



Alpha Release Report

Current Status

We have completed the milestones laid down to achieve our high target and have also completed some bits from our Extras. We also conducted an informal playtesting with 7-8 people and observed that we had to explain the game context and controls before they can play. This led to the inclusion of story as part of our loading screen and also reminded us to put a help screen in the main menu as well.

Playtesting also helped us to identify and fix UI related bugs.

Gameplay Changes

We have added walls for Morpheus. When we implemented the walls as we first planned, it became apparent that simply drawing a wall behind the player is not a good solution: A Morpheus player with a lot of dreams might not be fast enough to block off the opponent. Furthermore, players usually want to place a wall right where they are, and not run perpendicular to their regular movement direction for a while in order to draw the wall. As a result, not a lot of walls were being built.

Therefore, the wall is now being built in a much simpler way: A straight line perpendicular to the moving direction of the player. Holding down the button makes the wall longer, releasing the button finally places the wall. This allows for fast placement in hectic situations.

We also added “Extra Speed” as special power for Phobetor which serves as a counter for the defensive walls built by Morpheus.

Another thing we noticed while playtesting was that players usually didn't use the throwing feature and instead just walked into each other's dreams/humans. We therefore improved the impact of throwing by using thrown dreams in a grenade-like fashion: A thrown dream that hits the ground now takes out all enemy dreams in a certain radius instead of being neutralized on the one-by-one basis. This allows for very powerful quick game-changing moves.

We also added the effect of disturbance created by too many dreams surrounding a sleeping human, therefore, the probability of a (sleeping) human waking up increases with addition of new dreams above a threshold.

Other Changes since the Interim Report

We decided to introduce our story during the loading screen in order to explain what the game is all about.

Showing the story in the loading screen is a good idea as well because our loading time is at about one minute on the Xbox 360, due to map generation from height maps. Weirdly, the game starts up almost instantly on the PC.

We have added some particles using the Mercury particle engine for effects: Sleeping players now emit “zzz”, neutralizing dreams burst like bubbles. Walls have a fire at their base.

We have changed our fixed camera to a moving camera which automatically adjusts to where the action takes place in the game. This improves the visual quality while also making larger maps playable.

Sound effects have been added for throwing, exploding, neutralization. The music has been changed to use XACT instead of the XNA MediaPlayer class, because that would introduce a lag when switching songs in game. A simple settings screen has been added to swap players, adjust the sound volume and fix the camera. Backgrounds have been improved, there is now a cloud base in game and a sky background in the menu. Several maps have been designed, added to the game, tested, and adjusted for balancing. A crosshair has been added for figuring out where dreams land once they are thrown. The behavior of dreams has been tweaked such that they attract each other now with a force instead of an impulse, leading to physically more believable and fun (you can pull away dreams more easily) behaviour. Various bugs have been fixed.

Further Work

At this stage, we are focusing on balancing the gameplay using inputs from our playtesting participants and self observations.

Random things that would be a good idea to polish

- Animations: The walk cycles could be more realistic. - **Improved, but not perfect**
- Humans: Awake/sleeping humans could have some kind of yellow/purple glow, in order to distinguish more quickly between awake and sleeping humans. - **Awake humans now have a purple color, sleeping humans emit “zzz”.**
- Shadows: There are no shadows as of now. - **Dropped because of time constraints**
- Obstacles: We could use a nicer model for the obstacles. There are great free models for greek pillars available. - **Dropped because it's not as important, the current obstacles are good enough and we can use cliffs as obstacles instead**

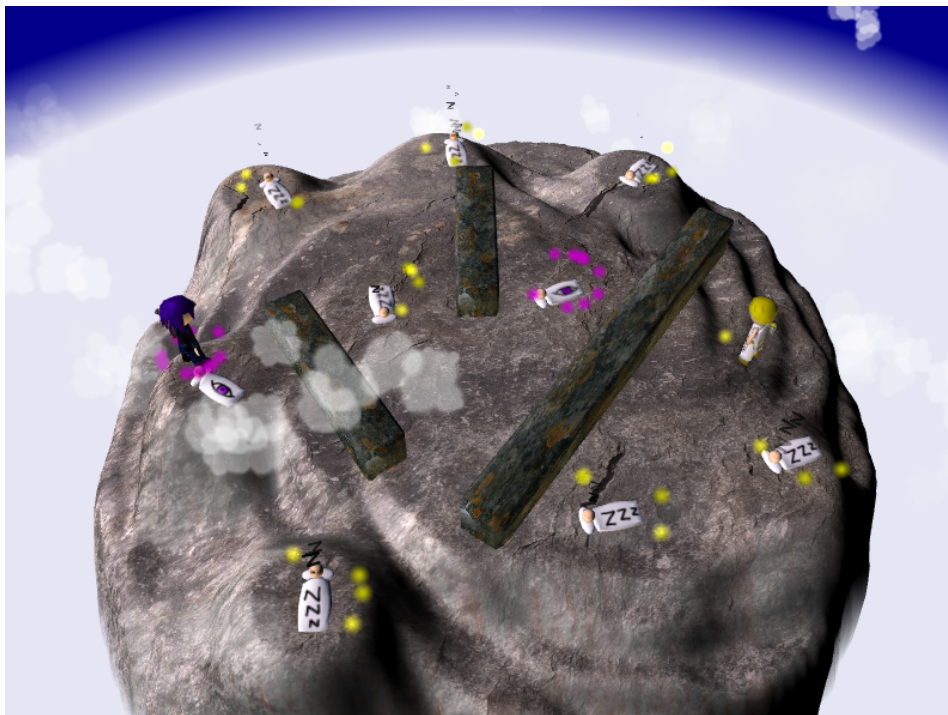
Detailed Progress Check

- *Functional Minimum* - Complete
- *Low Target* - Complete
- *Desired Target* - Complete
- *High Target* - Complete
 - Obstacles (Random) → Multiple Maps: Complete
 - Throwing (parabola) - Complete
 - Angled camera - Complete
 - Clouds - Complete
- *Extra* - Complete
 - Fog of War : **Dropped due to smaller view area.** Instead we now use moving camera.
 - Disturbing effects of too many dreams around sleeping human - Complete
 - Angled camera - Complete, extended to moving camera
 - Physical cloud simulation - **Dropped because of time and GPU constraints**
 - Particle effects & explosion for Dreams - Complete

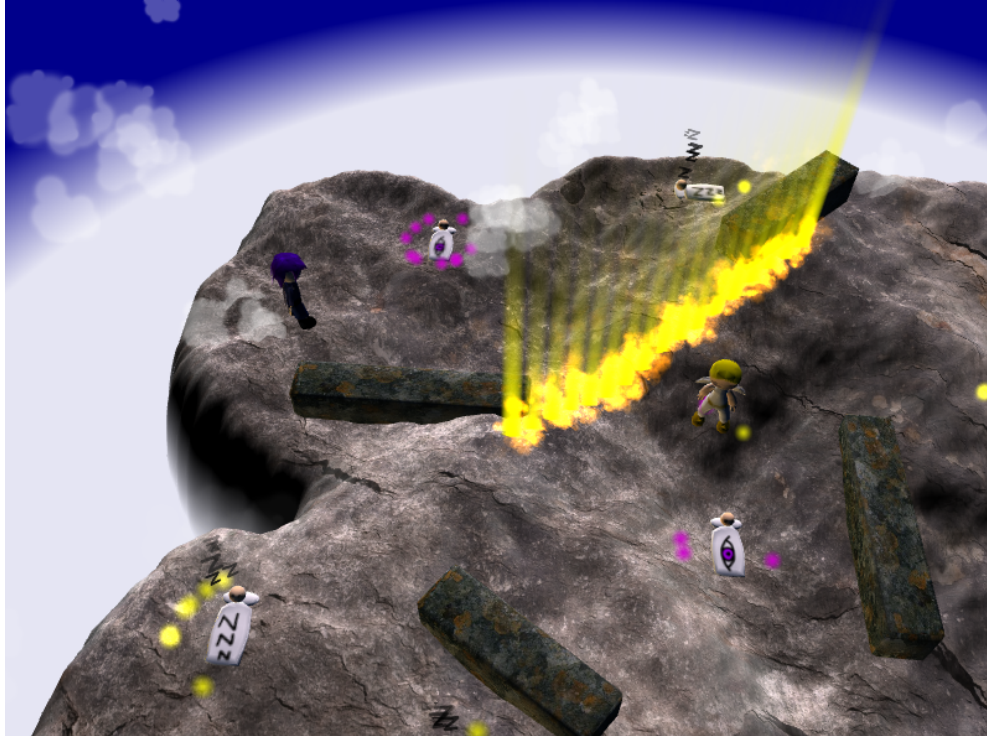
ScreenShots



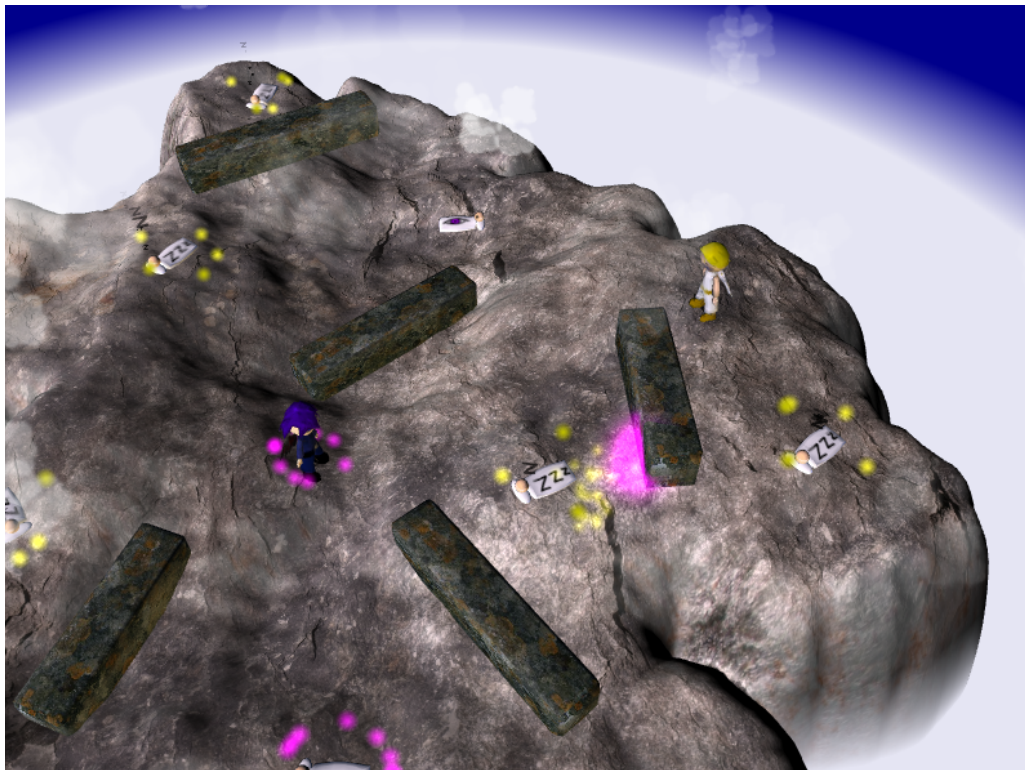
Map selection screen



To protect its snoring humans



Morpheus created a wall



And Phobos replied by exploding a dream grenade

Other maps

