

“Project Rampage”

TOJam 8 Game Design V1.0

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Overview

It's TOJam, let's have fun! The theme this year is “uncooperative” which will be represented by the game's main character who is tormented by an inner struggle between his desire to be good and evil.

Gameplay

Currently we have 3 gameplay stages designed which might end up being overly ambitious. We'll start by prototyping the Joust Stage (tbd by team agreement) and then move on to the other stages time permitting.

Controller

The game is designed to be playable by 2 – 8 players using the 2x4 Input Device Of Deathening or standard keyboard or 2 gamepads (with 4 buttons each?).

Input Prompts

We want player's to focus on the screen; not constantly looking back and forth to the controller to see which button they need to press next. We're going to try to avoid using abstract on-screen button prompts (unless we find them to be necessary during prototyping).

Animation feedback from the characters will act as button input prompts and the button layouts will be so dead-simple that player's will be able to keep their eyes on the screen while relying on their fingers to know which button to press next.

Controls

Gameplay is divided into 3 modes: joust, sword and fists. Each character is controlled by 4 buttons which can be manipulated by 1 - 4 players on each team. In each mode, the controls are essentially the same because we want player's to walk-in and start playing the game w/out a lot of floundering with controller confusion.

Joust Stage

In the Joust stage, the characters are mounted on horses with lances raised. Each of the 4 buttons corresponds to each of the horse's 4 legs. To drive the horse, the 4 buttons are pushed in sequence: 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3 4 etc. The better the players are at keeping a good/fast rhythm going, the faster the horse will ride. The horse will never "stumble", it'll just go faster or slower based on input speed and timing.

Victory

The rider who is traveling the fastest at the point of impact will be the winner. The losing rider will be knocked to the ground. The winner will expertly dismount his horse and stand before the loser with sword raised, ready to start the next round.

Todo: Create asset list for the joust stage.

Sword Stage (optional)

In the Sword stage, the characters face off with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other. The character will play 4 animations that add up to a single combo when the buttons are pressed in the correct sequence for example: **Step forward, Block, Attack anticipation, Attack**. Each animation is triggered by a button, but the buttons have to be pressed in the correct sequence to play out the entire combo: 1, 2, 3, 4.

Each animation in the combo sequence leaves the character either vulnerable or invulnerable to the other character's attack:

1. **Step Forward**: The character moves towards the other player. During this animation, the character is vulnerable to enemy Attack.
2. **Block**: The character raises his shield. During this animation, the character is invulnerable to enemy Attack.
3. **Attack Anticipation**: The character raises his sword high, preparing to attack. During this animation, the character is vulnerable to attack.
4. **Attack**: The character slashes his sword downward. The character is vulnerable to Attack.

Just like with the horse, the timing of the button presses during SWORD and FISTS will determine how well your character does against the other - however in these modes speed is not necessarily the key - you might want to hold on the block as the other player's attack comes down for example.

Animation Note: At the end of each animation, the character should hold the pose until the next button in the sequence is pressed.

Gameplay Note: The timing of the buttons could impact certain aspects of the combo. For example, if you hold the Attack Anticipation longer, the Attack could do more damage. This would add tactics to the button presses as well as risk/reward.

Control note: we could add a twist here where the controls are reversed like 4, 3, 2, 1 so that we keep the player on their toes w/out adding too much complexity.

Health

We could have either a health bar or single hit kill, tbd.

Victory

A player wins when her opponent's health bar is totally empty. The losing character's sword and shield will be flung into the air. The winning character will casually toss his weapons aside and stand before the lower with fists raised ready to start the next round.

Todo: create asset list for the sword stage.

Fisticuffs Stage (optional)

In the Fisticuffs stage, the character's face off in hand-to-hand combat. This is similar to the SWORD mode except w/out weapons. There are 4 animations that add up to a combo sequence and each animation is triggered by a button 1, 2, 3, 4.

Control Note: We could twist the button configuration again to be like 1, 2, 4, 3 (we can figure this out as we prototype).

Health

Same as Sword mode.

Victory

A player wins when her opponent's health bar is totally empty. The losing character will fall to the ground in defeat. The winner will stand over him, fists and head raised high in the air.

Todo: create asset list for the fisticuffs stage.

Game Structure

Currently we're planning to do a pretty elaborate presentation including a story progression which relies on cinematic moments. We probably won't have time to do everything so we'll start with gameplay first, then the main menu, then swapping out scenery and finally the cinematic moments.

Main Menu

The game opens with a simple Main Menu – each player presses a Play button on their controller before the game will begin (confirms that there are 2 players).

Intro Cinematic (backstory)

We do a brief introduction to show that the main character is going through some kind of good/evil internal struggle. Keep this simple, perhaps a single image at most – this could even be the background for the main menu.

Gameplay Sequence

1. Battle Introduction Cinematic:

At the start of each battle, the main character (as 1 person) will walk to the center of the screen. A Villager will appear on the far right side of the screen waving and saying "hello". The character will split into 2 playable characters, representing good and evil.

2. Gameplay

Players fight in a tournament to the death (see gameplay section).

3. Victory Cinematic

At the end of each battle, a short victory cinematic will play. This cinematic will be different depending on the winning player:

- If the “good” player wins, then the character will greet the villager, the sky will get a little lighter, the trees will grow leaves, birds will sing, etc.
- If the “evil” player wins then the character will strike down the Villager, the sky will get a little darker, the trees will drop leaves, blue birds will turn to vultures, etc.

4a. Go To 1

The character will meet something like 3 to 5 villagers in his travels, each time he meets a villager, we will repeat the gameplay sequence.

4b. End Game Cinematic:

After several battles (tbd), the character will reach his home (just a still image or staged with in-game assets?). Depending on which player won more battles, the village will either be beautiful and health or it will be burned and horrible. From here the game will return to the Main Menu.

Todo: cinematics assets list.

Presentation

This should feel like a broadsheet/comic book - medieval in style, with inky outlines and flat colors, but with the possibility of changing up the cameras as the modes shift, or having multiple views on one screen.

One idea for the aesthetic is that everything takes place on a sort of “puppet stage” with 2D characters and backgrounds and a perspective camera to give us an overall 2.5D style. When there are scenery changes, we handle them as if this were a physical stage eg. Pretty trees drop down through slots in the floor and then evil trees slide up to take their place.

Jousting stage

A wide top panel showing the whole field with tiny knights at either end charging at one another, and then a center splitscreen showing a zoomed in view of each knight so the players can feel the horses' footfalls and know how they're doing.

Sword and Fisticuffs Stages

We should be able to cover these battles with a single camera, zoomed in tight on the characters.

Scenery Changes

At the end of each battle, the background scenery will change a little bit to show that the character's actions are having a direct impact on his lands.

Todo: Create a scenery asset list.

Art note: how do we handle lighting?

Audio

We need to discuss how music and sfx will be triggered in game, who will implement them, etc.

Music

Music inspired by the period but as epic as we can possible handle it.

Sound FX

Cheering crowds, galloping horses, clanging shields/swords, grunting, villager talking, etc...

Todo: create an SFX and music asset lists

Interface

Main Menu

A simple background image with the game title and an interface for starting the game.

Todo: create a main menu asset list (background w/title, buttons, music, sfx, etc)

In Game HUD

The HUD will largely be figured out as we prototype the gameplay. Here's a short list of what we might need:

- Health bars for both players
- Round countdown eg: Ready! Fight!
- Scoring to show wins/losses

Todo: create an interface asset list