

The Future Proof Podcast 003

Melissa 0:21

Hello and welcome to the Future Proof podcast This is our monthly podcast talking about things we've been working on and what you can look forward to I'm Melissa Avery-Weir.

Gregory 0:32

And I'm Gregory Avery-Weir.

Melissa 0:34

So Greg, anything interesting in the last month?

Gregory 0:38

Yes! So we finally released Rosette Diceless. That's our our role-playing system an actual PDF and soon physical book that is very consensus-based, very improvisational. It's completely diceless. There's no one game master that runs everything--people trade off running things or come up with plot kind of collaboratively among themselves.

Melissa 1:07

You could have a consistent narrator if you wanted.

Gregory 1:09

Yeah, you could but the system is not designed--the system is designed to allow other things. So that came out the 25th, and it had a slightly staggered rollout over different storefronts. We've actually sold some copies, despite not marketing yet, which I think we'll talk about in a bit.

And we've got the paperback almost ready. We had some printer issues. We got those sorted out. Now it's just kind of, like, figuring out with the DriveThruRPG folks when we can go live. That will be print on demand, and if you've already bought the digital version, then we'll give you a discount that is the bundle price, basically that future people will pay for getting both.

Melissa 2:03

We talked a little bit last month about how we're not going print with Amazon to start, I think. Just because it's a whole nother--we have to do a whole nother check through typesetting and some reformatting and stuff like that.

Gregory 2:16

And honestly if we've got the choice of printing with a company, we might as well do it with not Amazon.

Melissa

Right.

Gregory

Like support smaller businesses. Not that not that One Bookshelf is particularly tiny, but it's certainly a more community focused site

Melissa 2:33

Yeah, so Rosetta's out. It's exciting! This is our second game release this year.

Gregory

Yeah, we're picking up the pace.

Melissa

It's this is also a release where we didn't have any idea like what the actual release process would be. So when we did Majesty, we discovered shortly after we pressed the buttons to go live that oh, it could take a whole day for things to show up, right?

Gregory

Yeah, the Majesty of Colors was completely new because it was mobile.

Melissa

Right. We'd never done that. And so you know, that was kind of a struggle, because you're like, "Oh, we're live, wait, no, wait, no one can see it yet. Oh, snap. I woke up at three in the morning to work on this before work."

Gregory

This is a similar thing of like, let's make sure to get our paperback stuff squared away a month in advance. Turns out that wasn't enough.

Melissa

Right.

Gregory

It would have been if everything had gone well.

Melissa 3:25

We even thought we were accounting for two rounds.

Gregory 3:28

Yeah, yep. But turned out things took longer.

Melissa 3:30

Yeah, that was exciting. Well, now we have two new kinds of projects under our belt in addition to sort of standard downloadable and standard web stuff.

Gregory 3:39

So what are we working on now?

Melissa 3:41

So next, and I have been working on updates for Exploit Zero Day. So we've got kind of some not a lot of stuff that's user facing at the moment, sort of infrastructural things that are going to make our lives easier. But, like, we've had some users that haven't had the right amount of in-game currency for a while, because they they were such early testers for us.

Gregory

Exploit Zero Day has been up for a while and in closed alpha. It's our hacking-themed social puzzle game where you're roleplaying hacktivists for social justice.

Melissa

Yeah. And so, you know, we pushed out some little database updates for for fixing in-game currency, you can now use normal emoji.

Gregory 4:31

Yeah. Before, if you put like a smiley in like a puzzle description. It would just end? Halfway through, right?

Melissa 4:41

Right. And this is one of those things, it's like, we started Exploit Zero Day several years ago. And we're using MySQL, which is an older style of database. And so it just didn't include full enough UTF set of characters.

Gregory

Yeah, at the time, we're like, we need to make sure to support Unicode so that we can support, you know, different languages and all all symbols and so on. But didn't even think about emoji. Because at the time, like--

Melissa 5:07

You couldn't do emoji on desktop, or, like, Windows hadn't released their keyboard.

Gregory

It was like, copy paste from somewhere.

Melissa

Right. And so, and we didn't have a lot of mobile users and such. Anyway, we, you know, kind of fix some stuff like that.

But I'm also working on an editor for our jobs system. So I think we talked about this maybe a little a month ago, but jobs are sort of missions given to you in game. They've got a bunch of messages, they've got a bunch of choices that connect those messages where it might be like, you know, "Get back to me when you've, you know, solved the cluster of these puzzles." And so sort of all that glue that connects each other, we have sort of a piecemeal editor for. You can edit bit by bit and glue it all together. And it's a real pain.

Gregory

Yeah, yeah, it makes it far more of a chore than it should be.

Melissa 5:59

Yeah, we spend all our time messing with that tool, instead of actually doing the creative work. So we're like, well, this time, getting back to it, let's just build the tool we need, which is one big editor that lets us do all of this in one place.

That sounds easy. Turns out, it's not. It's one of those things where it's like, okay, we have a lot of connecting pieces of information. And when you start trying to build an editor that can go three levels deep into editing, you're like, "Oh, I have to make sure everything saves correctly up the stack." And, and whatever, it's kind of a solved problem in general, but it's making it work for this particular case. So that's proving a little stubborn, but it's... We're pretty much considering it a blocker for going forward with doing the creative stuff.

Gregory 6:42

Yeah, because we need to be able to do our work smoothly.

Melissa

Right, yes. And we, and even just testing things is so cumbersome, because we're trying to, like flip back and forth between different things. And so it's, that's been that's been fun? It's gonna be rewarding. I'll say that. It's not always been fun.

Gregory 7:06

And someday, if, if Exploit Zero Day takes off, we may even be opening up the Job Editor to players to make stuff.

Melissa 7:14

Yep. It's in our plans to do so.

Gregory 7:18

This one is not yet ready for other people to see. It will be ugly.

Melissa 7:22

It'll be ugly. It doesn't have to have a lot of validation on it, because we know not to put in hot garbage.

Gregory

So yeah, and I guess our release structure in the short term has shifted a bit. We might have talked about this a little last month?

Melissa 7:40

I don't think we did, because we had--sort of the way we've been sort of organizing Exploit Zero Day or our original concepts were to have like, "alpha zero", "alpha one", "alpha two". And these would sort of be large versions--increasingly large versions.

Gregory 7:55

Yeah. And we were imagining that this would be practical. That it wouldn't take too long, but it's been literally years on each version. And that's not cool. So we're working to make it far far narrower and more granular and releasing... Doing a big like, "we have gotten to a milestone" sooner.

Melissa

Right.

Gregory

Our first little mini release is called "Crash Override". We are naming our at least our initial alpha releases after characters from the seminal film Hackers.

Melissa 8:36

Right. And I'm happy to also be naming our first one in honor of Zoe Quinn's excellent work.

Gregory

Yes, yes. I wonder if--was that inspired? It was surely inspired by Hackers.

Melissa

Oh, I assume so.

Gregory

Oh, yeah. So the first release is going to be a lot of stuff that users aren't going to see much of.

Melissa

Right, it was this job editor. There's the the emoji stuff in there. We'll post on the forums about some of those things, but a lot of it is under the hood: silent bugs or silent error tracking and things like that.

Gregory

And we're gonna kind of be stepping up into more and more interesting stuff. Our next release should have some good social features. Stuff that's not particularly dramatic, but will be minor quality of life improvements for folks.

Melissa 9:29

Yeah, and as we're doing those features, we'll also be resuming working on the actual story of Headless Swarm. So we have--if I recall correctly, we have released five of the nine or four of the nine.

Gregory 9:46

One of those two, yes.

Melissa 9:49

--Main sort of jobs or missions of Headless Swarm. So once this Job Editor is in a stable enough state that we can use it consistently, we'll be doing writing and job creation as we're working on features. We don't have at the moment a specific timeline for when releases are going to come out. Like, we're not boxing ourselves in quite yet. We've learned not to do that.

Gregory 10:21

We've got day jobs and we've got other stuff that means that we don't want to promise a specific date and then miss it.

Melissa

Right. But I think some of our blog posts soon are going to be leaning much more towards you know "here's what's going on, here's what we're working on with Exploit Zero Day" instead of less Rosette related stuff.

Gregory

And if you want to check out Exploit Zero Day yourself, it is totally playable right now. If you sign up to our mailing list, which you can get a link to at exploitzeroday.com. We send...

Melissa

Once a month around the end of the month.

Gregory

And you'll get a free alpha key for our existing "Black Echoes" storyline. Then if you want immediate access or if you want to try the new plot that is still coming out you can buy it on the store also at exploitzeroday.com. So what about that Rosetta PR that we're doing? And it's going to be probably getting more sporadic at least on our blog for a bit.

Unknown 11:25

Yeah, so with the book out we are... We're doing things like: there are some conventions coming up later in the year that we're gonna probably put ourselves on the list for running games.

We will be streaming a game September 30, I believe is the day? End of September, whatever that Sunday is. We're gonna be streaming a game over on Twitch on a friend of ours' channel.

Gregory

Our good friend Jim Ryan.

Melissa

Yes, "otherdoc".

Gregory

And one of the reasons why we haven't been doing a lot of very obvious PR is that Gen Con, which is one of the biggest roleplaying-specific--possibly *the* biggest roleplaying-specific--convention of the year was shortly after we were releasing. And it just ended up that way. We try to avoid releases around big conventions, but tend to have bad luck with that.

Melissa

I think I can now name three, because I think Majesty of Colors was right around GDC.

Gregory

Yeah.

Melissa

And then... something that we did before that.

Gregory

Oh, yeah. There was something around Ossuary.

Melissa

Yeah, Ossuary was Thanksgiving. That was great.

Gregory

But we're in a situation now where, to our understanding, we think that roleplaying games tend to have a little less novelty-driven thing. People don't really care about playing the latest roleplaying game the week it comes out. So we've got a little more slack on that. So we're going to start ramping up now that folks are back from Gen Con on reaching out to streamers, reaching out to folks who write about roleplaying games in order to offer to run games for them, to propose review copies, and so on and so forth.

And definitely, if you're listening to this, and you want to try out Rosette Diceless, and you've got a following that you think qualifies you as press or streamer or something like that: get in contact with us. We're happy to give you press copies and answer questions, do interviews or even run a game for you if it's going to be streamed or otherwise posted.

If you're interested in watching such things, we will likely be running the same basic premise for multiple people if we get enough interest. But the way Rosette Diceless works, there's enough improvisation and player choice that even the same premise is likely to turn out very different from group to group. So that's something we're very interested in showing off is the versatility and flexibility of how story works and Rosette Diceless.

Melissa

Yeah, so that's kind of nerve wracking. It's going to involve a fair amount of performance in a way that our other PR work doesn't.

Gregory

Which I think makes us both either nervous or wired beforehand. But we tend to comport ourselves quite well. I think once we're actually on camera or on mic.

Melissa 14:39

We'll see! It's different when you're roleplaying with friends and narrating for them, you know, being a DM for them. As opposed to the internet being in your chat. You know what I mean?

Gregory

Yeah, but we got this.

Melissa

We got this. So you can, as usual, find out stuff at futureproofgames.com. We're on twitter @PlayFutureProof and on Facebook as Future Proof Games.

Gregory

We'd love to hear what you think of the podcast. So far, we haven't gotten an enormous response. We'd love to get to know what works for folks and what doesn't work. So you can comment on our blog on this post or, again, write us/contact us on social media.

Melissa 15:23

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