

AMA Located Here:

http://www.reddit.com/r/Guildwars2/comments/13tuac/im_the_studio_design_director_on_guild_wars_2_ama/

*** = Answered (use Ctrl + F and put *** to find answered posts!)

111 = Unanswered (use Ctrl + F and put 111 to find answered posts!)

Elephants (In The Room):

***E1: Can we get a direct, on-the-record answer on where vertical progression will be headed? Specifically as it applies to gear-checks, gated content, and the addition of gear tiers? Will there be an amendment to the manifesto, or plans to retro-actively align with the manifesto again?

First of all in retrospect it would have been better to have included Ascended Gear at launch. It is designed to give users a progression path that is between Exotic and Legendary (Legendary Items will be at the same power level as Ascended) and the gap between them in terms of time is very large.

So to the question of vertical progression. So as we know there is already vertical progression in the game and we do intend to keep moving forward with this philosophy. However we have no intention of adding a new Rarity of Gear such as Ascended. Instead and as we evolve the game existing Rarity's will evolve over time. However these will not be common occurrences, for example full Ascended gear will be introduced over a long period of time and will be earned through lots of different parts/activities of the game. We had intended for example for the first release of ascended items come from other parts of the game but sadly it did not work out this way. Moving forward this is how it will work however.

In regard to gear checks specifically all increases in the power curve will be minimal and therefore there should be no straying from the intended power curve that you see in the game now, in terms of trajectory.

In regard to gated content via gear then i think that this is something we are going to give more thought to. Specifically if the reward at the end of the activity applies to players that are not just looking to do a specific type of content. Note that this statement is somewhat contradictory to the philosophy laid out above if the required items do not drop elsewhere or the ultimate rewards don't either. This is something we are going to fix.

Personally i do not feel that the latest changes are against what we said in the manifesto. I do however feel that we do have to be very careful in regard to progression design turning into grind and i believe there are some instances of this kind of grind that predate the launch of the game. It is for this reason that we are looking to revamp some aspects of the game whilst connecting other parts increase the overall experience of fun in our progression mechanics.

LoreChief: To sum up for anyone that doesn't understand this awesome answer:

Ascended gears should have existed at launch, and should have been in the place of what Exotics used to stand for (i.e. equal to legendary, the pinnacle of power), not exotics.

They will not add any other tiers if they can help it.

Ascended gears will be obtainable via different methods in the future, but their application being severely limited (such as resisting FOTM only debuffs) is being considered as it doesn't apply to anyone wanting to do other content with the same gears (WvW will not benefit from agony resistance as an example)

Gear checks/gated content is being evaluated (they see something fishy about it too)

The Manifesto is still the constitution of the game, and since this ascended gears were a post-launch "fix" to an issue, there are no further foreseeable infractions to the manifesto, which destroys the argument that ANet is implementing a "gear treadmill".

***E2: Ascended gears are making a lot of people worry about an ever-increasing gear treadmill. Many players did not want the exotic/legendary system to change, and they don't like ascended gears. Was this expected? Can this be something fixed in a painless way? Can it happen?

Yes the response was definitely expected. We did not intent for the information to come out this way. Going back to my previous answer the issue is that we believe in the vertical progression system we had pre launch and that the introduction of an element into the system post launch was going to cause concern but something we believe in. That is why there is no plan for new Rarity Tiers of loot but there are plans to enhance or gain items within the existing rarity design whose properties continue on a shallow power curve. This said we certainly don't want to create a system where itemization blocks progression in the game globally and we also need to be careful of this in areas such as FotM if the primary reward isn't available elsewhere in the game. So in short its an exciting problem but one that has been poorly communicated and handled.

And for this i take responsibility and apologies. However the future of this philosophy and the design challenges it throws up are going to lead to a pioneering world and one that we are very excited about.

So anyway i kind of went of topic here so in short. We don't intend to have an item rarity gear treadmill, we intend for the progression for gaining these rewards to have lots of different avenues for different types of player and where possible lower no fun grind within the whole of the game.

***E3: How will future events be handled in regards to timing? Oceanic players are upset that the one-time-only events were skewed to arguably unfavorable times for them, and that many didn't get to participate.

Moving forward we are going to do our best to design events that are accessible to the community as possible. We really should have thought about some of the ramifications of the design of the Karka event in more detail. In short its not something we wanted to happen and we will be rethinking how we do 1 time events moving forward.

***E4: Can we expect to see other additions of tiered gears after ascended? Or have we finally set a hard baseline?

LoreChief = See: E1

***E5: With ascended gears only being available at FOTM - is it intended that players wishing to be at their best in WvW will have to first tune themselves with fractal rewards?

It is absolutely not intended that Ascended will make a discernible difference in WvW. However it is the certainly the perception. Again however we would have much preferred to have released Ascended Gear across the whole of the game than in one area. Players in WvW will be able to acquire Ascended items within that area of the game soon.

***E6: Fractals have become the end-all for making your character stronger. Players are vanishing from maps everywhere to grind grind grind for the now-strongest items they can get ahold of. It's disruptive to the community, the fun, and the manifesto. What is being done about this?

This ties back to what i was saying earlier in which Ascended Gear and really any progression related reward mechanism that impacts the world globally should be introduced (Where possible) across the game and inside the different type of player's activities specifically. Allowing players to continue doing the things they love without focusing player migration to a specific part of the world. The introduction of the Ascended reward in one part of the game was a mistake and one that i don't want to make again. Soon Ascended Gear will adhere to these rules.

Also

Hi Cesmode,

Yep there is no doubt that the fractal level system is causing fragmentation. We are currently looking at solutions, one of which is to set the levels into tiers whereby all those within that tier say 1-5 can participate. This has implications on reward and difficulty which is why we are still looking into it.

Chris

111E7: No one likes Trahearne. He's a spotlight stealing salad-head and when do we get to kill him?

***E8: The agony system (as well as any other monster-only conditions added in the future) seems to encourage grinding for hard-to-get gears as opposed to skill-based progression promised in the manifesto, will this be remedied in the future?

Hi Jman,

Yes like many other types/rarities of item in the game the players would be able to get the Ascended items by playing the aspects of the game they really enjoy doing. And in the interim keep working slowly but surely toward their Legendary.

Chris

Also

I think the amount of materials required to make some of the gear is disproportionate to the amount of time the player wants to put in before he/she starts feeling like the goal is a grind and this skews the overall experience of the dungeon and the perception of the gear within it. I would like us to correct this and we will start working to this shortly.

In regard to future items the amount of work required to gain an item to allow players to experience content and continue having fun will be balanced appropriately.

chris

***E9: There are no ways to repair inside of fractals aside from cash shop items, providing an inherent advantage to people who pay for advantages. Can this be fixed?

Well it certainly wasn't designed to be a monetization resource, however i do see your point. We wanted to get rid of rez rushing and focus more on parties working together to not die and die less (-: We will continue to monitor the need for repair in the fractals and go from there.

Sorry if i am not giving more details here but this is something i would like to get metrics on.

Chris

***E10: With the growing empty-map-syndrome, are there processes in development to get players back into the non-80 maps?

Lorechief: See E6

Player Development (Where do we go now?):

111PD1: GW1 had hundreds of skills for each of it's classes. Can we expect skill additions for GW2 as well? If so, will they only be added in expansions? Are there plans to add them with major non-expansion content updates?

111PD2: What is ANet's position on the current implementation of trait trees? Can we expect any overhauls to the implementation of the system?

111PD3: A lot of professions have skills that no one wants to use (thief and ranger traps as an example). Are there plans on replacing or sprucing these up to make them more useful (being able to lay down 3 traps instead of 1 would be nice! Or laying them at a distance)

111PD4: What are the current plans for adding more usable weapon types & weapon/profession combinations in the future? Do you have any weapons (other than the previously addressed battle-axe type) that you're willing to share with us?

111PD5: Less and less people are interested in running story-modes, which is hurting new players. What plans are there to fix this? Increasing the replayability value for players who have already run it as an example?

Specific Requests (We'd like these things):

111SR1: Can we get a wardrobe system for PVE (similar to the SPVP)? Transmutation stones are clunky to use; they prevent players from changing gears (stagnant styles); and it requires A LOT of storage space to store soul-bound looks. Unlike the SPVP wardrobe, this one should be per-character (so that you don't unlock gear styles for all your characters and take the replay-ability out of content). I bet this would be a popular cash shop unlock too~

111SR2: Can we get decreased waypoint transportation costs? We understand that they are a money-sink, but they are also demotivating towards exploring the world.

111SR3: Can we get direct free transportation to Lion's Arch? The current way of going through the Mists is simply more loading screens than a lot of players want to deal with.

111SR4: Can we get 'underflow servers' to consolidate multiple servers with under-populated maps? It could be like; player walks into empty/low-pop map, receives prompt "an underflow is available, would you like to join it?"

***SR5: Can we get a method for changing character hair styles/skin color/hair color/underwear color? If so, will it be free or a cash shop item?

111SR6: Can you remove the repair costs associated with dying in WvW?

111SR7: Can we get a player test server in the future?

111SR8: Can we get a more visible cursor? During large/animated fights like large bosses or WvW battles, the cursor tends to get lost in the colors & spell effects.

111SR9: Can we get color-blind support for players who have issues distinguishing red/green AoE circles on the ground?

111SR10: Can you give NPC's in storymode dungeons a 'downed state' as opposed to an

insta-defeated state? Also, they are pretty much worthless to have around, and end up causing more trouble than their worth by aggro'ing undesirable mobs, and just getting in the way in general.

111SR11: We would like to make a choice on weapon skills, even between weapons we already have. Instead of say, 5 skills for a 2-handed weapon and 3 for a 1handed (or 2 for offhand) - how about 8 for a 2-hander (we have to choose 5), 5 for a 1 hander, and 3 for an off-hand? This would allow us more personalization/customization without nullifying the fact that the process of unlocking weapon skills is ultimately pointless..

111SR12: Can we enable the option to turn off the auto-floating camera while downed/dead? It's quite annoying that we have to keep reminding it to stop twirling around.

111SR13: Can we have the weapon size of daggers/pistols/focues (other tiny weapons) increased for Asura? There isn't really a point to even getting weapon styles as a pistol/dagger/focus user since you can't even see them.

111SR14: Can we get a "Change display name" option for our accounts? Cash shop or otherwise?

111SR15: Can we have our account name displayed in guild chat instead of character name? It's like talking to strangers in your own guild when someone you talk to regularly decides to play an alt you've never seen before. It dampens the community/friendly feel of being in a decent sized guild.

Follow-Ups (Status Updates):

***FO1: Can we get some metrics on the games population? How many people are actively playing? Is it lower/higher than at launch?

***FO2: What's the current state of guesting? When can we expect to be able to try it out?

***FO3: Player housing/guild halls - are these being actively worked on?

Lorechief: This might be similar to this question..

Hi Tyjala,

Thanks for taking the time to post your question. Both personal story and home instances are ares that i wish we had spent more time on already in terms of content since release. However we will be building on them as we move forward and would love to hear more of your thoughts in regard to the direction you would like to see them move in. In short you can expect to see big things.

Chris

***FO4: Can we get more details on the legendary pre-cursor scavenger events?

***FO5: When will we be able to preview items in the TP?

***FO6: What is the status on allowing 're-join' for disconnected members of fractals and other dungeons?

***FO7: What are the plans for compensating players who were unable to get Lost Shores event rewards even though they participated?

111FO8: Is gear-clipping ever going to be remedied? People don't like their characters heads being forcefully shaved to wear helmets and witches hats!

***FO9: Now that dungeon queue'ing (sans fractals) has been fixed for players, and LFG is in the works - are there intentions of correcting the awfulness of a dungeon leader quitting the group (i.e. booting everyone out of the dungeon)?

Professions (Important!):

111PR0: ***NEW AS OF 02FEB13*** Guardians just received a nerf to their spirit weapons, essentially crippling the possibility of ever doing a build with SW in mind. There was no compensation for this, meaning that now we have pets that are 2-shotted, don't go on cooldown til after their death, and have a 5-6 second attack speed. Additionally, they die if we use their active skill. Are there plans to quickly fix this issue so that guardians can build SW again?

111PR1: When can we expect this list of engi bugs to be fixed? ***BUMP*** This list is actively being worked on, however we have not received any confirmation that the "Deployable Turrets" bug has been acknowledged as an issue. The problem is that it works fine in SPvP, but in PvE/WvW, the trait does not allow for most turrets to be ground targetted, which pretty much defeats the purpose of having a turret build. Also, turrets have the worst pet targetting in the game, and we would like to be able to manually aim it, or have it focus our own target, thoughts?

(http://wiki.guildwars2.com/wiki/List_of_Engineer_bugs)

***PR2: Will engi's ever get stat-scaling on their weapon bundles?

111PR3: When can we expect this list of necro bugs to be fixed?

(<https://forum-en.guildwars2.com/forum/professions/necromancer/Necromancer-bugs-compilation-NB44-NT18-NP7/first>)

111PR4: When can we expect this list of elemental bugs to be fixed?

(<https://forum-en.guildwars2.com/forum/professions/elementalist/NEW-Elementalist-bugs-and-glitches-thread/first#post290693>)

111PR5: Are there any plans on improving scepter/staff elementalists?

111PR6: Are ranger pets going to get a survivability buff? Also, according to the wiki on pets, bears far outclass any of the other pets - are there plans to normalize pet stats?

111PR7: Can we get a "shut off ranger pet" option, as opposed to a temporary stow? They come out when we take fall damage, and its usually when we've previously shut them off because we don't want them out. This includes things like jumping puzzles, making videos or taking screenshots rapidly.

111PR8: A lot of elementalists liked 'Evasive Arcana' having a blast finisher. Can you bring it back?

111PR9: What do you guys think of an idea for ranger pets, that involves customization, personalization, and possibly an evolution of different utilities? Maybe the pets grow, and either learn new skills, or their skills become more specialized?

111PR10: Can we get ranger pet names to stick to the pets, rather than having their names default when you switch them?

111PR11: What are ANet's thoughts on the current incarnation of Stealth? Are there any changes to it in the foreseeable future?

111PR12: General profession bug updates; when can we expect those to take a high priority? Many players just want to see "ONE BIG PATCH" where all the bugs are fixed, without any added content, just to set the benchmark of functionality!

Support/Community (Forums/Communication):

111SC1: Profession specific forums are disconnected from Anet. This is exemplified with the lack of official response from Anet to any of the profession forums. Can we have more & more frequent contact/participation from Anet here? A lot of times, discussions on bugs, improvements, additions, go unnoticed, and these sections of the community usually, and genuinely – are out to present improvements to the game that they would like to be acknowledged for.

***SC2: With the start of the new "State of the Game/SPvP Tournaments" Johnathan Sharp is starting at the end of the month, and this AMA; can the playerbase get more involved with the development of the game? Something like "Voice of the Player" or "Submit your ideas" events on the forums with participation from the devs would be an amazing way to connect with the community, as well as get a temperature reading on what players are asking for.

Hi Grayn,

i love the goal here and it is an area i have been thinking about a lot today. Specifically a more frequent conversation between the community and the team. Still brainstorming around it, so watch this space.

chris

Crafting & Gears:

111CG1: As it currently stands; there are 3 legendary greatswords, and 1 of every other item type. How is the handling of other added legendary weapons going to go in the future?

***CG2: What other methods are going to be available for obtaining ascended gears?

Hi Bila,

I agree that the crafting materials required for Ascended Gear are to much of a grind and we are looking to balance the requirements in a manner that is fair for all involved and we had always intended for their to be multiple ways to get Ascended Gear it just didn't make it the FotM build.
Chris

111CG3: What are the chances of decreasing the amount of dungeon/rng grinding in order to obtain on ascended/legendary/exotic gears?

111CG4: With the addition of ascended gears, are there any intentions to update crafting professions to be able to craft the higher-tiered gears at some point (ascended gears and maybe legendaries?). As it is right now, with exotics being the highest craftable tier, it will be outdated when the launch of the rest of the ascended set items come into existence.

111CG5: Are there any plans for legendary back/armor items?

***CG6: You previously stated that there was a gap between exotic and legendary weapons that needed to be addressed; what does that mean?

Thanks for taking the time to post your questions. Mike O will respond to the top question and I will respond to the bottom section. Ascended Gear is designed to fill the 'Time' gap in regard to the distance between exotic and Legendary in terms of progression and in retrospect would have been better to have been rolled out pre launch.

I would also like add that we have never said there would be no vertical progression. We do intent to focus on horizontal but we will have vertical progression moving forward with the focus on zero grind and a very low power curve.

111CG7: Will future content be balanced around exotic or ascended/legendary stats?

***CG8: Will ascended gear drops be obtainable in WvW/Open world content?

Players in WvW will be able to acquire Ascended items within that area of the game soon.

***CG9: Any plans for new town clothing? How about weapon dyes?

We have been discussion this topic for a while. There are lots of things we have brainstormed but are not firmed up on a direction yet. However here are some ideas to wet your appetite or not:

Events and activities related to town clothes Cities as dungeons! Player created events and activities. Non confrontational material gathering for crafting.

These are just a few of the top of head.

111CG10: Can we get karma-purchasable cultural gears, and not just gold purchasable?

***CG11: Can you remove the 'ascended tier' from the game?

111CG12: Why do NPC's (weaponsmiths/armorsmiths) sell crappy gears even after the starting zone?

111CG13: Magic Find Gears. Are there any plans to either disable this in dungeon groups, or to provide its benefits to the party as a whole? Some popular suggestions on the forums are to implement an aggregate MF for parties in dungeons, so that your individual MF is of a benefit to the entire group. As a side benefit.. groups running with universally handi-capped stats would be required to demonstrate more player skill and thus should be rewarded for taking a difficult route for the sake of phat loot.

The Future (Updates/Expansions/Events):

***TF1: It's been previously stated that old content will receive new updates as content is released. What are the plans for updating maps like Orr, where they are seen more of as an “annoyance” then a “challenge”?

111TF2: Will there be an increase to the level cap with new expansions?

111TF3: Will we see more playable races with each expansion?

111TF4: Will we see more playable professions with each expansion? Dragoons, Golemancers, possibly splitting Engineer into an ACTUAL Engineer and a separate/new class called “Commando”? (I bring this up because a majority of the engineers skills are infantry-oriented, and not exactly “engineerish”.

111TF5: Tengu, Kodan and Largos – will/when will they be playable?

111TF6: Cantha/Elona – will/when will they be explorable?

111TF7: Aside from Halloween and Winter-festivities, what other holiday-based events can we expect (st. patricks day? new years? summer solstice?)

111TF8: What steps are being taken to ensure that the lag/bug issues with the last two events does not happen in events moving forward?

111TF9: With the implementation of Fractals. What are the plans to get players back out into the world again?

***TF10: What kinds of plans are there for future 1-time events?

***TF11: Should future events be tailored to suit different timezones, instead of a “one shot don't miss it” approach?

Hi Storm,

Thanks for your question. We are very aware over the concerns raised over the timing and one time nature of the Karka event. Moving forward we will be paying special attention to how we design these events to be as inclusive as possible.

Chris

111TF12: Can we get, or are there plans - for implementing more face/hair/beard styles? Also, why the lack of colorful hair options (even for Asura!) Only Sylvari get blue hair!? Of all the races, Asura seem like they should have been given a rainbow of coloration possibilities as well.

WvW (The Anonymouse Kill-Fest!):

***W1: What's the progress on improving player culling?

***W2: We have 3 maps in the borderlines that are the 99% exact same. Any plans on making these unique from each other to spice things up?

111W3: Money has become the most powerful asset in WvW. Whether a server is dominating or being dominated depends entirely on how much money each side is willing to spend. Are there plans for bringing the core assets of a successful server, mainly; good leadership, skillful players and strategy - back into the limelight?

111W5: With the increasing stats on gears, are there plans on normalizing it for WvW to keep it balanced?

***W6: Is Guild vs. Guild vs. Guild (or some incarnation of this concept) something ANet has considered doing in the future? If so, has there been any movement on it?

SPvP (Autobalance FTL!):

111S1: Are there any future plans for new game modes aside from "capture the point"? Battle royale, free for all, last man standing?

***S2: The people have spoken, we want spectator mode. You guys said before that all it would take to get started on it was enough people to say they wanted it! So how is development of spectator mode coming along?

I understand your frustration regarding questions on PvP but i simply cant answer all the questions. We have a separate PvP team working on that section of the game and we are building toward the functionality you describe currently. There should be more news regarding PvP shortly.

LoreChief: This may be the "State of the Game/SPvP Tournament" that Jonathan Sharp is participating in on 30NOV12.

***S3: Also, where are the leaderboards?

LoreChief: See S2

***S4: Also important! Where's our dueling feature?

LoreChief: See S2

Just to shamelessly throw in some of my own ideas here!

1. Rifles, torches, off-hand swords for Thief
2. Pistols for Elementalist
3. Off-hand sword for Mesmer

4. Hammer and mace for Engineer
5. Off-hand sword for Guardian
6. Rifle and pistols for Ranger
7. Nerf 100 blades. We have people running exclusive full-zerker-warr builds through dungeons like CoF, simply because it's the quickest way to dish out massive amounts of AoE damage and complete CoF path 1 in less than 7 minutes. If this isn't a flag that somethings out of balance I don't know what is!
8. Possible future Engineer skills; Active/Passive "signet" type skills that are actually equipping an overlay of misc golem parts over your character (golem feet, arms, chest, helm). Drill. Laser-saw. Sniper. Make Wrench a turret-exclusive toolkit (I can heavily expand on this if you're interested).

Thanks for reading! I will continue to provide new ideas and concepts as long as someone is interested in hearing them.

Sincerely,
-Nikk