NEED.MOAR.SHEEP

Conclusion Chapter

Changes from alpha release

At the alpha release, there were still some things missing that we already know we wanted to have in the final game. Most notably, there was no music, no wall around the game field and no help screen.
Playtesting showed us some more possible improvements. The basic game concept seemed fun, but the testers were a little bored with the sparse game field. They also came up with many good Ideas of which we implemented about 80%. The changes include:

- Black sheep that need to be driven over the opponent's fences.
- Bushes that repulse sheep and slow down the player.
- A crown icon highlighting the winning player during gameplay.
- The power-up fuel is limited and indicated by bars.
- The power-up bars flash if they are used but empty (for better discoverability)
- There is a countdown before the game starts with an indicator mapping the controller to a particular screen.
- The sheep spawn faster if there are less sheep on the game field.
- A bar indicating the game progress depending on the game mode (time, points, free sheep). If the game ends, the bar has reached 100%.

We also fixed some bugs and did some other small improvements and tweaks.

Questions

- What was the biggest technical difficulty during the project?
    - We spent far too many hours dealing with importing models from Blender to Visual Studio. Textures would not load or the changes didn't appear in the game. The overall workflow was horrible.
- What was your impression of working with the theme? Do you think the theme enhanced your game, or would you have been happier with total freedom?
    - We really like the concept of our game and only thinking about dreams made us come up with it. However, once we had the idea, we noticed that it was more about falling asleep and not actual dreams. So we started to construct some confusing storyline; the sheep counting was actually the dream without the character realising (because otherwise, why would he still try to fall asleep by counting sheep?).
      During the implementation, we started caring less and less about the theme and concentrated on creating a fun game instead. In the end, we even replaced the main character (little boy) with a dog, since it was easier to model.
      In conclusion, having a theme was great for the brainstorming process, but in our case became mostly a burden after that.
- What would you do differently in your next game project?
    - Get external feedback earlier and more often.
- What was your greatest success during the project?
    - The most important thing for us was being proud of our own little game and seeing others enjoy playing it.
      The greatest moment for me (Stephan) was losing during a playtesting session against someone who had never played the game. I was beaten at my own game. Literally. But I was finally sure that the outcome of the game was linked to actual skills.
- Are you happy with the final result of your project? Do you consider the project a success?
    - Yes, we are. Yes, we do.
- To what extend did you meet your project plan and milestones (not at all, partly, mostly, always)?
    - Although we were generally a little behind our schedule, we mostly met the milestones. The main reason of falling behind was the sudden disappearance of a team member which took us some time to recover from and reorganise.
- What improvements would you suggest for the course organization? (perhaps in D1 evaluation)?
    - One or two extra controllers per team would be great. It was very hard to test multi player features, especially when coding alone.
    - The Lectures should be hold before we actually need to implement the things they contain.
- Did you like the XNA framework?
    - It was OK but we don't know many others to compare with.
    - The best part about XNA was the huge amount of good literature and online guides.

Personal Impression of the Course

Overall, we think that the course was quite good. It was challenging throughout and a lot of work, but in the end, it was definitely worth it. It is really cool to have a product in the end - our own game for the Xbox.

About the course in general: a lot of time was spend on brainstorming and prototyping. Building a physical prototype was fun, but it took a lot of time to build it. Since the physical prototype was still quite different from the actual game, observing the gameplay with the physical prototype didn't help that much. Especially since the controls for the game are completely different. Instead, one more cycle of having people playtest our game and giving us feedback on it so we can adapt it would have been more helpful, especially since the time we had to program the game was so limited. We feel like once we familiarized ourselves with XNA and with Blender, we started to get much more productive and thus a little more time for the actual programming part would have been great.

Furthermore, some lectures didn't contribute that much to our actual game development. This was sometimes due to the fact that the lecture was behind the game development schedule, and it presented things that we already had to learn ourselves for the game. Also, the lectures were on quite a general level.

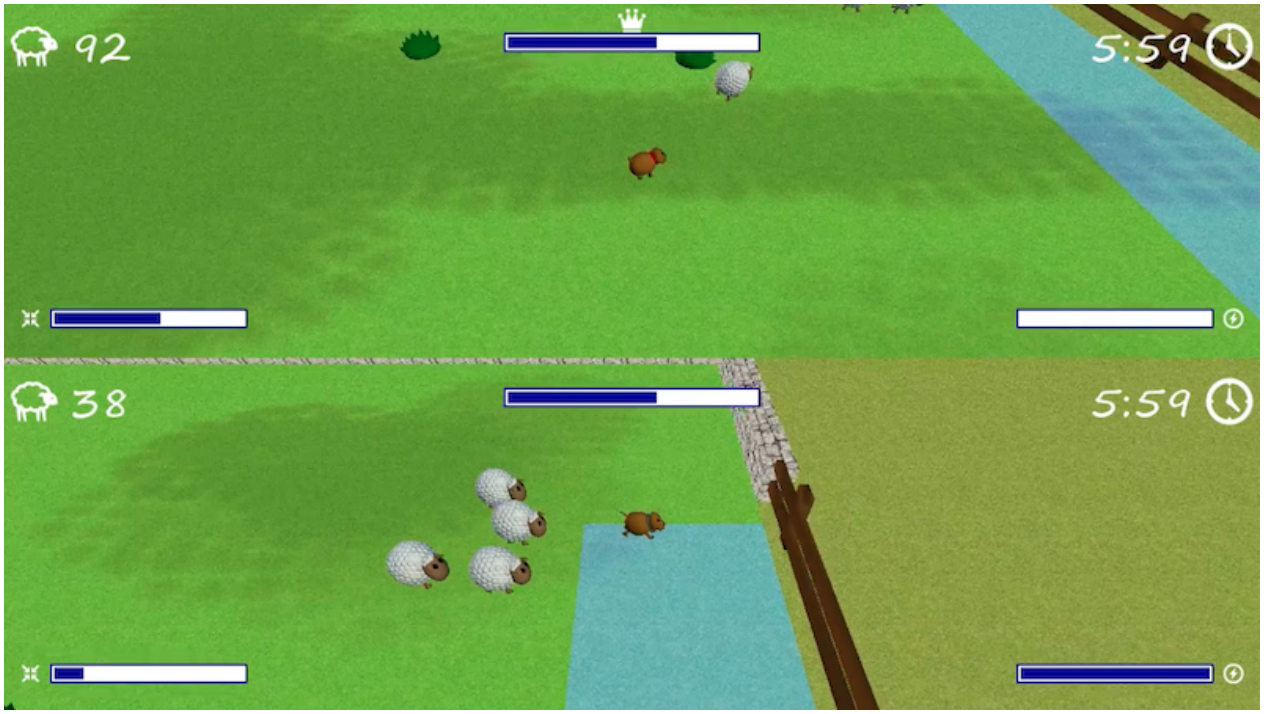
It was really cool in the end to have players playtest our game and see that they are having fun playing it - it gives you a feeling of success :)

Screenshots

game menu:

single player:

2 players: (the blue player is using an ‘attract’ power-up)



4 players: