Animapocalypse

Game Design Brief

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Games Pitch

Title: Animapocalypse

Platform: PC

Genre: 2D Side-scrolling platformer

Game Mode: Single-player

System Requirements:
OS: Windows XP/Vista/7

Processor: 1.8 GHz

Memory: 1GB RAM

Overview

Animapocalypse is a story-based side-scrolling platform adventure game which is viewed in a 2D perspective. You will play as the protagonist who is determined to save his dog and also the world.

Throughout the game, you will fight against many different enemy types; each level of the game has a unique range of enemies. You attack these enemies with a weapon of your choice, with three different upgradable weapons to choose from.

Levels in the game are all completely different, with each level having their own type of enemies, environments, art style and characters to engage with.

This narrative focused game should be approachable so anyone can play.

Unique Selling Point

2D Platforming games have recently became popular, with large publishers developing games of this genre for the first time in 10/20 years. The best example of this is Nintendo, with “New Super Mario Bros.” (2009), “Donkey Kong Country Returns” (2010) and “Kirby’s Epic Yarn (2011)”, all 2D side-scrolling platform games.

This genre offers nostalgia for older gamers and something new and interesting for the younger generation. The market for smaller games of this genre is not saturated and the number of people wanting another fun 2D platform adventure game is high.
Story

The game is set in the modern day and the military has been doing experiments with animals which have been funded by the Government. These experiments were used to turn animals into soldiers, most of the experiments were failures and the test subjects became mutated, creating overly aggressive and savage animals.

Due to a lack of livestock for farms, the Government offered a large number of these animals to farmers for very cheap prices. These animals produced a lot more food and were deemed safe to eat.

They obviously were not safe and all the meat and dairy products were contaminated with these mutated genes. When people and other animals ate these products, they too became savage. The only people safe from these infected foodstuffs were naturally, vegans. The majority of vegans have been brainwashed by a cult leader named Raphael, so the world has quickly descended into chaos.

The protagonist (who will be named by the player at the start of the game) is an assistant gardener for a small gardening company who has been avoiding the vegan cult group. The protagonist has not been affected by the “Animapocalypse” until one day his beloved dog Snuggles, accidently eats a sausage roll on the ground. Since his dog has now become infected with the mutated genes, the protagonist has to do everything in his power to find a cure for his dog and subsequently save the world.

Characters

Protagonist: He is the character which the user will play as.

Snuggles: This Shar Pei is the Protagonist’s dog and the reason why he is looking for a cure to eliminate the mutated genes.

Raphael: Is a vegan cult leader who thinks the “Animapocalypse is good and a cure does not need to be found.

Professor: A scientist who wants to help the Protagonist find a cure.

Glen: An uninfected Border Collie who lives on the farm.

Tidobot: A robot who is programmed to be friendly.

Test Subject 739#: A harmless mutant horse who was experimented on to create a unicorn.
Gameplay

With all 2D platformers, the gameplay mainly consists of running, jumping and quickly killing enemies. Animapocalypse is focused more towards combat with two levelling up systems, one for the player and one for the player’s weapon.

The player levels up by gaining experience from attacking enemies, every time the level increases, so does the player’s maximum health and strength.

Weapons

To level up the weapon, points must be collected, when the weapon is upgraded the design of it changes. These points are dropped by enemies and found throughout the game levels. This should encourage exploration when playing the game.

There are three weapons to choose from; a ranged weapon, a two-handed melee weapon and a hand-to-hand combat weapon.

Levels

There are four different story based levels in the game and one bonus level. Each level will have a boss battle at the end and a friendly character who will aid the Protagonist.

Level 1 begins with a tutorial section to introduce the player to the game’s controls and is set in the Protagonist’s home town. The player will have to fight the infected people who inhabit the town.

Level 2 is set on a farm and the player has to fight against infected animals. The boss is an infected farmer who owns the farm.

Level 3 is set in a science lab and the player will have to fight against robots and infected scientists. The boss is an infected scientist who wears a giant mech suit.

Level 4 is set in a military base and the player has to fight against mutated animal soldiers. The boss is a mutant animal General.

The bonus level can only be unlocked once the game has been completed. This level is set in a virtual simulation room found in the science lab from the third level. The player has to fight the previous bosses of the game and gains large amounts of points for upgrading weapons.
Analysis

Equipment

The main resource used to develop the game is Visual C++ and the Dark GDK library. This is available both at college and at home, so there should not be any problems for my team and me in terms of accessing programs to write code.

Photoshop may be used to create art for the game and animations. This is available at college but members of my team may not be able to access it at home or have any previous knowledge of the program. Therefore some problems may arise with the quality of art used for the game. To deal with this problem, it would be best to simplify the art and animations needed for the game so that they are easier to create. Microsoft Paint could be used as an alternative.

Maya could be used for creating the environments for the game, although the game is in 2D, it can still have environments rendered in 3D. My team should be able to access this program at home, but it is not always available at college. My team and I do not have any previous experience in importing work from Maya into C++ and our 3D modellng skills may not be sufficient enough to build a whole world for a game. Therefore to avoid any problems, I would prefer not to use Maya for 3D modelling as I feel I don't have enough knowledge of the program, but my team members may feel differently and want to use the program regardless.

Time

This game must be completed May, so we will have 4 months to plan, develop and evaluate the game.

We will have roughly two weeks for planning the game (February to March), one month for developing the code (March to April), one month for testing the code (April to May) and then finish with evaluation in May. This basic timeline will need to be worked on further with the rest of my team, as it’s difficult to estimate how long it will take for the team to work through these stages of game development.

I feel that having a planned out timeline is essential for working within a team, but I would need their input first so we had a timeline which suited the needs of our team. Making a timeline would be the first objective for the team and any problems should arise at this point and hopefully we will be able to sort them out sooner, rather than later.
Ability

As a team I feel that we will have the sufficient programming ability needed to develop this game. As an individual programmer I would probably struggle with programming this game, especially with the timescale.

The only problem I could see arising is with the levelling up system for weapon upgrades. If this is too difficult for my team and me, I would either simplify the idea or remove it from the game.

With any code that I write, I always want it to be easy to read and understandable. Hopefully I will bring this to the team, so the other members can easily use my code. One major problem which could occur is that we don’t understand each other’s code, therefore slowing down the development process and causing many unnecessary bugs. The easiest solution to this problem would be to have code which has good readability, which is properly indented and has a sufficient amount of comments so another member of the team can quickly understand the code.

Target Audience

The game is mainly focused towards younger, casual gamers. People who enjoy playing web browser games or small downloadable games sold on PSN/XBLA/Steam. There are a number of smaller sized 2D platformers which have released on these distribution services, eg. Limbo, Braid, Super Meat Boy.

People would want to play a humorous, small game which is fun and simple and not a game which is particularly intense and demanding.
References

- Braid
- DarkGDK
- Donkey Kong Country Returns
- Kirby's Epic Yarn
- Limbo
- Maya
- Mech Suit
- Microsoft Paint
- New Super Mario Bros. Wii
- Photoshop
- Platform Game
- PSN
- Side-scrolling Game
- Steam
- Super Meat Boy
- Visual C++
- XBLA