure the game is still profitable to port over. When these communities have made their presence known a console port may be made on the latest generation consoles, either Xbox and/or PlayStation as these have the second largest gamer player base under PC.
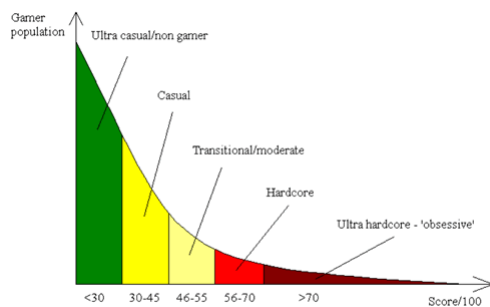
Target Audience

The target audience is "Core Gamers". A Core gamer, as defined by Wikipedia. Is a gamer who has a wide range of interests when it comes to games and game genres? Core Gamers could also be defined as a step up from a casual or average gamer. This means that they have roughly the same or more amount of free time and money to play games. A core gamer would be more than happy to pay for full priced games (£50 - £60) and to try new ideas and genres that may not be mainstream.

I have defined "Full Priced" as the general cost of new AAA titles which I will back up with 3 examples.

- Battlefield V – £54.99
- COD Black Ops 4 - £49.99
- FIFA 19 - £54.99

Below is a graph from Gamasutra showcasing the estimate population of gamer types.
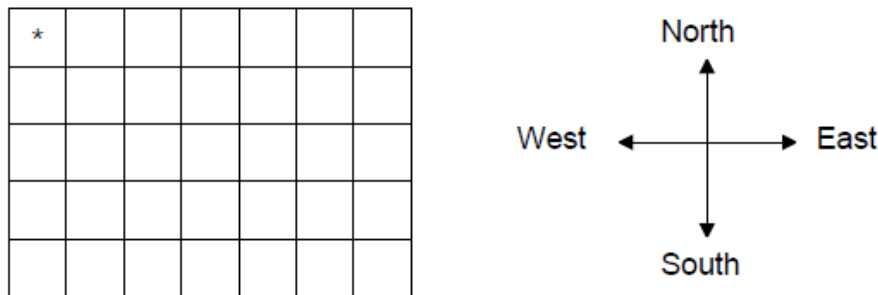

As you can see Core gamers are not showcased within this graph. This may be because, referring to my earlier point about Core gamers in relation to casual gamers: Core gamer's tend to be defined as anything between casual and moderate gamers. This is because they make up the majority of the worldwide gamer demographic, hence "Core" gamer meaning that they make up the core player base of games as a whole.

Gameplay

The Idea for Life of Unknown was born from a recent computer science benchmark where we students had to edit and add validation to a console game made in visual studio. The aim of the game however was for the player to find a magic potion hidden in the cavern which would win them

the game. They also had to attempt to avoid awakening the monster by setting of traps set in a random location each new game. Below is a diagram which may help explain the mechanics and how they relate to Life of Unknown.
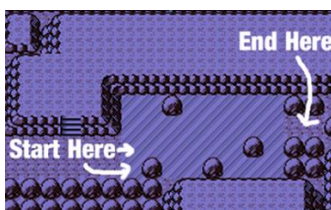

The movement in the game is done by the player entering either N, E, S or W. This obviously stands for north, east, south and west. However in Life of Unknown the movement system will use the ever popular WASD as it will be much easier for players to use. If a console port is made however, the movement system will need to be changed to support the use of a controller joystick.

The image also shows a grid with a * representing the players position. In Life of Unknown a 2d character image will be used and the same applies for the cavern/dungeon. However the dungeon will be much bigger and feature different rooms, sections and tile sets etc. Below is an example image for a cave tile set taken from the Pokémon game series.
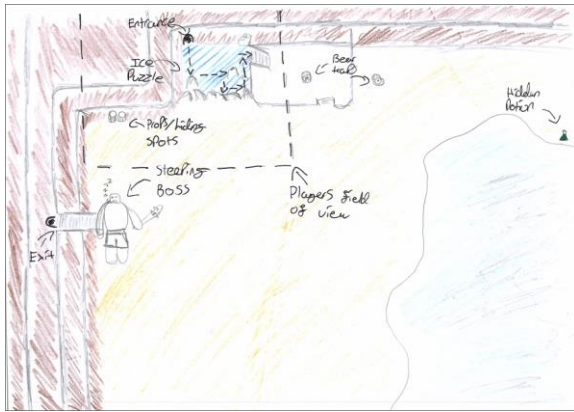

The game will have enemies, bosses and mild action elements however, the focus will be on storytelling and puzzle solving as this is a narrative adventure game after all. To use another example from the Pokémon series, here is an example of a form of puzzle the player may expect to find

This is known in Pokémon as an ice puzzle. It requires the user to calculate or use trial and error to find the correct path to exit the puzzle and continue towards their next destination. Generally as the game progresses these puzzles become bigger and more complex, often including additional obstacles that can now be interacted with.

Below is an example sketch that I drew for one of the cavern tile sets.

Key features/mechanics

Life of Unknown aims to give the player a story and development that will emotionally attach them and provide many hours of content for them to enjoy. Here is a list of the games key features/mechanics

- Top Down Viewpoint
- Levelling system
- Inventory system
- Horror elements
- Action elements
- Challenging stages and puzzle to overcome
- WASD control Scheme
- Item and achievement rewards
- Main and side quest lines
- Interesting NPC's
- An engaging lore That will emotionally attach players to the world
- Basic combat system

Unique Selling point

Life of Unknown strives to challenge the player and excite their sense of competitiveness through the difficulty of the puzzles and enemies within the game. Similar to dark souls the player can expect to die a few times before progressing to the next stage. I feel this is good for the game given that many other games these days tend to lower the difficulty too much for ultra-casual gamers. However that is not our target audience and core gamers are known to have wider interests and should be much more open to the idea of a difficult game.

Development

Given the nature of the game, development should not be as costly full priced games given that this is a 2d narrative adventure game. However, having that being said some potential players may be offended by this and feel as if the game would not be worth buying seeing as it is a full priced game. Therefore there will be a heavy focus on adding as much content and story as possible to make sure that our players feel valued not only in the game world. But also by the games developer.

Roles required for development

The Roles needed for the production of Life of Unknown include but are not limited to…

- 1x Level designer
- 1x Narrative designer/writer
- 1x Sound designer
- 1x Animator
- 2x 2D Artist (Characters, levels and UI)
- 2x Gameplay programmers
- 2x Tester
- 1x Project manager

The aim is to keep the design team fairly small so that communication between team members is as effective as possible. This will help make the game world as immersive as possible and keep the player attached.

Cost of development

According from Wikipedia a similar game, Undertale. Took 2.7 years for its only developer Toby Fox to develop with a small crowdfunding goal of $5,000 and an actual $51,124 raised. With the stated roles, our game should take approximately £225,000 to make given the following:

- 1 Year development schedule
- Each team member is payed approximately £25,000 a year
- Testers are payed approximately £250 if testers cannot be secured for free or if a beta is made available.
- Overflow of £25,000

Maximum Budget: £ 250,000

-Note: These figures are based on published spending averages from various development studios and games.

How will the game attract players before launch?

Given that the type of game Life of Unknown is, I have concluded that it would be worth finding interested players before launch. This will help determine how much money will be made in sales when the game releases.

I propose that a pre-registration service is offered and rewards and/or early access is offered to players who register an account before launch. These rewards could be in game content such as additional missions/levels, items or cosmetics. It might also be worth giving players who register exclusive or rare Life of Unknown steam items. This should prove to be effective as it will give players bragging rights.