BrainStew

Request for Proposal

Document History

Date	Description	Version
01/31/2025	Initial drafting of RFP	1.0
02/07/2025	Final document and proposal	2.0

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1.0 Problem Statement / opportunity / expression of need

In a world increasingly dominated by corporate control, there is growing need for creative outlets that allow people to laugh, reflect, and challenge the status quo – especially through fun and engaging experiences. Many existing 2D platformers and bullet-hell games often stick to classic sci-fi or fantasy themes with subtle nods to various issues (which are enjoyable in their own way) but often didn't fully explore dark satire and social commentary. What better time to do so?

While there's a handful of 3D games like *Fallout: New Vegas*, *Bioshock*, and *The Outer Worlds* that express the consequences of unchecked capitalism in their own style, let's fill the gap with a 2D spin. So clearly there's an audience to engage with recent modern-day struggles in a meaningful humorous way. Perhaps a game that blends chaotic run-and-gun gameplay, punk aesthetics, and dark humor would resonate. Imagine a dystopian Mars colony seized by tech oligarchs, where players take on the role of a disillusioned worker fighting to break free from a soulless mega-corp. Indie developers seize the moment for creative freedom! There's lots to explore here in a way that provokes thought. After all, *art should comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.*

2.0 Project Objectives

The project aims to create an action-packed 2D platformer that is a hybrid of run-and-gun, bullet-hell, and a dash of metroidvania elements set in a dystopian world controlled by tech moguls. Players will navigate through different levels inspired by tech-industrial environments, fighting enemies, completing objectives, and battling bosses. While it'll follow a linear progression, it should still be engaging and memorable.

Major components should be:
1. Player
    a. Balanced movement controls for the character – e.g. idle, regular running, pushing, wall-running, jumping…

b. A small inventory for ammo, weapons, or collectibles

c. Ability to use weapons and interact with enemies

d. Defined health

2. Enemies

   a. Varied enemy types with distinct behaviors (e.g. drones, guards..)

   b. Enemy drops or powerups upon defeat

   c. Some bullet-hell mechanics or simple attack

3. Boss

   a. At least 3 bosses with multi-phases (e.g. based on corpo leaders)

   b. Minion spawning

   c. Final ticket to advance to next stage

4. Levels

   a. Have them be distinct or themed

   b. Self-contained and clear goal to progress to next stage like a checklist

   c. Perhaps specified safe zones

5. Audio & Visual

   a. Sprites, background, platform is clearly defined

   b. Reflective soundtrack (the copyright aspect)

6. Menu/UI

   a. A main menu for starting new game or loading progress

   b. Option to toggle music or sound effects on/off

   c. Pause menu

   d. Checkpoints – save/load capability

7. Glitch/bug free – QA testing

8. (Optional) Companions

   a. The dystopian world is complex but you are not alone

NOTE: It is rather ambitious given the time, so the first submission will be beta version

3.0 Current system(s) – if any / similar systems

Researching or thinking of past games we may have played, the action-platformer genre has a handful of titles that did blend fast-paced combat with engaging level design and artistic direction. While this game should aim to carve its own identity

through a satirical dystopian setting, here are some games that could provide inspiration:

Contra I (1987) and Contra III (1992)

Contra is a classic side-scrolling run-and-gun shooter where players controlled commandos battling alien invaders, using variety of weapons to fight through levels that got increasingly harder. *Contra III* added more advanced mechanics like multi-directional shooting. The inspiration here is its:

- Responsive shooting mechanics – quick directional aiming and fluid movement while being able to dodge enemy attacks
- Variety of weapons – regular range or wide-spread shots, lasers, and more depending on the setting or powerup
- Dynamic boss fights with multi-phases that would escalate in intensity

Metal Slug (1996)

Metal Slug was another run-and-gun action game but with a cartoonish aesthetic and chaotic battles. It had humor and over-the-top silly action while navigating destructible environments. The inspiration from this would be:

- Enemy variety and humor – The balance of action and comedic elements among a dystopian setting (e.g. making corporate enemies absurd yet menacing)
- Power-up system – Temporary boosts like rapid-fire guns or shields
- Sprites – Exaggerated pixel art

Hollow Knight (2017)

Hollow Knight is a memorable Metroidvania game set in a haunting underground world with tight platforming and combat mechanics. It's known for its atmospheric world-building and exploration-driven gameplay where players could uncover secrets while facing difficult foes. Elements that could be drawn from:

- Checkpoints – Could use a specific waypoint or area for resting/saving or switching weapons before boss fights or at the start of new levels
- Movement – Precise jumps, dashes, and attacks that feel weighty yet responsive

- Storytelling – Hidden notes throughout the corporate setting from other workers or background details

4.0 Intended users and their basic interaction with the system

The primary audience for this kind of game consists of action-platformer enthusiasts or players who enjoy fast-paced run-and gun gameplay and fans of games with a satirical or dystopian narrative. In other words, the target demographic is likely to include:
- Speedrunners or completionists
- Fans of 2D platformers who appreciation tight controls and fast movement
- Indie game supporters who enjoy creative and narrative-driven games with a distinct style

Although the game is accessible to anyone, for vulgar language or gore there should be a content warning so players are aware before they engage with the material.

In terms of basic user interaction, it will be on their device of choice where the game is playable. Players will control a protagonist sprite navigating through different levels on a dystopian Mars colony, characterized by corporate oppression and rebellion
- Movement and combat
- Weaponry and power-ups
- Objectives
- Boss fights
- Progression and story

Details were described in Section 2.0 of this RFP.

5.0 Known interactions with other systems within or outside of the client organization.

1. Desktop Programs
    a. Available at the latest game version run as a Unity .exe application
    b. Keyboard controls or controller
2. Steam
    a. Another distribution platform for the PC version
    b. Available with keyboard controls or controller
    c. Compliance
3. Apple play store (iOS)
    a. Ported to mobile controls
    b. Compliance
4. Google play (Android)
    a. Ported to mobile controls
    b. Compliance

6.0 Known constraints to development

There are several constraints that must be addressed. While challenging, it's doable and will shape the direction and focus of the game.

1. Timeline
    a. Development timeline is a major constraint. With the goal of delivering an engaging experience within the specific period we have, careful planning and prioritization will be essential. Focus on getting the essential features in then add more later if doable
2. Constricted to Using the Unity Game Engine
    a. The decision to use the Unity game engine will define certain technical and design limitations. It does offer quite a bit of assets and base logic for 2D platforms that give production a boost but the team will need work within its strengths and weaknesses
3. Budget Constraints: No Budget

a. No formal development budget means reliance on open-source tools, free assets, and internal resources

7.0 Project Schedule

Date (2025)	Description
February 11	IT Manager GIT Presentation
February 18	Systems Analysis Presentation
February 25	Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Demo
February 27	QA Test of MVP
March 18	Project Manager Presentation
March 25	AI Specialist Presentation
April 10	Version Control Manager Presentation
May 1	Final Game Demo

Broad overview

8.0 How To Submit Proposals

Participants, to submit your proposals please email in pdf format to Kayra Polat the Project Manager for BrainStew at polat@brainstewdomain.com.
If you have any questions about this Request for Proposal or anything else, feel free to email RFP@brainstewdomain.com. Any general questions you submit will be posted to BrainStew's site on Q&A for anyone else who may share the same question unless explicitly asked not to.

9.0 Dates

Proposals can be submitted until February 7th 8:00pm. Decisions will be made by February 10th 8:00pm and we will notify all participants with a response to your submission email on whether it is accepted or not. We look forward to reading your proposals!

10.0 Glossary of terms

Action-platformer: A video game genre that combines fast-paced combat with platforming elements such as jumping, climbing, and dodging obstacles

Bullet-Hell: A subgenre of shooters where players must navigate through dense patterns of enemy projectiles, requiring precise movement and reflexes

Metroidvania: A type of game design inspired by *Metroid* and *Castlevania*, emphasizing exploration, backtracking, and unlocking new abilities to progress

Run-and-Gun: A gameplay style in which the player moves quickly while continuously firing weapons, often requiring dodging and quick reactions

Dystopian: A setting that depicts a society characterized by oppression, corporate control, or bleak futures, often used for social or political commentary

Indie Game: A video game developed by a small, independent team without backing of a major publisher, often emphasizing creativity and storytelling

Tech Oligarchs: Powerful corporate figures who control technology and society

Enemy AI: The logic programmed into a non-playabble character that dictates their behavior, movement, and attack patterns

Boss Fight: A challenging encounter with a powerful enemy, often requiring multiple attack phases and strategic gameplay to defeat

Minion Spawning: A game mechanic where smaller enemies are generated during a boss fight or major battle to add difficulty or variety

Power-Up: Temporary or permanent upgrade that enhances player abilities

Checkpoint: Designated point in a level where a player's progress is saved

Hitbox: Defined area around a character or object that determines whether it gets hit by an attack or collision

Collision Detection: A system used to determine when objects in a game interact (touching a wall, enemy, or projectile)

Glitch: Unintended error in game that causes unexpected behavior

Bug: Synonym for glitch, refers to flaw in game's code that impacts performance/functionality

*Note: Remember that "system" means product, service, and/or system your group would like to see created, built, upgraded, and/or changed. It is a broad term.