Super Space Segway

Welcome to Super Space Segway! Super Space Segway is a 2D puzzle-racer set in the future aboard a massive spaceship. The player is immediately thrown into the action with a quick cut scene showing the spaceship being attacked head-on by an alien race. During the cut scene the player sees that the battle is very even with the aliens and humans on equal ground - that is until the aliens deploy their minions. The alien minions are vast in number, but what they have in number, they lack for in brains. As a result the captain has ordered you, a simple janitor, to clear out the interior of the ship, but little did the captain know that there is a massive surprise lurking in the dark depths of the ship.

The game play is broken down into two parts. The first is the racing aspect in which the player’s goal is to clear each sector (level) as fast as possible in order to activate an EMP that fries all aliens in the completed sector. The second is the puzzle aspect where the player’s main difficulty of reaching the goal of each sector is predominantly comprised of solving puzzles which become increasingly tougher throughout the course of the game. Overall the game creates heart-thumping moments by having alien minions chase the player throughout the level to hinder the player therefore causing the player to move as fast as possible towards the goal while trying to solve puzzles at the same time which are blocking the player from reaching the goal, ultimately creating a puzzle-racer which requires both a quick-thinking mind as well as fast reflexes to escape the minion attacks.

The way in which these puzzles are solved is through use of the environment around the player. Since the game is set in space, natural intuition tells us that there is no gravity in space. To compensate for this, the ship has built-in gravity controllers which the player can use to change the direction of gravity during game play which affects many objects in the environment including the player. The player controls a segway which always lands properly no matter which way gravity is acting. For example, if the player changed the direction of gravity to pull towards the left the segway the player is on would also fall towards the left side of the screen but land properly so that the player can continue to drive sideways. With the use of gravity the player can alter the environment to whichever way seems fitting in the players mind to solve the puzzle as most objects are affected by gravity in some sort of method.

In addition to being able to drive the segway and change the direction of gravity there are multiple types of segways the player can use throughout the game. Which segway the player is able to use is dependent on which level the player is playing. Each segway has only one special ability with the exception of the default starting segway which has no special ability. Some examples of segway abilities are: a segway that shoots lasers, a segway that can push objects, a segway that can hover-boost-jump, a speedy segway, a one-way segway, with many more for the player to discover as the game progresses.

The controls are based off a twin stick control method with user customizable controls enabled. For example, keyboard controls comprise of the arrow keys to control movement, wasd controls to control gravity direction, the spacebar to boost, and the shift button to use a segways special ability. Since the segway can only move in a maximum of two directions the arrow keys that are applicable at the moment move the segway. To clarify, if gravity is normal (pulling down) the right and left arrow keys move the segway horizontally but the up and down arrow keys do nothing. If gravity is changed to pull towards the right, the up and down arrow keys move the segway vertically and the right and left arrow keys do nothing.

There are three main objectives in each level. The first objective which is the only required goal for each level is to reach the goal, preferably as fast as possible. The second objective is to gain bonus points by collecting energy balls and secret stars. Energy balls fill up your boost meter which can be used at any point in time by pressing the spacebar. Collecting secret stars gives the player the option to unlock secret bonus levels. Thirdly the player can rescue trapped space crew members such as scientists and pilots. When a space crew member is rescued they will share a bit of background information to the story progression.

The damage system in this game is very simple, get hit by an alien minion or take any damage from a harmful object in the environment and the player dies. The player starts with 3 lives and can gain more as the game progresses. To prevent frustration there are many checkpoints in each level to help the player to constantly be moving forward so that they do not get stuck in a certain area. If the player runs out of lives entirely they only need to restart from the beginning of the level. The only exception to this is if a player reaches a boss fight the player is granted unlimited lives till they defeat the boss.

The music and graphics in this game are very happy and bright. Hand-drawn style textures create a feel of an imaginative space story which all ages can enjoy. There are many comical animations such as a trail of pencil-drawn smoke trailing from behind the segway’s wheels. When a character dies, their segway explodes creating a hole in the hull of the space ship, which the player and objects in the nearby vicinity get sucked and hurled into out space. When a player changes direction abruptly their wheels leave black screech marks behind them which slowly fade away. Aliens vary in color, shape and size comprising of anything from a goo ball to a small monster with antennas. Bosses in this game look much more fierce but still retain the laughable look from olden video game bosses.

The overall approach to this game is to create an enjoyable experience which can be played for anywhere from a brief period of time to many hours on end. The levels are short enough that a player can play one level, put the game down, and return to it later right from where they left off which makes this game a prime candidate for websites such as miniclip.com as well as phone’s such as android and iPhone as well as arcade services such as the PlayStation Network (PSN), Xbox Live Arcade (XBLA) and Steam. The reason I believe this game is so much fun is because it takes every child’s imagination of spaceships and aliens and combines it with intense puzzle-racer platform elements but promotes continuous play through unlocking new types of segways throughout the game while maintaining a progressively increasing difficulty curve.