Bounty

"Kill or be killed"

By Guvvy Atwal

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Game Overview:

Game Concept

Bounty is a 2D action-adventure side scroller game. Revolving around a lonesome bounty hunter called Blaze. He is tasked with slaying 4 extremely dangerous monsters that each have a bounty adding up to a 1 billion galactic credits. No bounty hunter has ever come close to slaying these legendary beasts. This heightens the theme of risk and reward. Because if successful, Blaze will obtain treasure beyond his wildest dreams and be famous across the galaxy universally recognised. Or if not it may come at the cost of losing his life, reputation and being remembered as another failed bounty hunter that died chasing impossible dreams.

All 4 monsters reside on the planet Endfall. Requiring players to traverse through a variety of dangerous ecosystems. Full of threatening enemies and areas to explore.

Genre

Bounty is an action-adventure game. Its action is seen with the player engaging enemies in combat. Its adventure elements are identified with player exploration. When players unlock new area using newly unlocked abilities. Or perhaps finding new weapons and pieces of lore.

Furthermore, Bounty can be categorised into a sub-genre of action-adventure. As there are dozens of action-adventure games. The primary sub-genre Bounty strongly belongs with is Metroidvania. This sub-genre is well known for encouraging exploration and back-tracking. Plus containing dense environments, players must get through using their abilities. Upon unlocking new skills or weapons allows players to back track to previously inaccessible areas. That usually contains a useful item to reward the player for their efforts.

Bounty shares many similarities with the Metroidvania genre. Therefore, Bounty will take inspiration from games like Super Metroid. Plus Bounty's narrative aims to capture and create its own eerie mood and make players feel a sense of isolation. Because its protagonist Blaze only has himself to rely on.

Another inspiration for its genre is The Messenger. It notably features a variety of different environments, and will be useful as a reference for how detailed Bounty's 4 areas will be designed in terms of look and functionality (e.g., ensure enemies match the area they are in). Plus, the game emphasis fast paced traversal and combat encounters. Bounty aims to emulate a similar fast paced type of gameplay.

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Target Audience

Bounty's target demographic aims to appeal towards males over the age of 16+. The audience is more aiming to appeal towards the male gender because its protagonist Blaze is a man. Therefore, marketing the game towards males could prove viable because of this gender potentially identifying strongly with the protagonist and his journey. However, games are for everyone, and Bounty can be enjoyed by any person regardless of identity.

The choice of the age rating is due to Bounty containing violence, blood, and dark story themes. That may not be suitable for young children who aren't of a similar age of 16+. Because they may lack the emotional intelligence to process or enjoy the game. Despite limiting accessibility to younger aged demographics, this age rating has its benefits. One being it allows for more creative freedom when it comes to how violent, and the gory Bounty can get. Resulting in the design of areas and combat encounters to have far less restrictions. For example, combat sequences can be a lot more creative with how much more detailed and bloody death and attack animations are. Especially since many enemies are alien creatures and not humans. Furthermore, many adults will likely gain enjoyment from this game because it contains high-quality gameplay and certain elements like the narrative, aesthetic, and mood this game gives off could be rather appealing.

Bounty is a 2D action-adventure game that is a brand-new IP in gaming. It is unlikely to gain mainstream success the instant it comes out. This is because new 2D Metroidvania games need to be rather special to catches a mass audience's eye. Plus, this genre is far less popular than other game genres (like open world, shooters, battle royal and extra). Therefore, it makes sense for Bounty to be available on multiple gaming platforms. That way it can gain wide stream accessibility for as many potential players as possible. So, this game will be available on the Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X/S, Xbox One and PC (via Steam).

Game Flow Summary

Bounty is a 2D action-adventure, Metroidvania game that contains a mixture of linear and non-linear gameplay. Bounty can be described as quite a linear experience because it has set direction players are guided to follow. Through a variety of environmental cues found across the many explorable areas of the game. For example, a player travelling upwards in an area may only be given one option to get to the next area. By perhaps slicing a computer system in half with their sword. That triggers a door to be unlocked and allows the player to progress to the next area.

However, the non-linearity aspect of Bounty can be identified in the form of backtracking. As throughout Bounty players will be constantly discovering new weapons and abilities. Not only giving players more skills to use, but also more freedom of choice when exploring. As with these new abilities/weapons the player can backtrack to previous inaccessible areas and unlock them with your newfound weapons/abilities. For example, a wall may only be destroyed with a certain weapon type like a rocket. Which the player may initially ignore until they unlock a rocket

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weapon. Now they have the choice to either continue down their current path. Or backtrack in the form of returning to that wall to destroy it and progress down that new path the wall was blocking. Rewarding backtracking in the form of special items creates a positive feedback gameplay loop, which aims to incentivise players to veer off the linear path and go down other routes available to them. This is a key benefit because the player in game will be statistically stronger and from a psychological perspective feel more rewarded. As the player is actively rewarded for their efforts, in taking a non-linear approach.

To better summarise the game flow of Bounty here is a diagram displaying its gameplay loop:
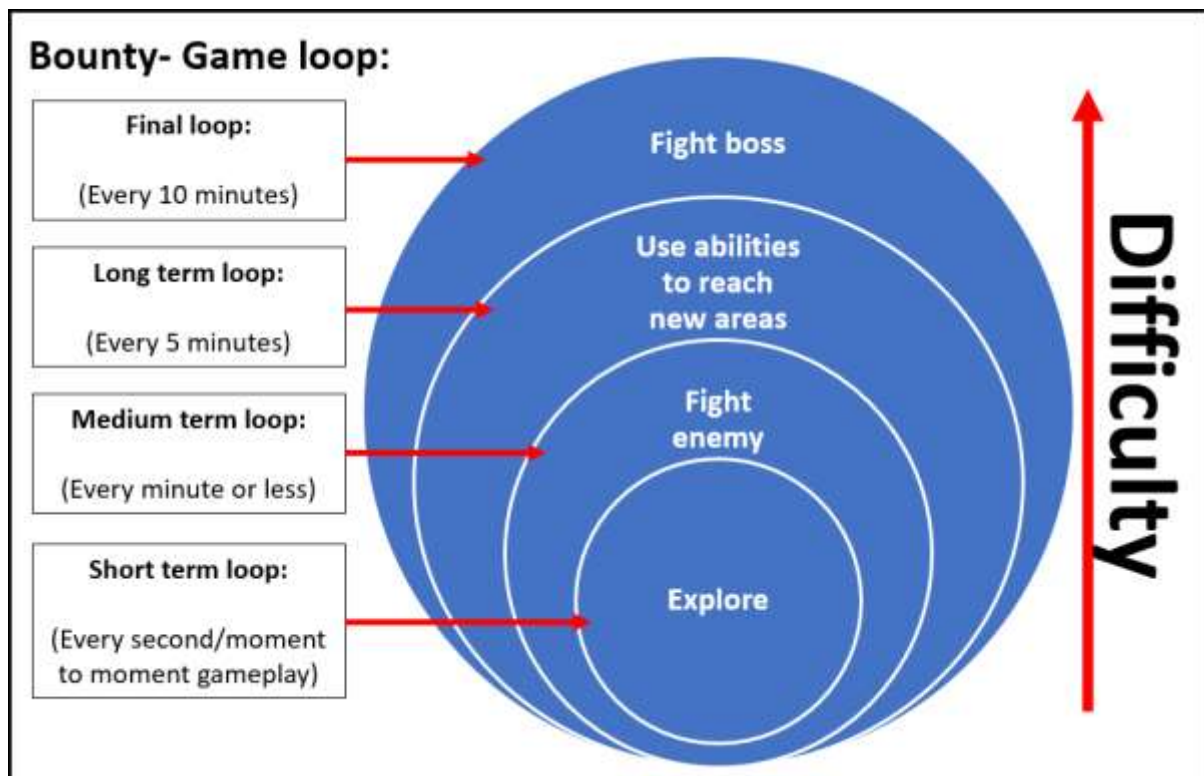
Look and Feel

Bounty has gone for a 16-bit pixel art style direction because 2D games tend to look beautiful and hold a timeless quality. Giving the game a very high-quality look and feel, despite the style being pixel art. In gameplay Bounty uses a fixed 2D camera angle. Typically seen in 2D side-scroller games like The Messenger (as seen on right) that follows the player.

This allows for more focus to be drawn to the different environment's players will traverse through and combat encounters. When considering physics of Bounty, there are many platforming sections that will require the player to jump or run up a wall.

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Therefore, the physics of Bounty are quite floaty. Allowing the player to have a lot of fun traversing through these environments. Giving more credit to Blaze (protagonist) being this highly skilled bounty hunter. If he feels very strong and silky smooth to play as.

Bounty contains Sci-Fi adventure themes. Since Blaze is a space bounty hunter who uses futuristic technology when it comes to his weapons and abilities. For example, when fighting enemies, he will use his special energy switch-gun. A futuristic weapon that acts as an energy sword and allows the wielder to switch to a gun! Plus, when traversing Blaze can jump for longer when activating his rocket boots. Furthermore, in the introduction cutscene of the game Blaze flies onto planet Endfall in his spaceship. The theme of adventure is recognised by Blaze's journey to slay the 4 legendary monsters. As throughout this journey he will be physically and mentally tested, fight enemies, and explore many environments to complete his adventure.

Some moods present within Bounty must be despair, triumph, remorse, and intensity. Moods such as remorse will be solely tied to key narrative moments. Where throughout gameplay players will experience moments of heightened intensity through boss encounters. Or completing objectives like flee the area that is rigged to blow-up after a set amount of time. Despair can be felt from looking at certain assets in the environment like corpses of previous bounty hunters. This reinforces the ever-present level of danger in the game. However, when Blaze does start to overcome platforming challenges, gains stronger weapons/abilities, and slays bosses. Should result in a shift to a more triumphant mood surging players with a newfound sense of hope and strength. Leading to them being one step closer to being the greatest bounty hunter in the galaxy.

Monetisation Model

For the consumer to play Bounty they just need to pay the premium RRP of £19.99 or less. There are no other monetisation models that plan to be implemented for and post release of this game.

Core Pillars of design:

Pillar 01: Upgrades

Upgrades come in many forms such as statistical upgrades. Where for example players can upgrade the quantity of health points, special ammo from gun weapons, damage of main katana weapon and extra. In addition to this player can acquire upgrades through new special abilities that have a big impact on switching up the gameplay. For example, players can acquire rocket boot upgrade that allow you to jump for longer and reach platforms that before were impossible to reach.
Now a reason why upgrades are justified in being a core design pillar is because it leads to the player feeling much stronger after acquiring every upgrade. Especially

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since these upgrades will purposely be placed in specific locations. As if a player either completes a challenging boss, or platforming section it is only fitting to reward them with an upgrade. Thus, making the players core strength and abilities feel earnt and rewarding to acquire. Leading to a positive increase in overall player engagement/enjoyment with this satisfactory reward system. Since it achieves the design philosophy of making the player feel strong and powerful. Even connecting to the narrative because if the player in game feels strong and can take on any threat. Then the idea of Blaze being the greatest bounty hunter in the galaxy is much more believable.

Pillar 02: Interconnected environments

The second core design pillar in Bounty is its interconnected environments. These have a huge role at adding more depth to exploration. As connecting each environment together allows gameplay to consistently flow at a good pace. Since there will be a purpose for why an entrance is not accessible because of a specific weapon/ability the player lacks. Immediately encouraging the player to realize they should try exploring another path/route from the same or a different area they are in. Effectively resulting in the player being constantly engaged with the game.

It should be mentioned there is some high synergy between this core pillar and the upgrade core pillar. Because specific interconnected environments can only be accessed through the use certain abilities the player will unlock. For example, weapon type attachments like rockets can only break specific blocks that block a certain path. But upon destruction of said path will reveal a new path the player can follow. Clearly highlighting the connective design tissue present between interconnected environments and the upgrade core pillars of design. That players will experience throughout their time progressing through Bounty.

Pillar 03: Combat

The third core pillar of design present within Bounty is combat. No matter where the player is on the map, every area will usually contain many enemies. Meaning a core aspect of Bounty's gameplay is engaging enemies in real-time combat. Furthermore, even when it comes to main boss fights, combat is heavily present. This is because boss fights are where the player is best challenged at their skill and knowledge of using different weapons/abilities to slay the boss. Which goes to show how much of a core presence combat has in Bounty because if the player isn't traversing through the map, they are likely engaging enemies in combat. Hence why combat is a core design pillar because of how much of prominent presence it has within Bounty.

Gameplay Mechanics:

Mechanic 01- Game mode

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Bounty will be a single player video game. At the start of the game players are offered a choice between two difficulty options: casual and standard. That way any potential users who desire a more streamlined experience won't need to worry too much about a challenging experience. Since there is a casual difficulty option. Upon completing Bounty, players can unlock a master difficulty option to select. Allowing players, the option to replay the game on a much harder difficulty, to truly challenge players skill.

For players to succeed at completing Bounty they simply need to slay the 4 legendary monster bosses that reside on planet Endfall. Which is done through exploration of this vast planet and killing every threat that comes across your path.

Mechanic 02- Game progression

Players can make progress in Bounty through intrinsic and extrinsic based progression. Intrinsic progression is made from either the player acquiring a new upgrade to their weapon arsenal, a new ability or increasing the players health points and damage output. This could be a result of the player defeating a certain boss/enemy type or found a secret room containing an upgrade item through exploration. Which is the game actively rewarding the player for key actions they made.

An example of extrinsic progression in Bounty would have to be the player slaying one of the 4 legendary monster bosses. Since these boss fights have the most challenging combat sequences. That test the players skill at best utilising their weapon and special abilities to take down one of these legendary beasts. Experiencing these challenging combat sequences should act as an external source of reward for players. As they know they only have a certain number of monster boss's left to slay. Plus feel rewarded for overcoming the challenge of defeating the boss. In addition to boss fights there are some challenging platforming sections that test players skill at traversing. That should give players a similar level of joy/triumph and feel externally rewarded for their efforts in overcoming any challenging platforming.

Bounty takes quite a linear approach when it comes to its narrative. To make story progression players simply need to follow the main objective of slaying all 4 legendary monster bosses. As after each boss encounter a new story cutscene will play. Giving the player an opportunity to experience many key narrative beats while making progress through Bounty.

As mentioned, players will be able to get stronger through acquiring a variety of upgrade items that are spread out across many areas of the map. For example, there will be specific items for increasing player health points, range of damage for katana or gun weapon and unlocking special abilities like rocket boots or gravity bomb. So stat and ability wise there are many methods for the player to become stronger in Bounty.

Mechanic 03- Level/challenge structure

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The visual design of every area in Bounty will be based on a specific theme. For example, the starting area may be themed around a luscious green forest to signify the area containing fewer tense encounters with enemies and simpler platforming sections. But later areas may be based on a fire theme where the environment uses lava and contains fire enemies. To signify the increase in challenge and tension. The purpose of having different themed environments for each area is to make every area in the players mind more memorable and refreshing to visit.

When considering the structure of Bounty, it contains many different areas with a range of interconnected environments. That gives players many opportunities to backtrack. Because there will be specific areas that are initially inaccessible from the player until they unlock a specific weapon/special ability. For example, there may be some gravity blocks, blocking an entrance for a new path that can only be pushed/pulled away when the player acquires the gravity blade attachment to their katana weapon. Hence why the structure of Bounty allows for players to experience backtracking to previous areas.

Mechanic 04- Puzzle design

Despite the heavy focus on exploration Bounty contains quite a few linear puzzles dotted around the map. That use environmental cues to assist the player in solving them. For example, there may be an upgrade health item embedded inside a wall containing what seems like normal rock blocks. However, upon using the players rocket attachment weapon there may have been one block that was secretly weak. Thus, allowing the player to climb into the wall area and acquire that health item upgrade. Going for more simplistic, linear puzzles that have pre-determined solutions is a key design choice. Because these puzzles will reward players with minor upgrade items like increasing health points, armour defence and extra. Rather than core rewards like the special abilities, and weapon types that have a direct impact on the players gameplay experience. Meaning pacing won't be slow down because the puzzles are optional and are designed to be simplistic to solve. But if many players can solve these puzzles, they will be adequately rewarded for their efforts from gaining new upgrade items that increase their stats. Leading to players being more motivated and encouraged to solve more puzzles.

Another reason why puzzles are justified in being used is because they have narrative implications. As many of the upgrade items acquired are from the rotting corpses of previous bounty hunters that have failed their quest of slaying the 4 legendary monsters. Therefore, every puzzle reward that is acquired serves as a constant visual reminder for Blaze (protagonist) at how dangerous this planet is; what the potential consequences could be if he fails.

Mechanic 05- Objectives

The main objective of Bounty is to eliminate all 4 legendary monster bosses that reside on the planet Endfall. The purpose of this objective is well contextualised within the narrative and gameplay of fighting these bosses. Because as the story progresses, players start to unravel the true value/importance these monsters have. To both the protagonist Blaze and the wider galaxy. Also, from a gameplay

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perspective players are actively engaging with the most tense/challenging combat and platform sequences. That showcases large set pieces and challenge.

For the player to complete the main objective they will need to complete a handful of side objectives. The purpose of these is to usually flesh out the game a bit more with more content for the player to experience. Plus give players a reason to carry out further exploration to areas that they may have missed. For example, the path leading to a main boss can't be reached because the gap is too far apart from where the player stands and the entrance. Therefore, the player will be given a side objective to find a special item that will help assist them making sure they can jump across gap. Which leads to the player backtracking and exploring an environment that contains a rocket boot item. Now with this upgrade to the players move set allow them to finally be able to follow the main objective of slaying the legendary monster.

Mechanic 06- Movement

The core movement of the player is running and jumping. However, through general progression players can unlock upgrades that enhance/advance their traversal move set. For example, acquiring rocket boots allows players to jump for longer, or if the player acquires a grappling hook attachment, they can climb up to certain grapple material blocks. Or when it comes to the special ability's players unlock, they have an impact on the movement gameplay. As the player will unlock abilities like wall running, sliding, and increasing running speed.

Movement is contextualised in Bounty when it comes to its narrative. This is because the protagonist Blaze is quite a skilled bounty hunter that is going on this journey to become the greatest bounty hunter in the galaxy. Therefore, it is realistic to expect Blaze to be capable of performing movement options as described above. Especially when the player learns more background information about the character of Blaze through flashback sequences. That show Blaze being highly proficient in using weapons and skill in traversal.

Mechanic 07- Collectables

Every collectible in Bounty has a purpose and is always valuable for the player to have. Since there will be collectibles that increase key stats like health, armour defence and ammo for every weapon. Or collectibles that give the player a special ability like jumping for longer or wall running. That to an extent is related to the story because many of these collectibles used to belong to the corpses of previous bounty hunters that failed at killing any of 4 legendary monsters. Usually, collectibles that increase stats are found relatively easy when the player is generally exploring. Whereas the collectibles that grant players special abilities are slightly harder to find. In theory leading to players feeling more motivated to explore further or potentially back track to previous areas they may have only briefly visited that still contain many unexplored paths. All for the thrill of hunting these collectibles that allow core progression to be made when it comes to the players achieving their main objective of slaying all 4 legendary monsters.

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Mechanic 08- Actions

The actions players will take in Bounty is a combination of platforming and real time combat. As when it comes to platforming practically every second of the game involves the player running or jumping across or up a platform. Then less frequently than movement, but still quite common will be encounters with enemies. That requires the player taking action and engaging them in real-time combat. Using Blaze's katana energy sword that can cause damage up close and even long range upon making a certain amount of progress. Where the player can upgrade their katana to shoot out a beam of energy that damages foes from far. Or the player can switch to the gun that shoots specific energy blasts against enemies. That throughout the game can be upgraded to add special attachments like rockets, grapple hook, gravity bombs. Thus, meaning Bounty will contain actions from running, jumping, slicing, and shooting.

Mechanic 09- Economy

Bounty has an economy made up from its resources. For example, players will need to resourcefully manage key resources like ammo/special ammo they have for their gun. Or the health figure because if health is dangerously low then that that dramatically increases tension felt by the player when engaging an enemy in combat. Luckily when defeating enemies, they will drop health orbs the player can consume to regain any health they have lost. Hence why resource management is a fundamental mechanic for the economy of Bounty.

Mechanic 10- Replayable

There will be two types of replayable game mechanics in Bounty. The first being the master difficulty option that can be selected upon players finishing Bounty for the first time. Selecting this new, harder difficulty will give players a much more challenging experience when replaying the game. By making enemies have higher health points, do more damage. Adds a lot more pressure to be strategic and skilful when combating enemies. Thus, leading to the replay value of Bounty increasing because now players have a good reason to replay game. To really pique player curiosity at how much more challenging Bounty is.

The second type of replayable gameplay mechanic implemented in Bounty is speed running. As there will be specific secret short cuts and hidden paths embedded into the design of many areas of the game. That most players won't notice upon their initial playthrough and is meant for players that want to speed run through Bounty. This is because every time the player completes Bounty, they will be given a completion time for how long it has taken them to complete the game. Thus, leading to players being more motivated to replay Bounty because they want to reduce their completion time to be as short as possible.

Mechanic 11- Artificial intelligence

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The only form of artificial intelligence present in Bounty will be for the enemies found in free roam and the 4 main monster bosses the player fights. Where there will be specific patterns programmed into the enemies. That way players can start to remember these patterns and begin the process of learning how to best counter every attack pattern thrown at them. Most enemy types found in the overworld will have 1 type of attack pattern unique to them. Whereas bosses will have more complicated and additional attack patterns the player will need to actively memorize and counter when fighting them. This choice is justified because bosses will have a significant larger number of health points, but also will cause a lot more damage to players than regular enemies.

Narrative:

Background

For several centuries bounty hunters across the galaxy have shared a single dream. That being to slay the 4 legendary monsters that reside on planet Endfall. These monsters are Brasil, Stoom, Hades and Velvon. The reason why these monsters are so valuable to galactic civilisation is because mysteriously these monsters on both a cellular and tissue level contain a mass quantity of Raliuem. Raliuem is an extremely rare material worth billions of galactic credits. Which means if a bounty hunter was to slay these legendary beasts they would be universally recognised as a legend among bounty hunters. Perhaps even be known as the greatest bounty hunter because it is the highest rewarded bounty in history. But consequentially for the last few centuries dozens upon dozens of bounty hunters have visited Endfall and tragically/fittingly met their end. Due to how strong each legendary monster is and how much danger the environments on Endfall are. Therefore, visiting Endfall now to achieve this dream is seen as a foolish way to die.

Introduction opening:

Upon starting the game players will experience an exposition introduction cutscene that immediately introduces the protagonist Blaze. Who is flying his spaceship that is set on course to arrive at the planet known as Endfall. But as his ship enters the upper atmosphere his vision starts to be obscured by thick fog that suddenly forms. That triggers a flashback sequence where the player see's several flashing images of Blaze's past and a voice over of someone saying: "You wanna visit Endfall?! Only fools go to that hell. Is the wealth, fame and power you gain really worth the cost of your life ending in pursuit of impossible dreams?!" But suddenly Blaze wakes up and tries to stop the shipping from falling to the best of his ability. Luckily many trees absorb most of the impact of the crash. Leaving Blaze isolated with only his base weapons, equipment, and guts. Despite the impossible odds stacked against him, Blaze is ready to begin his journey of achieving every bounty hunter's impossible dream.

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Game World:

Setting and Tone

Bounty is set in the far, far future in the year 3078. Despite advancements in civilisation, for the last several centuries the planet Endfall has remained in its prime, A planet that is a desolate and highly dangerous setting. Since the further exploration made into the core of the planet only results in harsher environments, containing stronger enemy types that are set out to kill you. That's without taking into the account the highly threatening boss in every area that will get stronger the further exploration is made. Which in a sense highlights the gradual increase of physical pressure felt by Blaze as he further explores Endfall. To either meet his end or acquire the wealth, fame, and power he has desired from slaying these 4 legendary monsters.

Bounty weaves in many different tones into its overall narrative. I think a core tone seen throughout the game is isolation. As from the start until the very end Blaze is alone on this journey with only himself, his weapons, equipment, and raw guts to get him to reach the end of his journey. This is especially reinforced when Blaze comes across the many deceased bodies of previous bounty hunters that have failed and met their end. Highlighting how much of a challenge this mission is going to be for Blaze. Adding another layer of eeriness and pressure to the tone because Blaze will loot the bounty hunters for their valuable weapons and equipment. Which not only makes him physically stronger within the game. But also, is quite symbolic because he is metaphorically carrying with him the dreams, hopes of previous bounty hunters. That's simultaneously adding both pressure for Blaze to complete his mission, but also may provide him some mental strength. Despite how dark and threatening this setting is for Blaze, there is a constant tonal shift between hope and despair that is present throughout the narrative. As every time Blaze slays a legendary monster, he feels triumphant for his efforts. But upon entering the next area he will feel more despair because the new environment he is in is a lot more dangerous and increases the overall stakes felt to complete his mission.

Areas

Since there are 4 legendary monster bosses that reside on the planet Endfall, it makes logical sense for Bounty to contain 4 main areas for the player to explore.

Area 1 is the great forest of Dansa. That contains the legendary serpent Brasil. Since this will be starting area of the game it's not supposed be an area that contains immediate life-threatening danger upon every new path that Blaze comes across. Instead, it's much more relaxed when it comes to enemy types and different sub-areas as although there are some dangerous enemies about and environments like toxic swamps, poisonous rivers, Blaze should be tasting slight danger. But what is incredibly fun about Dansa forest would be the boss encounter at the end of the area with Brasil the serpent. As Blaze will experience a chase sequence where he must

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run away from Brasil that is destroying much of the forest just to reach him. Then eventually lead to Blaze engaging Brazil in combat and slaying.

Area 2 is the glacial caverns of Kori. That is themed around the element of ice. Where many of the enemy types and the environments will also be based around ice. Now that Blaze has gotten used to how to defeat enemies from previous area, Blaze will need to learn how to defeat these new ice enemies and effectively manoeuvre through this glacial environment. Since it contains a lot of ice that increases movement speed and the potential of sliding. However, upon upgrading his katana to be a fire blade, Blaze has no problem blazing through all his enemies and eventually the boss of area 2, Stoom the mammoth.

Area 3 is the fiery, volcanic hell like area known as mount Jigoku. That revolves around the theme of fire, with a lot of the environment containing many rivers of lava, minor earthquakes and volcanoes erupting. That should really provide some intense hell-like imagery. Especially since many of the enemies will use fire attacks and are deigned to look like demons and ghouls. Even the architecture for regular buildings is made from materials like obsidian to really show to Blaze that this area is going to be very tense. From the point of view of both engaging enemies, traversing this hellish environment and fighting the legendary bull monster who is fittingly named Hades.

Area 4 is Owari. This is an area that is located deep underground, near the core of the planet. It contains many bottomless pits with many challenging platforming required. The theme of darkness is ever present in this area, where many caverns are purposely not lit brightly, and enemy types are at their strongest and even use purple like shadow energy with their attacks. That all culminates in a final encounter with the very last monster boss called Velvon the owl and harbinger of darkness. Who uses dark shadow energy and his intelligence to push Blaze beyond his limits. To feel fitting of a final boss and match the theme of darkness that is every present in this final area.

Characters:

Protagonist

The protagonist is a galactic bounty hunter called Blaze. He has been a bounty hunter for several years, taking on many bounties that allows him to get by and survive. Survival and meeting end meets is all Blaze has ever known for a good few years. As right now the galaxy is at peace and the relevance of being a bounty hunter is slowly fading to time. Therefore, Blaze is motivated to reignite the recognition and praise bounty hunters deserve for their efforts. By taking on the biggest bounty that has ever been set, the elimination of the 4 legendary monster's that reside on Endfall. With this bounty completed Blaze will gain wealth, fame, and power beyond his wildest dreams. Most importantly the character will finally have a fresh start at living a new life, with a true realised, meaningful purpose, rather than just for the sake of survival. He now has gained a sense of enlightenment and true purpose in this vast galaxy.

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Antagonist

In Bounty the role of the main antagonist Velvon is quite small. Since the narrative holds a lot of focus on the journey of the protagonist Blaze. But Velvon does serve the story by being the type of antagonist that is a force of nature. Despite the other 3 main bosses sharing this antagonist like trait with Velvon because they too are forces of nature that have no other motivations besides challenging Blaze in combat. What makes Velvon so unique compared to the other three bosses Blaze will need to slay is the fact that Velvon is intelligent life form. Who has been able to cultivate this dark shadow energy that gives him strength and power to eliminate anyone that stands in his way. But what makes Velvon such an effective antagonist is that he is responsible for the fog that appears that gives Blaze a flashback to his past and reminds him of his fears and memories. Plus, directly feeds from the souls of previous bounty hunters that have met their deaths at Endfall. Which upon learning of this knowledge completely fuels Blaze, giving him the mental and physical strength to seek justice and eliminate Velvon. At last, all bounty hunter souls that were trapped inside Velvon are free and can finally rest in peace. The main motivations behind Velvon are his lust for power and being a threatening force of nature, the protagonist must face and overcome.

Other Characters

As mentioned prior the narrative has a focus on the isolation Blaze has when going on his journey. So, the only other characters that needed are for the flashback sequences to Blaze's past. Which highlights anonymous bounty hunters that you will see in game of their deceased corpse. Plus, Blaze has a best friend named Jack that promised Blaze he would eliminate Velvon himself to get Bounty Hunter well recognised in the galaxy like years prior. But tragically meets his end by Velvon and the remains of his body are displayed on the walls of Velvon's lair. Finally, the exposition voiceover that players hear at the start of the game is by Sully the bartender who usually serves Blaze a drink. But in this exposition voice over warns Blaze of how foolish and dangerous visiting Endfall is. Serving as a reminder to Blaze of the potential danger he is about to enter when he crosses the threshold to the unknown regions of Endfall.

Levels:

Level 01 – Great Forest of Dansa

Dansa is the first level players will encounter and experience. It is an expansive forest filled with various flora/fauna. From an environmental perspective this level features huge tree branches players can platform to, vines to climb, poisonous swamps to avoid. In addition to the many enemy's players need to fight. Design wise they take much inspiration from nature like alien Venus flytraps, huge bugs. All aiming to feast on the players corpse. Which supports the idea of this level

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containing ludo narrative consistency because all these types of flora/fauna are consistent with the forest theme. Hence leading to players feeling further immersed and more willing to engage with the narrative and gameplay this level presents.

One unique attribute about this level is its difficulty is scaled down than later levels. This is because players need some time and space to experience/grow familiar with the core gameplay of Bounty. As throwing the player into a level containing high level platforming and enemy encounters may be overwhelming and fill the player with frustration. If they don't have a well-rounded understanding of the core gameplay. Hence why to strike a balance of challenge in Bounty, it is necessary for this first level to serve a greater purpose at giving players an area to fully introduce the main gameplay mechanics and core movement. Before the challenge can be scaled upwards in later level to provide a more engaging gameplay experience.

The overarching goal for players is to slay the legendary serpent beast Brasil. Eventually after much progression in this level players will encounter a physical wall blocking their path to the cave where Brasil sleeps. There is only a small gap at the top of the wall to enter. Therefore, Blaze will need to physically back track to the previous areas in this level for him to acquire a pair of rocket boots. Giving him the boost in jumping ability he needs to encounter Brasil. This is a key example of the non-linear back-tracking gameplay ever-present in Bounty. Where despite players being guided in one direction, they still have quite a bit of freedom to choose where they want to explore within this level.

Level 02 – Glacial Caves of Kori

Moving on players will descend below into the ice-cold glacial caves of Kori. This level has a few unique qualities that makes it an effective subsequent level. Firstly, the design takes a minimalist approach because the main environmental set pieces in this level are simply different structures of ice and cavern walls, floors, and ceilings. In contrast, to previous levels like the Great Forest of Dansa, that had environments rich in biodiversity and detail. So, to compensate this level is purposely designed to provide a more quiet, lonely experience.
Resulting in a tighter focus being drawn to the icy platforming players are likely to be engaging with. As upon completion of the previous level players will have acquired the key item rocket boots. Unlocking a new double jump ability that is essential to handle the many tricky ice-based platforms players will need to reach. Which is one way this level enhances overall pacing because it is a slight shift in the gameplay. Since players have acquired a new ability they can master, but also the fact that the environment and enemy variety is different to the previous level. Creating a fresh, well-paced gameplay experience.

Speaking of enemies, this level features a whole host of ice alien creatures, designed to challenge players patience and awareness moving from platform to platform. It features ice slugs crawling on walls, ice bats targeting you, ice crabs that have a tough shell and deadly ice bears! Having these enemies be themed around the element of ice, is a good reason to make them physically stronger than previous enemies. Because their icy outer body is a layer of armour players must break. Automatically scaling up the challenge of this level because enemies are slightly

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tougher to defeat. However, to compensate for this higher challenge, in the latter half of this level players will acquire an upgrade to transform their sword into a fire blade. A powerful weapon that can easily slices through ice enemies and provides ultimate satisfaction because players feel adequately rewarded from their previous efforts.

This level appears to lack ludo narrative dissonance because all environments and enemies encountered have thematic resonance with the ice theme. In fact, fitting this level because it is supposed to resemble a glacial ice cave, that should have frozen elements from start to finish. Leading to player not being doubtful of the environmental storytelling. Especially when you consider previous levels had players exploring the surface of the planet. So the concept of going underground and encountering many glacial caves doesn't seem out of place and fits with the journey Blaze is going on.

Level 03 – Mount Jigoku

After the climax of level 2, players will have slayed the legendary beast- Stoom, the Mammoth. Who before perishing destroys a wall, opening a passage to Mount Jigoku. This level is purposely designed to contrast previous levels in many respects. Firstly, its main theme the environment and enemies are based around is fire. Giving players a more tense, spacious experience. That puts a tighter focus on immediate danger for players to face, rather than danger players can overcome in their own time.
There are 2 main types of dangers players should expect- enemies and environmental hazards. Environmental hazards can come in the form of lava rivers, minor volcano eruptions and earthquakes that causes the ceiling to rain down fiery rocks for the player to dodge or die! Alongside this the player can be welcomed by many flames engulfed demon enemy types. Which reinforces the idea of this level being quite hell like. Especially since much of the platform design language is based on using obsidian and hard rock material that gives players some temporary land to stand on. That isn't engulfed by fire.

Like all levels in Bounty, the main objective is to slay a legendary beast and in Mount Jigoku's case by the end of this level players will need to kill the legendary bull beast, fittingly named Hades. Who is responsible for all major volcano and earthquakes occurring thus far in this level. Further supporting the narrative consistency present within this level. Because throughout this level every single enemy and platform section in this hellscape poses as a constant danger for Blaze. Paying off the previous set-up for planet Endfall being this place that holds many dangerous environments that have killed hundreds of expert bounty hunters over the years.

The obvious inclusion of a fire theme is another example of Bounty subverting player expectations. Where gameplay can remain fresh to play because players now have an environment to play with their new abilities/weapons. Providing an opposite look and feel to previous levels like Glacial Caves of Kori. Thus, resulting in pacing for this level to not suffer. Whilst also allowing for the standard non-linear gameplay that is featured throughout every level. Including Mount Jigoku where for example: upon players finding a rocket attachment to their weapon, they can fire rockets against

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weak walls (the player previously went past) that opens many new passages containing additional abilities and weapons.

Level 04 – Owari

After an intense boss fight with legendary bull beast- Hades, Blaze has now reached the final level in Bounty: Owari. A level containing a distinct atmosphere in comparison to all previous levels. Because Owari features many bottomless pits and abysses engulfed in waves of shadow. As if the very environment is purposely losing its colour because of the usage of dull grey colours for all the cavern walls and floors. Whereas previous levels were brimming with life and full of vibrant colours for each respective region.

The only way to get through these dark caverns is to use the light from the players weapon and metaphorical light within Blaze's heart to get him from the start to finish. Where players will encounter the final legendary beast- Velvon the owl, harbinger of darkness. He is responsible for the immense shadows ever present in Owari. But a positive consequence as a result of this, is it draws closer focus on the protagonist Blaze. Showing players, a better representation of Blaze's physical and mental struggles with traversing this dark landscape. Since at this point in the narrative, he has been through much physical hardship and is almost at a mental breaking point. Because he comes across the corpses of his dead bounty hunter comrades littered throughout every level. Especially in Owari this feeling of dread clearly highlights the resonance in narrative consistency felt by the player. This is because it is quite believable for a final level to be the most challenging and daunting level to finish.

Speaking of challenge all enemies featured in Owari are the exact same enemies encountered in previous levels. But this time are infused with purple shadow energy and results in enemies being a lot stronger when it comes to their damage output and total health points. Although the player will have background knowledge of enemy attack patterns. At the same times players will have to counter carefully with the increased strength these enemies now have.

Interfaces:

Game User Interface (GUI)

Bounty has gone for a meta user interface (UI) style for all UI elements ever present within moment-to-moment gameplay players experience. These UI elements include total player health and weapon ammunition, which is positioned in the top left corner of the screen. In the top right-hand side is a mini map that visualises the player in a snapshot of the location they are currently in. All these UI elements are examples of a meta-UI. This is because they don't exist within the same 3D games engine space the player character is in. Instead, they are 2D interfaces that sit outside on top of the main 3D games engine space like a sticker. However, what makes this UI "meta" is the fact that the UI is representing certain features found within the fictional world the player character is in. Giving players an additional perspective to gain more information about the game. For example, the mini map is a 2D UI element that

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gives players more information about the surrounding area layout our player character is in. Or if the player character gets damaged, we can see the health bar actively reduce in real time to getting hit. Highlighting the meta-aspect of this UI because it actively reflects the actions taken in the 3D games engine space. But in a 2D UI element that is outside of the space our player character operates in/is aware of. But in a format that is useful to the player and makes sense in the context of the narrative of Bounty.

This GUI could be described as a UI that is easy to use. As these UI elements go for quite a minimalist design and only take up the top left/right corner of the screen. For the sole purpose of maintaining player immersion. As it only is displaying visual information, rather than being a UI element that has influence over the gameplay featured within the 3D games engine space.

Controls

Controls scheme for console and PC:
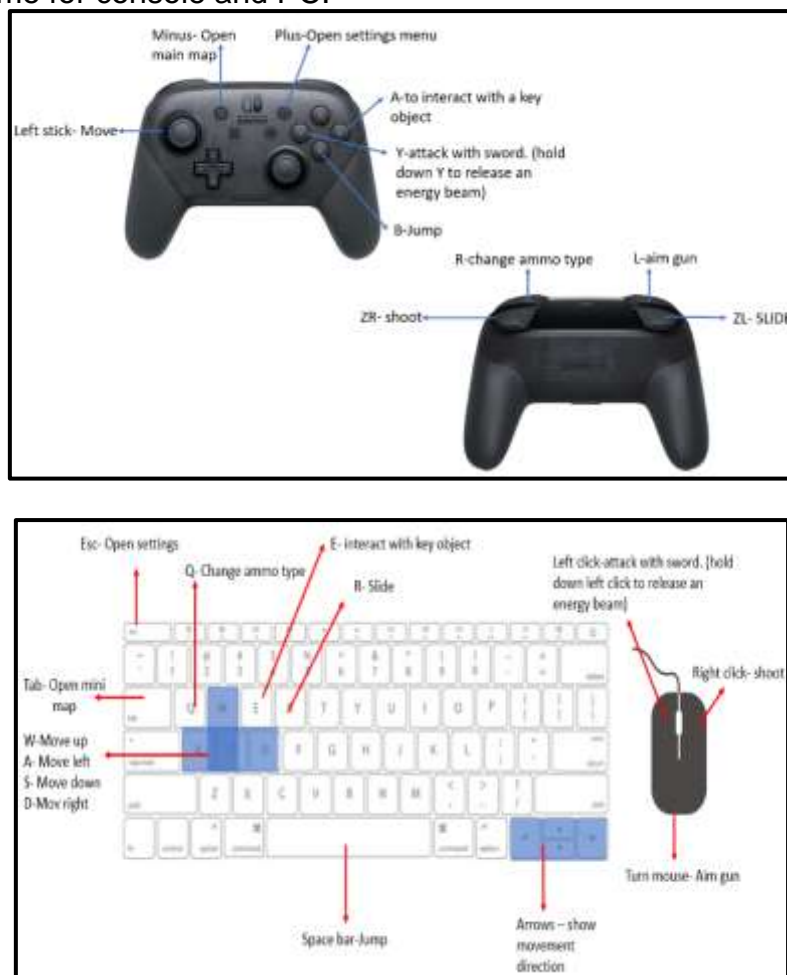
To break down controls in Bounty further every button input can be categorized into primary and secondary actions. Primary actions include moving, jumping, attacking with sword, aiming gun and shooting. Are all actions constantly used throughout playing Bounty. Since this is a 2D action-adventure game and it is impossible to

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reach the end of a level without that primary movement players needs to get across every platform (moving, sliding, and jumping).

In addition to this combat is a core pillar of design for Bounty and is likely the 2nd most popular gameplay players will engage with. As there are many enemies sprinkled through every section of a level. So, attacking with a sword and aiming/shooting with a gun will be primary combat actions players utilise.

However, secondary actions include opening map, opening settings, interacting with key objects, change ammo type and aiming gun. Now opening the map and settings are clearly secondary actions players rarely use. As settings will only be opened to either quit the game or adjust specific features like brightness, controller layout/sensitivity and several accessibility options. In which most players are likely to adjust their preferences once. Even with opening the main map, players are unlikely to use this action very often because of the mini map present within the top right screen corner throughout most moment-to-moment gameplay beats.
One reason why changing ammo type is reduced to a secondary action is because in Bounty other ammo types (that aren't primary energy ammo) is usually meant for specific situations. For example, there may be some gravity blocks blocking an entrance. Therefore, the gravity missile will be required to destroy these gravity blocks. Or perhaps the player wants to unload a huge amount of damage to a boss. So, they may need to change to a stronger ammo type like the super, plasma ammo and deal a mass amount of damage.

Bounty's control scheme could be described as intuitive because of the smart button placements for all primary/secondary actions. For example, a player may desire to jump and attack an aerial enemy type. The player will be able to use both hands to firstly use the left stick to move to an appropriate position. Next use their right thumb to easily press the jump button and sword attack button in one fell swoop. Because the jump and attack button are assigned to be next to each other. Proving the console control scheme is intuitive and servery lacks controller dissonance. Since primary actions aren't all located on one side of a controller and are equally spread out.

Finally, it is worth discussing the fact that Bounty is planned to release on multiple major consoles. Which have different controller buttons names for each controller type. So here are the switch controller buttons translated for Xbox and PlayStation.

Switch:	Xbox:	PlayStation:
Left stick	Left stick	Left stick
-	Xbox view	Touchpad
+	Menu	Options
A	B	Circle
Y	X	Square
B	A	Cross
ZL	LT	L2
L	LB	L1
ZR	RT	R2
R	RB	R1

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Audio, Music and Sound Effects:

Bounty is a 16-bit 2D action, adventure game. Therefore, all audio, music and sound effects need to reflect/fit well with this chosen genre. One common piece of non-diegetic audio played throughout Bounty is text. That appears through many narrative beats of Bounty, e.g., a cutscene where characters are exchanging dialogue. Or if a tutorial pops up on the players screen, that gives advise on a new ability or weapon the player has unlocked. As going for recorded voice line audio would feel completely out of place in Bounty because it is going for a much simpler art style. Some additional non-diegetic audio tracks featured in Bounty would be the rumblings of an earthquake/volcanic eruptions that occur in Mount Jigoku level. Or the whistling wind blowing through the tree leaves in the Great Forest of Dansa level. Another example of effective background ambient noises is the heartbeat sound effect. That is used during the lead up to the final boss fight against Velvon. To really ramp up pressure felt by players before this climactic moment.

Now music has almost an equal amount of responsibility as gameplay, in terms of keeping players engaged. As music can go a massive way at enhancing players enjoyment of the gameplay they are experiencing if the music alongside it sounds great. Hence why to match the 16-bit 2D art style Bounty goes for; its soundtrack should base many of its songs on chiptune genre of music. A genre that produces 8 bit or in Bounty's case 16-bit style music. That would additional work effectively if infusing certain other genres to match specific level themes. As for levels like Great Forest of Dansa you could infuse some rock and pop. To give players the feeling of high energy and confidence. Or during Mount Jigoku level, because of the hell like imagery present through its environmental design. It gives a great opportunity to infuse some heavy metal, to convey the intensity of this level.

Some major sound effects featured in Bounty is the sound of players sword slashing, gun firing and having a slightly different sound effect depending on the type of sword/gun the player has equipped. Beyond this we can look to some environmental sound effects like passageways opening, walls being destroyed, obtaining a new ability/weapon, double jumping/hovering with rocket boots item. These are all important sound effects that gives these related gameplay moments more spectacle and quality.

Accessibility:

Bounty uses a multitude of help systems to assist players. One such as the player being able to select a casual difficulty option. Automatically mitigates the challenge of Bounty in comparison to standard difficulty settings. As casual difficulty gives players a better opportunity to slay enemies because of their reduced total health points/attack damage. Resulting in the core look and feel of the game is not compromised with this new difficulty. Whilst supporting players who find standard difficulty too much of a challenge.

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Next there are some subtle help systems within the core gameplay experience to help players in game. As every level in Bounty features much exploration and back tracking. Which may cause some players difficulty to keep track of where they need to go, or where they are currently in the area. Thus, why Bounty gives players both a main map of the level and a mini map located in the top right screen (shows a snapshot of current player location in proximity to surrounding area). However, with the main map, it only shows the areas the player has explored. That way if a player is unsure of where to travel next, they can look at the map and any paths that are blacked out are clearly paths for the player to explore next.

Settings is another help system that may resolve specific problems players are having in efforts to make Bounty a game that can be accessible to as many different types of gamers. For example, in settings players can:

- Adjust certain graphic settings like a colour-blind mode.
- Remap controller buttons to suit a playstyle that is most convenient.
- Control brightness of game.
- Adjust volume for game audio, music, and sound effects
- Adjust sensitivity of aiming gun weapon.
- Change language.
- Change text font and size

A final help setting would be the tutorial pop up videos that describe/ visualise what a new ability/weapon does in game. In case a player is unsure of the full functionality behind these new abilities/weapons that get unlocked.

Technical specifications:

Target Hardware

Nintendo Switch, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, and PC via Steam.

Development hardware and software

To ensure Bounty can run at an optimum performance it is recommended the developers use computers that can run Bounty at a recommended performance. Luckily every game on Steam does display what computer hardware is required for games to run at minimum or recommended performance. However, since Bounty hasn't been released, we can only estimate what computer hardware will be needed for this game to run. By looking at other similar scope games to Bounty. For example, games like The Messenger are a 2D action/adventure that can run:

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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM:
OS: Windows 7 Service Pack 1 or newer (64 bit)
Processor: Intel core i5-4210 1.7ghz
Memory: 2 GB RAM
Graphics: Intel HD Graphics 4400
Storage: 1200 MB available space
Sound Card: Onboard soundcard or better

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On essentially most modern computers because games like The Messenger and Bounty are going to be much smaller scope retro throwback type games that won't be pushing modern gaming computer hardware.

(The Messenger system requirements screenshot from: https://store.steampowered.com/app/764790/The_Messenger/)

Therefore, it is highly likely to run at an optimum performance across all target hardware.

Regarding development computer hardware, in theory any modern computer can be used. However just to be safe, developers can instead use modern computers that have at least a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card. This is because according to Steam (https://store.steampowered.com/hwsurvey/videocard/) as of writing this it is the most popular graphics card used across steam with "8.19%" of total steam users. So, it would be appropriate for developers to develop with modern computers that are potentially accessed by Steam users with similar spec computer hardware.

The only other pieces of development hardware required to develop Bounty would be a few drawing tablets for any artists to create concept art, level designs and 2D models. Plus, it should be noted Bounty is planning to outsource all its audio, music and sound effects needs to an external company.

Developers will be using a multitude of development software to create Bounty. Firstly, the game engine software being used will be Unity. This is a suitable game engine software to develop for because Unity contains a range of 2D game-specific tools. Like manipulating 2D environment assets, lighting effects and animations.

Secondly Adobe illustrator will be a development software used to create Bounty's 2d sprites, environment art, menu's, logo, and many more design components. Because this design software is renowned for enabling the creation of awesome, high quality pixel art and many different types of art. But also ensures projects can retain high resolution and sharpness because projects created in Adobe Illustrator are very scalable. A key advantage over other software that don't give as scalable or high-quality art.

A final development software to be used is Twine. This software is specialised in designing narrative structures. Which would significantly help support in structuring the narrative development of Bounty because it has a linear narrative. Furthermore, within Twine, users can build flowcharts containing branching nodes. So, in the case of Bounty, narrative developers can categorise each narrative beat that unfolds in every level into separate nodes. Upon clicking each node, it expands and reveals

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more detailed notes/description of that specific narrative beat. The main appeal of using this development software would be how easy it is to visualise the structure of Bounty's overall narrative. Hopefully leading to many game designers having a far easier job at understanding the overall structure Bounty's narrative takes.

Network Requirements

Bounty is an offline single player game, with no network requirements.

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