

You Were Told to Lose Money By Making Games, and You Actually Did It?

Chapter 65: Revising Parts of the Game

After seeing Brian May and the others off, everyone at Morning Star Games threw themselves into the intense development of the game.

"Don't write every single branching dialogue yourselves," Chen Xu reminded Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu.

"Just lay out the outline for the branching paths, and you two can handle the review afterward."

The scripts for the game's major endings were already more than halfway complete.

Overall, the main storyline still followed the themes of the original Detroit: Become Human.

However, Chen Xu wasn't simply copying the original game scene for scene.

For example, Markus's four endings.

Two of them—the nuclear "peace" ending and the self-sacrifice ending—were logically sound.

The peaceful ending achieved through public support also made sense in principle.

But the original game's presentation where everything was ultimately resolved by singing or Markus kissing North felt rather ridiculous from a storytelling perspective.

So Chen Xu, together with Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu, made several revisions.

Instead of having Markus, North, and the remaining androids completely surrounded with no hope of escape, the revised version would have them retreat to a ship while still retaining some ability to fight back—for example, with a hidden dirty bomb still available.

This also tied into the earlier peaceful route.

Because the androids genuinely wished to avoid causing greater bloodshed, Markus would voluntarily step forward.

If, throughout the earlier chapters, the player had consistently chosen peaceful actions while controlling Markus, public opinion would support the androids, preventing war.

If not, stepping forward would instead lead to a bad ending, with the android revolution crushed.

Beyond that, Chen Xu also revised many smaller branching paths throughout the game.

As for whether making these changes might produce unforeseen consequences...

He didn't care very much.

Whether sales went up or down didn't really matter.

After all, the system would cover his losses.

If he couldn't afford a riverside apartment after this settlement, he'd just try again next time.

"Don't worry, Brother Xu. This part won't take long," Xiu Fu said.

"But Brother Xu," Gong Qi asked, "how should we use these branching side stories to stir the players' emotions?"

Some branching storylines directly affected the ending.

Many more didn't change the ending itself but instead adjusted the likelihood of different outcomes.

For example, in Connor's first hostage scenario, if the player returned the fish that had jumped out of its tank to the water and saved the wounded police officer...

While those actions wouldn't directly change the ending, they would increase the likelihood of Connor awakening his humanity later in the story.

So while these branching side events might not seem especially important, they couldn't be reduced to meaningless filler quests like unclogging toilets.

Chen Xu smiled.

"Just make more of the choices resemble trolley problems—moral dilemmas."

For branching side content, especially within a web-like narrative structure, this was practically a universal solution.

In his previous life, CD Projekt Red had been masters of this approach.

The Witcher 3 and Cyberpunk 2077 had employed it especially well.

"You can call that studio a fraud if you want. You can criticize their poor optimization or say they released unfinished games."

"But when it comes to quest design—especially side quests—they're absolutely among the best in the industry."

"So that's how it works!"

Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu suddenly understood.

In other words, they need to torment the players emotionally.

Create one route where every NPC survives, then, depending on the player's branching choices, have either major or minor NPCs die at critical moments.

Just like Sekiro's Immortal Severance and Return to Humanity endings.

Either the Divine Heir or Wolf had to die, leaving players with lingering regret.

At that moment, the two of them felt as though a long-locked door deep within their hearts had slowly swung open.

As expected Brother Xu!

You'd never learn lessons like this in school.

The two sighed with admiration before leaving the office, completely satisfied.

Watching them walk away, Chen Xu leaned back in his chair and let out a long breath.

Another task finished.

He probably wouldn't have to personally oversee every detail of the story anymore.

He then picked up his phone and checked the messages Eiji and Shinji had sent him.

The acquisition of the motion-capture department had also been finalized.

Although he felt a little sorry for Atsushi, the man simply hadn't had another choice.

They hadn't really been able to "cooperate" this time.

But that was fine.

Next time, for sure.

. . .

June 6

The art outsourcing had been assigned to an overseas studio.

Because of that, Chen Xu specifically established two review teams to alternate reviewing every asset.

The goal was to prevent any undesirable content from slipping into the game.

Development of Detroit was progressing at full speed.

Meanwhile, some information inevitably leaked.

After all, hiring actors for facial motion capture, purchasing Hyakukin Studio's motion-capture department, and outsourcing artwork overseas were hardly small moves.

Several media outlets managed to obtain information through various channels.

They learned that Morning Star Games had acquired Hyakukin Studio's motion-capture department and appeared to be developing a brand-new title.

Fortunately, because the project hadn't yet been trademarked under its official name, the game's title itself remained secret.

Even so, thanks to Sekiro's success, both gaming media and players became extremely curious about Morning Star Games' mysterious new project.

Discussion spread rapidly.

Inside his office, Chen Xu placed a checkmark on the latest script submitted by Xiao Dao and Xiu Fu.

He then opened the collection of media reports Zhou Ran had compiled.

[Insider Claims Morning Star Games Has Acquired Hyakukin Studio's Motion-Capture Division; A Brand-New AAA Title Reportedly in Development]

[Is Sekiro 2 Coming? What Surprise Will Morning Star Games Deliver This Time?]

[A Rational Analysis of Sekiro 2's Possible Setting and Story]

He continued scrolling through the hottest discussions on gaming forums.

"It's finally happening! Sekiro 2!"

"I've already gotten tired of doing Double Difficulty, NG+8. The new game is finally coming?"

"But Hyakukin isn't helping this time. Won't the combat system end up terrible?"

"No way. Didn't Morning Star buy Hyakukin's motion-capture department?"

"To be fair, the mocap department isn't responsible for designing combat systems."

"Don't be so pessimistic. Remember when Sekiro first launched? Everyone was trashing it and demanding an easy mode. Look how that turned out."

"Exactly! Just be excited!"

Reading through the comments, the smile on Chen Xu's face grew wider and wider.

It was almost as if he could see the system radiating golden coins.

Excellent.

The more excited they are, the better.

Right now, everyone believed they were making Sekiro 2.

Then, when the game was finally revealed, they'd discover it wasn't anything like what they'd imagined.

Their expectations would collapse instantly.

And wouldn't that naturally affect launch sales?

I'm getting better and better at farming gold from the system.

Feeling completely satisfied, Chen Xu closed the forum and stood up.

As soon as he stepped out of his office, he spotted Zhou Ran wearing an expression bordering on despair.

Walking over for a closer look—

"Oh..."

She was fighting Owl (Father) in Sekiro.

The boss's posture gauge was only two deflections away from breaking.

Fortunately...

No... unfortunately.

Chen Xu couldn't help feeling sorry for her.

"Try using thrust attacks against Owl. They're really effective," Chen Xu whispered.

"President Chen!"

Hearing that, Zhou Ran put on an exaggerated expression of mock annoyance.

Did he really think she was still the clueless beginner she used to be?

Owl is weak to thrust attacks?

Yeah, right.

As if I'd fall for that.

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For context: This is an inside joke among *Sekiro* players. Owl (Father) can perform a devastating Mikiri Counter against the player's thrust attacks, making thrusting at him one of the worst ideas in the fight. Chen Xu is deliberately trying to trick Zhou Ran into getting punished.