

Save Your Ice Cream Man!

Game Design Document

Introduction

When the children of the world lose hope... As their ice creams fall to the unforgiving sidewalks of despair... only one man can save them from tyranny...

Save Your Ice Cream Man!

Save Your Ice Cream Man is a fun platformer designed to engage kids motor skills and compassion as they play as a tiny superhero, who uses his super speed to travel around the world catching children's fallen ice creams before they can hit the pavement. Each level consists of simple, engaging platforming challenges under a time limit as the player, controlling Save Your Ice Cream Man, dashes along the sidewalk to catch the child's ice cream before it hits the ground. The focus of the game is kindness and humour, juxtaposing the billowing cape, strong chin and traditionally powerful superhero features with the fact that Save Your Ice Cream Man is only a few inches tall, scrambling around the sidewalks to perform kind acts for kids in need.

Current Development and Gameplay

Gameplay consists of levels with a lenient time limit, Save Your Ice Cream Man must jump between kids shoes, ice cream vendors, and school supplies while avoiding hazards such as wads of chewed gum and sewer grates to reach the falling ice cream in time.

Concept Art

Game Aesthetic uses real life shots, and renders Save Your Ice Cream Man and his various obstacles in a sketchy imaginative style. The idea is to present the world of Save Your Ice Cream man as real, rendering it in the vibrant imagination of a child. Save Your Ice Cream Man looks like your stereotypical superhero, cape and cowl and all, with a goofy ice cream theme, rendered in pastel blues with sprinkles on top. Each of the backgrounds and level terrain are rendered with real images, having the super hero clambering around real shoes, hot dog stands, and park fixtures. Each level's stories could even have full motion video showing an individual's ice cream being dropped as our hero rushes in to save them.

Planned Features

To keep gameplay simple the demo only has jumping, but Save Your Ice Cream Man could be equipped with a dash, or perhaps an Ice Creamifying beam to turn other sketchy enemies and obstacles into delicious ice cream that would increase the timer. The Important thing is to keep gameplay itself simple, with the goal of focusing on allowing players to learn hand eye coordination and feel rewarded for completing the levels on time. Ultimately I think the most important thing to add would be a wall jump to allow for more unique platforming opportunities.

The background art uses some individual shots but panorama and further zooms to allow for establishing shots or zooming inside of obstacles as Save Your Ice Cream Man enters them (I.e. cutting a boot in half and fading a shot of the halved boot to show the inside of it as Save Your Ice Cream Man enters through the toe and platforms his way out the top)

Demographic/Moral Analysis

The Intent of this is to play to a younger demographic. Superheroes are a touchstone in modern culture and a staple for young kids growing up. The intent of Save Your Ice Cream Man is to provide children with the moral of 'no deed is too small'; following a tiny, possibly imaginary super hero as he selflessly travels the globe, solving the smallest of problems imaginable. Playing through the tribulations of climbing a shoe to help someone can help children realize that anyone can be a superhero, and that simple acts of kindness are something we should all strive for.

Final Thoughts

The design space I'm approaching this from is similar to Celeste; providing players with a (relative) challenge, in this case the time limit, and making gameplay fun and responsive. Regularly encouraging the player and giving them more ways to interact and grow with the game. And finally, making succeeding as rewarding as possible, to help the player in feeling accomplished in achieving the task. If this concept were picked up into a full game i would want a variety of levels, perhaps some even educational! Having Save Your Ice Cream Man traversing the insides of perhaps car machinery, or other areas that children don't get to see inside of very often, the zoomed in perspective gives us as the designers the opportunity to really explore environments in a unique way that might make the player appreciate those mundane places more!

In order to save time i simply modified an old project i had lying around to show my level creation process and implement the basic mechanics of timer based simple platforming. Hence

why the project space has some unnecessary files that, when making a final product would be removed.

I used a lot of sort of basic blocks for platforming to show off the nature of platforming i'm looking for; path optimization, i want to add obstacles such as patches of gum to slow our hero down, or sketchy enemies that fly around and knock our hero back. The plan is not to have anything able to kill or hurt the player character, and rather to focus on the timer as the main motivator.

Ultimately I'd like to have level geometry be mostly implied by the backgrounds, which I've shown off here using the boot, using the geometry of real world objects to extrapolate geometry for the players to jump around on, I was inspired to do this by that game kids play in the car, watching a little man jump around on the side of the highway, surfing on top of other cars and road barriers, swinging from the telephone poles. I think that sort of gameplay would really resonate with kids.