

# Pandamonium

## Game Development Cycle #1

### a. Game experience goals

- Immerse the player in beautiful and devastated scenarios at the same time.
- Sensitize the audience to nature preservation and animal extinction prevention
- Spread awareness of what the bipolar disease means and what it does.
- Increase players affection for pandas and other animals.
- Make the player feel empathy with the panda and people with the disease.
- Emphasize the bond of friendship and family and how important they are.
- Players feel like they are a deadly badass panda but balanced with his disease and the natural clumsiness of a panda.

### Success criteria:

- The player is able to defeat the bosses
- The player is able to solve the platformer challenges that appear
- The player learns how people with bipolar disorder deal with their disease

### b. Game concept

- **a. The player's actions. What the player will do in the game?**
  - The player will use the keyboard to execute all in-game actions.
  - The player will explore and interact with the environments.
  - The player will control the panda's disease to combat enemies and solve platforming challenges
  - The player will unlock new skills and upgrades that allows him to progress while also showing the panda's continuous control over the disease.
- **b. The player's motivation. What motivates the actions? What is the player trying to achieve?**
  - The players motivation is to save his family and fight off the bad guys that captured his family and are destroying his home.
  - The player is also motivated to see the growth of the panda and his control over his bipolarity.
- **c. A visualization of the game. How does the game look like? Present some visual references for the game. Present a draft of a screenshot.**
  - The game will have a heavy focus on natural scenarios but eventually will also have some city based scenario. Ideally we'd like to follow an art style that allows us to convey a sense of beauty and wonder to the player through the scenarios, such as the one featured here (from Ori and the Blind Forest) :
- **d. The value of your concept. Why is the idea interesting and worth developing? Why is the game fun?**
  - The idea is interesting because it has a disease component involved which affects both the story and the gameplay. The player will grow attached to the

panda's history and learn what kind of problems people with bipolar disorder face.

- Being a metroidvania it will be packed with action and plenty of exploration and upgrades to prevent the game from becoming stale.
- The game is fun because, come on, who doesn't like pandas? And this one is a special panda.



### c. The first tweet

Exiled and faced with extinction, a panda named Mookie must control his bipolarity to save his family and regain his place in panda society.

### d. Competition and related references

- **Mega Man 11:** This entry of the mega man series and all the previous entries, while not being a metroidvania, they feature similar platforming gameplay mechanics to our idea since they also have stance switching elements. The story setting is very futuristic which is the opposite of what we're striving towards. One weakness these games share, especially the earlier ones, is the ruthless difficulty, many times failing to land a simple jump can lead to death. Another weakness is the lack of exploration since these games are stage-based with relatively small stages.



- **Ori and the blind forest:** This game was our main source of inspiration since it's also a metroidvania platformer with a large focus on nature preservation and beautiful environments. The game has a superb artstyle, good flow of movement and excellent music that fits the theme of the game. A possible weakness could be the steep difficulty which many times results in several trial & error situations which to some audiences can be frustrating.



- **Owlboy:** This game has a similar philosophy to our idea, the idea of a rejected misfit trying to save his fellow companions. The game also features nature based, pixel art environments, good flow of movement and dynamic gameplay with the ally switching. The gameplay aspect differs from ours since it features several characters with different abilities where in our game we only have one upgradable character. While the pixel art art style can be seen as a strength, it can also be seen as a weakness since it could alienate some audiences. Another possible weakness could be the slow start to the game.





- The idea was also inspired by some real world events that we'd like to garner more attention towards including the increasing worries about animal extinction and nature preservation and also the social exclusion of people with different traits.

#### e. Player personas



**Name:** Eugénio Monte

**Gender:** Male

**Age:** 23

**Profession:** University Student

**Favourite games:** Valkyria Chronicles / Zero Escape

**Favourite style of games:** JRPGs

**Player type:** Seeker



**Name:** Joana Silva

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** 15

**Profession:** Student

**Favourite games:** Super Mario, Sonic Mania

**Favourite style of games:** Platformer Games

**Player type:** Conqueror



**Name:** André Fernandes

**Gender:** Male

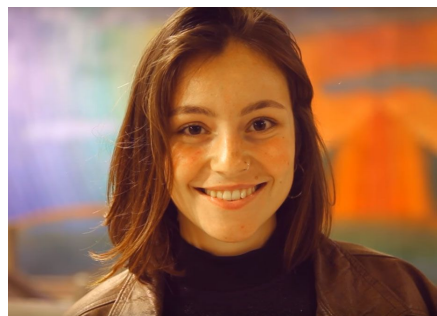
**Age:** 18

**Profession:** Unemployed

**Favourite games:** Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Final Fantasy XIII, TES: Oblivion

**Favourite style of games:** Action RPGs

**Player type:** Achiever



**Name:** Rita Pereira

**Gender:** Female

**Age:** 23

**Profession:** Marketing

**Favourite games:** Ori and the blind forest, Owlboy

**Favourite style of games:** Indie Games

**Player type:** Daredevil

## **f. Focus group**

Our target audience is for teens and above, according with the ESRB ratings, that equates to people with +13 years old. We were unable to find panda experts but we did research pandas. We also weren't able to contact a person with bipolar disease since neither our closest friends nor our family have that disease. But we also researched the disease and got the fundamental ideas.

A few of our potential players were worried that we were introducing a real disease in our game. They said that we should be careful about unintentionally giving the wrong idea of what the disease means and how it works. That was the only concern about the game. In general, the players in question liked the idea, the goals and the motivation.

For the players that didn't know the competitors we described in **Competition and related references**, we showed them a gameplay video. They really seemed to like **Ori and the blind forest** and **Owlboy**. For those that played any of that games the comment was always "It's astonishingly beautiful and has an incredible story and gameplay". A beautiful comment we received from one of our players was "the idea of the game seems interesting to me, especially the skill part".

With our game we pretend to aim to several types of player types including Seeker, Achiever, Daredevil, Conqueror and Mastermind. We would also like to have a more hardcore audience such as speedrunners.

## **g. Play scenarios**

André Fernandes arrives home after a long day of school. He just wants to relax a little bit. So, he turns on the PC and goes to eat. When he comes back he notices that there is no internet. Good thing he has some games that doesn't require internet connection. Since he wanted to finish the achievements of the game he was playing, he ended up spending 7 hours grinding.

It's Wednesday and Eugénio Monte has finished lunch at school cafeteria. Now he has 2 hours to kill until next class. After he eats lunch he always feels sleepy but since he can't sleep and is not in the mood to study he grabbed on his backpack and went to an empty room to play a game his friend recommended him the day before. He likes to immerse in strange worlds.

Joana Silva has been playing the same game for 2 days. She believes she is about to discover an important part of the unlock a new level but she is stuck while tries to find the key which unlocks a door and leads her to a new level. Eventually the game gives a her hint that allows her to finally unlock the level

Rita Pereira has reserved some of her free time to finish a game. She doesn't know how it will end but she suspects that all will be fine. She prepares to face one of the last levels. She follows the path, enters a tunnel and now she in the middle of the enemy base. She feels an unbelievable determination to overpass this challenge without dying.

## **h. Core gameplay loop(s)**

Our core gameplay loop is:

1. Accessing an area.
2. Solving platforming challenges and defeating enemies.
3. Reach the final step of that area and defeating a boss.

4. Unlock a new ability that lets him access previously unattainable areas and secret passages.
5. Reach the new area.

#### **i. Any other relevant information**

**Story:** The year is 2022 and you are part of the last panda pack living in the wild. You are not like the others pandas. You know something is not right with you. Eventually you found out that you were bipolar and its when the things started to go all wrong. During the elders meeting it was decided that you would be kicked out and alone you left the pack. A year has passed and you find out that your family has been captured by the Humans. Turns out it has been issued a statement by the government that all wild pandas should be imprisoned and eventually killed for safety reasons. You know the kicked you out but they still are your family and you are the last one in the wild and their last hope.

#### **About the disease(some information):**

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition where a person goes through episodes of mood disturbances which have an effect on that person's mood, thoughts and behaviours. The episodes usually have depressive and manic symptoms. This condition can be further divided into bipolar disorder 1 and 2.

Bipolar disorder 1 episodes characteristics include at least three of the following symptoms:

- Increased talkativeness
- Increased self-esteem
- Decreased need for sleep
- Increase in goal-directed activity, energy level or irritability
- Racing thoughts
- Poor attention
- Increased risk taking

Bipolar disorder 2 episodes' characteristics include at least five of the following symptoms:

- Depressed mood
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in eating
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Loss of pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Restlessness or slowing down
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Indecision or difficulty concentrating
- Thoughts of suicide

In addition to these two types there are also some rarer types of bipolar disorder which have less dramatic effects. These were not studied.

Since we want our panda to have sudden and drastic changes in his mood we have decided to focus on bipolar disorder 1. This allows us to use the manic symptoms to change the gameplay and the depressive symptoms to show his emotional side and how he deals with the situation he has found himself in.