

Animal Crossing: A Nook of His Own

Game Concept Document



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Columbia
COLLEGE CHICAGO

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PREMISE

Animal Crossing: A Nook of His Own is a item-shop roleplaying game where the player takes control of Animal Crossing's money-loving raccoon, Tom Nook, and explore his younger days as a shop keeper. Manage a slowly growing item shop, survive in the sprawling metropolis of New Crossing, find new merchandise to sell, and live life like a raccoon.

DESCRIPTION

In this game, the main character is Animal Crossing's previous antagonist, Tom Nook. *A Nook of Their Own* follows this character's younger life and start in the item shop industry, before he got into home development. The game takes place in New Crossing, a concrete jungle full of different animals and problems. In this city, fortunes are made and lost, and it's up to the player to make Tom Nook's fortune.

Tom starts off penniless, just jumping off the train and getting his start. As the player progresses through the game, they start Tom's first item-shop, slowly expand on it, and will eventually be in charge of a chain of Nook item shops. These item stores receive stock from different places. At the end of each day, it's up to the player to decide what items the store will stock the next day. The goal is to stock items that the player knows will sell tomorrow. To gain this knowledge, the player will have to walk around the city talking to other animals and finding out what trends are going on, or if there are special events happening that could impact sales numbers for specific items. Proper store management is critical to the player's success, as well as constantly trying to expand Nook's business. The player can acquire new stock by purchasing contracting license or by talking to special animals in New Crossing. Some animals, after doing them a favor, will offer to ship their specialty product to your store. Specialty products sell for more than normal items, so exploration and socialization is important to the game. At the same time, players have to help Tom with his social life and personal desires.

This game also takes a focus on Tom Nook's history and social life. As a young raccoon in a city full of other animals, anything can happen to Tom. The player will be able to befriend other animals of the city, and can even romance certain characters. There will be a large number of these dynamic relationships,

and they can impact Tom in positive and negative ways. The game covers several years of Tom Nook's life. The game and time progresses every time Tom makes a shop upgrade. After each shop-upgrade, several years go by and Tom grows as a person and businessman. Decisions made in the previous year will affect Tom's life in his later years in positive and negative ways. The game is won when Tom completes his grand chain of Nookington's (the 5th store upgrade) and decides to retire to the country.

Players will want to play this game to the end for the sense of accomplishment and to get the full story of Tom Nook. Each store upgrade is significantly harder to unlock, and the increasing difficulty and need to become better

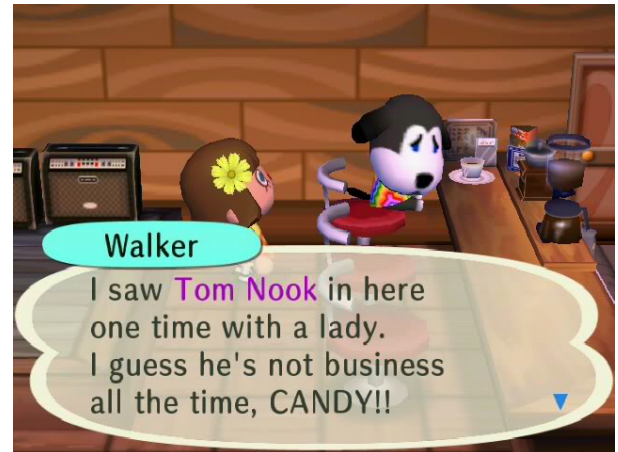


to succeed will help drive players through the game. Beyond that, as a player it will be interesting to make social and life decisions and see how they play out over the course of the game. This game should help give players a new perspective on Tom Nook, who is commonly hated for his role in the Animal Crossing games proper. I want player's to feel happiness for helping Tom succeed, but also sadness when Tom fails, or when tragedy strikes. There are a range of emotions and feelings in Tom's life, and at most I want player's to understand that and be able to finally empathize with the "greedy" raccoon. The atmosphere of the game will be hopeful and warm, but sad things can happen and Tom can fail. The player loses if Tom's business fails, or if they make certain story based choices. There should always be a prevalent theme however, of Tom picking himself back up and getting back out there, one the player should emphasize with and learn from. Even when the player loses, the game always end with Tom moving to the suburbs to relax and open a small corner store (where he works and lives in the Animal Crossing games)

FEATURES

Animal Crossing: A Nook of Their Own, will have several robust systems in place and a huge variety of activities and social events to participate in. The player will feel like they are in a living breathing city, and that it's up to them whether Tom's dreams will live or die.

- Manage and learn the ins and outs of the item shop industry, and use these skills of the trade and Tom's knowledge of business to rise to the top.
- Learn more about the mysterious raccoon from the Animal Crossing games, Tom Nook, and live his storied and sometimes tragic past.
- Interact with a menagerie of animal personalities and climb the complex social strata of New Crossing. Make friends, enemies, and even fall in love.
- Each choice has unique consequences that effect how the story plays out. With multiple endings and a variety of story lines, players will need to play the game several times in order to discover it all.



GENRE

This game is story driven item-shop role playing game. The player is taking on the persona of Tom Nook and learning about his life and experiences. The player is in control of Tom's choices and livelihood, and depending on how they play depends on what happens to Tom. Act like a greedy raccoon and things may not turn out well. Treat others kindly and generously and maybe Tom will live a happier life. Ultimately the player is playing a role and seeing how their choices in that role effect the world of the game, all while managing a complicated business.

PLATFORM

The primary platform will be the Nintendo DS. In my experience, Animal Crossing games tend to play very well on mobile consoles. Being a Nintendo series, the game will naturally be on a Nintendo system. The Nintendo DS is robust enough to handle the complicated systems of the game, while still giving players the ability to play on the go. It also has some interesting aesthetics (with the 3D and touch screen) that can make handling items easier, and make the world feel



more like a living breathing place.

ESRB RATING

The game will be rated E for Everyone. The game is based on the popular Animal Crossing series and as such the content will not be overly violent or mature. There will be some somewhat mature themes that are touched on, (such as Tom dating, and several potential character deaths), but these themes will be subtle and not focused on in an overly mature way.

TARGET MARKET

The game is targeted towards fans of the roleplaying and life simulation genres, as well as fans of the Animal Crossing series. Ages range from 12-26, focusing on people who will be able to understand some of the more complicated systems of the game and still appreciate the charm of the world. The older players who use mobile devices and play games during commutes or short breaks also will enjoy the game in that it's very pick up and go. The latest age range is about when the charm of animal crossing may lose appeal to people, and thus is not focused at an older audience.

MARKETING POSITION

What makes *A Nook of His Own* different is the atmosphere of it's world. A lot of life simulation type games are more realistic and tend to be somewhat mature. This game combines what makes life sims interesting and puts it into a more relaxed and charming world. Mechanically, the mix of the social and business systems and how they interact with each other is also unique to this idea. The game also explores the back story of an important character in Animal Crossing, which many fans of the series will find interesting.



COMPETATIVE ANALYSIS

Animal Crossing: New Leaf - This is the latest game of the series released on the Nintendo DS. *A Nook of His Own* borrows aesthetics and themes from this series and is under the same name, however, the focus in *A Nook of His Own* is more on the business side of things and Tom Nook as a character. The game is looking at Tom's life and what brought him to where he is today, rather than a player character who is upgrading his house.

Catherine - This is a puzzle social-sim game. It is a more mature game based on a man's relationship with different women and the dreams (puzzles) that haunt him every night. This game has a lot of good social interaction mechanics and is a good example of how the social system in *A Nook of His Own* may function. *Catherine* however is much more mature, and appeals to a much different audience.



Recettear: An Item Shop Tale - In this game, the player runs a fantasy setting item shop, selling equipment to adventures, hiring them to bring back more loot, and interacting with the people of the town. The item-shop model in this game will be similar to *A Nook of His Own* as well as the idea of meeting people who can help you get better stock. These systems are handled differently in *Nook* in that there is a bigger emphasis on social interaction, and the player will have more control over the item shop. The game also has a more cheerful tone than *Recettear*.

BACKSTORY

The player begins the game on a train headed to New Crossing. The player is in control of Tom Nook, a young raccoon who is leaving home to try and make it in the big city. Tom has planned to meet an acquaintance of his, Leif, in the city where Leif will help Tom get situated. Once the player leaves the train, they can explore the town and eventually meet up with Leif, who explains the beginning of the game.

RISK ANALYSIS

The size of the world is a lot larger than most Animal Crossing titles, and as a result it will be difficult to give the world a cohesive feel that fits with the atmosphere of the game. The interconnectedness of the different story systems (social and business) will also be difficult to flesh out fully and make sure it all works together. Certain choices will need to make later choices in the game unreachable, and it will be difficult to get all of these to work smoothly.

SUMMARY

The Animal Crossing games are incredibly addictive and interesting. The games has a lot of interconnected systems and the world of the game feels very real and visceral. A Nook of His Own takes these themes and expands and complicates them, providing players with a living breathing city, a complex business and social system, and a new perspective on an old raccoon...

