

Icarus Blueprint System: A Comprehensive Proposal

1. Introduction

Icarus, a session-based PvE survival game, challenges prospectors to endure a hostile alien environment, construct temporary shelters, and extract valuable exotics. A recurring challenge for players is the ephemeral nature of their constructions; each drop necessitates rebuilding from scratch, often leading to repetitive tasks and a loss of creative investment. This document proposes a comprehensive "Blueprint System" designed to address this by allowing players to save, rebuild, and share their structural designs. This system aims to enhance player creativity, streamline the building process, and foster a robust community-driven content ecosystem.

2. Core Concept

The Blueprint System enables players to capture the structural layout of their self-built bases or modules into a digital blueprint file. This file can then be used to project a holographic guide for reconstruction in subsequent prospects, or shared with other players. The system is designed to integrate seamlessly with existing game mechanics while adding significant depth to the building and social aspects of Icarus.

3. Detailed Mechanics

3.1 Blueprint Creation and Management

3.1.1 Blueprint Capture

- Activation: Players would utilize a new in-game item, such as a "Structure Scanner", or an advanced mode of the existing "Construction Hammer" (unlocked via the tech tree). Activating this tool would initiate a selection mode.
- Selection Process: In selection mode, players would highlight connected structural pieces (walls, floors, roofs, doors, etc.) they wish to include in the blueprint. An intuitive visual indicator (e.g., a glowing outline) would confirm selected components. The system should intelligently detect connected structures to simplify the selection of entire buildings.
- Exclusions: Players should have the option to exclude specific non-structural items (e.g., crafting stations, storage boxes) from the blueprint, as these might not be desired in every reconstruction or could be placed manually.

3.1.2 Blueprint Saving Interface

Upon confirming the selection, a dedicated interface would appear:

- Name: Players assign a unique name to their blueprint (e.g., "Compact Forest Outpost," "Mining Operations Hub").
- Description: A text field for detailed notes, tips, or lore related to the design.
- Tags: Customizable tags (e.g., "solo," "duo," "storm-resistant," "wood," "stone," "metal," "early-game," "late-game") to aid in organization and searchability.
- Material List Preview: A clear display of all raw materials and crafted components required to build the entire structure from scratch. This list would dynamically update as components are added/removed from the selection.
- Thumbnail Generation: The system could automatically generate a small isometric thumbnail image of the selected structure for easy identification.
- Cost to Save: To prevent abuse and add strategic depth, saving a blueprint could incur a cost, such as a small amount of Exotics or a specific research point expenditure. This positions blueprint creation as a valuable mid-to-late game feature.

3.1.3 Personal Blueprint Library

- Access: A new dedicated tab within the player's character menu or orbital station interface would house the "Blueprint Library."
- Organization: Blueprints would be displayed with their name, thumbnail, description, and tags. Sorting and filtering options (by name, date, tags, material cost) would be available.
- Details View: Selecting a blueprint would show its full material list, a larger preview, and options to load, edit (rename/retag), or delete it.

3.2 Blueprint Reconstruction

3.2.1 Projection Mode (Ghost Build)

- Activation: From the Blueprint Library, players select a blueprint and choose the "Project" option. This would enter a special projection mode.
- Holographic Guide: A translucent, colored (e.g., blue or green) holographic representation of the blueprint would appear in the game world. This "ghost" structure would be visible only to the player activating it (or their party members).
- Placement and Orientation: Players could freely move, rotate, and elevate the holographic guide to find the optimal placement. Visual cues (e.g., red highlights for invalid placement, green for valid) would assist in positioning.
- Material Requirements Display: While in projection mode, a persistent UI element would show the total materials required for the blueprint and the player's current inventory count for those materials.

3.2.2 Construction Methods

Two primary methods for reconstruction are proposed, offering flexibility:

- Guided Manual Construction: This method maintains the core building gameplay of Icarus:
 - The holographic guide acts as a template. Players must manually place each structural piece by targeting the corresponding ghost component with the correct material in hand (or using the Construction Hammer).
 - The UI would highlight the currently targeted ghost piece and indicate the required material. If the player has the material, they can place it, and the ghost piece transforms into a solid structure.

- This method preserves the resource management and physical building challenge while eliminating the need to remember complex layouts.
- Assisted Batch Construction (Optional/Tiered): For players seeking greater efficiency, especially in later game stages:
 - If the player possesses all (or a significant portion) of the required materials for the entire blueprint (or a section of it), they could initiate an "Assisted Build" option.
 - This would consume the materials from their inventory and automatically construct the corresponding pieces in sequence. This could be animated to show pieces snapping into place rapidly.
 - This feature could be locked behind a higher-tier research unlock or require a specialized construction tool.

3.3 Blueprint Sharing and Community Integration

This aspect is crucial for fostering a vibrant player-driven content ecosystem.

3.3.1 Community Workshop Integration

- Platform: The ideal implementation would be integration with a platform like the Steam Workshop.
- Publishing: Players could choose to "Publish" their saved blueprints to the Workshop directly from their Blueprint Library. This would require a confirmation step and adherence to community guidelines.
- Discovery: Other players could browse, search, filter, and subscribe to blueprints via the Workshop interface. Blueprints would display their name, description, tags, thumbnail, material list, and creator.
- Rating and Comments: A rating system (e.g., stars, upvotes/downvotes) and comment sections would allow the community to provide feedback and highlight quality designs.

3.3.2 In-Game Sharing Mechanisms

- Blueprint Codes: Players could generate a unique, shareable code for their blueprints. This code could be pasted into chat or shared externally, allowing others to import the blueprint into their personal library.
- Tradable Data Disks: A physical in-game item, the "Blueprint Data Disk," could be crafted or found. A blueprint could be "loaded" onto this disk, making it a tradable item. Players could then exchange these disks directly in-game or via a dedicated "Blueprint Trading Station" (perhaps an orbital module or a rare ground structure).

3.3.3 Blueprint Tiers and Progression

To maintain game balance and progression, blueprints should respect the player's technological advancement:

- Tier Locking: Blueprints containing components (e.g., advanced building materials like concrete, specific crafting stations) that the player has not yet unlocked in their tech tree would be marked as "locked" or "unavailable for construction."
- Visual Indication: The Blueprint Library and Workshop interfaces would clearly indicate the required tech tier for each blueprint. Players could still view locked blueprints but would be unable to project or build them until the prerequisites are met.

4. User Experience Flow

1. Build Phase: Player constructs a base in a prospect as usual.
2. Capture Phase: Player activates Structure Scanner, selects desired components, and confirms.
3. Save Phase: Player names, describes, tags, and reviews the material list in the saving interface. Pays any associated cost. Blueprint is saved to Personal Library.
4. New Prospect/Rebuild Phase: Player starts a new prospect. Accesses Blueprint Library.
5. Projection Phase: Player selects a blueprint, enters Projection Mode, positions the holographic guide, and reviews material requirements.
6. Construction Phase: Player either manually builds piece-by-piece following the guide or uses Assisted Batch Construction (if available and materials are present).
7. Sharing Phase (Optional): Player publishes blueprint to Workshop or shares via code/data disk.
8. Discovery Phase (Optional): Other players browse Workshop, find, and subscribe to blueprints, then use them in their own prospects.

5. Benefits and Impact

- Enhanced Creativity: Players are encouraged to design intricate and efficient bases, knowing their efforts can be preserved.
- Reduced Repetition: Eliminates the tedious process of rebuilding common structures from memory in every new prospect.
- Community Engagement: Fosters a thriving ecosystem of shared designs, encouraging collaboration and friendly competition.
- Accessibility: New players can benefit from experienced builders' designs, easing the learning curve for base construction.
- Strategic Depth: Adds new layers of resource management (for blueprint costs) and progression (tech-locked blueprints).
- Content Longevity: Provides a continuous stream of player-generated content, keeping the game fresh and engaging.

6. Potential Challenges and Considerations

- Performance: Large blueprints might impact game performance during projection or batch construction. Optimization will be key.
- Exploitation: Preventing players from creating overly complex or game-breaking designs that could be exploited (e.g., blocking spawns, creating unraidable structures in future PvP modes if introduced).
- Balance: Carefully tuning the costs for saving and the requirements for Assisted Batch Construction to ensure it doesn't trivialize the building aspect entirely.
- UI/UX: Designing intuitive interfaces for selection, saving, library management, and projection will be critical for player adoption.
- Modularity: Ensuring blueprints can be easily combined or modified, rather than being rigid, fixed structures.

7. Conclusion

The Icarus Blueprint System represents a significant opportunity to enrich the player experience by valuing their creative output, streamlining gameplay, and empowering community interaction. By carefully implementing the proposed mechanics, Icarus can evolve into a game where every meticulously designed base contributes not just to a single prospect's success, but to a shared legacy of innovation and survival.

By Tlokeki