Project Proposal

Hype Train Studios

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1- High Concept

A marionette game featuring the use of the Leap Motion peripheral, designed to entertain and entice Children with a classical and ancient art form.

2- Genre

Original concepts for the game revolved around the Exploration and sandbox genre, including puzzles, toys and combat, that the puppet would interact with.

3- Gameplay (goals, rules, challenges, actions)

Playing the game will see the main character, a puppet, being controlled by the player by lifting and lowering different fingers over the leap motion controller. The player will hold both hands out, and with the index finger pointing away from them and the thumbs pointing towards each other. Using the index fingers will control the puppets legs, while moving the thumbs will have the characters arms move. Lifting either hand will cause the marionette to spin on the opposite hands leg (ie moving the right hand up will cause the puppet to spin on the left leg), and this will be used to turn it. Raising both hands in the air will cause the marionette to be lifted into the air, as if jumping, but only by a set height.

The character will be able to then move through the world, while also being able to interact with objects and enemies using his arms. Gameplay would likely be slower paced, to allow all ages to play and enjoy themselves. Goals will be very small, and contained to the area the player is interacting with. For the most part, they will be set abstractly by the player with a focus being strictly on having fun, rather than completing tasks.

4- Features (perspective, style, progression, controls, etc)

The game will be played from a 3D Third Person Perspective, following behind the puppet as he moves through the world. The style will mimic marionettes through history, and will make use of physics engines to allow the puppet's body parts to sway and swing. Visuals will all be very rustic, as though it is a real life puppet show. When changing sections of the game, curtains will close to signify a change in scene.

5- Setting/Story/Characters

The game will feature an environment filled with different puzzles and interactable objects that the player will be able to play with using the puppets hands. It will feature a large play room like area with different themed objects placed around. Story will be avoided, acting only as an interactive entertainment area to allow players to simply pick up and play with the puppet. However, different parts of the playroom can be styled using different themes, to allow some interesting interaction opportunities.

6- Technology/Platform

Leap Motion will be used in our game to read the user's hand gestures for controlling the character. As stated before in the gameplay section, there will be different gestures to make the marionette move.

The engine will we be using will be Unity. The reason is that Unity has a lot of developer tools ready to use with Leap Motion that will prove to be very helpful in creating this game. It also features a working physics engine which will be key to our ideas, and allows a quick and efficient workflow for our small team. Not only that, but it is the engine that we have the most experience with and one that we can use effectively.

7- Market Analysis

For our game, we've decided to target children as our major demographic. With a generation more versed in technology and digital media than ever before, games for entertaining kids are quite popular. Our game will also help in the development of young minds and bodies by helping to develop motor control by interacting with the puppet on screen. This could also be aimed at a secondary market of people with disabilities in need of physical rehabilitation, through precision movements required to control the puppet.

There has been a large market influence driven from games made for young children. In terms of game consoles, the Wii and Wii U game consoles are generally considered to be focused on a younger demographic. These consoles have respectively sold approximately 101 million and 7 million units worldwide. We can derive from this success that children enjoy the motion involved in playing the Wii games. In creating a children-oriented game using Leap Motion technology, we enable children to play a game with the same motions similar to the Wii, but without the controller requirement. Thus, simplifying the way in that a child can interact with the system even more.

Our game is a very original and exciting idea that can be played anywhere with a surface that the leap motion can be attached to. As the nature of the game is pick up and play, it would allow for the game to be placed in many different environments, like hospitals, schools, the home, and any other places that kids might need a quick bit of entertainment without needing to invest a lot of time. This allows for our game to easily have an open market and an infinite source of exposure.

Puppets are a classic method of entertainment used for children. Whether it be as simple as a parent purchasing a puppet to amuse his child or a local puppet show put on for an audience. Using puppets as the main character for our game allows the child to control their own, and have fun doing it.