

Digital Product Development Journal: *First Build*

Presented by Nix Pendergast
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Introduction

The digital project idea that is being developed is a **Fantasy Character Creator Toolkit**. This product is a tool intended for the users to design their own fantasy characters.

Progress Summary

So far, I have been able to create a basic yet functional prototype. I plan to have male and female bodies in the future. To simplify things for this prototype, I focused on the female bodies.

I also want to add more options for all the pieces. This selection was to get things started.

If I had to put a percentage of how close to a final product this product is, I would say probably 35% finished. The current prototype will not be the last and there's still plenty to add to it.

How it Works:

The user will choose each character parts the want, then scale them onto the selected body to build the character.

Pieces with color will have a part A with the line art as a vector layer, and a part B with the color as a raster layer. The user can recolor part B without any degradation to image.



A character I made using the finished prototype

Toolset & Workflow

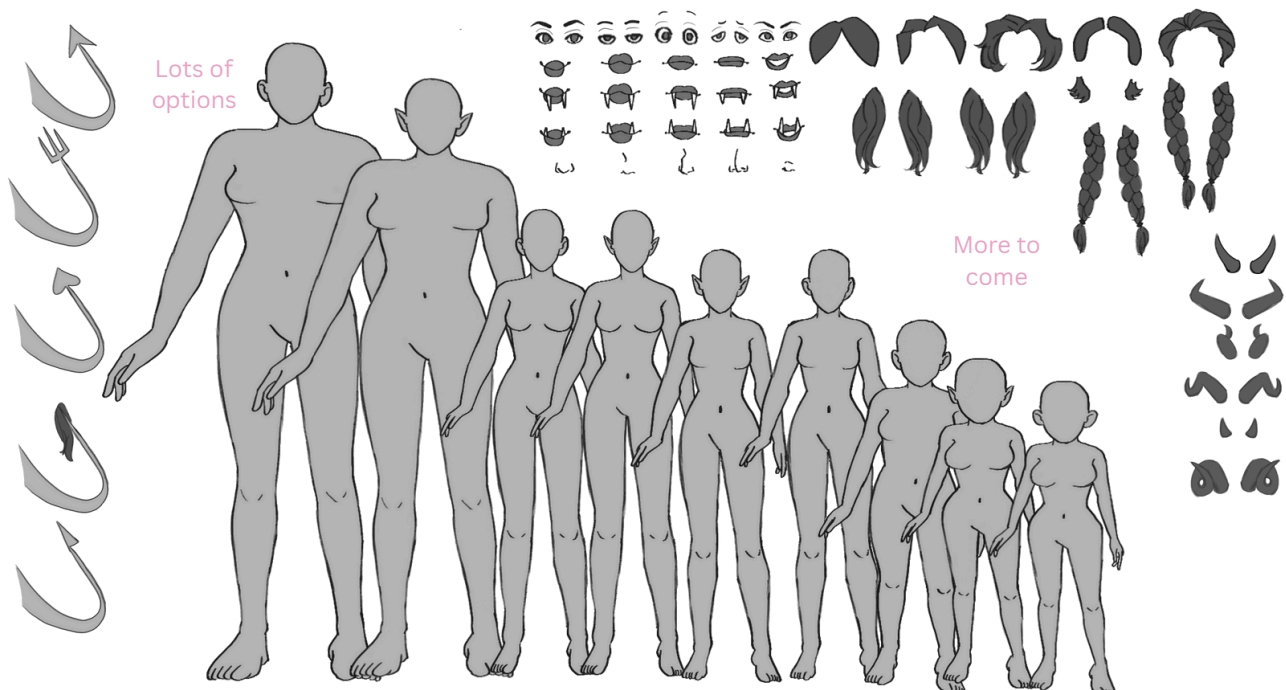
Software Tools used through this process are:

- Clip Studio Paint to draw the dolls and different parts.
- Adobe Photoshop to compose all the doll and different parts.
- Canva for documentation.
- Paint for testing the PNGs, in a different program.
- Adobe Illustrator for testing the PNGs, in a different program.

Overall, the workflow for the week has ebbed and flowed. Certain parts have gone more smoothly than others. For example, drawing all the pieces was rather smooth as I got in a rhythm. Exporting he pieces out as PNGs

Something new that I did learn is that Paint, the free digital drawing program that comes on most computers has the ability to create layers. This made it a more compatible program for this product than I initially had assumed.

Another thing I learned is that Clip Studio Paint does give the ability to vectorize layers, even though this is a function I ended up not needing.



The complete first prototype

Challenges & Solutions

Originally my idea for the packaging of the Fantasy Character Creator, was to have all the vectorized PNGs in a zipped file but I found this process tedious, even with the exact parts I needed to create the prototype doll. So **a challenge** I faced was figuring out how to streamline this process for the user.

To solve this problem, I decided to offer the toolkit in 3 versions. One version will be a zipped file containing all the PNGs, while another version will be a composition of all the PNGs together, as pictured above as a single Clip Studio Paint file. The final version will be a composite of all the PNGs as a single Photoshop file.

Another challenge I needed to solve this week is whether my idea for how the user would create their character would work the way I wanted it to. To do this, I needed to make a whole character to test out. One prototype I made, had the lines of the doll part drawings and the colors on the same layer. Another prototype had the lines and drawings on different layers. With the One-Layer-Prototype, the lines of the drawings depreciated with every single recolor.

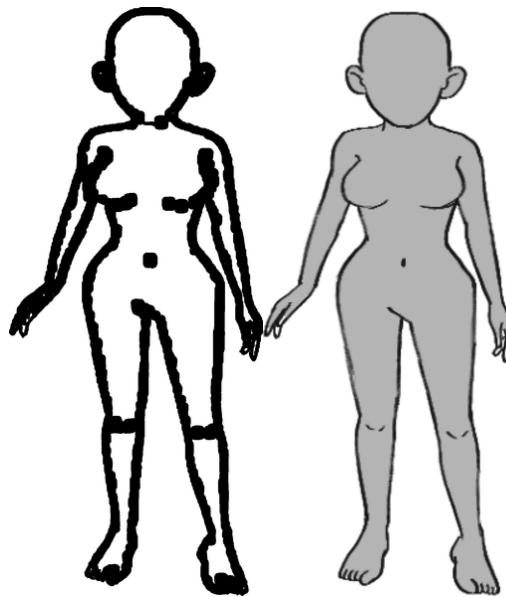
While with the Two-Layer-Prototype, the lines don't depreciate at all with recolors since they are on separate layers.

By creating two prototypes, I figured out that the Two-Layer method was the best way to retain the quality of the doll pieces through re-colorization.

A roadblock I hit is that when I tried to vectorize the PNGs, it would ruin the image, making it an unrecognizable blob. This is because I did not vectorize the layer until after it was drawn.

Due to this, I will make sure the DPI is at 300 to avoid quality degradation with each recolor.

I also plan to do another prototype where the line art layers are set to vector layers from the start so the degradation doesn't happen. Also so that the pieces are scalable with degradation.



a vectorized doll versus the original

Another **change** that I decided to make after starting on prototypes is to have the full bodies for users to use, rather than individual body parts to piece together.

While I have seen other character creator toolkits that successfully use this method, I honestly created one combination like this and hated it. I decided to save myself the time and just do full bodies, but still try to provide a diverse array of bodies to choose from.

Reflection

With my methodology for creating the Fantasy Character Creator Toolkit, my next steps are to expand the options available within the Toolkit.

I plan to start another prototype before I adding not only the male doll options but to expand the customization options, add clothing options, and refine what I have created so far.

As well as to create both visual and video instructions as to how to use the toolkit.