

Hungry Space Cat

Project Pitch

Chosen Template/Project Description

Figure 1.1: The menu scene consists of a few buttons, an astronaut cat image and a space-themed background.

Template

Hungry Space Cat builds on the 'Project Idea Title 1: Arcade Game' template.

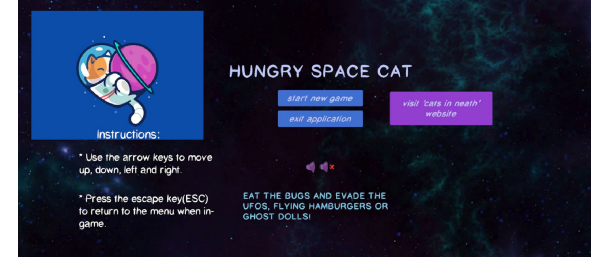
Description

Hungry Space Cat is a 2D arcade-inspired game for the PC that takes light inspiration from arcade games such as Namco's *Pac-Man*, a 1980 maze action game [1] and *Asteroids*, a 1976 space shooter by Atari [2] while including a more modernised look and feel.

The game features an adorable astronaut cat trying to consume some space bugs while evading cute-looking enemies such as UFOs, flying hamburgers, ghost dolls or a combination thereof. There are four levels; the player advances through them by eating all bugs inside a scene without losing all their lives (Figure 1.2)

Like in *Pac-Man*, the cat earns points for eating the space creatures while trying to avoid the annoyed enemies that could spell the end of its feast (and life!) [3]. The game's goal is for the cat to consume as many bugs as possible without getting hurt by its opponents. If the cat has any lives left, it can proceed to the next level.

The background of *Hungry Space Cat* engages the space theme to pay tribute to games such as *Space Invaders* and *Asteroids*. Overall, the game aims to be easily playable and fun without requiring too much investment or time for the player to understand its plot.



Motivation/Target Audience

Motivation

With their simplicity and lack of complex narratives, arcade games offer a unique advantage over modern games. They allow players to dive in quickly and provide game programmers with fast feedback / quick development cycles. Thus, arcade games are ideal for a final project that shows accumulated knowledge and skills. On a personal note, *Hungry Space Cat* addresses the creator's affection and love for cats, wanting to raise awareness that adopting cats is better than buying pedigree ones.

Target Audience

The target audience of *Hungry Space Cat* mirrors those that Toru Iwatani, the creator of *Pac-Man*, intended for his game, aimed at being accessible to a broad spectrum of audiences [3].

The simplicity of *Hungry Space Cat* allows for instant immersion in the game while offering a safe and quiet space, making it suitable for:

- ★ Busy people who want to enjoy a game without having to read instruction manuals.
- ★ Casual players who wish to play a game with a straightforward objective.
- ★ New gamers and seasoned ones alike who like challenges.
- ★ People with health issues that prevent them from playing a game for an extended amount of time.
- ★ People who enjoy light-hearted games.
- ★ Young players who enjoy cute creatures and bright colours.

Project Objectives

Hungry Space Cat aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- ★ Be a game that is easy to play/pick up.
- ★ Have visuals that are enjoyable and simple.
- ★ Be respectful towards arcade games in their philosophy, design and approach.
- ★ Serve as a motivation for players to explore other arcade games.
- ★ Encourage people who like cats to adopt one like the developers of [An Arcade Full of Cats](#) do with their projects.

Cat Trax

Cat Trax, released in 1982 or 1983, is a clone of the game *Pac-Man*, featuring a cat on the run from three canines [4, 5]. To gain points, the kitty has to eat the catnip in the maze, and – anytime a green potion appears – it will transform into a dog catcher truck that sends any captured dogs to a pound at the top of the screen [4, 5]. Once the potion wears off, the dogs start chasing the game character again [4, 5]. *Cat Trax* was developed for the Aradia 2001 [6] – an obscure home game system released in 1982 by UA.Ltd [5].



Figure 1.2: An image of the arcade game *Cat Trax*

Cat Trax has a fun take on *Pac-Man*; however, it remains a clone with little to set it apart regarding creativity or originality. While games such as *Pac-Man* inspired *Hungry Space Cat*, it still aims to be something of its own, emphasising its space-centred/feline theme.

Mappy

Released by Namco in 1983 [7, 8], *Mappy* (マッポー) was a side-scrolling maze game featuring cartoon-like characters like cats and mice [7, 8]. It ran on the *Super Pac-Man* hardware modified to support horizontal side-scrolling [7, 8].

In the game, the player guides the police mouse, Mappy – a term derived from the Japanese nickname *mappo* [8] – through a mansion owned by cats called Mewkies to find stolen goods [7, 8]. To survive, Mappy must avoid the mansion's cats and traverse the building via trampolines [7, 8].

Figure: 1.3: A screenshot of the arcade game *Mappy*.



Mappy is more involved and complex than *Cat Trax*, but its story and motive are simple, not allowing the slightly more enhanced gameplay to get in the way. *Hungry Space Cat* builds on the philosophy of *Mappy* by extending a simple story with more elevated graphics.

Pac Cat



Figure 1.4: An image of the indie game *Pac Cat*.

Pac Cat by Divok is an indie arcade game with pixel graphics for mobile devices. In it, a cat has to eat all the points to pass the levels while running from bulldogs [9]. Reviews of the game describe it as cute but buggy, with the controls not working and the game being challenging from the get-go [9].

Consequently, *Pac Cat* defeats the purpose that creators of games such as *Pac-Man* had in mind: for them to be simple but become more complex with increasing levels [3]. *Hungry Space Cat* starts simple but becomes more difficult at each level, thus keeping in line with the characteristics of an arcade game.

References

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- [9] Google Play. Pac Cat: retro cat. Retrieved February 17, 2024 from <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.Divok.PacCat&hl=en&gl=US>.

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6. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.Divok.PacCat&hl=en&gl=US>