TRAVIAN: LEGENDS ON TOUR 2018

GAME DESIGN WORKSHOP NOTES

TOPIC: NPC KILLS SHOULD GIVE 50% OFF POINTS/OFF POINTS IN GENERAL

- Players are attacking Natar troops for off points, ignoring real players. Is this the behavior we want to encourage?
- The goal is to promote more action between players. This is a war game.
- Discussion turned to focus on whether it's possible to prevent artificial off-points, that players get by killing Natars / own troops / friendly troops. This is unfair, especially on Tournament/Finals because of the prize rewards.
    - If we don't count killing own troops, players who want to boost will just team up with someone else and do it anyway. This suggested change will not solve anything, especially not on Tournament servers.

- Discussed several approaches to solve this issue. Including:
    - Giving players off points only with alliances they are "at war" with
        - - makes the game more complex rather than strict
        - - more "cosmetic" looks like a solution, but how effective is this really?
    - Giving off points for defeated troop's combat value/defensive value
        - Con: locate and kill scout hub is risky. Reducing points against scouts contradicts intention to go more PvP
    - Make it harder to kill Natars? Scale with server population
        - Con: cuts out smaller sized alliances
    - Only grant off points for the first attack on Natar owned Artifact/WW villages
        - Con: makes it more complex. Can also be abused by sending one fast unit beforehand to deny off points.

Conclusion:

TG:

- Understand the issue and the concerns surrounding this, especially for Tournament servers.
- But even after extensive discussion with the group an ideal solution couldn't be found and accepted. There is actually no easy solution. Though it remains on our table. Maybe we find some useful adjustments (unlikely) for Tournament servers only.
- As for any change, we want to solve a problem, not to add a patch/fix which can be circumvented and by that, nothing changes for the players

TOPIC: CAN ONLY RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM ALLIANCE/CONFED

- Players express the several issues experienced with reinforcements/supplies from foreign alliances including:
    o Travian Black Markets/Selling resources/troops for real money
    o Unexpected huge spikers with troops
    o Bots supplying resources

- The Group discussed the potential for restriction of troop supply/resources to only come from alliance members/ confederacies members. Overall, the feature received mixed reviews but willing to give it a try.

    Points mentioned include:

    o WW exception/Artefact exception
    o No "snowball" confederacies
    o Pushing protection needs to be addressed with this rule
    o This rule will make it harder for multiaccounts
    o One additional goal is to remove hidden pushing accounts
    o Alliance size should be kept as it is, 60 members, to promote team focused gameplay.
    o What would be the limit of confederacies? Stick to 3 or based on server population?
        ▪ Artefact for more confederacy slots was welcomed by the players.
        ▪ Different domains have different populations, Japan/Turkey for example. Needs to be taken into consideration. One system might not fit every domain.
    o We don't want to encourage Alliance hopping from this mechanic.
        ▪ Cooldown period
        ▪ Returning defense complications
        ▪ Trade routes complications

Conclusion:

TG:

- We understand the current issues around this area of the game. Acknowledge that this is a feature has potential may solve many issues.
- Concerns of a split opinion within the community remained even after discussions.
- The amount of 60 players per alliance and additional 3 alliances to form one confederacy was "strongly" rejected by some Tournament representatives. They want to play with 1000-player confederacies. For them, this makes the Tournament appealing. Regular Travian Legends players, both 1x and 3x speed players, couldn't agree at all.
- Suggestion to make alliance maximum size scale dependent on the player amount was rejected by TG. This would be hard to explain + it would encourage fake registrations to increase member size.
- On the forums, this feature was seen as an attempt to reduce/eliminate "Spy" accounts. It´s not. We see "Spy" accounts, or to be more precise here, "Traitors" as part of Travian diplomacy and strategy. We have no intention to create features to limit/eliminate those.
- We see another benefit with this idea: Training of new players.
    o They would be part of the same alliance/confed.

- o Smaller alliances/confederacies could fill up their remaining space with a trainee alliance
- o Instead of telling new players "you can be my support. Build def. But no, you won't be part of us", this system would encourage transparency (hidden push accounts would be difficult) and it gets new players better involved in alliance gameplay
- We will further discuss feature and move forward with topic internally. This includes the difficulties mentioned above (Alliance change -> cooldown, returning reinforcements, Trade Routes, etc.) As this feature would change the meta game tremendously, we will double check with the community before we introduce such a change on any regular Travian Legends server!

MOBILE APP

- The group raised the question of a Mobile APP for Travian Legends (at least 2 Apps, one for Android and one for IOS)
- Before any bigger discussion could start, the Product Owner gave a 5-minute explanation of why APPs are not on our Agenda in the near future. The main point was:
Technical reasons – even if we would start now, with the current code structure, it would take 1-2 year to develop those, next to our maintenance work.
  - o "But there are some APPs already on the market" was a remark from one player. "Yes, there are a so-called-apps" was the answer. "But in fact, all of them are data crawlers. If we would do the same and all players would use it, our servers will suffer from high load and all players, doesn't matter if they access via mobile or desktop, the servers will lag. To prevent this, a real mobile app needs to use API´s. And currently, we cannot provide API´s for all features/core systems."

Conclusion:

- No plans to develop an app, due to technical limitations.
- Plan is to refactor the existing old code base, step by step. This refactoring made the new combat simulator possible. Once the code has been refactored completely, a mobile app will be considered.
- Many bugs have been caused by the refactoring, this was expected and should have been communicated better to the players beforehand.
- In the meantime, we will continue to make the game more mobile friendly.
  - o Every feature/page which we refactor will also take mobile devices into consideration. This might be special popups, rescaling of popups or buttons, adjusting text sizes etc. It won't be perfect, but more usable than before.

- The group shared their appreciation for the smaller map (401x401) on Fire and Sand and New Years Special server. They want to have reduced map sizes globally
    - Discussed several sizes and agreed that there is no perfect size that fits all domains
    - Suggestion: one unique map size for each domain depending on their total player numbers
        - TG: This would create a huge additional workload internally. And it would open the door for more bugs and human errors (wrong configuration used for server start). We want more stable servers, not potentially increase the amount of human errors…
- Idea of a dynamic map was mentioned, similar to Travian Kingdoms
    - TG: we can do it like Kingdoms, but then we lose our Donut map. There won't be any "leap one more hex left and appear on the right side of the map" anymore.
        - Unclear if this would be an appreciated change. It will change a lot of tactics
        - This will increase distances for players on the opposite map. Now they are only a few map tiles away, with this change it could be several hundred tiles. This basically contradicts the "main goal" of a reduced map size which is "reduce open range between players" …
    - TG: Besides that, a dynamic map would increase randomness. Imagine you settled close to the border few hours ago. Then the map expands and an 15c with 150% would appear …. Uncool……

Conclusion:

TG:

- Glad to hear the appreciation for the smaller map. It was suggested on several forum years back, but it took us really long to implement this with our old code base. Getting this finally solved without bugs and hearing the appreciation is very pleasant!
- We want to reduce the map size for all Travian Legends servers (with a few exceptions) but couldn't find the right size yet. We don't want to significantly increase the workload for our technical department and we don't want to open the door for human mistakes even more (wrong configuration file used). We need to keep the large map for our big countries. 501x501 would be a size where all other countries would fit in. But 501x501 is still too big for smaller domains. Using 3 different sizes (large/medium/small) is for sure an option, but increases workload and error chance compared to large/others.
Additionally, fake-bot accounts will fill up the free space. If we pick a too small size, we could end up in closing the server before all real players could join…
Anyway, we will implement this more sooner than later!

- Birthday Special presentation
    - o The group was very surprised by the main feature. No one saw this one coming.
    - o The first statement after the presentation was one of shock followed by silence. You could see from their faces the attempts to realize what they just heard and all the strategies undoubtedly flooding their minds for the upcoming Birthday Special 2018. A storm of questions broke the silence, accompanied by smirks.
    - o The feature set of our Birthday Special 2018 is still a secret. The group is not allowed to share any details. We will share all details in July, so everyone is able to adapt their strategies before the first server starts in early September 2018.

- Rework of our Statistic pages "Plus" and "General":
    - o The group liked the new visuals and the data shown
    - o Some players suggested to include weekly stats
    - o The alliance leaders wanted to have access to those stats (Getter Tool "light"). We will think about this for further iterations.

- Combat simulator
    - o Design team presented the new, soon to come combat simulator (by now, its already live on our PTR on Travian International)
    - o Players wish to have "resources lost" calculation in the simulator
        - ▪ We will implement this later
    - o Players wanted to have the feature "apply losses for next calculation"
        - ▪ We will implement this later
    - o The question "How much gold will this new combat simulator cost?" was answered with: "Nothing, it's for free".

- Rework of our Trade Routes feature:
    - o The group really liked the new visuals
    - o The group were surprised, that we already included the "most wished" improvements for the trade routes, without the need to hint us on those
    - o Unfortunately, the rework is more work than expected. The implementation is on hold. We will most likely continue to work on it after our Birthday Special release in mid-September.

- Concepts on the new design of the messaging system was shown:
    - o The group agreed that a global chat is not needed. Players use Skype or similar tools anyway.
    - o Some players think that the new layout/system will improve the messaging on mobile devices
    - o The rework of the messaging system is scheduled for 2019

- Players asked about removing hero items and were surprised to hear, that in general, the community wanted Heroes and the Auctions to remain. Travian did several surveys during our Birthday Special server Rise of Alliances (RoA), raising exactly that question.

- "Fast start" was a wish for the next annual special. We discussed a lot about the last pushing protection adjustments in our Travian Legends: RoA version and the high amount of huff towards the pushing protection system. We discussed a "fast start" without any adjustments for the pushing protection, but agreed, that this will grant offenders too much of an advantage.

- Some players brought the suggestion of a 2x and some 5x speed server versions from their communities. We see the appeal of 2x and 5x versions. But we don't want to split the players even more. We often read in forums, that we should reduce the number of server starts per year. Other communities want more server starts. The vast majority of domains gets a new server every 45-60 days. We did a couple of tests during the last years, varying the frequency of new servers. It turned out that for our game, Travian Legends, the perfect frequency is 45-60 days. With that frequency, the most of our new players will stay, while our experienced players get the chance to surrender a round and start over without a long waiting period.

- Some communities had the idea of "Recycle Troops", similar to "Space games". After a combat, debris can be harvested to regain some resources. We don't see much of a benefit here. Especially in the late game, resources are not a limiting factor to build up troops.

- Some communities are afraid, that their domain might get shut down or get merged with another domain. Other communities shared their wish to merge with others to increase the number of players per server.
    o That's exactly the challenge… in general, we are open to merging domains/communities. On the other hand, we are very careful and want to make sure that the vast majority of players on both domains agree.
    o For very small domain, we might enforce a shut down or merge without asking
    o Language is the most challenging aspect according to some players. Even if we provide the native languages in a merged domain, the communication could still suffer. Nevertheless, the group agreed, that the native languages should be provided on merged domains. This should include support staff and Multihunters if possible.

- FreakZz from Germany, a participant of the Legends on Tour event shared a concept to change the end game of regular Travian Legends servers. This topic was not discussed with the group. Key features of the version:
    o Wonder of the World should spawn later in the game on random positions
    o Remove grey area
    o Besides the construction plans, the alliance needs to control a certain area around the WoW to build up the levels
- We contacted Arausium from the Italian community. Arausium was pretty upset that the Italian representatives did not push the same topic. After contacting Arausium, we got a concept via email. Unfortunately, the concepts shared only one similarity: "Wonder of the World should spawn later in the game on random positions".

- Obviously, there is no "one way to please them all". But we will keep this topic on our list