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2 Intro

3 Hello, and welcome to our new FAQ video series which will replace the rather outdated
4 FAQ video released in September 2012. Since then, the OpenMW project has come a
5 long way. Our engine is nearly feature-complete by now, and the developers concentrate
6 on bug-fixing, fine-tuning, and implementing the last missing features.

7 The goals of this series are to properly introduce our project, answer the most common
8 questions about OpenMW, and give some in-depth information about certain aspects of
9 the engine, e.g., the current development status or future moddability.

10 In the first video – which you are watching now – I'll give a general introduction to the
11 project and explain the advantages OpenMW brings for our different target audiences.
12 The second video will summarise the project's current status and the remaining tasks for
13 version 1.0. In the third video we will take a closer look at OpenMW's future by discussing
14 the engine's potential and naming limitations to both the OpenMW project as well as
15 the engine itself. The fourth video will focus on compatibility issues with the original
16 game OpenMW was designed to run in the first place, mainly speaking of problems with
17 user-created modifications to the vanilla game. The fifth video will be a call to arms
18 for everyone who is interested in helping OpenMW to reach its goals – whether you are
19 an experienced coder, a fan of the original game, or an artist who creates models and
20 textures.

21 Enough said. Now, let me introduce you to the OpenMW project.

22 What exactly is OpenMW?

23 Q: *What exactly is OpenMW?*

24 A: OpenMW is a free and open source software designed to run the classic RPG *The*
25 *Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind.* The original game has been created by Bethesda
26 Softworks and was released in 2002. It received critical acclaim because of its
27 open-world character and its innovative setting. It came with its own editor, *The*
28 *Elder Scrolls Construction Set*, which allowed players to modify many aspects of

the game, leading to a huge amount of mods – some of which are still being worked on.

Bethesda also created other famous RPGs, like parts four and five of the *The Elder Scrolls* series, Oblivion and Skyrim, as well as the revival of the Fallout series. The OpenMW team wants to build an engine called *OpenMW* to replace Morrowind's original engine, making the latter obsolete in the future.

Why would you reimplement a whole game engine?

Q: *Why would the OpenMW team start such a huge undertaking in the first place? Morrowind has been playable when it was released, and it is still running on recent Windows versions.*

A: Well, Morrowind's original engine has its flaws. There are many bugs which will never be fixed considering the game's age. Moreover, it tends to be unstable and was optimised for, now, very outdated hardware. Also, the modding capabilities are limited when it comes to changes in the actual game mechanics, which lead to a variety of hackish third-party software to overcome at least some of the hard-coded limitations. Last but definitely not least, the vanilla engine only runs on Windows, ignoring a growing part of the gaming community.

Isn't this illegal?

Q: *You are rebuilding a commercial game? Isn't this illegal?*

A: No, the OpenMW project is a completely legitimate engine reimplementation. It is neither a modification nor a third-party engine hack. We are just writing a piece of software which is able to run Morrowind by reading its game files, and every part of the engine has been written from scratch. We do not provide any of the original contents and have obtained our information through clean reverse-engineering. The game files themselves are still property of Bethesda Softworks and ZeniMax Media.

What are your goals for version 1.0?

Q: *Okay, I get it. What are your goals for version 1.0 then?*

A: The OpenMW engine has a great potential which goes far beyond the scope of the original game. But for the time being, the OpenMW team concentrates on reimplementing Morrowind with all of its features, some of its bugs when necessary, and compatibility with all of its mods, given they have been created in a clean way.

We'll consider the engine ready for version 1.0 when the following goals have been reached:

1. OpenMW correctly implements every feature of the original game, while adjusting obviously wrong behaviour when it is reasonable.

2. OpenMW fixes every system design bug in the original engine, e.g., the infamous bloating of savegame files during a play-through, or the limit of 256 mods to be active at a time.

3. OpenMW supports all existing content, including the add-ons *Tribunal* and *Bloodmoon* as well as every mod which has been created without using third-party software or libraries.

4. OpenMW runs natively on Windows, Linux, and Mac OSX.

5. OpenMW takes advantage of modern hardware in order to achieve a better graphical quality without a performance hit.

6. OpenMW improves the interface and journal system of the original engine.

7. OpenMW improves the game's physics and AI.

8. OpenMW allows developers to create a new game from scratch, independent from Bethesda's contents.

Of course, these goals can be adjusted in case of unreasonable delays because of a single feature missing but we consider the first four goals essential for OpenMW 1.0.

What are OpenMW's hardware requirements?

Q: *What are OpenMW's hardware requirements? Will OpenMW perform better than the original engine?*

A: Morrowind is an old game and should run well on any remotely up-to-date system. Since version 0.37.0, our engine's performance equals or exceeds the vanilla one's in most situations. However, there are some restrictions when comparing both pieces of software. First of all, OpenMW has not been optimised yet, leaving room for noticeable improvements. Secondly, OpenMW ships with improved graphics which complicates a straight comparison between the engines. Finally, there are a few problems with certain system setups, especially with AMD drivers. To cut a long story short, if your PC is above Morrowind's hardware requirements, the game should perform well using OpenMW. If not, please contact us in our Support subforum at openmw.org.

Do I need a copy of TES III: Morrowind in order to play OpenMW?

Q: *You are replacing Morrowind's engine with a new one. Do I need the original game files in order to play Morrowind on OpenMW?*

A: OpenMW only is an engine designed to run Morrowind's game files. We do not provide any of the original content – which would, by the way, be a severe copyright infringement. So yes, you need the original game to run Morrowind using OpenMW. It is still available on Steam or GOG for a fair price, and, sometimes, you can still find it for sale at game stores.

Please note that you don't need Morrowind to run OpenMW. You only need the Morrowind game files, if you want to play Morrowind on OpenMW. This is especially true for new games created with our editor, OpenMW-CS.

Is it possible to port my old Morrowind savegames to OpenMW?

Q: *Is it possible to port my old Morrowind savegames to OpenMW?*

106 A: In general, no. There is an early version of a savegame importer but it is far
107   from being finished. Maybe, someone is willing to continue work after version 1.0
108   has been released. We advise you to start a new game when switching over to
109   OpenMW.

I just want to play Morrowind. Why would I use OpenMW instead of the vanilla engine?

112 Q: *I'm just a Morrowind enthusiast who wants to enjoy the game without any modding*
113   *magic. Why would I use OpenMW instead of the vanilla engine?*

114 A: OpenMW is a modern engine and runs natively on Windows, Linux, and Mac OSX.
115   And the best thing is, you can play the game on any screen resolution. OpenMW
116   is actively maintained and fixes most of the vanilla engine's bugs and design flaws.
117   We have reworked the savegame management and have improved the interface,
118   e.g., by making all UI windows adjustable, redesigning the Alchemy window, or
119   adding comfort functions to the mercantile window. The placement of items has
120   seen improvements too. Moreover, a great amount of settings has been added, e.g.,
121   to adjust the view distance, make the sneak mode toggle, or show the owner status
122   of items and activators. OpenMW also supports joysticks and gamepads.

I play Morrowind using tons of mods, MWSE, MGE, and MGSO. Why would I switch to your engine?

125 Q: *I play Morrowind using tons of mods, MWSE, MGE, and MGSO. Why would I*
126   *switch to your engine?*

127 A: First of all, OpenMW should support every user-created content, if it doesn't rely
128   on third-party software or engine hacks. Obviously, this doesn't include utilities like
129   *Morrowind Script Extender* or *Morrowind Graphics Extender*. However, OpenMW
130   will provide most of the additional functionalities right from the start in the future,
131   compensating for the lack of compatibility. Modifications relying on third-party
132   software may remain incompatible though. They need to be rewritten or, more
133   likely, to be substituted with written-from-scratch modifications using OpenMW's
134   extended modding capabilities.

135 So, if utilities like the *Morrowind Graphics Extender* are a must-have for your
136 Morrowind play-throughs, OpenMW may not be the best choice for you right now
137 as it will take some time after version 1.0 has been released until OpenMW features
138 everything the great Morrowind modding community has invented to cope with
139 the original engine's limitations.

I want to mod Morrowind. What advantages does OpenMW provide for modders?

142 Q: *I want to mod Morrowind. What advantages does OpenMW provide for modders?*

143 A: Morrowind came with its own editor, *The Elder Scrolls Construction Set*, which
144 allowed modders to change many aspects of the game. However, there were many
145 hard-coded limitations, and the editor always felt somewhat clunky.

146 The OpenMW team has created its own editor, OpenMW-CS, to overcome these
147 restrictions. Our editor is multi-threaded, non-blocking, and provides a modern
148 interface which is customisable and supports multiple views. Modders may open
149 as many documents at the same time as they want to, while keeping the load on
150 their system low. It is also possible to create new games without any Morrowind
151 dependencies.

152 On the hard-coding side of things, the OpenMW team plans to get rid of most
153 limitations after version 1.0 has been released. In the future, modders will be able
154 to add new skills to the game, overhaul the combat system, create schedules for
155 NPCs, and much, much more. And keep in mind that all of this will happen in a
156 clean way, ensuring a high degree of compatibility and consistency.

I want to develop a game based on the OpenMW engine. Is this possible, and am I allowed to sell my game in the end?

159 Q: *I want to develop a game based on the OpenMW engine. Is this possible, and am I*
160 *allowed to sell my game in the end?*

A: Like I said before, OpenMW-CS provides the option to create new games running on the OpenMW engine. We will also provide a game template which contains the minimum of required assets a developer would need in order to create a new game – independent from Bethesda's contents, of course. The corresponding *Game Template* project as well as the *OpenMW Example Suite* whose purpose it is to showcase OpenMW's additional features are already in slow but active development.

Regarding commercialising your game: OpenMW is licensed under the GNU GPL license. This license grants free access to the OpenMW source code. If you develop a game and change the source code in the process, you must ensure public access to that particular code. If you don't change the source code at all, your customers can simply download OpenMW from official sources. Apart from the source code, any assets you have created for your game are under your copyright and are not subjected to the GNU GPL.

To sum things up: Yes, you can create a game with OpenMW-CS and sell it. You must provide free access to your source code though.

Outro

That's all for the general introduction to OpenMW. The next part covers the project's current status. If my answers to the frequently asked questions raised even more questions, please leave a comment, or visit our forums at openmw.org. The corresponding links as wells as references to other relevant sites are available below this video.

See you in part two of the FAQ series. And, as always, thanks for watching!

Part 2: Project Status

Intro

Welcome to the second part of our FAQ video series. This time, we will talk about the project's current status.

You've just released version 0.40.0. Another 60 releases to go until version 1.0?

Q: *So, you've just released version 0.40.0. Another 60 releases to go until version 1.0?*

A: The OpenMW team uses the so-called *Semantic Versioning* to index OpenMW releases. A version label consists of three numbers, separated by a point. The first number refers to the current main version. Since OpenMW has not reached its first set of main goals, the current main version is *0*. It will be increased to *1* as soon as we've reached all of the goals I've introduced in the first part of this series.

The second number indicates the minor version count. It is increased with every release, 40 of which we had until today. Accordingly, the number is by no means a percentage value of our progress. If you want to convert the current version into such a value, I'd say that we've released version 0.95 or 0.96. The minor version counter is reset to *0* when the major version counter is increased.

The last number represents maintenance releases or patches. These are small updates in case of severe errors popping up after a minor version's release. The patch counter is reset to *0* once another minor version release has arrived. Oh, and don't get confused: We often skip the last number because we are lazy as hell!

Is Morrowind currently playable on OpenMW?

Q: *Now, be honest: Is Morrowind currently playable on OpenMW?*

₂₀₅   A: The short answer is: Yes, Morrowind is already playable on OpenMW!

₂₀₆   And here's the long answer: As far as we know, the main story, both add-ons as
₂₀₇   well as every side quest of the vanilla game are working. The same goes for nearly
₂₀₈   every game mechanic, missing a few AI features at the moment. Testers constantly
₂₀₉   give us feedback about our engine's performance – and current replies show that
₂₁₀   our engine often runs more stable than the original one, without noticeable bugs
₂₁₁   and with a decent frame rate, even on high graphics settings.

₂₁₂   We get more and more reports about issues with mods though which is related to
₂₁₃   the increased number of players using OpenMW. Often, errors occur because of
₂₁₄   mod author's hackish solutions to the original engine's limitations, or because of
₂₁₅   plain scripting errors. However, there are lots of bugs or unexpected behaviours on
₂₁₆   OpenMW's side which only appear, if the engine gets stressed beyond the vanilla
₂₁₇   game's standards. We are also implementing a lot of fall-backs and workarounds
₂₁₈   to make OpenMW compatible to as many mods as possible.

₂₁₉ What exactly keeps you from releasing version 1.0?

₂₂₀   Q: *What exactly keeps you from releasing version 1.0?*

₂₂₁   A: There are four main things which prevent us from directly jumping to version
₂₂₂   1.0: the status of our editor, OpenMW-CS, missing features, bugs, and missing
₂₂₃   optimisation.

₂₂₄   OpenMW comes with its own editor, OpenMW-CS. We initially planned to release
₂₂₅   OpenMW 1.0 and OpenMW-CS 1.0 at the same time in order to allow modders to
₂₂₆   create new content right away. However, the progress on our editor had been much
₂₂₇   slower for a long time which resulted in a big gap between OpenMW's playability
₂₂₈   and OpenMW-CS's usability. Because of that the OpenMW team has decided
₂₂₉   to uncouple both pieces of software and will release OpenMW version 1.0 even
₂₃₀   without the editor being fully functional.

₂₃₁   When you have a look at our bug tracker, you get an impression of what's missing
₂₃₂   right now on OpenMW's side. First of all, there is a small number of features which
₂₃₃   need to be implemented. These include several AI-related tasks, e.g., a proper

implementation of the AI's fleeing behaviour and an improved path-finding AI. A full list of the missing features is available in the video links below.

The OpenMW team wants to release a product which is as bug-free as possible. According to our bug tracker, the number of bugs which need to be fixed before version 1.0 can be released is in the double figures. There are likely to show up more bugs in the future but we've managed to constantly decrease the number of remaining issues in the past. Nevertheless, bug-fixing is a tedious task which can be very time-consuming.

The last reason for delaying the 1.0 release is a rather vague yet complex one: optimisation. As I said earlier, OpenMW performs very well. There are a few weaknesses though, namely certain problems with the physics engine and performance problems on AMD graphics cards. Additionally, the OpenMW team not only wants to create an engine which is equal to a 14-year-old game engine but rather allows to use modern graphic features, more scripts, and more content, while keeping a decent frame rate. We will have to trade perfect optimisation off against a reasonable release date for version 1.0.

OpenMW seems to be rather complete. When do you expect version 1.0 to arrive?

Q: *OpenMW seems to be rather complete. When do you expect version 1.0 to arrive?*

A: OpenMW is an open source project, and every team member working on OpenMW does so on a voluntary basis. That said, we don't give exact release dates. But let me give an estimation instead: I would say that we will have two to three minor releases until version 1.0 is ready, i.e., 0.41, 0.42, maybe a 0.43 and, then, an OpenMW 1.0.0. Given an average time of three to four months per release and counting from September 2016, we end up with a 1.0 release between June 2017 and January 2018.

Will there be a beta test or something like that?

Q: *Will there be a beta test or something like that?*

A: There are supporters and opponents of a beta test – and we had quite a few discussions about that topic. The first group argues that it would be beneficial to announce a public beta in order to make clear where the project stands and to draw the attention of additional testers. The latter group wants to avoid the term *beta* as OpenMW is playable right now, and only in alpha status because of some minor features missing. They opt for an extended test phase before the 1.0 release.

We will decide on that matter when the time has come – and, of course, inform you about our decision. Despite the naming issues, you can assume that we will rather delay version 1.0 to thoroughly test OpenMW's functionality than rush an unstable OpenMW 1.0.

Outro

Alright, any questions left? If yes, simply put them in the comments tab below, or head over to our forums at openmw.org. Below this video, you'll also find the most important links regarding our project.

See you in the next part which will cover OpenMW's potential and limitations. Until then, thanks for watching!