Idea Iteration Document

# Concepting Stage

In the concepting stage, the group collectively put dozens of ideas on the floor and adopted a simple spitballing approach to talking about them. Consideration was given to each team member’s desires and preferred work role, which led to early shelving of some ideas that would have been completely unworkable for different individual team members. After about two hours of discussion, and some writing, we had cut it down to ten ideas.

The original idea at this stage was that we would pick two or three concepts and quickly jam out prototypes for them over the three weeks.

## A Top-Down Hack n’ Slash

One of the least fleshed out concept that made it through the first round, this ended up being rolled into another concept. This was just by unspoken agreement; The mechanical set on its own wasn’t particularly inspiring, and with no aesthetics being attached to it, it lost traction.

## VR Dagger Teleporting

A concept the team was pretty excited with: Using physics to throw a knife as a weapon towards (presumably humanoid) enemies in a VR stealth game, and then teleporting to the knife – Our combat system and locomotion all rolled into one.

Unfortunately, we are a team with only one programmer, and he has as of this writing never done VR, likewise with two of the artists. This one was reluctantly shelved for being out of scope. Considering the idea we went with, it probably wasn’t out of scope, or at least was far less out of scope, but the lack of HTC Vive availability on campus makes revisiting this concept moot for now. If we were to visit, we would for these reasons:

* Interesting portfolio piece.
* Potential market even if the game is ‘unfinished’ due to the Vive.

## Shooter

Another very weak concept that was put out as it was a genre not yet on the table in the discussion. We quickly vetoed it as a team for several reasons:

1. It’s one of the most flooded genres on the market,
2. Not all of us were particularly interested in shooters, and
3. It didn’t suit the skills of our artists.

## Elemental Control

This concept was pitched as an aesthetic idea, theming a game around controlling the surrounding the elements. Team interest was high in this one, but after a brief discussion we realized that making a game with this concept *feel good* required a lot more time and work than we had – Some quick googling brought up the work of other people, and it was in the 1-2 month scale just to get a single earthbending-style mechanic working well.

Some workarounds were discussed to make a game with this theme on the cheap, but the general consensus was that this would just make the game feel cheap, so it got shelved, with the ultimate reason being scope.

## Mad Max Driving Game

This concept actually made it to the final 3/12 of the concepting stage. Originally just thrown on the floor as ‘a driving game’, the notion received immediate pushback as the team members almost all personally find driving games in the vein of Forza et al boring.

After a bit of discussion on how to make a game like that interesting, however, there was some discussion about Mad Max, and the general consensus was something more violent, that would present the artists with engaging models to do. Ultimately, it was shelved for the same reason we originally dismissed it: The team still found driving games boring.

## Viking Hack n Slash

This had the most traction in the art team, as two members were very excited about making something with those idealized Norse aesthetics. Originally put on the floor as an aesthetic theme, the Top-Down Hack n Slash was rolled into this concept to make the concept more realized and a bit more feasible.

It seemed like a good fit: The art load suited the team composition of 2 environment artists and 1 character artist, while programming-intense it was still manageable, and there was plenty of design space. The concept made it all the way to the final two, but was shelved against the horror game.

## Journey of Three

Probably the weirdest idea thrown out, this game was about controlling three different characters at once using a gamepad: A large character with the left stick, A medium character with the right stick, and a small character with the D-Pad. At the same time.

The trigger buttons would perform character specific actions– For instance, the large one would kick if the player pressed the left bumper, and the small character would jump if the player pressed the right bumper. So the game boiled down to constantly building up difficult control challenges – Kick the small one across the gap, for instance – that would force hand gymnastics on the player.

It was shelved precisely because it was so strange, and also it’s mechanics inherently implied a cartoonish art style, something the artists weren’t comfortable with.

## A Musou Game

The actual sentence this concept hit the floor with was ‘a game where you feel really powerful’, which was then likened to Dynasty Warriors, the king of the musou genre. Pretty hard to make, and also required about three hundred particle effects to be satisfying. Best left to the Japanese masters, we shelved this one pretty quickly.

## Turn-Based RPG

A solid set of mechanics put out: A turn-based rpg involving a terrain system and ‘slots’ for where the character stood. Effected terrain would in turn affect the actions of the character e.g don’t cast lightning when you’re standing in a water puddle, dingus.

The consensus was that sort of games work best in a 2D art style, which the team was not keen on. Probably the best choice to be revisited should the team pivot away from concept 10 heading into the Majors, for these reasons:

* The concept has a solid amount of work for everyone, deep design depth, and a relatively light programming load compared to the other concepts.
* Also to its advantage is its versatility in platform: almost every other concept is a PC or console game. This concept suits the tablet or smartphone market as well as it does PC.
* The concept can be polished to a high degree within the provided time-frame.
* Although the nostalgia wave for these games sees them imagined in 2D, there’s no reason they can’t be 3D, and there are successful 3D games with these mechanic sets.

## Project Staker (Horror Game)

This concept was pitched as a core mechanic: A first person co-op game where enemies spawn and approach wherever the players are not looking. This would cause the players to attempt to lock down any entryways to wherever they were going and force communication on them, and tension.

After some aesthetic discussion, the team settled on the Elizabethan era Vampire style, and we realized that having the spawning mechanic function based on player torchlight would be 1) more in style, and 2) way more sensical and easier to onboard new players.

There were several pros to the project that lead to picking it up:

* The art style was interesting to the art team.
* The core mechanic was already fully fleshed out from pitch, leading to a strong team vision.
* The concept, while not truly innovative, fits into an underserved genre while still having solid appeal.

However, there are also several cons:

* Single programmer, first person co-op game. Extremely high workload.
* Eats pretty much the entirety of the prototype time.
* To provide a satisfying experience, the scope of the game is dicey at best. A lot of work needs to go in before we can see a solid result.

Ultimately, the team gunned hard for this idea collectively, so it was selected for the prototyping stage. If that goes well, it will most likely be continued into majors, with the goal being not to provide a complete experience, but to nail down a vertical slice of the game for a portfolio piece.