

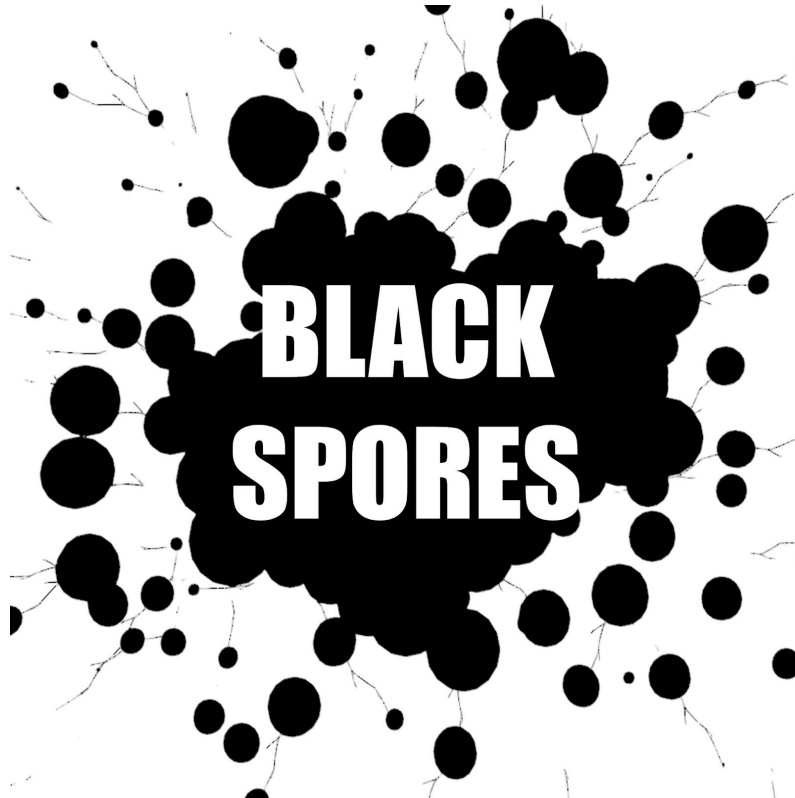
# Black Spores

## DESIGN DOCUMENT

By Instant Regret Games for the 2024 Pirate Software Game Jam  
Game Jam 14: It's Spreading!

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## Introduction

### Game Summary Pitch

Black Spores is a first person horror game about escaping an outbreak of a dangerous alien substance through a series of procedurally generated chambers.

### Platform

The demo is developed, exported and tested on windows PC, but the game can potentially target other platforms

## **Development Software**

- Godot engine version 4.2.1: Game logic, level design
- Blender: models, graphics and UI
- Ableton live 11: what little SFX we have

## **Genre**

Singleplayer, First Person, Puzzle, Horror, elements of Roguelike and comedy

## **Target Audience**

This game isn't marketed to any specific audience; Although the design is intuitive enough for casual gamers, veteran players could enjoy the cultural references and the increasing difficulty. The horror part is not intended to attract a certain player base, it's there simply because horror games are somewhat easy to make when you're not great at art/modeling and all your creations end up in the uncanny valley.

## **Concept**

### **Gameplay overview**

The player controls a first person character with a single task of escaping a research facility infested by a giant mass of black substance of unknown origin (it's spreading). The player is supposed to navigate through a linear sequence of randomly selected and somewhat procedurally altered chambers, keeping ahead of the ever spreading mass. There are no other enemies or any combat, providing for a more unique experience and at the same time simplifying the development cycle. Throughout the game the player collects various

usable pickups that can, if used strategically, let the player put more distance between themselves and the black spores.

## Theme Interpretation (It's spreading)

The black spores, mentioned in the title of the game, are what's spreading. The spreading can be observed immediately upon starting the game, and also announced on the wall screen within the players view with the words "it's spreading". The interpretation of the theme is as literal as it gets. Any misunderstanding on the players side is very unlikely.

## Primary Mechanics

Mechanic
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Movement and Energy</u></b></p> <p>The usual WASD/Space movement mechanic is extended with an <b>Energy</b> bar. Both jumps and running (moving with increased speed) consume energy, and when the bar is depleted the player is only able to walk relatively slowly and can't jump high enough to clear certain obstacles. This makes it crucial to save up the energy (i.e. not run) in order to prepare for jumping.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Energy Boost</u></b></p> <p>A basic pickup that provides a few seconds of unlimited energy. After the timer runs out, player ends up with a full energy bar.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Anti-Gravity Boots</u></b></p> <p>Pressing jump twice will consume 1 charge of anti-gravity boost and accelerate player upwards, allowing the player to get to otherwise unreachable areas.</p> <p>The boots also negate fall death, also consuming 1 charge in the process.</p>

Mechanic
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Teleporter</u></b></p> <p>A throwable object, can be deployed in certain unreachable areas. After a teleporter is deployed, the player can teleport to its location at any time.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Stasis Ward</u></b></p> <p>Another object that can be deployed at any location and will prevent the black spores from spawning in a certain radius during its lifetime of 10 seconds. If deployed in a narrow corridor, it can completely block the progress of the black spores and thus buy the player a few seconds of time.</p>

## Art

As all models were made for this game jam, the amount of time and effort that could be dedicated to each model was very limited, thus bringing the quality down to a basic low-poly level. The titular black spores are literally unshaded black low-poly spheres. Instead scarce lighting has been used in level design to provide for a more dark and suspenseful feel.

## Game Experience

### UI

The information about players current energy, as well as Antigrav Boots / Stasis Ward / Teleporter charges is provided via a simplistic HUD in the top right corner of the screen.

## Controls

### Keyboard

Movement: Arrow keys / WASD

Crouch: Ctrl/C

Run: hold Shift

Jump: Space

Ward: Q

Teleporter (Deploy): Left Mouse Button

Teleporter (Engage): Right Mouse Button

Antigrav Boots: Hit Space twice

## What can be improved

The main issue the demo is currently facing is performance limitations, mainly affecting the speed at which the black spores can spread. This in turn leads to level design decisions that artificially slow down the player, leading to a slower paced gameplay, which is not the original intention for this game.

Given more time, the algorithms behind the black spores progress can easily be optimized to a point where the game can become much more engaging and fast paced.

Other things that are outside of the demo scope are more diverse levels, better models design and overall graphics, deeper lore.

Another game mechanic not implemented in the demo is a roguelite-like character progression, allowing the player to improve character properties such as speed, energy, jump height etc between escape attempts. This

would allow to increase the starting difficulty way beyond the casual level, providing for even more challenging and engaging gameplay.