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Creating the perfect role-playing game

Berks resident James Aloye is working on “Eternal Conquest: The Great War,” which combines elements gamers are looking for.

BY SUSAN L. PENA
READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT



READING EAGLE: LAUREN A. LITTLE

Jim Aloye with a shot of his game, “Eternal Conquest: The Great War.” The Lower Alsace Township resident is looking to release it in 2019.

When Lower Alsace Township resident James Aloye was a kid, he had a passion for playing classic-style roleplaying video games such as the “Final Fantasy” and “Dragon Warrior” series by the Japanese company Square Enix.

Now he’s finding that creating his own game is even more enjoyable than playing someone else’s.

“It’s very creative and very technical,” he said.

Known in the gaming world as RPG, or role-playing games, these games aren’t about pushing a button to get things to happen, Aloye explained. Instead, the player enters a story that involves a hero on a quest to destroy monsters that have caused a tragedy.

“You grow your character’s abilities and characteristics, and then when you engage in battle, you start the battle and observe what happens as the characters win or lose, based on their statistical levels,” he said.

The skills used are intellectual rather than physical; you don’t need great handeye coordination to win. And you can stop in mid-game and save it for later.

Filling a gap

Aloye loved the games, but there always seemed to be something missing.

“The general consensus (among gamers) is that when you play these games, at least one of three fundamentals is lacking in some way,” he said. “The fundamentals are the depth and richness of the story; the length and experience of play; and the ending. The game might look great and have a rich, in-depth story line, but the ending was dull. Or there would be other issues like the game might play out too fast.

“I hadn’t played anything with a perfect balance.”

So five years ago, Aloye, who has worked for many years as an IT specialist and software developer, decided to start a classic-style RPG company of his own, Eternal Conquest LLC, to deliver a revolutionary video game, “Eternal Conquest: The Great War,” to an international customer base. And if that is successful, he hopes to continue with a series.

“I seek to make the perfect set of those three fundamentals,” he said.

Using $30,000 of his own money, Aloye started by purchasing and setting up the technology he needed to create the game, and by doing extensive market research. He said he spent about 4,000 hours on this phase during the first couple of years.

He started the development phase two years ago, spending about 1,000 hours creating the game itself. About 3 percent of it is complete now, but he has a fully playable demo that can be finished in three to 12 hours. When finished, the full game will take approximately 180 hours to play — longer than most. For RPG fans, he said, “the longer the better.”

Three different worlds

The story will involve three different worlds, in the present, past and future, he said, and 10 to 20 playable characters, each from a unique background.

There will be two unique aspects to the game: season, date and time-specific content and geographic-specific content, he said. Gamers with internet access can use these portions of the game, which are connected within the company’s infrastructure.

For example, in the North Lands of the game, he said, “there’s a village that is only accessible during December. So you can’t enter the village and get the weapons and armor that you need unless you’re doing it in December.”

The same applies to the geo-specific content, which uses the GPS inside a player’s phone or tablet to ensure they are playing in the correct location to access certain game elements.

Having found himself in what entrepreneurs call the “Death Valley” of startups, Aloye said he needed help with getting investors and bringing his product to market. After reading a story in the *Reading Eagle* about AmpTech, a Malvern, Chester County-based firm that helps startups move forward, he contacted the company several months ago and is preparing for a release of “Eternal Conquest: The Great War” by the fourth quarter of 2019, in time for Christmas.

Pre-sale

AmpTech helped him with contacting a venture group that has pledged to match $100,000, which Aloye is raising through a TeamUp crowdfunding pledge site.

He is pre-selling the game on his website, www.ectgw.com, where gamers can also watch a video of the prototype and, if they agree to pre-order the game, can have access to every demo released between now and when the full game arrives.

Aloye said AmpTech also helped him come up with a third pathway to marketing the product: to partner with individual businesses, municipalities and tourism boards, who can buy into the geospecific content of the game and use it as a tool to bring players into their areas.

“If I have Bill’s Ice Cream Shop, for example, and I buy the geo-specific content, then a player who is inside the shop can get content you can only find there,” he said.

With the initial demo complete, Aloye said he is in the process of moving it to commercial grade and will have it available on iTunes by December. He’s giving it away for people to try out, and they will be encouraged to visit the TeamUp site and pre-order the full game.

Once he has secured funding, Aloye said, he plans to hire a graphic designer and composer who are waiting in the wings to produce his own intellectual property for the game, which can subsequently be used for other products. (Currently, he is using thirdparty graphics and music for the demos.)

Aloye, a 1996 graduate of Central Catholic High School, studied IT and software development at Alvernia University. He has a job in IT (he declined to disclose where he works), and has started online companies including Aloye Media, which publishes Christian children’s books, and Aloye Computer Enterprises, an IT business.

Contact **Susan L. Pena:** *money@ readingeagle.com.*

Eternal Conquest LLC

Owner: James Aloye **Location:** Online; Aloye lives in Lower Alsace Township **Phone:** 844-672-5693 (select Option 2, Media and Publishing Dept.) **Website:** www.ectgw.com

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