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IGME 420 - Level Design
9/30/22

P01C - Platformer Final Build and Postmortem

– Video Breakdown –

Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PFDhbF22_a0

Steam Link: <https://steamcommunity.com/sharedfiles/filedetails/?id=2870465194>

The video is of a short playthrough of both the finalized level, and the original for comparisons. I originally wanted to do an audio commentary with Zoom, but the exported video had low frames per second so I recorded with OBS instead.

Timestamps:

0:14 - The player starts in the center room of the level near the exit portal with one of the strawberries to unlock it. The signs to the left and right and the teleporter above show the player the directions they can go to get to the other rooms and get the strawberries they need.

0:20 - In the left room are some timed obstacles with the cats throwing mines and the laser columns to get around. Something added to this and the right room was the checkpoint so players couldn't go back to spawn immediately by throwing themselves into the obstacles.

0:36 - In the right room are two enemies carrying the strawberries above a pit of spikes with more laser columns. I had condensed the room from the original version to make the area a little easier to get through, as my intention was to try and get players to knock the enemies into the obstacles and take care of them.

0:53 - In the topmost room is the platforming section. The layout of this room underwent the most change as it was simple cloud platforming in the original with the water below. Now there are more obstacles with laser columns and timed explosive blocks to take timing into account to get through. The monster floating from one side to the other was still kept in.

1:01 - The spring is a new obstacle added to the level just for the sake of making the area more interesting.

1:06 - The secret area with the pumpkin pie is still in this segment, just on the other end of the room now.

1:46 - This is the beginning of looking back on the original level. Off the bat, there are more blocks condensing the space between the rooms, which I've shrunken down in accordance with feedback in order to make the level more compact. There's more space taken up by blocks in both the vertical and horizontal scale of the level, the treadmills to the left and right are longer, and you can easily see the challenges from the center room in the revision, but not the original.

1:52 - The left room is a lot larger and the cats shoot arcing energy balls instead of mines, which can easily be avoided on the lower platform. The lack of checkpoints makes it easy to get through this area after collecting both strawberries.

2:10 - The right room is also larger and has magma blocks on the bottom to get back up to the platforms. The large scale made it easy for the enemies to slip through, which I condensed in the final version. I also removed the magma blocks as they seemed unnecessary with the smaller room size.

2:25 - The topmost room starts on the right end with both strawberries easily in view. I expanded the level in both ways in the revised version to make use of the space and added the laser columns to make it more interesting.

2:32 - The pumpkin pie room has a small indication that it's there with the alignment of the floating monster and the placement of the bush.

– Postmortem –

For the post mortem, I'll go over all of the changes between the original and finalized version in accordance with the feedback received from my peers. Most of the people who tried the level said they liked the idea of dividing it into three challenges to finish it however you wanted. My original plans were to break down platforming, timing, and combat into three bite-sized challenges with two strawberries each. Combined with the one in the center, you could only finish one challenge to speed through the level, but each one was so small it wouldn't take up much time to finish all three. The changes I implemented thanks to the feedback are:

The left room didn't have much activity: I fixed the left room so the player couldn't stay on the low platform to dodge the energy balls. The lack of an upper platform and use of mines fixed this, while I could still keep the laser columns from the original version.

The platforming segment wasn't too interesting: I took advantage of the added space on top to make the segment have more interesting obstacles as the platforming in the original was just moving across narrow gaps with plentiful ground to land on.

The right room was a bit too open: If given the room to move around the player, the enemies can easily escape and prolong the time the player takes hunting them down. With the smaller room, the players can easily knock the enemies into an obstacle to take care of them, as originally intended.

The overall level was too easy: I already noted the changes to the three rooms from before and how I changed them to be a bit more difficult. I also added checkpoints to the start of the left and right rooms, because while some of my peers noted that dying to head back to the starting room was a time saver, others noted that starting in the room when you miss one of the strawberries was a bit frustrating.

The level felt a bit too large: The original version was made to be 39 blocks wide and 30 blocks tall, and a lot of the space was filled with blocks that had no purpose being there. I tried to circumvent the wide aspect with the treadmills to speed up moving between rooms, but making the level smaller and the challenges more compact was the way to go.

In general, the feedback I got was mostly positive. Plenty of the people who tried the level enjoyed the open-ended aspect of choosing how you wanted to complete it. There was one piece of feedback that spoke negatively on the linear aspect of the use of signs pointing the player in a specific direction, but I still kept them in so that players understand where they have to go, while they still have the freedom to choose a different path. Plenty of feedback was regarding the difficulty, and while I never intended to make the level hard, I understood where they were coming from and adjusted certain aspects to address that statement on the difficulty level. Since there was a lot of positive feedback on the challenges in the rooms themselves, the level was kept mostly the same with a few changes to each room, except the top room which underwent an overhaul. With all of the notes I've received, I feel like I made a good balance with the final result by taking the original concept and adjusting it to make it more enjoyable.

(Refer to the images on the next page for a side-by-side comparison)

Original Level



Revised Level

