A Short Climb - Prototype

CSCI/CITA280: Game Programming

Thomas Marshall, Alex Tate-Moffo

Questions

Our primary question in coming up with our prototype was, “How should obstacles be laid out in the level in our platformer level, such that the level makes sense to navigate vertically?”. Additionally, this question fed into some other smaller questions, such as “How long should the level be?”, “What types of obstacles should we include?”, and “What movement abilities should the player have to navigate these obstacles?”.

Our Prototype

We decided the best way to answer these questions was to sketch out a mock level layout and play with the different elements and their locations, before we actually move on to code. Our level prototype is a digital sketch which depicts a large tree, serving as the context for the upward movement of the level. The tree is divided into five “stages,” which will essentially function as checkpoints from which the player cannot fall down from, and features the player (for scale), two different enemy types, two types of moving platforms, one type of pickup item, and a goal location (potentially the location of a boss).

What We Learned

Our prototype did serve to answer our questions well, we believe. In laying everything out, it was easy to tell that, in order to keep the level relatively short, player movement needed to be fairly restricted. Otherwise, we would have to compensate for different movement abilities and lengthen the design for a greater difficulty curve. Additionally, the prototype helped us to settle on the different types of obstacles, since we had to come up with a way to progressively introduce them that was not too challenging or confusing to the player.