Starway Seeker GDD

Overview

Game Description

Embark on a whimsical journey through space and magical realms with our protagonist, a lost astronaut wizard. The game unfolds over a series of individual, intricately designed levels, each offering a unique puzzle-solving experience. Divided into two captivating worlds—each with 2 to 5 levels—the first world immerses players in a space/galaxy theme, while the second plunges them into a fantasy/medieval/magical ambiance. The core objective is simple yet engaging: navigate from the starting block to the designated end block, unraveling the path by manipulating the environment around.

Theme

The game seamlessly blends the vastness of outer space with the enchanting allure of magical realms, represented visually through two distinct thematic atmospheres and embodied by our endearing astronaut wizard. Although the thematic interplay is primarily showcased through character design, each world distinctly echoes its thematic essence, providing a dual yet cohesive thematic experience.

Objectives

- **Primary Objective:** Reach the end block of each level to progress.
- **Secondary Objectives:** (Future consideration) Additional challenges or objectives may be introduced to enrich the gameplay experience.

Mechanics

- **Block Movement:** Rotate the camera to move blocks, creating a pathway for the character.
- **Character Navigation:** Click on a block to move the character to that location, emulating the user-friendly controls of Monument Valley and Mekorama.
- **Movement Constraints:** The character can only move to accessible blocks by walking.
- **Gravity Flipping:** (In the second world) Flip gravity to introduce vertically moving blocks, adding a layer of complexity to the puzzle-solving mechanics.

Influence

The minimalist art style, intuitive controls, and creatively designed puzzles are heavily influenced by Monument Valley, Mekorama, and Fez. The game adopts player movement from Monument Valley, camera rotation akin to Mekorama, and perspective-altering level interaction inspired by Fez, all tied together in a unique blend to provide a fresh puzzle-solving adventure.

Audience

- **Age Group:** Suitable for all ages, particularly enjoyable for ages 10 and up.
- **Target Audience:** Puzzle enthusiasts, admirers of artistic level design, and fans of Monument Valley or Mekorama will find themselves at home in this enchanting puzzle adventure.

Gameplay

Gameplay Summary

Players embark on a linear yet exploratory journey through meticulously crafted levels, with the core engagement stemming from the innovative mechanic of rotating the camera to move blocks and create pathways. The gameplay flow is intuitive, inviting players to delve into each level, uncovering the path that leads to the end block. The challenge escalates in a linear fashion, ensuring a balanced difficulty curve that aligns with the player's growing understanding of the mechanics.

Victory Conditions

The sole victory condition in each level is to navigate the character to the designated end block. While there isn't a scoring system in place, the sense of accomplishment is derived from solving the puzzles and progressing through the game. In future iterations, a cinematic might be introduced to provide a rewarding narrative insight upon completion.

Defeat Conditions

Our game adopts a friendly approach by not having any defeat conditions. Players are encouraged to explore and interact with the level at their own pace without the pressure of failure. This creates a relaxed yet mentally stimulating environment where the only barrier to progression is the puzzle itself.

Defined Mechanics

- **Camera Rotation:** Players can rotate the camera sideways by pressing 'Q' or 'E', unveiling new paths by moving blocks. In later stages, a keybind will allow for vertical camera flips, introducing vertically moving blocks and adding a new dimension to the puzzle-solving experience.
- **Block Interaction:** The movable blocks are the heart of the gameplay, their interaction with the camera rotation creates dynamic pathways for the character.
- **Character Movement:** Players guide the character by clicking on the desired block to move to, embodying a user-friendly control scheme.
- **Level Design:** Each level is meticulously crafted to either introduce a new mechanic or reinforce a previously learned lesson through design and layout, facilitating a natural learning curve.

Future Considerations

- **Buttons and Interactive Elements:** Future expansions may introduce buttons and other interactive elements to further enrich the puzzle-solving experience.
- **Rewards and Acknowledgments:** Future iterations may include rewards or acknowledgments, enhancing player satisfaction and engagement.

Technical Aspects

Screen Flows

Upon launching the game, players are greeted with a Main Menu screen, featuring options to Play, adjust Settings, or view Credits. Selecting 'Play' transitions the player directly into the first level of gameplay. In future iterations, a Level Select screen will be introduced. Transitions between screens and levels are gracefully handled with fade-ins and fade-outs, providing a seamless navigation experience.

Defined Controls

- **Camera Rotation:** 'Q' and 'E' keys to rotate the camera sideways.
- **Character Movement:** Mouse-click on a desired block to move the character.
- **Gravity Flip:** A designated keybind (to be determined) will allow players to flip gravity in the second world.

The first level will feature on-screen instructions akin to Mekorama, ensuring players are comfortably acquainted with the controls before delving deeper into the game.

Target Platforms

- **Primary Platforms:** Windows and WebGL via itch.io.

Plans for extending to other platforms may be considered in future development phases.

Technical Requirements

- **Development Environment:** Unity.

No specific hardware requirements or third-party tools are identified at this stage, and the game is designed to be accessible to a broad range of players with standard computing hardware.

Optimization & Performance

- **Performance Tuning:** Regular playtesting will be conducted to identify and address any performance issues, ensuring a smooth gameplay experience across all target platforms.
- **Aspect Ratio:** The game will maintain a fixed screen aspect ratio of 16:9 for the time being, ensuring a consistent visual experience.

Art

Visual Style

Our game seeks to mesmerize players with a minimalist isometric graphic style, inspired by the elegance of Mekorama and the imaginative landscapes of Monument Valley. The visual narrative unfolds across two distinct yet harmoniously intertwined themes: the boundless cosmos of outer space and the enchanting mystique of a magical forest.

- **Galaxy World:** Embraces the serenity and vastness of space, adorned with twinkling stars and celestial bodies. The color palette here leans towards cooler shades, reflecting the calm yet eerie beauty of the cosmos.

- **Fantasy World:** Transports players to an enchanted stone forest, where the magic of nature comes alive. The color palette for this

world is warmer and earthier, evoking a sense of organic wonder.

Sound Design

The auditory experience aims to complement the visual narrative, with thematic musical scores and ambient sounds enhancing the immersion in each world. The gentle hum of the galaxy and the whimsical tunes of the forest will echo the visual style, creating a holistic sensory journey.

Interface

- **Main Menu:** Featuring Play, Settings, and Credits buttons.
- **In-Game UI:** Displaying Level and Pause Menu options.
- **Options Menu:** Offering Music and SFX Volume adjustments, along with a Play button.
- **Credits Screen:** Listing Project team names and Asset acknowledgments.

The interface design adheres to the minimalist aesthetic, ensuring clarity and ease of navigation while preserving the game's artistic integrity.

Project Organization

Development Timelines

The project is structured into three sprints, each lasting four days, leading up to a beta release on November 8th, 2023.

- **Sprint 1 (Completion: 10/27):** Aims to deliver a playable prototype with two levels.
- **Sprint 2 (11/1 - 11/4):** Will focus on implementing feedback from Sprint 1, expanding levels, and refining art and sound design.
- **Sprint 3 (11/5 - 11/7):** Dedicated to finalizing the game levels, enhancing animations, particles, and post-processing to enrich the game's visual appeal.

The beta version's reception will inform the decision on whether to continue developing the project further.

Costs

Given the academic nature of this project, a traditional budget hasn't been allocated. However, for an ideal scenario, further research and consultation will be conducted to provide a realistic cost estimation.

Team Composition

The project is driven by a team of four dedicated members:

- **Daniel Lopez:** Music and SFX Composer.
- **David Martinez:** Game Designer, Level Designer, and Game Programmer.
- **Laura Díaz:** UI Artist and Designer.
- **Sebastián Ramírez:** 3D Artist and Technical Artist.

Collaboration is facilitated through Trello for task tracking, GitHub for version control, and Discord for communication.

Monetization

Initially, the game will be launched as a Free to Play (F2P) beta version. If the beta receives positive feedback, a full version of the game may be developed and sold as a one-time purchase. The beta could serve as a demo for the full game. The team plans to conduct further research on marketing strategies to ensure the game reaches its target audience effectively.

Development Calendar

Daily meetings are scheduled to review progress, address issues, and ensure that the project remains on track. While a detailed development calendar hasn't been created, the sprint-based approach provides a structured timeline for achieving key milestones.