Dizzy Returns

Brief on thoughts/direction for a brand new iOS Dizzy game.

Andrew Oliver Sep. 2012

We recently got agreement from Codemasters that we can write and release our own Dizzy games, with no ties, approval etc. to them. This came about because, they wanted to explore the iOS market, and somebody* had presented them with an old Dizzy game, remade for the iOS and Android.

(* Paul Ranson,   originally wrote the game Dizzy:Prince of the Yolkfolk, for us, on various platforms, including the Amiga. He had the original code and graphics and 'ported' them to iOS and then enhanced a little)

They decided it was a quick, cheap easy way to experiment in the market, but realised they couldn't do without our agreement. So we agreed on the condition that we could now go back and also make our own games.

We could choose to do this ourselves, But, we may choose to get it on Kickstarter, as bringing back old games is perfect for Kickstarter, and it starts a real following for the game, and we have a lot of followers that would take a big interest in this. But we'd need a load of cool ideas, to 'Pitch' a Kickstarter.

Dizzy: Prince of the Yolkfolk on iOS and Android. And 'enhanced' port of the original Amiga version of the game.

Our thoughts on this game:-

- We let it go out because it allowed us to negotiate with Codemasters.
- Our old friend, Dizzy programmer, wanted to get paid!
- Being a port, people would take it for a retro remake/port, and as such, it didn't need to move on.
- The graphics look relatively pretty and nice solid style.
- We had a huge list of improvements (including removing the arrows from the hud!), that were agreed to, but never happened!

New Dizzy Game

So, we'd love to make a new game that brings Dizzy back, bigger, bolder than ever before in a brand new adventure on Mobile.

Where do we start?   What do we like, dislike,   what do we keep and what needs to change, to move with the times?

What we keep:-

- At it's heart, Dizzy is about a courageous young explorer, do-gooder,   who solves puzzles and helps people.
- We like the 'Disney-esque' feel of the graphic style.
- We like the settings and land and the kinds of characters he comes across.
- Its about creating a story along the way of the ever opening landscape that he explores.
- It's aimed at 6-12 year olds, boys & girls (tending, more towards girls, possibly)
- The story and puzzles and all based on 'familiarity'.
   - i.e. it's all created in a world of fairy tales, myths and pop-culture.
- Building on themes in 'folklore' eg. We all know that Lepricorns, like gold, and you'd find gold at the end of the rainbow! And that maybe at the end of a yellow brick road.
- Shrek got it just right. – annoying really.   But we were there first, so they cant take issue with us doing this.
- It's a side on 'platform' game.
- We want to stay true to the 'world of Dizzy'   so Zaks castle, Mine, Treehouse etc.
- The general imagery of Fantasy world dizzy cover art showed what we imaged, but didn't actually see much of that in game.

Things we don't like:-
- Shouldnt have modern day items – Shouldnt have had a Stereo or a camera as object. No electronics.
- The current iOS game attempts the on screen joystick – needs something far better.
- The idea of picking up and placing multiple objects and having multiple requests on a mobile game, doesn't really work, because people want smaller sessions and to come back to games. Mid game, and that causes a problem for adventure games.

Things to consider:-
- We could do pinch and stretch zoom, on the screen. So you can see more or less 'map'.
- The game is 'login with facebook' and it knows who of your friends has the game, giving options for posts.
- Games are great if they are multiplayer and viral.   Dizzy was very singular, can it be opened out to more?
   - i.e.   You are playing the game, picking up and taking objects to where they need to go and advancing a story.   But can you 'ask' a friend to find an object for you, or Ask for a clue to what is needed,   or where something needs to go?
   - If you request a clue,   could it link you to a friend (facebook) that has got past that challenge? So you can get the clue from them, in some way?   In turn, you'll get messages from friends asking you for clues about things you've recently done.

- Would it be possible/Sensible   to show all the people you know playing in the same game world. [or at least the top X (8?) of your friends shown, wondering around)
   - If you were all Dizzy that would break things. - ideas, 'ghost'ed' or all have different adventurer hats, or seen as different characters?
   - If you look at Runescape. There's loads of people in the same world, walking around, completing the same quests as you.   If you went to a tree to grab the axe, you'd see the tree up and the axe. Even though another player may have cut down the tree and walked off with the axe in their version. It's just a juggling game of who sees what and what is permanent and what is puzzle related.

- Each 'puzzle' (take item from   A to B, to receive C) could be seen as a quest, and you must be able to do a quest in a typical 'iPhone' gameplay session. The problem with adventure games on mobile, is the fact that you have to remember where you were, what you were doing and where you've left stuff. This all breaks the Dizzy gameplay,   what can we do, to create an adventure game, that tells a story with puzzles that doesn't have this fundamental problem?

- Make it short session gameplay(a few minutes),   i.e. you are given an objective,   you can explore and work out the puzzle, take the object to where it's needed, get 'resolution'   from solving puzzle, or giving the

- Could you tag-team you're way through a story.   So you do one 'quest' as described above.
   - In competitive mode: When the quest is done, you send to a friend, as a challenge (they are asked to complete the same quest in a better time, or in a better way?)   and then they can see if they beat you.
   - In co-op mode.   They see a piece of the story play out (condensed!) they see the objective, they see you tackle it and complete it, and see the resolution. And are then challenged to the next part of the adventure with the next 'quest'

- Other characters/creatures should move around and be doing their own little things, to make the world feel more alive.
- It shouldn't have joystick control, but touch where he should walk to, or touch left and right of him to make him walk left/right : Touch him to talk or pickup/put down : Above or below him, to make him jump.
- It could have 'games' [challenges] within the environment. (think bubble dizzy and down the rapids)
- Maybe games into screen, ala. Temple Run? But Dizzy in a Minecart? Or would this be better to keep side on, and a minecart section be more like Canabalt.

- They talk each other via speech bubbles and/or voices. How would other parts of the story play out?

- Art style:
  - It's a side on platformer. The graphics look nice'ish. But can it be moved on? I think the characters should be 3D characters.
  - I think the 3 flat parallax panes are too flat. Maybe we can build 3D levels (think Little Big Planet, or Rayman Origins)

Object finding:
There must be an element of finding the object, and solving the puzzle. BUT, unlike the old, lets not make it bloody obvious and just a case of walking back and forth. And we need a help system (via talking to characters) that will help you if you cant solve the puzzle.
i.e. In old. "Can you find a find a knife to cut this rope?"
   In new, "This is tied, and I just cant budge it"
   The knife doesn't need to be a challenge to find, but you have to realise it's the object that is needed.
   If you went back to the character, more than X minutes later, he may say, "Can you find something sharp to cut the rope with"
   If you went back a further X minutes he may say " I'm sure there must be a knife of something that you can find".

Challenges should be obvious, but often involve many multiple steps to get to resolution. And where possible, you think you have the answer, but are then stopped, by another challenge, that must be solved, so they start chaining up.
We need a 'remember?' feature, or something. So people can come back to a game, mid play and be able to pick it up mid challenges and know what they were doing easily. This is fundamentally breaking 'adventure' games on iOS. – Need a creative solution for this.