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Game Jam PostMortem

The game jam was quite the experience, and having a team member that had done it before was invaluable. The most crucial step to our success in the game jam was quickly coming up with a base concept for the game “Where the Light Doesn’t Touch”. This allowed us to iterate on ideas while we were developing and create a working prototype more quickly. This extra time allowed us to polish mechanics, level design, and animations for a long time on the final day of the game jam. Another crucial step to the success of our game was playtesting. Both members of our own team and other people attending the game jam playtested our game throughout its development which allowed us to figure out which mechanics felt fair or unfair, and which levels were too hard. For example, the initial design of the mole enemy was generally thought to be much too difficult to understand. The mole initially moved every 3 player character steps, and could only alert on the player on the 2nd of those three steps. This behavior was un-intuitive and caused a lot of frustration amongst players, so we changed the behavior so the mole always alerted if he saw you, and moved every 2nd step. Players that playtested our game after this change were much more likely to intuitively understand how the moles moved and seemed to get much less frustrated when facing them.

Additionally, our level design was fine tuned by playtesting as well. A few levels were revealed to much harder than the person who created them initially thought. After a few rounds of people failing to complete them, we moved those levels to the post-credit section of the game as “bonus levels”. Overall, the importance of iteration and playtesting was the main lesson learned from the game jam.