Gaming Lab: Projects Comments

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1 Battle Balls

- Most favorite: The hole game concept seems cool and well defined. It somehow reminds the concept of Bomberman, with some dynamic adds. Cool!

- Least Favorite: I really cannot say. I had the feeling that everything was taken in account carefully. I have tested the flash prototype, and it seems fun. So, just get it done, dudes ;)

- Suggestion: The buildings at the border are somehow dangerous to be broken, because of the danger of falling. You might consider to put there some kind of special bonus, maybe unique, there.

2 Gravity Bound

- Most favorite: The main character! It seems great.

- Least Favorite: The visual design, except for the main character, was quite not defined. The abilities/powers were also not so clear. But I'm looking forward to play a demo.

- Suggestion: Even if it's not your primal objective, try to make the visual design consistent. Who are the enemies? What kind of looking/technology do they have? Even if it's easier to go and grab whatever you find as free models, imho the game risks to suffer for lack of consistency, and could really be better if you manage to define it's universe.

3   Parasite Paradise

- Most favorite: I love the game concept and the draws.

- Least Favorite: Sounds a really hard task. The most interesting part is the dynamism of the giant, which is quite complicated if you want to give the feeling of it being alive.

- Suggestion: Falling down is the kind of thing that make you break your controller against the wall in a frustration attack. Try also to avoid scripted dynamics for the level. It should be alive in a general way, in my opinion.

4   Speed Thugs

- Most favorite: Futuristic high-speed racing with bonus and powers. It's simply cool.

- Least Favorite: Most people will complain about the lack of innovation. I like clones, if they are good. My only concern is the choice of cel-shading. Usually it reminds cartoons, and is not so easy linkable with futuristic vehicles.

- Suggestion: Try to use the correct colors palette. For an example of fast gameplay with cel-shadeing go and look at www.warsow.net. It's a first person shooter, but some of their ideas could be useful. They are not yet finished with the conversion of the graphic style, but one aspect that has been discussed in the dev team is the use of color palette. You can make thing pop up in your screen just by giving an higher RGB range. So for instance say that your vehicles should be in between 200-250, the bonuses 150-200 and the race map 100-150. This is actually what happens in cartoons, where main character simply pops up because of their vivid colors. Imho this would integrate the cel-shading aspect, and really give the cartoonish feeling. This will also improve the playability, simply because you better understand what's happening on the screen.

5   Titor's Equilibrium

Amazing, incredible, outstanding!!! And the graphic guy, he's so cute!

6   S.P.H.E.R.E.S

- Most favorite: I like the speed, the level concept, and the hole idea.

- Least Favorite: Nothing in special. Just don't underestimate the physic engine!

- Suggestion: Gameplaywise I suggest to consider the concept of having portals, or simply teleports. It's really simple to implement them, and they improve the level potential, especially if they are one way. I created some levels for first person shooters and I guess that some concept works here too. Usually the way to place them is as a final refinement of the arena. You draw the arena sketch with the main areas, the connectivity, and then you try to make it simple as possible. At that point if (and only if) you have some dead end areas you put a portal. Take some time considering if you simply want to connect two dead ends, or if you want to put the portal destination right in an important area. Sometimes it's really cool to kick campers-players butt by placing a teleport in a good way. But don't abuse the concept. Put them only if you need them... I also suggest to consider a clean visual design. It's easier to be done, and looks cool. Btw, if you embrace the high-tech visual design, don't hesitate to contact me, because it seams to me that our projects have things in common, and we might share some visual tricks, or kill each other if we see that the other might win the microsoft contest ;-]

7   T.B.D

- Most favorite: The cooperative thing.

- Least Favorite: This kind of games are quite outdated, in the sense that you hardly find a child who really spend time in this kind of shot 'em up. The classic player is around 30 year old, which is not a problem, but simply say that the gender is strictly bound to a generation.

- Suggestion: If you can, concentrate really in the cooperative gameplay aspects. Make it fun, and well contructed. Use for instance, simultaneous interaction (like two shots at two different position at the same time, required to unlock whatever). And if you have the possibility, spend time on the visual design. It actually was one big aspect in the old school games. Personally I would hardly play more than 1 minutes a scrolling shot 'em up with crap graphic. Try to define your craft, and the bonus with one technology, and the enemy with an other technology, so that it's visually clear, as

soon as something appear, if it's good or bad. And try to have cool land-scapes, and background.