

January 30th Livestream Transcription

Transcribed by @Shaze#7493. PM for any edits.

< Start of Stream >

Intrepid studios shares Alpha 1 progress updates and first look at the new UI changes.

Quick Updates:

- We'll be having new character models for all the races soon.
- Parts of the Alpha 1 map will be shown at the Alpha 1 demo at GDC.
- Studio move will be taking place very very very shortly.
- Valentines Day event planned for February, more details later.

Design (UI) Team Update: Ryan Pearson (Senior UI Artist) is brought on stream. Spent over 12 years at Blizzard on projects such as Battle.Net for 8 years and Diablo for 4 years. I worked pretty passionately on the Blizzcon reveal. As a big fan of form following function, if its designed well and plays well, that's most important to me. With Castle sieges, the challenge involved creating UI that helped provide all the necessary information but was still modular and aesthetic. Our UI designs for Ashes of Creation are meant to be modular to let players customize how they want their UI to look.

The capture points for sieges require dynamic icons that provide the player with information on the compass so they better understand what's going on. We had to decide between how information was displayed, information displayed above a player's head, all of it is greybox currently, so its not final yet.

Design Team Update: Dave Oelkers (Senior Animator) is brought on stream. I've been animating in games since 2000, working on games such as Mark of Kri with a background in 2D animation. I then moved to Trion to work on an action RPG, following that to Amazon Games Studio. I joined Intrepid near the end of Apocalypse and got to work on the 2H Greataxe animation polishing.

We take the general frame of the Bear for example and are able to pump out additional assets that share the same frame/mesh/animations/etc. which helps speed up the content generation speed. Also variants of the swiftclaws and raptors.

Environment Team Updates: Michael Bacon (Lead Environment Artist) is brought on stream to supply candy to the stream. Our team has been going through bugfixes on Castle Siege while also working extensively on the MMORPG. We saw the downsides of the prefab approach in Apocalypse and figured out a much better alternative for the MMORPG, which was incredibly

helpful. So the node system right now uses blueprints so we can easily swap things around, especially with swapping out assets inside the houses relating to racial stuff. Depending on wealth levels, we can now showcase node buildings as they're falling apart or gold-trimmed based on the wealth of the node. Previously in Alpha 0, we brute forced the node system to manually create the nodes and we simply couldn't duplicate it for all the nodes. But our environment team figured out a solution to build this tool to produce procedurally as well as authored node layouts. So even though the nodes are partially procedurally generated, they have parameters to account for placement for sieges, town halls and more.

Since we were able to try out various building structures in Apocalypse, we were able to find areas that we could expand on in terms of housing, such as raising the ceiling and adding more detail to the houses. Construction will also have actual progression from stage to stage of construction with transitioning animations.

We've got a large scope ahead of us to incorporate all 9 different racial cultures within the MMORPG, all of which is entirely player influenced. We're dedicated to hitting a standard that you the community and we are proud of. We'll be showcasing a new biome next month, the grasslands and the magical forests.

Community Team Updates: Lt. Toast (Community Manager) is brought on stream

<QnA begins>

Q: Will mounts have emotes that the players can use?

A: Mounts will have access to certain skills as they level up. For example a charge or a stun etc. We did think about the ability to give them emotes, I don't know if we'll be able to fit it into launch, but we definitely want them in.

Q: Please clarify, I thought we would not be getting such traditional outfits early on?

A: When you achieve armor at the early stages, it might be a little grandiose compared to other games that you have played. But we just wanted that transition from a civilian from a world you know nothing about to this new dangerous world.

Q: Any news on the usage of chaos system of Unreal Engine?

A: We kinda moved away from it. For an MMORPG optimization is a key component. We want to see more established technology from Chaos before we implement it. So there is potential in the future, but for now, no.

Q: Why the Sunglasses?

A: I (Steven) saw them on the table before the stream and said we should wear sunglasses for the stream. The end.

Q: Can we get some clarification on the world map, specifically how much of the 480sqkm is land and how much is water?

A: We were referring to playable area. The edges of the map ofcourse wont really classify as that, but the water will be filled with content and more.

Q: Will there be emphasis on visual clarity for PvP?

A: The player is to leave that upto the player to decide. We'll give players the option to decide how clear they want it to be. We want you to be able to read what's going on in the situation and understand it. Offering players easily visible threat assessment is incredibly important. So certain skills/weapons/armor will have recognizable assets to let the player make snap decisions.

Q: Will there be surprise encounters with epic beings in Verra where you have to just watch them and enjoy?

A: The concept that we're going with is- This is a world that exists without you. There's going to be content for players to just observe and be immersed in.

Q: Will the healing archetypes suit a variety of playstyles like direct healing/HoT/Damage mitigation etc?

A: Yes. We've talked a lot about building your playstyle and how you want to play.

Q: What class has been your favourite to play and why?

A: I feel answering that will give an unfair disposition towards one class. However the ranger plays pretty fun and tactical.

Q: Will gathering involve simply clicking or holding down keys or be interactive?

A: We dont want to inundate that process with too many interactions. Sometimes people just want it to be simple and straightforward as players enjoy relaxed gathering.

Q: Do you have any plans on keeping players interested in Apocalypse after lvl 50?

A: Apocalypse is something that was meant to gather information for the MMORPG and its definitely satisfied that purpose. We're going to evaluate what we use it for, but right now, no definite answer.

Q: We know that legendary weapons exist, but what about legendary spells?

A: We've talked about ability augments in that category, but we have to check to see if its actually viable. In other games legendary weapons have a bonus activatable skill to add a different dimension to your class. But having a legendary scroll that drops from a Boss or as an augment, but I dont know if we're going to implement it or not.

Q: Can a summoner summon a dragon or something similar if a proper class is picked?

A: Yes. Summoners will have access to dragon species. We're thinking of a summoner creation suite to customize your summon. Since its being implemented with the Animal husbandry system, we could totally implement it with the summoners.

Q: How viable will PvP, arena or open world be for gearing up?

A: We're definitely going to have PvP Arena rewards, but we dont want to overly incentivize or make it a one stop shop to dis-associate with the open world environment as it pulls players away from the economy and being a part of the crafting/gathering systems and more. So no, not direct gearing up, but definitely power ups.

Q: Will our weapon auto-attack have an actual use in game?

A: We dont have an auto attack, we have the combo system that you can spec into. Typically your other skills have cooldowns, but ours has a repeatable skill effect where you can continually attack with. It has components from an enhancement standpoint. Its not going to have the Quick Time Elements you saw back at PAX years ago.

Q: You've mentioned open world battlegrounds, do open world dungeons count as open world battlegrounds?

A: When I say open world battlegrounds, our objective system is the ability for an event to take place in the open world and in that event will be spawned objectives and rulesets that players can utilize to have victory or failure. So those are like specific events in the world. Whereas the open world dungeon is a contested dungeon where battles will happen and guilds will fight over it. But its not an event that takes place with a specific ruleset.

Q: If i have a camel or goat cosmetic, can I place it on anything besides a horse?

A: Cosmetics arent categorized as a type. They are classified by tier. So you have regular horses in the first tier, and pegasus for third tier.

Q: Can players cause disasters through actions they take?

A: If a public event occurs and it ends with a negative result, yes a natural disaster will occur but not as a direct effect of players, but as a reactive event.

Q: Can we be a straight fire mage or a pure frost mage?

A: Yes, you can take a large majority of your skills to be a fire mage. You might want other supportive skills though. But you could totally spec into skills of a certain energy type, you might be able to increase the potency of a particular energy type, However there's a downside, so lets say fire is a predominant skillset on your server, players might spec into it to make you less viable.

Q: Will there be I-frames on dodges?

A: We're leaning towards a yes, primarily via I-frame type skills that provide short immunity.

Q: With the PvE revolving around questing, are there any plans to ensure it doesn't take away the sandbox from the game?

A: The quests aren't built around the linear model. It's built around a modular narrative that should reinforce the idea of a sandbox. The overarching questline directs how the world grows.

Q: Will the adaptive AI be for all mobs or dungeon bosses only?

A: The goal is to keep it as adaptive as possible, but we'll definitely leverage it on bosses more as they have the most rewards associated with it. Our behaviour trees are compartmentalized to different NPC's. So you may have grunts with minimal behaviour, then a group leader, elite boss, world boss and more that represent the adaptive AI.

Q: Are class specific utility skills a strict requirement for certain content like rangers disabling traps?

A: Yes, there will be multiple solutions to solving environmental obstacles.

Q: Due to limited fast travel, can crafting stations be mobilized or moved?

A: Depends on the crafting station. Different tiered stations exist that are resigned to freeholds and specific node stages, so there's a wide variety of things to factor in.

Q: Will there be armor for specific crafting/gathering professions?

A: Yes, most certainly. This is something that provides an additional layer of expertise and devotion.

Q: What kinds of tools will we have to manage our friends list, organization, invisibility, favourites, etc.?

A: I would say we're taking a standard approach to the friends list. But we're definitely going above and beyond for our guild systems.

Q: Regarding the PvP flagging, are players allowed to repeatedly attack players to low health and not kill them to avoid gaining corruption?

A: There's definitely risk associated with that. As a higher level character, there's a chance you could kill them by mistake for a much higher penalty. So no you won't be in corruption just for attacking. Yes you can be attacked by players while fighting a mob. You cannot see another player's health, not their HP or percentage. Their nameplate will deteriorate, but unless in a party or raid with them, you won't see their status.

Q: Will guild halls have parlour games and other tavern systems?

A: No, that ties into the business system which we want to keep in that building type. The guild hall is for guild member benefits and to provide additional systems. The tavern games will be kept to the tavern systems. We don't want guild people to just stay in their guild halls, but to actually go out and utilize the other systems.

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