Black Hole Fear

Project overview

Event Title:	Space & Fear Jam	Date: 14.09.18 - 16.09.18
Event Type:	Gamejam	Location: Gjøvik
Author:	Askel Eirik Johansson, Maria Øksnes, Mathias Stifjeld	

Project Title:

Black Hole Fear

Project Group:	Role	Expertise
Askel Eirik Johansson	Programmer	Advanced
Mathias Stifjeld	Programmer, artist	Advanced
Maria Øksnes	programmer	Advanced

Technology

Development Environment:

pixilart
Github
P5
Javascript

Target Platform:

Browser

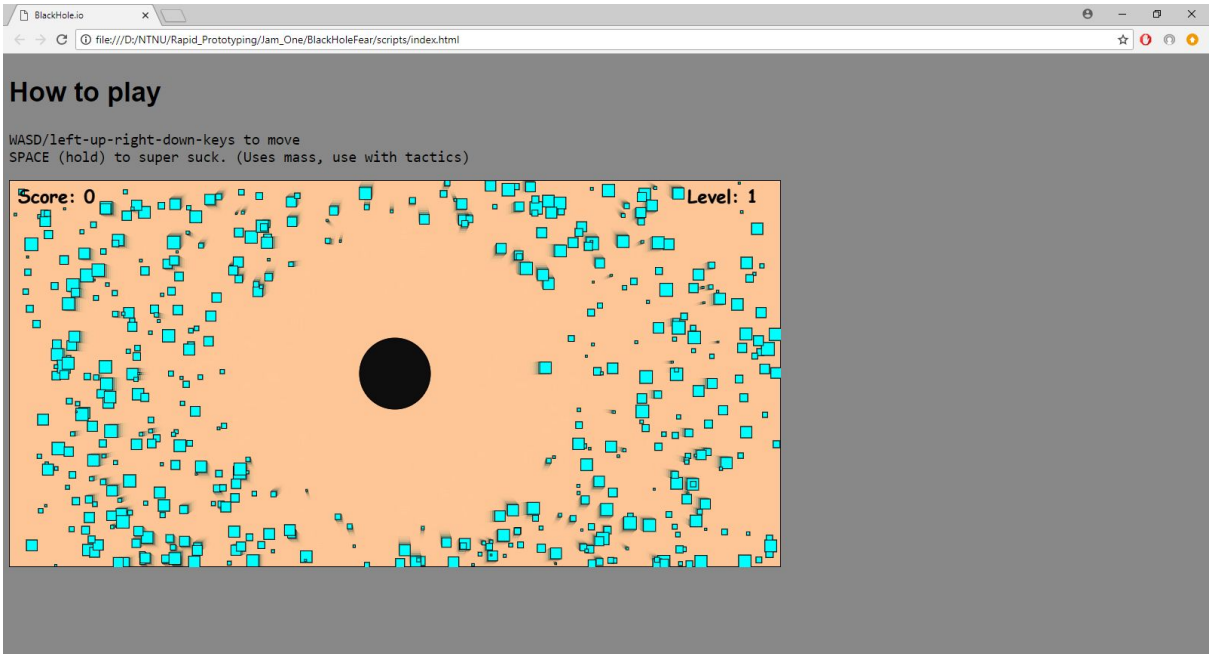
Code download/install instructions:

clone https://github.com/DJTechnoo/BlackHoleFear.git
in the scripts folder, open index.html file in any browser.

Description

The game puts you in control of a black hole. Your sole purpose is to eat mass, but mass don't want to be eaten, and will do it's best to escape you. The bigger you are, the bigger your pull/sucking-force, and pull area. You constantly lose mass and the smaller you are the faster you lose it. The goal is to eat all the objects in a stage before you run out of mass and disappear. You gain score as you eat and score is given based on the size of the object you eat.

Here is a picture of a newly started game:



Individual from here

Mathias:

Contribution:

I made some pixel-people that we in the end sadly were unable to use as they caused an error in every browser we tried with the exception of Internet Explorer. They were meant to be used as food for the black hole, but in the end we simply kept the blue squares from our initial prototype.

I mostly had the role of the second person in a "pair-programming" approach as I had little

experience with the language used. I did however do some balance- and graphical-tweaks and helped googling when necessary. I did also do (somewhat) extensive playtesting for Quality Assurance.

Everyone was involved in the ongoing creative process discussing whether a feature was good/bad and if we should or should not add/keep it.

Reflection

The Good:

1. Awesome game. The game was quite fun and it was fun making too. While much more could be done, both graphically and on the feature side of things (sound, music, more different levels etc.), it was still a game I feel could (and perhaps should) be polished and hosted online. It was not a massive project, and so we could work very reasonable hours and still come up with a good end result.

2. Decent communication. We didn't spend a lot of the time talking about things that were not relevant to the task at hand, but worked fairly focused. What was discussed that was not directly related to the game was mostly dinner time and when to end work for the day and start the next day. However, we were not always on the same page as far as what was being worked on or how we wanted it to be. Communication could be improved, but was alright.

3. Awesome group. The group was able to work together fairly relaxed and with decent communication. The group had a decent variety of skills that were put to use in what we figured would be the optimal way. "e looked at what we could do and let the group members work on what suited them most and did compromises where necessary (i.e. I did the "drawing" as the others didn't fancy it that much and with them being more versed in the language we were working in, it was more beneficial to have them do coding).

4. I now have a better understanding of javascript and the parts of the p5 library that we used than before (i.e. now i actually know the p5 library exists)

5. The game can be addicting, where you want to outperform your previous best.

The Bad:

1. Unable to integrate the artists work. We got an error that appeared to be a problem with Cross-Origin Resource Sharing (CORS), and while it first appeared that it was due to using files stored locally was the problem, it was not fixed by hosting the images online (except for Internet Explorer), as we still got what appeared to be the same error after trying that. Since Internet Explorer did not run the game as smoothly

as other browsers, we had to scrap the folks in the end. We did not spend that much time on it and so there might be a solution, but we decided to move onto other features as this was not massively important for the game.

2. We were unable to properly implement the feature of splitting the black hole into two separately controllable holes (or have the player start with 2 at a stage) due how we coded the first hole. It was a lot of duplicated code and in the end there were a host of bugs like eating not adding size (and actually getting it to eat in the first place) and in the end we took it out of the prototype, but if we decide it should be polished and hosted online, it would be something to consider doing.

3. Optimization, the game can lag at times on weaker devices.

The things that I would do differently are:

1. Longer work hours, this jam was done a bit more relaxed, working from approximately 12-21. It worked out since we had a relatively simple game in mind, but for a bigger game or even to make the one we made more complete, longer hours would be needed.

2. Communication was ok, but could be better to make sure everyone is on the same page and do a bit of pre-planning to understand what the final prototype will be like.

What Changed:

1. Used the “brutal development process” where you first create a game that completes with a single click. Thus we had a game “start” “interact” “end” - then added more complexity to the interaction. This meant we always had a functional game.

Learning reflection:

I learnt Javascript which i had no prior experience with. I also Improved my drawing skills ever so slightly.

Conclusion:

Overall a good jam. The requirements set for the jam were not very strict and allowed for a more creative process by not restricting us to many features or aspects that HAD to be in the game or by limiting language/engines to use for the jam.

Askel

Contribution:

I started with a framework which we all used to build our game. I mostly took care of animations and what was displayed on screen, and player movement. I made the player very springy when shrinking or growing.
I also made a very rough functionality that the black hole attracts particles if they get too close, and otherwise they avoid the black hole.

Reflection

The Good:

1. The game is very satisfying to play. It moves very smoothly and is relaxing to watch in the easier parts of the game. We spent a good portion of time to make the game very pleasing and aesthetic. It is a very simple game after all, so we were able to get some good artificial physics in the game such as player momentum. The bigger the player is, the slower it accelerates and collapses on itself if it gets too small.
2. We got much of what we planned to include in the game. We discussed in the beginning on how the game should be. The game was very straight forward easy to implement and again allowing for some aesthetic workload. There was always some room to implement a fun feature somewhere - very flexible.
3. We didn't rush things. We worked at a slow pace and not overworking. This probably made us very awake and alive each day to think more clearly. I think that if we did work constantly without breaks, the game would not be that much better.

The Bad:

1. We didn't really know who was doing what. Even though the communication was good, we still worked isolated on some levels. This could cause problems for slightly bigger projects.
2. We couldn't implement all the features we planned. The code was organized at first, but eventually still became messy when trying to implement the feature of having the black hole split into two controllable players, so unfortunately the idea was abandoned.
3. On of our team member's creative artwork was left in vain as it could not be

loaded in chrome with the online p5 library. I was very happy to use those sprites, but very sad when the error message graced everyone with its presence.

The things that I would do differently are:

1. I would get a better overview on who is doing what. Merge conflicts can be avoided when you know where other members are currently working.
2. Bringing my own food. When you can decide for yourselves when to meet, you can make sure you have time to prepare own meals. It's very expensive to purchase food from the vending machines. They're just snacks after all.
3. Organize code better. I would definitely try to organize my code better so that they are readable not only for myself, but for others as well.
4. I was thinking whether it would be smarter to draw the game first. If the game is drawn on paper, everyone can share things visually by drawing ideas.

Learning reflection:

I touched p5 for the first time. I learned more about the built in functions of the p5 library because I needed to achieve something like drawing shapes or displaying score, and also some other helpful functions. We used github, and it was my first time to make an actual game through git. We obviously used git to share and merge code, but it was a learning experience. I am usually very intimidated and afraid of git, but touching it helped me overcome it.

Conclusion:

This has been a fun jam, a lot was learned. We came up with a finished prototype although we left out a feature. In the end it's also about experiencing working on a tight schedule with a team.