

Escaping Scope Creep

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Who Are We



Welcome to Lich-Cat, the newest project from the Hellstow Collective. We are a small team of 6 Students in the Sheridan College, Honors Bachelors of Game Design program!

Lich-Cat is an isometric dungeon crawler in which you use a plethora of spells to defeat your foes. You cast these spells through our Rune Circle system which allows the player to truly feel like they are creating their own unique magic!

Today you are going to be learning how we kept our project safe from the ever-present Scope Creep that plagues our industry!

Scope Creep?

Scope Creep is a major problem affecting all game development teams and all Design Thinkers. Thou there are other words for it the outcome is always the same. Scope Creep is when new ideas keep getting added to a project until the project has become so large that it can no longer be finished, or is completed to a level that is no longer good enough to be released.



Our Scope



It was easy for our team to identify that we were falling into Scope Creep, we had set ourselves fairly lofty goals for the length of our production cycle and yet still we would constantly have new ideas coming up.

This isn't inherently a bad thing, sometimes new ideas will improve on old ones without creating much more work but a team must be cautious not to overdo it with these new ideas.

Stop The Spread

To stop the spread of Scope Creep we broke our ideas into three distinct groups.

First: Features

These would be the core parts of the game, these features were mostly the original ideas of the team and in order for a new idea to be added to the features list it had to have the support of the entire team and a plan for how it could be added without disrupting the flow of current work.

Second: Stretch Goals

These were ideas that a single member of the team had that would greatly affect our speed of production.

Team members understand that their ideas in this category

Stretch Goals

Here lays a list of our current stretch goals for the game. These are features that we would like to implement into the game but due to our lack of understanding of how long 8 months truly is, we cannot say whether or not these features will make it into the game.

1: Player-Created Spells

Players can input their own runes to create their own combined spell types, they create their own spells.

2: More Levels

Add More Levels

3: Board Game Mini-Game

Add a mini-game in the Lair that is played with Rogi and then defeated bosses, this would be a replicated board game or card game filling a role similar to Gwent in The Witcher.

would have to wait until all features were finished before their idea had a chance to be added.

This system is fairly commonplace, but it doesn't feel good for a team member to be told all their ideas are lofty stretch goals that are unlikely to be added as not all ideas are so lofty.

As such we made our third grouping; Squash Goals,

Third: Squash Goals

These are the ideas of a single team member that wouldn't put too much pressure on development to be added.

As such you could think of this as a shortlist to becoming features.

This solution addresses the main problem of scope creep which is that it often overburdens projects with new ideas.

Through this system, we are able to ensure that our ideas are recorded in such a way that if time and resources permit we can add our new ideas.

This also stops us from adding ideas too quickly in a way that would overburden the project.

What I've Learnt

From addressing this problem I have learnt just how important and impactful new ideas can be.

Through this system we have already taken ideas from squash goals into features which will greatly improve our game.

Example Idea:

The implementation of a shop system will add to the rogue-lite nature of the game, while also providing another form of npc which can at times be used as a base for a new enemy type.

Squash Goals

A goal the team will likely get into the game but can drop if need be.

1: Collecting Resources

Add "Spores" that drop on enemy death which can be used to upgrade ritual pieces.

2: Shops

Add shops throughout the levels where "Spores" can be used to purchase Ritual Pieces

3: Variations on all enemies

Make multiple versions of the base enemies, changing: colour/mushroom locations/equipment

4: Basic Named Rituals

When a player inputs a set of specific reflects into the ritual star, they will gain a mega buff stronger than a full star could manage.

5: Spell Modifiers

Add spell modifiers such as wall or explosive



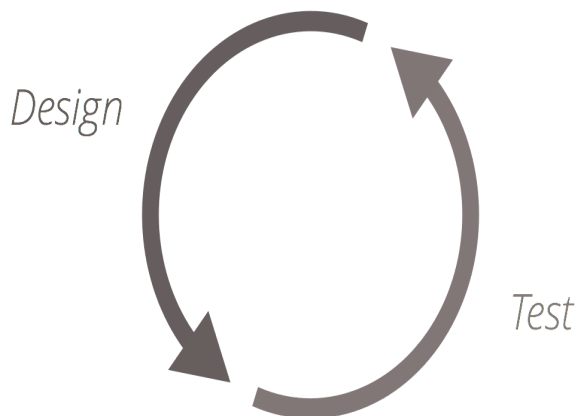
A more complicated spell-casting system which will allow the players more flexibility in the magic, they want to cast.

Both of these ideas also add more than just their base idea:

For the shop, it has given us a collectable resource that can be used to add more distractions to the game to break up the combat and exploration keeping them feeling fresh.

The addition of combinations in spellcasting has also led us to simplify the base spellcasting system, stopping a large amount of user error while drawing spells. Which is a pain point we had been struggling to find a solution to.

Remember



The most important thing to remember with Scope Creep is that new ideas and an expanding scope aren't purely bad things.

It's essential that teams are willing to iterate during the production of the game improving on all aspects of the game.

However, it is equally important to limit these ideas to avoid overburdening the team.

While our solution may not be perfect for every production, every production should attempt to set up some type of system to ensure that the game is improved through production without causing the game to bloat.