

The current state of the Gryphonheart Empire is very little activity, if any at all. At the start there were plenty of activity, but that has faded. This report discusses some of the reasons why this happened and as well discusses some options and solutions to get it back on track.

1. The reasons to fading activity outcome

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to find and discuss the reasons to the falling activity level. This is important, since it is necessary to know the problems in details in order to solve them.

1.2 Observed changes

Before the start the activity where only shown trough the activity level at the forum. That itself have been rising and falling. At the time where blizzard promoted the project at the front of their community page, the activity rise extremely (10 new members each hour). However this faded after the news interest where gone.

Regarding the project itself, then it followed the same curve in the beginning. When rumors where that the project should start on the Sha'tar server, then a few of the members made characters there. The activity rise slowly. At the time where a starting date where officially announced then the activity exploded. After the opening event the member amount slowly faded, until this day, where it have reached a very low amount of active members. In addition then the percentage of the people in the OOC channel who where actually RPing did fall as well.

1.3 The reasons to the development

There is no single answer to why this fall of activity happened, but there are several possibilities. It is most likely a mix of all of them.

News interest has done its part. By analyzing both the forum activity and the in game activity, then it is clear that both have been following news interest a bit. After the opening event some members seems to have left, more or less.

The project where started in the middle of the official holiday. That results people in being away for one or more weeks. Some members where away when it started and other where away in the weeks after. The holiday also results in some members being able to be even more online.

In the first week the behavior of most people where clear. In the evening there where a clear picture of people standing around in Ambermill, in groups and talking. Most of them without direct purpose, but to act out their character. That is normal reaction, especially for roleplayers. If you place several of them at a isolated place without a goal, then they will just start talking to kill time. In this way one can critically say that the project had turned into one large tavern. This "tavern" RP is widely accessible over all RP server and communities. Therefore it will most likely not be interesting in the long run for most of the involved. Without interesting things to do then people, who are not yet socially bound to many others in the project, would most likely leave and go back to their original communities.

The Gryphonheart empires location isolates it from the existing community and infrastructure. This gives many, both good and bad results. The long distance to travel in order to get to the RP might keep some from doing it in shorter playing sessions. As well with low activity then people might not travel to the empire, since there is most likely not activity to be found. That leaves even more of the community who are online, to questing and leveling etc.

1.4 Conclusion

The current state of the empire is a result of several problems combined.

2. Solutions for the problems.

2.1 Purpose

On basic of the analysis done over the problem with the falling activity, there can be developed some solutions. The causes of the problem can roughly be divided into the following four:

- 1) Fading news interest.
- 2) Members on holiday.
- 3) Tavern RP.
- 4) Desolate location.

The purpose of this section is to develop solutions for each of the four sub-problems.

2.2 Solution ideas for "Fading news interest"

The phenomenon itself is not easily to change. Therefore a solution to this is either a) Don't letting "news interest" happen at all, or b) don't let it fade. Since solution a will include not bringing anything new then it will not be a good solution. Then if it shall not be able to fade, then it would be changing the phenomenon. A realistic solution could be to create new interesting features often and by that way have some new and interesting most of the time. The problem with it is that it requires a lot of work. Therefore there should be worked out a balance in the frequency of new features, in other to both keep interest from the members and also not giving too much work.

2.3 Solution ideas for "Members on holiday"

This problem will occur mainly in the summertime. It is in itself more or less unavoidable. The objective should then be not to avoid the problem, but lower the damage the problem causes. This could be done by giving the present members some activities to keep them entertained. It will mainly mean to keep the amount of new activities and events on the same level as when it is not holiday.

2.4 Solution ideas for "Tavern RP"

As mentioned then "tavern RP" occur because the roleplayers does not have anything planned to do. They are so to say bored. This casual RP is what they can get on any realm, so at the point where few are tired to the new community socially yet, then they would rather go back to their old community. To avoid all this then it is necessary to make activities for the members. The following are a list of some roughly divided RP types.

1) Conflict RP

This can be good guys against bad guys, Cobs against robbers or random people against demons. It is seen often out over the RP realms. It is an interesting RP with much of fun for the key members. However, it can be difficult to make it fun for all. Another downside is that if it occurs to much then some will be tired of it. (Personally then I am very tired of it after one year of leading a guard force). It should be kept in moderate amount.

2) Tavern RP

As mentioned in the problem description, then this RP occur when people does not have anything else to do. It gives the players a good option to act out their characters behavior. It can be good, but it should only occur between the other RP types, since it is not enough as main RP theme.

3) Society RP

A less spread out RP method is the society RP. It is basically roleplaying how a medieval society where. The game itself focuses on the heroes of medieval times. This is of cause interesting, but unrealistic. A world where non-heroes are a minority can be a bit unrealistic for someone to roleplay in. Creating society RP is mainly directed to those roleplayers who want things realistic. However, they might not be the only ones interested. Nothing is fun if you get too much of it, so maybe the simpler non-heroic roleplaying that a medieval society offers could be fun for some who wants a change.

Society RP in details can consist of many things. It reflects a medieval life and therefore mainly work related RP. That itself changes a lot from character to character, since there are many different occupations in a medieval society. However, it is not so interesting if everybody does work related RP isolated from each other. In medieval times each man where specialized in doing one thing only, being farming, blacksmithing, baking etc. Therefore the community where brought together by trading. Markets were the natural center of the society. With those markets, and gathered community, comes entertainment etc. In this way the most basic in society RP is trade.

A good solution for a RP theme could be to base the main part of it on the society RP and then will in with conflict and tavern RP. The advantage of the solution is that it offers many interesting aspects for everyone and that society RP is not offered in large scale on any other RP servers.

2.5 Solution ideas for "Desolate location"

The desolate location of the empire where chosen to get a distance to people who did not want to take part of the empire RP. The downside of the decision is the travel time. An easy solution could be for the members to bind their heartstones in the South Shore inn, which is the one closest located. A more sophisticated solution could be to use warlocks to summon people. With the current size of the empire, it has been observed that there is not always a warlock present inside the empire. It can as well become

annoying for the warlocks who want to enjoy a session of RP, to now and then interrupt their activities in order to summon others.

Another solution could be to have a warlock and two helpers (all based on trial accounts) standing afk ready to summon. This would include some kind of warning system to the person who is operating the computer, knowing that someone wants a summon. A trial account has limits, so it would require a warlock to level to level 20 often. It could be done with only the helpers being on trial accounts, but that would include "sacrificing" an account. However, further research in the limits of trial characters are necessary.

2.6 Conclusion

There have been found suitable solutions to all four problems. The solutions got the need of activities in common. Therefore most of the problems can be solved by getting more activity. The solution to the RP theme (3) can bring more activity. Therefore the further report will concentrate in the development of the society RP.

3. Society RP

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to develop ideas for the society themed roleplaying. It is as well the purpose to discuss a practical implementation of these ideas and the problems related to it.

3.2 Ideas for society RP

As mentioned earlier, the trade is an important part of the society RP. In medieval times trading did mainly take place on marketplaces or similar central public places. The trades were mainly between tradesmen and local citizens. They were also a bit between the citizens. Having the trade gathered together gave a better option to get costumers and it did as well create competition between the traders. An idea to connect this to roleplaying could be to make a market. Such requires many active people and therefore it could, as a start, be made as a weekly event (dependent on the amount of people).

A market could at some point also bring entertainment with it, since there are many people gathered. It could be any kind of entertainer, from actors to magician.

Another thing that had its position in medieval times was superstition and by that the connected religion. The church was important for the medieval people and it does as well have a central position in the Warcarf universe. Roleplaying in connection to the religion could as well be a part of the society RP.

Since the empire is fairly new, then it could be fitting for the community to perform some work together to get the empire further build up. That could be everything from resource gathering, to subduing of threats towards the people.

For the rest of the time it would mainly be hard work to produce wares in a medieval society. This can only be realized in game if it is somehow entertaining to roleplay or do. The everyday work depends much on what each player's character got as occupation. Hunters will use time hunting in small groups. Farmers will be working at the farm and in the fields. Smiths and other craftsmen will be preparing wares. Fishermen will be fishing and traders will be gathering exotic goods around the world.

3.3 Practical implementation and problems

A practical way to implement the trade could, as mentioned, be to make a market day e.g. each week. The frequency and length of such markets day could vary dependent on the amount of active members. The main activity on such event would be for each individual to trade something. The game economy is driven by the players constant renewing of equipment, as they level. Most roleplayers does not level much, or at least not much while they roleplay. The Empire will for that reason not have a constant need of new equipment. There is therefore a need of some other kind wares to trade. (See the following section for further discussion of ideas for wares and economy).

Implementation of entertainment and its likes is not complicated. However, it requires some people present at the market, in order to have an audience. The amount of entertainers can then easily be scaled depending on the amount of people in total.

Services and similar events regarding religion are rather easy to implement. However there might be some trouble with the amount of people attending it or the amount of people actually believing in it IC. It can be

a challenge for those who choose to be priests to get the citizens to believe in the light as religion. That can be done in many ways, just like missionaries does.

Regarding the work, then it is, as mentioned, necessary to make it fun for the players. Most of this work should be, if possible, done in groups, so people can roleplay with each other. Some of it can also be done as events, e.g. having a large harvest event for farmers or hunting trip for hunters. However it might be necessary to make the work more interesting.

3.4 Conclusion

Society RP can be implemented by adding marked days, church services and work events. However it is necessary to develop some details regarding trades / wares and regarding work.

4. Wares and economy

4.1 Purpose

Since the game economy in its normal way do not create a large need of trade within the empire, then it is necessary to develop or find alternative needs, that can create a basis for trade.

4.2 Necessary wares

Since the game is focused on combat, then the items in game does as well. There are in that way not focus some wares that would have been very important in a realistic society. This following is a prioritized list of wares that could be necessary in a realistic medieval society (most important wares highest).

- Food
- Water
- Clothing
- Pottery
- Ale / Wine
- Tools / Weapons
- Furniture
- Oil
- Luxury (sculptures, art)

The list is just some of the groups of wares in a medieval society. Most of these wares is not necessary in the game mechanical. Food and water is in the game for regeneration of health and mana. Ale is implemented is implemented in a realistic way and is not connected to the combat part of the game though. Clothing is accessible as armor and can be produced by a few professions.

4.3 Realistic need of wares

Most of the wares are, as mentioned, not a necessity for a player through the game mechanical. The player will therefore not have a reason to buy wares without roleplaying a consumption (e.g. eating). This is a problem, since no consume will not give any need of trade on long terms. It is therefore necessary to find a solution that creates consumption.

4.4 Production of wares

A lot of the wares on the list is implemented in the game as items. However, they can only be found through combat and in most cases far from the empire. It will in the way not be easy for most players to gain the items they would produce by their occupation. In addition then many non combat related items will not be in the game (e.g. pottery). It is necessary to find a solution that can somehow include non combat related items.

4.5 Money and value

In the game economy the income for a standard player rises extremely as they level up. A given amount of money can by that be worth a very large fortune for a low level and be next to nothing for a high level. The gap is very wide and therefore creates a large inflation. In relation to the empire then it will mean that low level roleplayers will have to work hard to get money to buy a certain ware, while a higher level can buy it without blinking. It creates a lower and higher class, but the difference between classes might be too high. It is therefore needed to have a more roleplaying friendly economy.

4.6 Conclusion

There are several problems regarding wares and economy. Those solve those problems there are the following requirements:

1. There shall be created a solution with a continues need of wares

2. There shall be options to create non combat related items.
3. There shall be a more roleplaying friendly economy system.

5. Technical solution

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of this section is to discuss solutions that can fill the requirements mentioned in 4.6.

5.2 Addon solution

The technical limitation in use of addon is that it can only modify the UI (user interface) part of the game. It cannot add or change things in the game mechanical. However, it can add additional information and show it in the same way as the normal user interface. E.g. showing reputation from user made factions.

A solution to the above mentioned requirements could be to develop a separate item system for the roleplaying project. This would give players the option to create items of their own liking. This could also be used to create a more non combat related item industry by adding some roleplaying orientated professions. Examples on that could be a brewmaster or farmer.

5.3 Blizzard

Another solution could be to contact blizzard and get them to implement the necessary changes in the game. This, however, might affect their already implemented economy system.

5.4 Find another game

There exist many different MMORPGs and it is very likely to find another game that have a game mechanical that suits the RP project more. However, this is a bad solution since it will split up the existing community.

5.5 Choice of solution

To fill the requirements, the addon solutions might be the best one. The down side of it is that it requires some work to implement. It will as well require some time to analyse and develop the economy system in order to get a satisfying result that will give a healthy economy for the project.

6. Further development

As mentioned then it is necessary to develop and discuss the details of a economy systems, that can result in good trades and healthy economy for the project. Some of the topics that need to be developed further are:

- A way to make a profession system that gives as much trade between the professions as possible, without it being too hard to make progress
- A way to let most final products be consumable, in order to ensure a need of the wares in the long run
- A decision about how what limitations user made items should have so they will not infect on the empire item economy.
- A decision about if the empire should have their own money to ensure a less level based inflation.
- More to follow...

Note: At this point the further development and documentation have been halted, while it is getting feedback from the forums.