

Polarity - Conclusion

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1. Summary of final results

1.1 Final results

Our game consists of 13 levels with different degrees of difficulties, ranging from introductory levels with no obstacles at all, up to very hard levels which require multiple attempts even for experienced players.

The game is rendered in 3D and includes a depth-of-field post-rendering effect to visually enrich the game.

1.2 Significant changes since Alpha Release

In the alpha release we only had 6 levels with a very high difficulty.

The game now always provides a choice of 3 unlocked levels. This way, players don't get stuck in the game, when they can't complete a specific level.

We have included audio in the game. A catchy soundtrack for the title screen and samples which are played during the gameplay. An important addition are funny sounds, which are played when the player dies. These sounds make dying much less frustrating.

We have included a settings screen which allows to reset the score and to unlock all levels, for those players, who don't want to play the levels in sequence.

3. Commentary about our experience during the class

3.1 How well did your initial design ideas materialize into the final game?

All core ideas are in the final game. The core ideas were:

- a simple physics engine, which supports gravity, magnetism and collisions,
- gameplay on a 2D surface projected into 3D space,
- and collectible stars.

However, we were not able to include any of the advanced ideas. Such as

- items which temporarily affect the physics of the game (gravity, weight of player, magnetic power of player)
- items which open new pathways or which disable obstacles

3.2 Were you able to follow your development schedule, or did you deviate significantly from it?

We gradually fell behind schedule, because we were not able to do all the amount of work with just two people.

Also, maybe, it was a mistake to implement the game editor ahead of schedule. On the other hand, all advanced levels were created with this editor. Only the simpler ones were done by manually coding XML files.

3.3 How did the different elements of the project structure (development schedule, prototype, playtesting, etc.) contribute to or hinder your progress?

The project structure was very helpful. Since we are only a team of two, we did not have to rely much on it, because coordination was very simple.

4. Personal impression of the course

4.1 Did it meet your expectations?

Yes. Although we were only able to implement the essence of the game, with no additional embellishments, we believe that we have created a game that is fun to play, and that is nice to look at.

4.2 Are you happy and proud of your game?

Yes. Given all the work that we invested into this game, we think that we got very far, although we were just a team of two.

4.3 Do you feel there wasn't enough time or that the schedule was too compressed?

For such a small team, the schedule was too tight.

Having a team of three, would have been ideal. This would have allowed us to achieve many more things.

5. Additional questions

5.1 What was the biggest technical difficulty during the project?

We faced the following technical challenges:

- Developing a semi-3D physics simulation. The simulation is performed in 3D, but then we pushed the player object back into the current 2D surface.
- We had to implement a workaround for the XML serialization used by XNA, because it was too weak to store our levels.

5.2 What was your impression of working with the theme?

Having a theme was very helpful, because it allowed to find consensus for the game much quicker.

5.3 Do you think the theme enhanced your game, or would you have been happier with total freedom?

The theme greatly enhanced our game. It allowed us to focus on fewer ideas.

5.4 What would you do differently in your next game project?

We would skip the level editor and code the levels directly in XML.

5.5 What was your greatest success during the project?

After the final presentation our game was one of the most played games by the visitors.

5.6 Are you happy with the final result of your project?

Yes. We believe that our game is easy and fun to play.

5.7 Do you consider the project a success?

Absolutely.

5.8 To what extend did you meet your project plan and milestones (not at all, partly, mostly, always)?

Functional minimum - completed

Low target - completed

Desired target - partially completed. We would like to have implemented more collectable items - not just the stars.

High target - untouched

Extras - untouched

5.9 What improvements would you suggest for the course organization? (perhaps in D1 evaluation)?

The course was very well organized.

5.10 Did you like the XNA framework?

No.

The weak garbage collector provided by the framework is hindering development a lot. It would have been better, if XNA did not have a garbage collector at all.

Also XML support in the content pipeline is not well thought out.