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**Why is this an Independent game?**

*Crawl* wasn't entirely financially independent. It was partially funded by Film Victoria, which helped Powerhoof get *Crawl* into Early-Access on Steam. *Crawl* is also not tied to any large publishers, which allows Powerhoof to shape *Crawl* however they intended it to be: a focus on arcade competitive & co-op 4-player local multiplayer action RPG. It is stylistically reminiscent of old arcade games, with pixelated graphics and 8-bit soundtrack and sounds, which emphasises its indie nature.

**Is this a serious or experimental game?**

Crawl is a mix of serious and experimental, but leaning towards experimental. It is serious where it subtly has a sinister tone underneath all the fantasy and dungeon-crawling themes. In its earlier build, the "Hero" player is seemingly a generic hero character, that is trying to escape in the dungeon. In its latest build however, before every game, the 4 players are pitted against one another (heroes against heroes) and whoever wins gets to be the hero first. In that scene, players can see various actions (as seen in the screenshot below: one can be seen about to stab a body, seemingly trying to make a sacrifice) of the hero characters that imply they are being driven mad by the dungeon and are turning against one another, further implying the sinister tone. On the other hand, this game is experimental because no other game has tried to be a competitive & co-op 4-player local multiplayer game. The competitive element of the game is found in the hero switching mechanic, in which whoever manages to kill the hero player, then becomes the hero. We think this mechanic is crucial to Crawl's frantic 4-player multiplayer because it keeps players on their toes. The co-op element is present in the moments right before the killing blow is dealt to the hero player because each monsters will have to work together to bring the hero's health down before finally trying to get the kill for themselves.

**What aspects of this game are successful?**

*-Balancing asymmetric coop and competition:*

Using the three against one dynamic means that monster players always have an opportunity to team together and it is often even necessary to do so to kill the hero. In fact if the hero meets a boss, the other players literally have no other option but to team up or all lose. But, because the player with the final hit will become the next hero, there is a constant competitive edge. In the end, you want to be the one to reach level 10 and escape the dungeon, but if another player is already close to winning, you become content with teaming up and let others take the final blow if it means stopping the leading player. As a bonus, this dynamic means that no matter whom the spotlight is on as the hero, everyone still gets a chance to play and do something. Even when there are no monsters to inhabit, the ghost players can collect bubbles of ectoplasm as ammo for their globs.

*-Two layered theme:*

One of the driving forces behind the game, on top of its unique game play, is its style, which directly affects its gameplay. Powerhoof sprung for a dark fantasy theme: rituals, curses, and pentagrams and blood offerings as core parts of the game. The theme lets players use monsters that grow more and more horrific so you can really see you're progress through the game, and so the hero player always feels a bit of pressure to succeed. There is a pleasing shock when your friend enters a room and faces their first max level monster.  This setting, subject matter and sense of scale brings a sense of urgency to each player.

On top of the dark fantasy scene is an arcade cabinet motif. The game being unabashedly a game has left a lot of creative freedom for the designers to create systems that just work well, without fear of breaking some level of immersion or theme. It's an arcade game, so large colourful banners, flashing light and sprawling shimmering text are all fair game. Which is good, because Crawl relies on being able to have very clear indicators of who is playing what role, when attacks are coming, and what scores have been added. Being a four player asymmetric game that revolves around extravagant traps and combat could easily become cluttered, but it is largely due to this arcade motif that Power hoof could bring clarity to game play.

**What aspects could be improved?**

It's tough to pick something that needs improvement in the game that their developers aren't already working on. There are definitely some rubber banding issues, where one player can be left behind somewhat in the game and, if other heroes are a higher level, they simply wont get a chance to catch up. But this has definitely been getting better with time. More points for dealing damage as a monster, particularly if you aren't landing final blows, would help a lagging player get better monsters faster and thus and improved chance at catching up.

Mainly however the asymmetric game play, and more importantly, the constantly changing asymmetric game play could be focused on more. One hero's life can be stretched out and battles can be short, with one or two monster players dying fast and the hero left in a one on one battle. When this happens a few times it can also mean that switching roles becomes rare, and if two players a pitching at a similar level, a third or fourth player can run nearly a whole dungeon without ever becoming the hero. Changing the flow of the game so that more people play as the hero character more frequently would make the game much more interesting in some ways, and would really spotlight the changing asymmetric system that makes Crawl special.


# Crawl Remix

### Summary

Our game is a local 4-player asymmetrical multiplayer that is about achieving higher scores than your friends whilst avoiding their laser fire. It will be more serious compared to Crawl's experimental take on multiplayer as it is sort of our version of Powerhoof's 4-Player multiplayer gameplay found in *Crawl*, but as a whole, it is still leaning towards experimental. Our goal with the game is to create our own take on the unique local 4-player multiplayer game with similar mechanics as *Crawl* with the addition of our own mechanics.

### Gameplay

1. 4-Player local multiplayer
2. Competitive with a tinge of co-op
3. Two different player characters (Hero and Goon)
4. Hero has one move (Dodge & Shield)
5. Goons have one move (Charge laser)
6. Whoever is the hero, has to break boxes scattered across the level to find and collect coins
7. Goons have to stop the hero
8. When a goon kills the hero, that goon becomes the hero.
9. Timing will be the central motif of the game.
10. Winner is determined by whoever collects the most coins as the hero

### Inspiration

The main inspiration for our remix of *Crawl* is its unique take on a local 4-player multiplayer genre. Its balanced mix of competitive and co-op is distinct among many local multiplayer games and is, we think, the core element of *Crawl*. Unlike Crawl, our remix does not have dungeon crawling, equipment purchasing, bosses, etc because we wanted to focus on the 4-player multiplayer element as well as the character switching mechanic. By focusing on these two mechanics, we will be able to refocus them through implementing our own mechanics such as coin collecting, the hero's dash & shield, the goon's single charge-up laser and possibly more. We wanted to emphasise the frantic nature of *Crawl* by having all of the game elements in one room at any given time and any goons killed by the hero will respawn in the room, whereas with *Crawl* once you kill the monsters, they revert back to ghosts until they can find pentagrams again and become

monsters. Although this will probably make the game really frantic, maybe almost too frantic, but we think we can narrow things down from there.


## Assets:

### Visual art assets:

All art assets will be in a 2D topdown pixel art style. This may develop into an isometric view also, as long as it allows for full horizontal and vertical movement.

Four goon characters / or / one shooter character and a well designed system of determining which player it is.
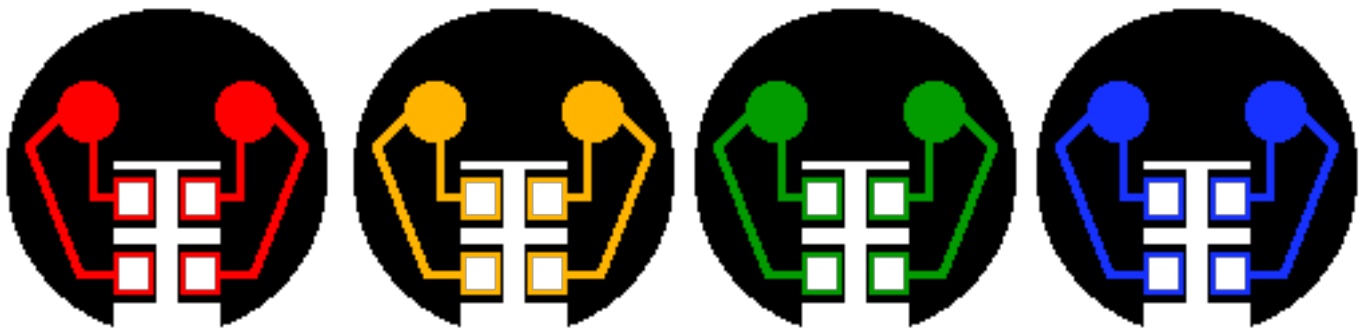


*Goon concepts: using colour to determine players*

Goon animations (2D sprite based):

- Idle

- Movement

- Prepping to shoot

- Shoot

- Transitioning (to hero)


Four heroes / or / one hero and a detection of which player possesses them.



*Hero concepts: also colour coded*

hero animation (2D sprite based):

- Idle
- Movement
- dash (include a prep)
- attack sprite during dash

environments:

- coins



- boxes



- floor / background



- Wall tiles.

UI System:

- Player scores
- Timer
- Finish / final score system.
- Change hero indicator

Menus&misc:

- Start screen (insert coin type screen)
- Instructional menu
- Pause screen

- End score screen

## Coding:

Because of the constantly changing classes, players will be controlled from a state system.

- Player hero script
    o Movement on x & y axis
    o Melee attack
    o Dodge
    o Coin collection
    o Hit detection from goon bullet
- Player goon script
    o Movement on x & y axis
    o Twin stick aiming
    o Ranged attack
    o Hit detection from hero melee
    o Transform to hero
- State machine keeping track of which player becomes hero
- Level timer.
- Score system
    o Detect and store individual player scores.
    o Compares scores at the end of the game to detect the winner.
- Random re-spawning manager.
    o for players.
    o for objects.
    o System that spawns objects in different locations depending on the location of the hero.

## Sound Design:

A driving 8-bit inspired sound track. Sound effect should be distinctly different from each other in a arcade theme.

Goon sounds

- Movement (maybe)
- Shoot charge
- Shoot fire (x3 pitches)
- Shoot impact (x3 pitches)
- Shoot impact (on player) (x3 pitches)
- Death (x3 pitches)

Hero

- Movement

- Dash

- Dash impact

- Death

Environmental:

- Ambient soundtrack (musical?)

- Coins collection (raising pitch like in Mario)

- Crate destruction.

- Timer (beeping towards end of time)

- UI and menu clicks.

**What needs to be done first?**

First:

- Hero & Goon movement and attack scripts.

- Hero switching state system.

- Re-spawning systems.

- Stand in player assets. (no animation, may not be final character designs, but needs to be clear which player is which.)

These need to be in before testing anything else can begin. The core of our game is the constant changing asymmetric combat, so having this built in rough way is the very first importance. Art assets just need to be clear at this point nothing more.

Second:

- Art direction and concepts

- Art assets can be begun

- Scoring systems.

- Tuning combat and switching states

Having our art direct set should be the next objective so that assets can be made in a succinct style. This step is more for ease of production later on. Scoring working out goals and flow of each round is next in importance, but it relies on having systems already in place.

The rest:

- Tuning game play

- Implementing all assets

- Working on game feel.

- Lastly menus and stuff.

Things can flow a bit more naturally at this point, as long as we are staying on top of assets. Polishing and frequently testing the game to tune its feels will probably be the next most important thing however.

**What are the high time risks?**

Coding first systems. The state machine and independent scripts for characters are integral to the games design, but they are also unfamiliar ground and are likely to take up a lot of time.

Player art and animations. Less important but liable to take a lot of time. Getting on visual assets early and staying on top of them will be important for time.