**Helios**

Game Mechanics

Platform: Windows

Target Audience: 18-24 Hardcore Gamers

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# Introduction

Helios is a turn-based tactical strategy game set in space. The player will navigate his/her flagship, the “Helios” across the galaxy, conquering planets to gain resources and to seek out planets suitable for colonization of the player’s species. Gameplay will be broken up into 3 distinct phases:

* The **Navigation Phase** is designed to let the player move around freely in the galaxy and choose which planet to conquer next. This gives the campaign an open-ended nature as the player is free to engage missions in any order or simply explore.
* The **Strategy Phase** takes place on the player’s flagship, the Helios. The player will have to make major strategic decisions like how to spend resources and what technologies to research. The player will be able to switch back and forth between the Navigation Phase and the Strategy Phase at will.
* The **Combat Phase** is where majority of the action will take place. This is a turn-based phase where the player will control a fleet of 3 - 5 space ships against an enemy fleet.

# Navigation Phase

## Core mechanics

In the Navigation phase, a map of the galaxy will be displayed. The player is essentially flying the Helios across the galaxy, to choose the next destination.

The primary resource in this phase is fuel. Flying anywhere will consume fuel and it will have to be replenished at fuel stations and may also be offered as a reward for certain missions. The player will be unable to fly to a different solar system if the ship runs out of fuel. There will mechanics in place to avoid a situation where no progress is possible at all; but it will incur resource penalties. The player will have to monitor fuel carefully.

Exploration is the primary objective mechanic in the Navigation Phase.

The player will also be able to switch to the Strategy Phase via the interface.

## Controls

The controls in this phase will be primarily mouse driven.

* Mouse movement will move the cursor across the visible galaxy map
* The Scroll Wheel can be used to zoom in or out
* The view can be panned to different areas of the galaxy by moving the cursor to the edge of the screen or by using the WASD keys.
* Left click will select planets or other locations.
* Right-click is used to move the Helios to a particular location
* The player can right-click on a planet to fly to it and start a mission, if one is available.

## Feedback

* On the galaxy map, planets that have a mission available will be highlighted.
* Once the player arrives at such a planet, a cut-scene will be triggered and the game will switch to the Combat Phase to start the mission.
* Planets that do not have any missions at the moment will still be worth exploring to gather extra resources.
* Tooltips providing information about the various locations in the galaxy will be displayed upon hovering the mouse cursor over them. These tooltips will provide information like threat level, resources available at the planet, etc.

# Strategy phase

## Core mechanics

This is a planning phase. The player will have to make decisions on how to spend limited resources and prioritize which technology to research. The construction game mechanic will be utilized here.

* The primary resource to manage in this phase will be Credits; which can be earned by doing missions or from harvesting operations.
* The player will be able to add various modules to the Helios; like Power Generators, Research Labs, Ore Refineries and Factories.
* The player will also be able to go into the Research Screen to choose what technology to research.
* This is also the phase where the player will be able to upgrade the combat ships of the fleet with various weapons, shields and other components.
* The player can spend experience points to level up the space ships in the fleet. The 3 classes of ships will have unique progression trees with unique skills to choose from.
* The 3 classes will be:
  + Long range fighter: The player can choose skills from the tree to make it a scouting ship with stealth and movement skills or a sniper-like ship with upgraded weapons.
  + Close range fighter : This ship can be speced as a tank or a high-damage, high risk craft, with devastating close range damage
  + Support craft: The support ship can be focused solely on buffing and repairing allied ships or it can be given some offensive debuffing skills.
* Various actions like research and building will take a certain amount of time.
* Choosing what to spend the limited resources on will be a major strategic concern in this phase.

## Controls

Controls will be mouse driven in the Strategy Phase.

* There will interface elements that will let the player go into the various screens like Building, Research, Upgrades, etc., by clicking on the corresponding button.
* While on each of these screens, the player will use left-click to click on menus to make choices like which module to build or which technology to research.
* The Escape key or the “Back” interface button can be used to go back to the previous screen/menu.

## Feedback

* Tooltips will provide descriptions of the buildings and technologies like their cost, intended use, etc., when moused over.
* Budget breakdowns will also be displayed periodically to give the player an idea of how Credits are being spent.
* An interface element will display upcoming events chronologically to give the player an idea of when actions will be complete and in what order.

# Combat phase

## Core mechanics

This is a turn based phase where the player will take his/her actions and then the AI will take its turn. The player will have to strategize and give commands his units to try and outwit the AI opponent.

* The player and the AI will take turns until one side is defeated.
* Certain missions might also have specific objectives and/or timers and might contain elements of rescue, escape and capture gameplay mechanics.
* On the player’s turn, he/she will go through all the space ships in the fleet sequentially and give them commands hoping to defeat the enemy fleet and to complete the objectives.
* Timers can be used in certain missions to invoke a sense of urgency.
* The key resource in this phase will be action points for each ship (represented as Power), which will recharge every turn). Each ship will have a specific amount of Power to spend each turn.
* There are 2 core actions that the player can take for each ship: Move and Attack. For example, if the ship has 10 power, the player can move 4 grid spaces, and then spent the remaining 6 power to attack. It can use a powerful attack that uses 4 power and a weaker attack that uses 2. Or, it could use all 10 power to move to a tactically advantageous position to setup for a massive attack next turn.
* The player can choose to use any of the skills available to the ship currently selected or use a basic attack or setup in a defensive stance, for example.
* Once an ability or attack is selected, the player will have to choose the target for it. The target can be an enemy spaceship, an allied spaceship or just a location in space.
* A random number generator will be used in most of the calculations in this phase. Most attacks that target an enemy will have a percentage chance to hit. This chance will be determined by various factors like the attacker’s accuracy statistic, the defender’s defense, etc.
* Once an attack connects, it will deduct the amount of damage that the attack would do from the target’s remaining Hit Points.
* If the hit points reach 0, the ship is destroyed.
* There also buff/debuff skills. These will simply apply a condition to the target. If it is a location based condition, any units that are in the affected location will have the condition applied to them.
* There will be fog of war that will hide enemies and objectives until they are discovered via exploration.

## Controls

The mouse and keyboard will both be used in the Combat Phase, although the mouse can be used exclusively as well. UI will be critical here to convey important information to the player.

* Mouse movement will control the cursor.
* The player will be able to pan the camera across the battlefield to get an idea of the positions of enemies and objectives by moving the cursor to the edge of the screen or by using the WASD keys.
* Left-click will select objects on the map, including allied and enemy space ships.
* A skill bar at the bottom will list every action available to the currently selected ship. The player can left-click on any of the buttons to carry out the corresponding action. The buttons will also have hotkeys assigned to them (1-0) for quick access using the keyboard.
* Right-click will confirm actions and execute them, if a valid target/location is right-clicked upon.

## Feedback

Various interface elements will be used to provide feedback to the player

* A bar will indicate the remaining power (action points) for the selected ship. Any action that is selected will cause a portion of the power bar to blink, indicating how much power will be used for that action.
* When an attack is selected, the available targets are displayed and information like chance to hit, damage caused and other effects of the attack itself are listed. As the user selects enemy targets, information about the enemy ships will also be displayed, such as current health points and other properties of the target.
* Selecting the Move button will highlight the area that a ship can move to. This area is typically a circle and the radius is the maximum possible movement if all available power is used. The ship can move anywhere within this area and power will be consumed proportional to the distance moved.
* Objectives and Timers (if applicable) will be prominently displayed.
* The difficulty level of this phase will increase as the game progresses and the player comes across more heavily defended planets with better armed fleets to battle.