Innovating the Future of Tabletop Games: The Hybrid Experience

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Introduction

Board games, with their origins dating back over 5000 years to the Fertile Crescent region, have seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years, particularly in the last five years with innovative games driving sales . The COVID-19 pandemic further boosted this trend as people sought ways to connect with friends and family. Digital platforms like D&D Beyond and virtual tabletops (VTTs) such as Roll20 have facilitated hybrid and remote play, providing a valuable alternative to in-person gaming during periods of social distancing. While players generally view the online experience as inferior to in-person play, they appreciate these platforms for enabling them to continue engaging in their hobby amidst challenging circumstances.

Objectives

To investigate a new method of hybrid experience, combining the advantages of digital and physical play.

To Identify issues faced by players when trying to conduct a Tabletop game.

To Propose a new gaming experience for the tabletop gaming community

Methods

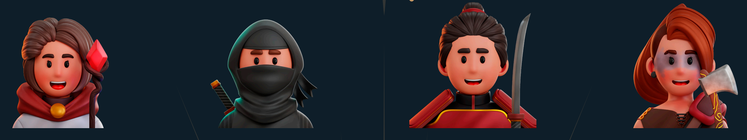
Prepare Interview Questions

Online Interview

Foundry VTT

Sampling

The study of this research will consist of 7 players and game masters who have played at least either online using digital tools, physical use printed maps and tokens or a combination of the both.



Data Collection Methods

Participants will be contacted via phone calls or messages

A set of interview questions will be sent before hand, as well as details on the research

Interviews will be arranged and scheduled according to each participants preferences

Data will be collected via online sessions or face to face meet up

Framework

The study took place over the period of 3 months and employed a inductive approach. The inductive approach allows for the exploration and understanding of the experiences and perceptions of tabletop game players

Specific Observation → Pattern Recognition → General Conclusion

Findings

Physical Games
- More immersive
- Figurines and tokens cumbersome
- Longer preparation time needed

Digital Games
- Less immersive and personal connection
- Digital tools are helpful
- Easier to schedule and arrange logistics

Highly Recommended

Music and Ambience **Automation** **Visual Aid**

Utilizing Foundry VTT in conjunction with physical hardware during a live tabletop game session can significantly enhance the gaming experience. Foundry VTT, a modern, self-hosted, web-based platform, offers a rich set of features for visualizing and managing tabletop games. When combined with physical hardware, such as projectors or interactive screens, it can bring digital elements into the physical world, creating a truly immersive hybrid gaming experience. For instance, digital maps and character tokens can be projected onto the gaming table, providing a dynamic and interactive game environment. Simultaneously, the tactile experience of rolling physical dice or moving physical pieces can be preserved. This combination of digital convenience and physical interaction can enrich the gaming experience, making it more engaging and immersive for all participants

Conclusion

This research study explores the future of tabletop games, specifically the innovative hybrid experience that combines the benefits of digital and physical play. The study highlights the importance of maintaining the improvisational and collaborative nature of tabletop games in this hybrid model, while also considering the role of realism in digital games. The COVID-19 pandemic, despite its challenges, has spurred innovation in the industry, emphasizing the need for adaptable gaming experiences in a socially distanced world. The research identifies key issues in current tabletop gaming, such as games driving excessive spending, serious content, and logistical challenges, and proposes a hybrid gaming solution. This approach aims to address these issues while leveraging the strengths of both digital and physical play, offering a promising direction for the future of tabletop games.

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