

Serengeti Sprint

Design Document
Alexandra Conley

Introduction

An albino giraffe uses the elasticity of its neck to avoid danger and travel across the African savannah in order to reach the herd from which he was separated.

Background

Despite giraffes being the tallest animals in the world, there are still other living creatures as well as outside forces that pose a threat to them. For the giraffes of the Serengeti in Tanzania, this is no exception. The story is centered around a young giraffe named Denzi, whose existence is even more strenuous because of his albino coat. Being lightly colored and easy to spot by predators, he has struggled to stay alive thus far, but he has succeeded. When a horrible drought strikes and the main waterhole dries up, the herd must travel to the other side of the reserve in order to find another source of life-sustaining liquid. As the herd begins their travels, however, Denzi soon finds himself lost and separated from them. He must run through patches of savannah foliage in order to reach the place his herd was going and in the process, must outrun the lions following him. As he dodges through the undergrowth, other obstacles will present themselves in which Denzi must use his neck to dodge the things falling from the trees. If he gets hit too many times it will slow him down and the lions will catch him, but he must also keep his neck up in order to spot his herd. Denzi's goal is to reach his herd and the new waterhole in time.

Description

You are playing as a young, albino giraffe named Denzi. You will be greeted with the title screen on your phone or other mobile device. The button options to choose from will be start, instructions, settings, and credits. When you click on the "credits" button, it will take you to a screen in which you will see everyone who was responsible for the making of the game. There will be a small arrow button that will allow you to return to the home screen.

While back on the home title screen, if you click on "instructions", you will be taken to a screen where you will see how the game dynamics work. You will be greeted with a series of short looping animations of snippets of real game play that show you the controls. It will explain that a small D-pad will be featured on the touch screen allowing you to use four-way control to stretch and constrict the neck as well as moving it up and down and forward and backward. You can change where this control is located on the screen later on. The D-pad controls can be used separately or together to create combo moves. When used separately, you can maneuver the giraffe's neck to move up and down and forward and backward. However, when using two arrows at once, like "up" and "left" at the same time, it can cause the neck to stretch farther in that direction to catch items or when using "down" can constrict the neck to duck and dodge obstacles. You may use your finger to swipe through the various instructional screens and animations on this page. When swiping to the next page, you'll be shown what obstacles you must avoid. When swiping again, you will be presented the page that will show you how to catch items, power-ups, and other various rewards. When you get fully acquainted with the controls, you can, at any time during the instructional screens, press the return arrow to bring you back to the original home screen.

When back at the home screen again, you can click on "settings" which will send you to a page where you can adjust a few things to customize your gaming experience within this

application. One of the settings will be labeled “orientation”. This comes with two check boxes that say “right” or “left”. You may change this to customize what side of the screen the D-pad will be located on depending on your preference or dominant hand. A few other settings will be “music” and “sound effects” that will feature sliders in which you can customize the volume of both the music that will be playing as well as the sound effects when you dodge obstacles, pick up items, or advance levels. These can be adjusted all the way up as well as both being muted if you wish to play without the distraction of sounds. Just like on the other screens, a return arrow will be present so you may navigate back to the home screen.

Once again back at the home screen, you can now choose to play the game. When clicking “Start” you will immediately be transitioned to a cut scene if this is your first time playing the game. If you have played previously, your game will take you to the last level you completed and show your progress through the game so far. At this point you will be shown a map of the reserve and how far you’ve traveled. At any point you can go back to previous levels or play the current one to unlock the next stage. If no game data is present, you will see a cut scene of a giraffe herd noticing that their water has dried up and they soon begin a journey to cross the reserve. The scene switches over to an albino giraffe who is asleep and wakes up to find his herd has left without him. The cut scene zooms in on the giraffe’s face as he turns around to realize that lions are on his trail before fading to black.

After the cut scene, you will be presented with a map of the Serengeti Reserve. Most of the map will be faded out until the levels have been unlocked. A small giraffe head will appear and wiggle back and forth on your current location in the game. This screen will also feature a button that says “stats” in which you can check your distance traveled as well as other statistics of the game. This “map” screen can be checked at any time, even during gameplay, if the game is paused. When the giraffe head is pressed, it will take you into the level where gameplay will start immediately. You will see your albino giraffe character already running. No predators will be seen on the screen yet.

The screen will display a text that says “Go!” in which the controls are turned over to you and the D-pad will appear in the screen. In that instance, you will slowly start to see obstacles in your way as you run through the trees. Things like branches, both short and long, will be in your way and must be dodged by toggling the controls to keep the giraffe’s neck down. However, you need to keep your head up as long as possible in order to keep an eye on your herd’s tracks. When you keep your head fully erect, your score will be doubled for the duration that you can hold the position and you can do this as many times as you like throughout the level. The score will be displayed in the top right corner as a “running” score, meaning as long as you are running, you will continuously be gaining a higher score. The items you pick up can affect the score as well as how often you hold your head up.

If you accidentally hit a branch or other obstacles, it will slow you down slightly. After you get hit twice, you will begin to see a group of lions in pursuit of you. Each time you get hit, the lions will slowly gain ground on you. If they catch you, it is game over and the level must be restarted in order to complete. However, your score for the level is still recorded.

Getting hit with obstacles is not the only way to lose the game. As you run, an energy bar will be present in the top middle of the screen and will deplete quickly. As you run, leaves will be falling from the trees. Swing your neck and head towards them to catch and eat them. The leaves will temporarily relieve you of some of your fatigue but if leaves are not continuously consumed, you will quickly grow tired and be unable to run, allowing the lions to catch you.

Throughout the level, there will be many items that you can pick up to both help you stay alive and help you boost your score quickly. For instance, if you catch a golden leaf that falls, your belly will stay full until you hit another obstacle, in which case it will go back to depleting at a normal rate. Some can increase your speed, but in doing so, will make obstacles harder to avoid because of them coming at you a lot faster than usual. Others will be merely for score

purposes and may be floating shapes that say “x2” or “+100” indicating whether a number will be multiplied or added to your score.

At the bottom of the screen, there will be a dotted line with a small giraffe moving along it. This indicates how far into the level you are and how much longer you have until the level is completed. If a level is completed, you will be greeted with a congratulatory scene that shows you how quickly you completed the level, how many obstacles you hit, and your current score. At this point you can choose to quit the game or continue on to the next level in which you will repeat the process.

Key Features

- The game will feature dynamic elastic neck controls
- Play as a giraffe like never before with an albino coat and fight to survive
- Avoid getting hit by branches and falling objects and outrun predators
- Make your way across the Serengeti with over twenty levels and unlockable bonus levels
- Outsmart your enemies by using power-ups like “cloaking” to temporarily hide yourself
- Eat leaves falling from the trees to keep your energy up

Genre

The genre is set similar to a traditional side-scroller game. However, instead of the player being able to control the usual movements of the character like forward, backward, and jump, the player uses the arrow keys to control only the neck of the giraffe in order to avoid the obstacles and catch falling items.

Platforms

Serengeti Sprint is a casual game for people looking to pass a little time while at home or on the go. The game will be offered on the Android Market and the Apple App Store and will be free and available to all mobile devices including phones and tablets. The gameplay is quick, easy, and simple to use, making it hassle-free for anyone looking to play. The game does not have a learning curve nor does it require any special skill in order to be played. The game can be played by anyone above the age of six years old, but may not be able to be completed by someone of that age because of the slow increase of difficulty as you progress farther through the levels.