

Game Jam Reflection / Justification

Game Title: Sofa King

Team Members:

- Amy Liu (acliu)
- Chris Pike (chpike)
- Shane Schulte (shanesms)
- Yelena Pham (yhpham)

Creative Process: The theme of the jam was announced as “Long Live the King”, so we immediately tried to branch out from the theme to as many different ideas as possible, before settling on one. Ideas that were tossed around were king of the hill, some sort of VIP defense mechanism, cards, chess, and the punny phrase “Sofa King”. From there, we made the jump to “the floor is lava” and through iteration came up with our final idea. The game essentially ended up being a hybrid of 2 players playing a competitive tetris style game, while the other 2 play a side scrolling platform on the level created by their respective allies.

Development and Playtesting: After crunching together the basics of our game, we quickly got to work making all of the individual elements of the game mechanics playable so we could find what worked and what didn't. We originally planned to have the platformer players and the couch-dropping players both use a grid movement system, but we decided it felt clunky and scrapped it. Later, we reintroduced the grid movement of the couches to maintain a bit of a tetris vibe. We also originally planned to introduce powerups to make the levels more dynamic/interesting - however, upon introducing a power up that resembled a coin, we decided to scrap the system and add coins to give both teams a sense of a goal and a means to score points on their way to the level's end. In terms of playtesting, we dedicated several times during the jam after our prototype was ready to just play it amongst the team and discuss design choices immediately after, then revise and repeat on a roughly hourly basis.

Reflection (Shane): Overall, I enjoyed the experience over this weekend. The tension and stress was high, but in some weird way it adds to the fun of the whole thing. Working this closely and intensely with a team can definitely highlight some of my personal teamwork flaws - I tend to be a bit stubborn with design decisions and am probably not the easiest person to work with in these kinds of circumstances. However, in the end I think we came out with a really fun product, and I had a lot of fun working with this team.

Reflection (Amy): Even though this wasn't my first game jam I still learned a lot. It was my first time working on a 4 player game so I was able to get a better understanding on Unity's input manager and organizing multiplayer controls. It was also my first time working on sound so I was also able to learn more about Unity's sound system. All in all I thought the game jam went very smoothly, we didn't have any game breaking bugs, technical difficulties, or major merge issues. We also came up with a game idea fairly quickly and was able to get a prototype done by early Saturday. It was a fun experience and we ended up with a fun game.

Reflection (Chris): Having never done a Game Jam I did not know what to expect, but quickly found myself having a great time. I definitely preferred the Game Jam to the regular project. I had teammates who were already versed in Unity so I learned a lot about Unity in an extremely small amount of time. The short timeline also accelerated my experience with Unity so now I am more comfortable using it. I also appreciated working with 4 people instead of only two. This has put the final project in scope for me. I know what 4 people are capable to make in 2 days, so I have an idea what can be made in a few weeks. I also know confusing it can be to have 4 people working on the same part of the project and how to better split tasks. I think the experience of the Game Jam was more than worth it and I probably would have never gone if it wasn't offered as a project.

Reflection (Yelena): This past weekend, four of us came together and made an awesome game. It was interesting because while coming up with an idea, we thought our game might not be complex enough. However, even when it got to the end of the game jam we felt we were low on time. I think a game jam is great because it really encourages you to just get a product out, and not worry too much about getting it perfect from the start. People were fixing their game while getting feedback from those playing it! All in all, I'd like to do a game jam again and apply what I've learned from the first time around.