



This document is meant to be a high level reflection on the first year of Early Access for DayZ.

Most described systems and updates in this document are at a very high level so as to give an easy glimpse into what occurred in the first year.

Visuals contain herein are from internal testing during this period and are not necessarily reflective of actual intended gameplay.



Basic Information



- Early Access offering went live December 16th 2013
- As of December 16th 2014, 2,830,000 people have purchased the DayZ Early Access
- 2,775,000 people have participated in the Early Access offering (played)
- Average per-patch (monthly) unique users is around 1,100,000 players

DayZ hit Steam's Early Access program three months into principle development. With basic functionality present and reasonable stability, the design of what DayZ is and was began to evolve along with the Early Access users' gameplay of the stable branch updates.

Initial Featureset

With 0.28 (The initial launch version of DayZ Early Access) the very basic core foundation of DayZ was present.



Internal Q/A tester struggles to find a firearm prior to release

- **Central Architecture / “The Hive”:** Initial functionality for DayZ’s character persistence was deployed with the launch of DayZ. With a global database of characters shared across all game servers.
- **Chernarus +:** With the global replacement of nearly all structures in Chernarus with new enterable versions of the previous models, this expanded greatly upon the potential exploration of the DayZ game world.
- **Item/Weapon Modifiers:** Evolving from previous generations technology of treating weapons and items as simple objects, all identical and basic. Items (and in more depth the M4A1) are treated in both the game and the central hive in fashion similar to player characters, with their own modifiers and conditions.
- **Expanded player customization:** Coming from the basic models in the Arma 2 mod, DayZ expanded greatly upon the player customization options allowing for much more in depth unique characters. With every clothing/gear option fully replaceable this offered each survivor the choice to represent themselves in their own vision.

Quarter 1 – 2014 (0.28 to 0.43)



An unlucky survivor lays slain on launch day.

Within the first quarter of 2014, DayZ saw rapid growth in gameserver coverage and active Early Access consumers. The core development team began expanding to meet the growing scope enabled by the Early Access success. In addition to new gameplay features, expanded use of the experimental branch for volume testing began. In addition, the first few months of this quarter featured constant hotfix / bugfix work to respond to the ongoing evolution of the title as the consumers played the latest builds.

1. **Content surge:** As DayZ became available to all interested Early Access consumers the art and design teams were able to rapidly begin scaling up to push out frequent content updates with new gear, tools, items, weapons, and more.
2. **UI / Status Redesign:** Iterative changes to the user interface and character status messages evolved based upon consumer response to the original launch design of character health and status messages.
3. **Expanded server options:** Initial support for private/sub hives, accelerated time, and first/third person camera modes were introduced in the first quarter to provide server operators with the first of a growing amount of intended server host options.



4. **Security Support:** PBO Signature verification, engine side vulnerabilities, VAC, and BattlEye client/server support were all rolled out in Q1 for 2014. With the constant evolution of DayZ's core game engine this became an ongoing goal for the entirety of the Early Access development in 2014.
5. **Ongoing Chernarus + Development:** Q1 saw the introduction of the first of the new cities for DayZ's world. Svetloyarsk, Karmanovka and Chernaya Polana. As well as new structure models (Police station, Healthcare Center, Orthodox Chapel), updated villages (Zelenogorsk, Khelm, Olsha, surrounding villages)
6. **Animation system expansion:** Support for subclassing, state blending, new item IKs, new weapon animations, and new gestures. The animation system for the DayZ early access went through a large amount of growing pains during Quarter 1.
7. **Improved Lighting:** Mid way into the first quarter, engine programmers began work on improving the existing lighting technology in order to empower night time gameplay and better present upcoming work for flares, campfires, and so on.
8. **Network communication/messaging:** Within the first quarter the engine team rewrote how network messages were prioritized, and communicated between client and server. This evolved into the existing guaranteed messaging system that DayZ currently uses.
9. **Infected respawning:** Initial functionality for the respawning on infected upon death was introduced to DayZ servers mid way through Quarter 1.
10. **Initial support for hermit play-style:** From picking berries, to catching rain in a container, to hunting, and cooking animals. the first steps to support an entirely independent survival style were implemented into stable branch.
11. **Bullet physics:** Late in Q1 DayZ saw the introduction of the early state implementation of bullet physics in its base game engine. This was visible to the Early Access consumer in the form of item throwing. (Best known for being used to toss your buddy a spare magazine or clip)

Quarter 2 – 2014 (0.44 to 0.46)



Brian Hicks stumbles across a Q/A disaster in Elektro during internal testing

Quarter two for 2014 continued the ongoing need for development time and focus to be split between ongoing feature progress, and balance/bugfixing for the stable branch Early Access users. Expansion of existing mechanics also saw a strong upsurge during this quarter, with the “hermit” playstyle taking strong leaps forward through expanded mechanics. Additionally, within this quarter the DayZ dev team on boarded several new key positions, including a new Lead Gameplay Programmer, and Build Engineer and the onboarding of the new team in Bratislava.

As well, the build process saw a shift to a more predictable monthly stable branch release schedule.

1. **Initial contractible diseases:** Rolling out with Salmonellosis, the contraction and treatment of diseases upon player characters began to be supported within Q2.
2. **Expansion of wilderness survival:** Iterating upon the systems supporting player survival in the wilderness introduced the global spawning of animals, support for fishing, crafting of improvised backpacks, skinning of animal corpses, and gathering of sticks, wood, and rocks, as well as the crafting of improvised bows.
3. **Chernarus + Development:** Continuing with ongoing development of Chernarus +, the towns of Novodmitrovsk, and Dobroe were introduced into the world of DayZ. As well as the new



administrative/town hall building within Novod's town square.

4. **Ragdoll Support:** Within Quarter 2, DayZ saw the initial implementation of ragdoll support of both player and infected bodies during death into initial closed testing.
5. **Persistent Objects:** Internal testing began on server side persistence for all items globally. This would see its stable branch introduction within the first month of Q3.
6. **Dynamic Events system:** Coming in out of the expanded scope, the first iteration of the dynamic events system was introduced to the stable branch servers in the form of crashed NATO rescue choppers scattered throughout Chernarus.
7. **Further content additions:** From MP5K weapons, to hand grenades. Roadflares, improvised backpacks, the Longhorn pistol, OREL Police Uniforms, and Gorka clothing. The ongoing updates in the world of in game content continued.
8. **Engine: Sound :** Limitations in the existing sound system were discovered during Q1 of the Early Access, and work began on a complete replacement of this technology. Results on this would begin to arrive in 2015.
9. **Development of New Animation System:** Principle work on the creation of a new animation system designed to support the feature set of the final DayZ product and replace the legacy animation system inherited from the RV engine began in this quarter. The initial implementation of this to stable branch will be seen in 2015.

Quarter 3 – 2014 (0.47 to 0.49)



Dean Hall camps out above the North East Airfield

Moving into Quarter 3 for 2014 started to show the introduction of gameplay programmers' work over Quarter 2 into Stable Branch. With things such as persistent objects, ragdoll support, and the initial implementation of a navigation mesh for A.I. As well, the experimental branch saw a rapid surge in server support and the deployment of its own dedicated central architecture.

1. **Ragdoll Support:** Stable branch received support for ragdoll for player and zombie corpses. Evolving the options for hilarious forms of death to the next level.
2. **Navigation Mesh:** The initial implementation for both infected, and animal A.I. was introduced to stable branch within Quarter 3. Addressing the majority of issues with infected ignoring structures and causing large volumes of player death. Iteration and development of this continues into Quarter 4.
3. **Persistent Objects:** Starting with the Medium Civilian tent, support for object persistence per-server arrived in Q3. This evolved into server persistence for all objects, and continued into per-item-type cleanup, and container/place able object persistence.



4. **Ongoing evolution of central economy:** One of the long ongoing areas of development for DayZ in 2014 is the central economy. Work began in the later part of Q3 into item quantity global control, with the design evolving in Q4 into world region control in 2015.
5. **Expanded environmental hazards:** Wetness, cold, and overheating began to be deciding factors in the survival of characters on stable branch within Quarter 3. As well as the systems to counter these factors seeing continued iteration to enable competent survivors to continue navigating Chernarus.
6. **Chernarus + Development:** Continuing with ongoing development of Chernarus +, the towns of Severograd, Turovo, Sinistok, Vavilovo and Dobroe were introduced into the world of DayZ.
7. **Security Iteration:** One of the most ongoing areas of DayZ development for Early Access would easily be security and cheating iteration. Within this quarter we saw the abolishment of camera clipping through nearly all structures, massive duplication fixes, script abuse, and a reset of the central hive.
8. **Further content additions:** The return of the legendary Makarov pistol, the medium civilian tent, Dean Hall's face, boonie hats, and more. Content additions from the art and design team continued to pour into stable branch updates throughout Q3.
9. **New A.I. System:** As the Early Access showed shortcomings within the original A.I. system released with the title, work began on creating a brand new A.I. system designed to respond to the demands of the design of DayZ. The fruits of this work will begin to be seen in the first months of 2015.

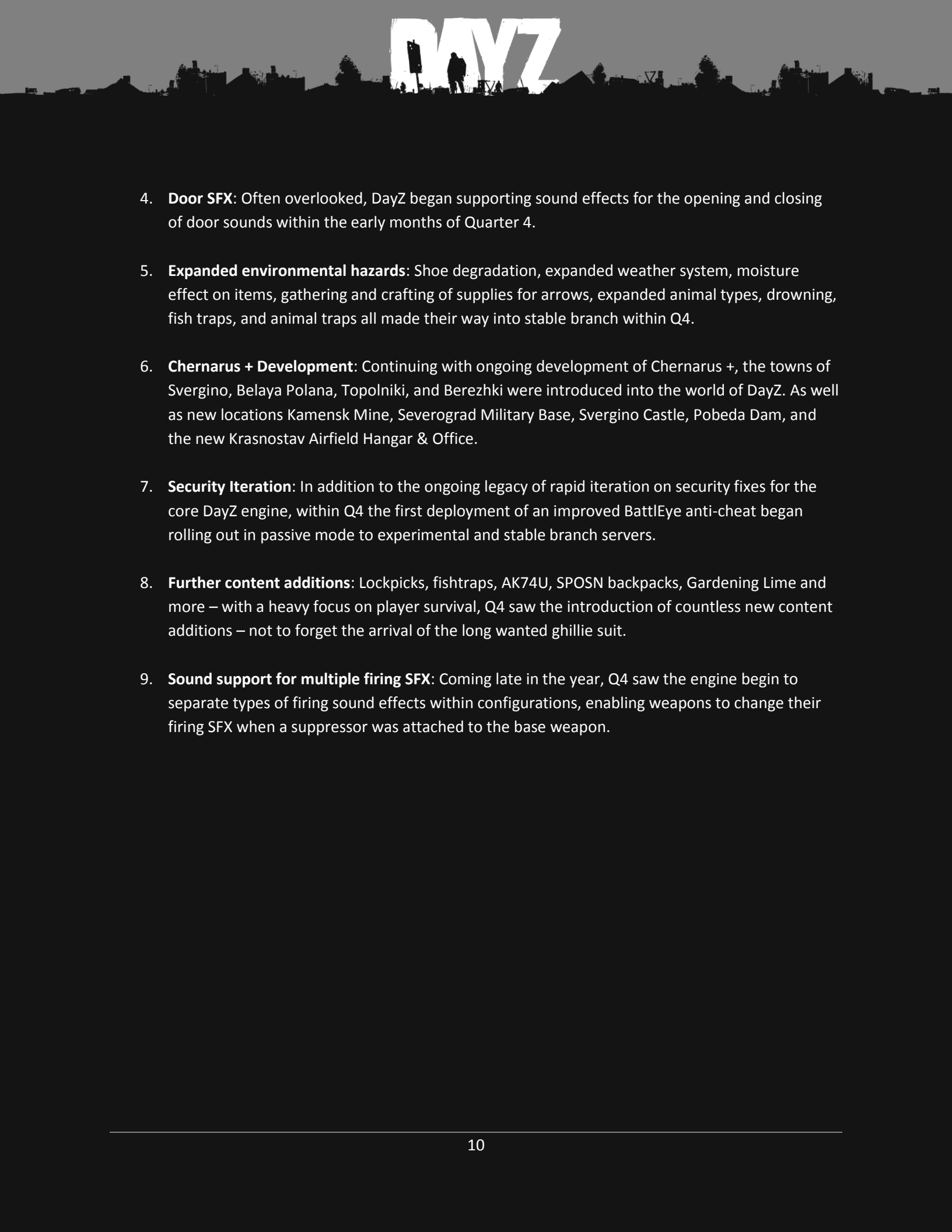
Quarter 4 – 2014 (0.50 to 0.52)



Matt Lightfoot greets us from the apparent safety far from any snipers.

Quarter 4 for DayZ saw the transition of Dean Hall out of the studio, the expansion of support for player communities, improvements in server side performance, improved central hive side statistics, expanded anti cheat functionality, and of course the introduction of the first iteration of wheeled vehicles.

1. **Initial Vehicle Implementation:** The long demanded arrival of DayZ's first wheeled form of transportation arrived into stable branch within Q4. The very first implementation of a planned in depth system, this vehicle was introduced with relative ease onto experimental branch and made its way to stable. 2015 seems the coming of persistence, storage options, transmission mechanics, repair and damage systems and so much more for this system.
2. **Horticulture:** Players were given further options for living off the land within Q4 in the form of the planting, watering, fertilizing, and harvesting of tomato plants within greenhouses scattered across Chernarus. This system ties into server side persistence.
3. **Basic Barricading:** With planned evolution expanding upon this system greatly in 2015, Quarter 4 2014 saw the introduction of basic barricading to all structures across Chernarus in the form of lockable doors.



4. **Door SFX:** Often overlooked, DayZ began supporting sound effects for the opening and closing of door sounds within the early months of Quarter 4.
5. **Expanded environmental hazards:** Shoe degradation, expanded weather system, moisture effect on items, gathering and crafting of supplies for arrows, expanded animal types, drowning, fish traps, and animal traps all made their way into stable branch within Q4.
6. **Chernarus + Development:** Continuing with ongoing development of Chernarus +, the towns of Svergino, Belaya Polana, Topolniki, and Berezhenki were introduced into the world of DayZ. As well as new locations Kamensk Mine, Severograd Military Base, Svergino Castle, Pobeda Dam, and the new Krasnostav Airfield Hangar & Office.
7. **Security Iteration:** In addition to the ongoing legacy of rapid iteration on security fixes for the core DayZ engine, within Q4 the first deployment of an improved BattlEye anti-cheat began rolling out in passive mode to experimental and stable branch servers.
8. **Further content additions:** Lockpicks, fishtraps, AK74U, SPOSN backpacks, Gardening Lime and more – with a heavy focus on player survival, Q4 saw the introduction of countless new content additions – not to forget the arrival of the long wanted ghillie suit.
9. **Sound support for multiple firing SFX:** Coming late in the year, Q4 saw the engine begin to separate types of firing sound effects within configurations, enabling weapons to change their firing SFX when a suppressor was attached to the base weapon.



In Conclusion

DayZ has been in the unique position to be at the forefront of Steam's Early Access program. As a title that entered and uses Early Access for the truest execution of the program, there has been extensive lessons learned from consumer interaction, release messaging, live development, and so much more.

Looking into the future, evolving the accessibility to the development team and transparency into the development process has many opportunities to grow. In tandem to this, new positions within the development team created from lessons learned from Early Access will be filled in the coming year.

It is critical to the success and advancement of the Early Access model that developers clearly communicate project and development status to the engaged consumer base, and it is the target of the DayZ team to evolve in this area over the next year and leave a lasting positive impact on the Early Access model.