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Input on Meeting Topics

Abstract

[A few comments by skarfester on several different points on the discussion schedule of the 2nd General Discussion.
— note by Quintus]

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1 Audience + Target Age Group (Topic 6)

The best option is to expand the target audience; there's no need (as a platform game) to focus in a particular age range. To achieve this TSC needs different campaigns and/or difficulty levels.

2 Depth of Story (Topic 7)

A platformer doesn't need much of a story, but is a good complement if we integrate it in the game. For example, we can think the campaigns as "missions", like Indiana Jones films.

3 Themes (Topic 8)

This is related to theme and audience: adding more characters to choose from. This way we can have a female character, and maybe more, for example a "classic Alex", if TSC changes Alex graphics.

4 Level of Cuteness (Topic 9)

Maintaining a relatively cute comic style works for me: I'd avoid too childish graphics and there's no need for something "agressive", "dark" or "hipster". Cute works for most people.

5 Narration, cinematic scenes, and story formatted text (Topic 10)

If we develop a story we need to introduce it in the game. I'll stick only to visual narrative, without text or speech. That way we can maintain TSC more language independent, and avoids lot of translation work. The problem with this is that a complex story can be hard to explain without words.

6 Life energy system (Topic 11)

That's the big issue. I'll recap some opinions discussed in <http://forum.secretchronicles.de/topics/367> and others:

- quit lives: the progress is saved so they have no sense.
- save points, save states, checkpoints: I'll suggest to automatically save after a completed level. This way the player doesn't need to care about that and can continue playing or quitting the game without losing (worldmap) progress. In addition to that I suggest a new power-up which acts as a checkpoint. With that level developers can design larger levels without the risk of becoming too frustrating. We can add as well arbitrary save-states bought by the players with diamonds, for special occasions.
- diamonds as a currency: if we cannot earn lives, we can use diamonds for buying regular or special items, like save states or "flying" ability to pass difficult areas (very expensive). We'll need an item menu for this (the pause menu is enough).
- quit score points?: they'll have no impact in the game, so we can keep as hi-score ranking information or remove completely.
- quit game over screen: obvious. When die, you just go back to the worldmap or the previous checkpoint or save state.
- energy system: I prefer a "hit system", because is more simple and straightforward than a energy bar with different damage levels. Now we have small Alex, big Alex and Alex with powers (which doesn't count as an extra hit). In my opinion is a good idea to reflect the hit status in Alex itself (like small/big Alex) for example in his shoes: red shoes=1 hit left, yellow shoes=2 hits, green=3... We can count the extra powers (fire, ice) as another hit, just losing them when hit.
- difficulty levels: with a hit system is easy to implement a difficulty level: starting with 3 hits for kids, 2 for average players and 1 for pros but... I'm not a fan of difficulty levels. Once you end a game in "normal" you probably won't play it again in "difficult", because the levels are going to be essentially the same. I prefer games with difficulty depending on campaigns or levels. Maybe we can rely on level design and add just a "kid" option with extra hits.
- pits (no floor): I think we should let empty pits kill Alex instantly, but using them only on special occasions, such as castle/boss levels. This adds extra challenge to certain moments because even if you are full of energy, a mistake can kill you. We should use pits with static enemies instead, with a way to jump back. I know I rely a lot on level design...

7 Closing

Thank you for reading. These are just my views, and I'm not close to other options. I hope I've given you a couple ideas for the game.