FORTNITE

Game Feedback

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Content

Introduction

Hello ladies and gentlemen.

Here is my feedback of Fortnite after 40+ hours and currently lurking in Plankerton 24+.

Few things before we dive right in:

- At first I was writing "imho" at the end of each sentence so I've decided to just say it here: this is my humble opinion.
- I could not analyse the "Late Game" yet and I believe all aspects of a game need to be taken into account before suggesting changes. Therefore I'll mainly focus on Early game (and if you see something that is definitely going against a late game element, feel free to point it out)
- You'll read many critics here, but eh, I already played the game for ~40 hours and I intend to continue. I like it. That's why I'm taking the time to write this.
- I'm a fierce Unreal 4 Developer!
- Points made in no particular order of priority.

New User Experience

It feels okay. Mechanic tutorials come at a good pace, quests keep us hooked, storyline and voiceover makes it entertaining, not to mention the great cinematic.

But the game menu and the difficulty are two things that kind of collide with it in an unpleasant way (both have their own sections).

The new user experience could be cool but the efforts invested in are currently sapped by these two factors.

Difficulty Curve

This is a discussed debate among the community if I'm correct. Some say it's too easy, some say it is good as it is because "first zone is for beginner".

The problem I felt was not about it being "too easy" at start but being "frustrating": there weren't enough monsters for the four of us! I felt like stealing the fun out of my teammate when sending a grenade in the middle of a pack he was just going to wreck.

I could rush in every mission but my teammates weren't necessarily in this mood and I didn't want to spoil the fun for them. I rushed some, went slow with others.

I don't mind the first part of a game being easy: people can learn things and progress at their pace. But I do mind when I have several tools to kill monsters but I actually can't use any of them because all monsters are dead already!

I'm just reaching Middle Plankerton as of now, difficulty is higher and it's pleasing.

Sometimes when we suddenly jump from a zone level to another it can be a bit daunting. Maybe it could be smoother.

Overall it seems okay-ish in its current state but can be improved. Warning on the first twenty games or so which felt a bit frustrating (not enough monsters to slash!).

Exploration

It feels pretty good overall. We're kind of gods in this world: we can create or destroy almost anything.

Random level generation is top-notch with a mix of fixed level designs (if I'm correct) and procedurally generated content obviously.

One thing is annoying me quite much though. It is the non-formalized jump height. I mean the fact that sometimes one obstacle of X size can be jumped over and another of *seemingly* X size cannot. It often happens with the roof fences (as example but with other elements as well).

I also believe grass and brushes should not block the player but instead shake around with a little grass noise when we walk pass them.

Combat

Minions

Sometimes, minions' movement is jittering and sometimes it feels like I'm not headshoting whereas I'm aiming the head (when they play an animation for instance).

The "invulnerability" frame of the minions when they get knockbacked is pretty counter intuitive and even now I still forget about it.

Feels & Guns

Other than that, combat overall feels great. The headshot pulse, the enemy knockback threshold, the purple energetic blood, the punchy gun feels, the responsive controls and neat animations. Pretty well crafted on this side.

Melee Weapons

Melee weapons felt a bit off to me and I believe it's all about the skill animations:

- Left Mouse Button Skill: The amount of time our ability is waiting for us to repress the button to trigger the combo feels too long to me. Recovery time after an animation as well.
- Right Mouse Button Skill: Felt too long, too slow, and too rigid. It didn't feel good to have an immovable character for so long (I'm talking about axes and swords mainly since it's what I tried, the rest IDK).

I don't know how to be more accurate, but there's definitely something to refine.

Energy Costs

I feel like all skill energy costs are a bit too high (class and weapon skills). I do understand that it is a tactical combat / exploration resource and I like it that way. But nevertheless I have the feeling that combat would be smoother with these costs reduced by ~10-20%.

Responsiveness

Nuclear Strike is sometime not responsive (quickly clicking its shortcut and left mouse button don't trigger it right away).

Floating Texts

I feel like they are not readable enough.

I can read when I focus on them. But it shouldn't be an active information, it should be a passive one which I gather while dancing around the enemies or shooting them from afar.

They also have the capability to teach the critical strike mechanic but since they are not readable enough they sometime fail at it.

I asked a friend of mine if he thought Floating Texts were readable in their current form. He said yes and then I told him critical strikes and headshots were two different mechanics (he thought headshots = critical strikes). This means he didn't see the three different colour schemes of damage types (I don't know if there are more).

I think they should have a less noisy, wider font and a less noisy texture. Maybe it should also last for 0.3 seconds more but it might be way too noisy with certain automatic weapons so I don't know about that.

I didn't check to see if we can disable them or not, but it should be a good idea to be able to (or to select what type of damages we want to see: regular, headshot and criticals).

Build Mode

At first it seemed a bit complex for no particular reason. Then I watched a few videos, tried a few things ingame and saw how the system was smooth and had depth. I love it. It will become a reference used by other games using the same mechanic if they want to provide as much modularity, strategy / tactical depth and way to express as a player.

Enemies

AI

There are many pretty good things here.

Enemies have a little lunge attack when they hit us. Making it not so easy to fool them by running around in circle.

The aggro behaviour is pretty interesting and seem well thought out (order of priorities, path length, path strength, building: hitpoints & types, hero aggro…). It feels very organic.

Diversity

A dozen of enemy types do not seem much for a game where we're supposed to play at least a hundred hours.

But so far it hasn't been shocking at any point. I've never said to myself "again these guys". Props to the AI and the build/tower defence system that makes all of this interesting with the same enemies.

I don't know if and when we're going to run out of diversity nor if it is a real problem (maybe it will never happen). Anyway it is definitely something to keep in mind.

Elemental enemies can't be counted as they are just variations of existing enemies and behaviours.

Progression

I'm not necessarily your target audience but since I played quite a lot I'll talk about it anyway.

F2P Progression

I'm not so fond of the free-to-play progression system. But I like the concept of "simulated improve" (increasing stats) through playtime.

It feels great to have a lot of things to do (even if the UI makes it hard to enjoy but we'll get into that later). It provides a high feeling of commitment to the game and our account. Llama packs are like Hearthstone packs and RNG is always spicy. Overall, it is a contract we sign up with the game, either we're up to commit time and play the game or we're not and this game is not for us. I signed this contract right now and I enjoy it. **It just needs to be rewarding enough for a F2P player.**

Skill & Research Trees

These systems are a bit frustrating to me:

The Skill and Research trees for example. I like the fact that in the end I'll be unlocking everything. But I don't like the fact that there are very few meaningful choices to make other than unlocking one perk before another in the same branch. Even some higher nodes can't be purchased after unlocking their weaker node because they have other prerequisites than the node path.

I don't feel like I'm investing points in a build or making choices, I feel like I'm simply filling points someone else asked me to fill.

I think these systems would benefit from letting us choose on what we want to focus. This means less or no prerequisites outside of node branching, real trees with leaves for each class and being able to access the level two of a branch we're going for without prerequisites.

Power Level

Also the Power Level system is a bit unclear. Why does it take into consideration Survivor Squads slotted but not Heroes? Why doesn't it take into consideration the weapons I've equipped? I don't know if it should or not, I'm just finding the system quite complex and not always coherent which makes me unable to determine my power level compared to the other players and the missions I should be playing in.

Especially since I'm matched in 34/40+ missions whereas a big red ribbon tells me not to play in these missions (I was 22 Power Level at that time). A friend of mine even thought the red ribbon was indicating a locked mission!

Voice Lines

Overall, the work on voice lines is great. The humour is not Borderland level but it's quite good and it's hard to do well on this side of things. But I'll talk about the few things that bugged me:

The See-Bot and summoned Defenders spam us a bit too much (for weapon, ammunitions and I'm done listening complaints about his eye!).

I'd like to hear a sound feedback when a teammate dies (maybe there's one, but if I didn't noticed it…).

I'd like to hear a sound feedback when a Stalker spawns / goes up in the air / charges me (one of the three or all of them). For some reason the voice line "Stalker!" does not always trigger.

Voice lines about the fort being attacked are great but they could be even better with more accuracy. A random wooden stairs in the middle of the map triggering the "Fort is being attacked!" is too much obviously. And it would be better if it had several levels of alert instead of using the same message when a Husk is hitting a wall or when a horde of monsters are overwhelming the door. Right now it is really alarming all the time which can be confusing for newer players (and not informative for more experienced players). I know there's a radar on my HUD to see enemies, but sound feedbacks are always quicker to make our brains react since we don't have to go look for the information, it is coming to us.

Loot

Reaching the midgame, I have noticed these things:

- I have tons of unused crafting materials that I often throw away: I can't tell if something is too rare or too common at that stage of the game but I would say the balance of looted crafting material types can be refined
- I'm not excited about the weapons I loot ingame: I fight with three levelled up weapons and all the weapons I loot are underpowered compared to it, recycling them does not hype me much nor does transforming them, but I did not get the grasp of these mechanics as of yet which might make things spicier.
- Ingame Chests are not that exciting: I believe my feeling comes from their content but I know they have to remain a team-oriented loot item. I don't know how they could provide more excitement.

Quests

I feel like it is nicely done: during most of my progression I didn't feel like I was grinding missions, I felt like I was advancing through a story. Even if there were some grindier missions that asked me to collect X number of quest item but only X-1 maximum instances of it could spawn in the same map.

But I came to a mission yesterday that really got me out of the mental state "story progression" and put me in the state "go grind stuff" it was the "Complete 6 Relay Radar mission" and it wasn't a nice feeling. Afaik there's only one Relay Radar per map and I just read "do 6 missions". It was too much at a single time. Maybe just splitting this quest into two different parts could have avoided the bad feeling. Don't get me wrong: I like to farm, but only when I need it and I carefully choose what and where. It would have also been a different feeling for me if the mission asked me to go in a 40+ zone. I would have realized it was too much for me and I would have farmed a little bit! Maybe not 6 missions in a row, but at least 3. On my own will ☺

I think you managed to find a good balance between storytelling, farming and progression; you need to keep it as balanced for the rest of the game.

Mechanics and Maths (-)

I'll be talking about minimaximization here. It is what we're all doing when matching our survivor perfectly. It is the fact of making a character powerful by using a combination of many small and finely selected bonuses.

There is a lot of minimaximization involved in Fortnite, whether it'd be Survivor Squads or Skill & Research Trees (and many other subsystems).

But in many of them I'm lacking accurate numbers. I need to know how everything is tied up; I need to be able to compare everything (not by adding / removing Survivor for instance).

Few examples:

- What does personality match gives?
- How much flat damage do I gain from any "squad damage bonus" with my regular weapons and traps?
- How much durability do I lose when I die? Only on equipped weapons or all of them?
- How strong am I compared to other players?
- What resources I have? (not only those in the Resources tab)

- How much sub crafting material do I have? (it indicates 0 but I can craft 100 of them and it will auto craft them when needed so it's counter intuitive, 0 means I have to take care of it)
- How much power does evolving a weapon / survivor / hero gives me?

I need tools to correctly make my account decisions and investment.

Menus (-)

You talked about it in your video. I can't say "you should do this" because I believe your reworking process is kind of a holistic task and I don't know how you started it nor do I know what we need from the menu in the endgame. Therefore I'll focus on what I felt awkward / inefficient so far so you guys can think about how it can fit (or not) in the future system.

- When selecting an object I have the schematic for, I'd like to be able to craft it from this menu instead of having to go find it in the left scrolling crafting bar.

- While scrolling through the trap craft selection menu, it brings me back to the last trap I selected every time a trap completes crafting which can be annoying when trying to find a particular trap while crafting lots of traps.

- When selecting something to be slotted (let's say Survivors, Heroes or Collection), it prompts a window in which we choose which object to slot. The different ways to cancel this window is either to press escape, to find and click the X entry in the selection list or to click the Cancel button with the mouse. But we need one more option to close it: clicking anywhere on the screen but on the window should close it. This would speed up the menu handling process by a lot.

- When I want to remove a slotted survivor, I have to click on his slot, scroll all the way up in the selection window and double (or sometimes triple) click the X entry to unslot it. It would be easier if the X entry was at the end of the scrolling menu instead of the beginning (since it starts at the end when opening up the window). But since the sole purpose of this change is to allow us to unslot survivors quicker, it would be even easier to just have a button to unslot all survivors in a squad.

- I'd like to be able to see my inventory from the outgame menu.

- I'd like to be able to drop items in my Storm Storage in the outgame and ingame menus.

- I'd like to be able to redraw resources from Storm Shield from anywhere on the map while in build mode in Storm Shield (as long as the defence has not started).

- It would be easier to understand what object I'm currently inspecting if its icon was on its detail panel title bar.

- When selecting an item, its recipe list appear on the left and tells me which crafting materials I need, if I want to know what these materials are, I need to go to the side menu-tab "Crafting", it's tedious when we need it (and it happens a lot at start). It would be easier if I could just mouse hover the material icons on the left to see a tooltip giving me that information.

- When a lobby has been found / created, I'd like to have a UI / sound notification.

- When receiving a lobby invite, I'd like to have a UI / sound notification.

- When in a game lobby, I'd like to be able to switch heroes by simply clicking on my hero (like Gadgets).

- When selecting a hero (in the current menu version) while in the lobby, it's strange to have to click back on "Map" to go back to the lobby.

- It would be great to be able to start Storm Shield defence from any tower in the Storm Shield map.

- It would be great to have an option to "reset our base", refunding us all the resources in our bank (but I did not think of the fact that we could then reset our entire Stonewood base to use the resources elsewhere when we're done defending it).

- The Storm Shield map is resetting whenever I leave it, it would be great to have it up all the time.

- Some friends of mine and I had trouble finding how to invite and play with friends (it kind of sounds silly to me since I found it quite easily meanwhile and the whole process doesn't look that much complicated at all) I don't know what to do about this but there's definitely something.

- We're doing a lot of traffic in our survivor squads, swapping them around pretty often and I think a more flexible approach to slotting/unslotting would be great (like drag and dropping survivors in and out).

- The different menu tabs of the item inspector are a bit tedious to navigate with. I find myself clicking at a lot of different places to get basic information.

- We're spending a lot of time in the menus in Fortnite and therefore I think it deserves its 'toy' status and should be treated as such: a high level of polish and a lot of enjoyment using it.

Conclusion (TL:DR)

I like the game, here's what's keeping me from loving it:

- **UI** – slotting/unslotting, getting the information we're looking for and navigating in general is tedious
- **Afraid of the grind / F2P Model** –I'm fine with grinding and F2P progression as long as it does not become solely a grind fest – where we spend hours slaying one type of monster just to find the same overstated type of monster in the next area. Keep up with the novelties: new enemies, behaviours, biomes, traps and weapons. Keep up with the storyline, the side quests and the meaningful F2P rewards (but again, I'm not necessarily your target audience).
- More **meaningful choices** during progression especially regarding the Skill / Research tree

That's all folks!

If you read that far, thank you very much. It was a pleasure writing this and I hope reading it was interesting to you (and not too hard despite my not so finely crafted English skills).

Fortnite is a good game as it is and it has the potential to become a great title with a strong community.

Keep up the good work!

Good luck and have fun everyone ☺