PANDAMONIUM

GAME DEVELOPMENT CYCLE #2

Grupo 4:
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INTRODUCTION

Pandamonium will be a 2D platformer metroidvania game where, environmental pollution has caused mutations on several animals. Mookie, a mutated and exiled panda faced with extinction must fight his way against several other mutated animals and humans to save his family and species. Due to his mutation Mookie has two states, a calm and clumsy one and a furious and impulsive one and he is able to switch between both.

STORY

The year is 2222 and you belong to the last cupboard of pandas living free in the forest. With all the toxic and radioactive pollution something strange is happening to all animals. And you are no exception.

Life hasn't been particularly easy for you ever since you remember. Pandas always avoided you and you never understood why.

You were always alone, but one day something strange happened. You woke up in a strange place that isn't your stone. You feel strange and you notice that you are not in the village. Worried and not remembering anything you start looking for the village.

You get to the village, but the air is heavy. All the pandas are looking strange at you and entering their houses. They were afraid and you were confused. Then, the wise panda and some other pandas came to you and told you that you had to leave. You resisted and asked why, but there was no answer. They grabbed you, threw you out and told you to never to come back again. Grabbing your banana leaf sack, you went out trying to understand what had happened.

Some time had passed and you finally opened your sack. Inside was a letter and it said: It wasn't your fault. You can't control yourself when you get mad. It's like... You have two different personalities. Don't blame yourself, you will be fine on your own.

Confused with what you just read, you hurry up to the village to demand responses about what had happened and what you did.

No one was there. Completely empty, you find in the middle of the village a newspaper letter captioning: Mutant pandas no longer a threat. New law for capturing and killing pandas approved by the government.

Horrified with that you just read, you know that you are the only one that can save them.

GAME CONCEPT
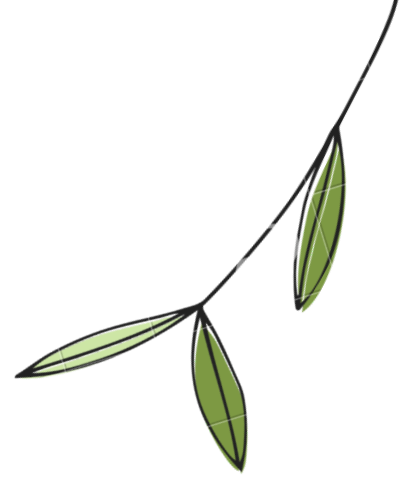
GAME EXPERIENCE GOALS

- Immerse the player in beautiful and devastated scenarios at the same time.
- Sensitize the audience to nature preservation and animal extinction prevention
- 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 mutation and the natural clumsiness of a panda.

SUCCESS CRITERIA:

- The game's graphics are able to make the player feel like they are where Mookie is.
- After playing the game the player is now aware of issues that exist in our society such as environmental pollution and how it affects several species.
- After playing the game, the player is now more empathetic towards pandas and other animals and their daily struggles.
- The game is able to depict the two facets of Mookie, the calm and clumsy and the fury and fighting abilities

THE PLAYER'S ACTIONS

- To interact with the menu and the skill tree the player will use the mouse.
- For any other in-game action the player will make use of the keyboard. These include exploring areas and fighting enemies or bosses. (the keys themselves, will be presented in a later section)
- While exploring the player will be able to find caged pandas to release, collect berries, solve puzzles and find keys or other objects that will allow him to access boss areas. If the player releases enough pandas he will obtain achievements, by collecting berries he will then be able to use some of them to be granted a temporary boon such as life or more time in rage, after solving puzzles he will find chests that grant him experience points and some even life.
- Fighting enemies grants some experience and fighting bosses grants more experience than regular enemies while also awarding a predetermined new ability.
- While doing any of the previously mentioned actions, the player will be able to switch between the calm and rage modes.
- As the player gets more experience points he will level up and by doing so he will be able to unlock a new optional ability.
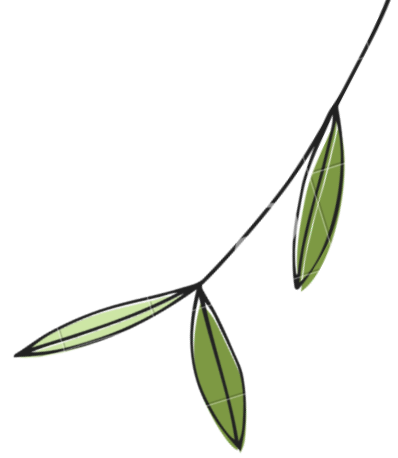
VISUALIZATION OF THE GAME

- It will be a platformer game, in 2D with a side-view
- Our designers are looking at the Gris game for inspiration
- 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) :

THE VALUE OF YOUR CONCEPT.

- The idea is interesting because it has a mutation 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 similar disorders 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.

THE FIRST TWEET

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

THE PLAYER'S MOTIVATION

- 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 mutation.
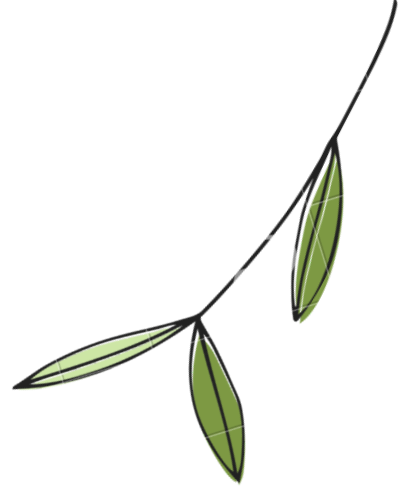
COMPETITION AND RELATED REFERENCES

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.


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.

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. We believe that, while this is true, difficulty is an important aspect of a game and it should gradually increase as the player advances. We will try to balance difficulty with progression in-game so that the player doesn't face very steep difficulty spikes in earlier sections of the game.
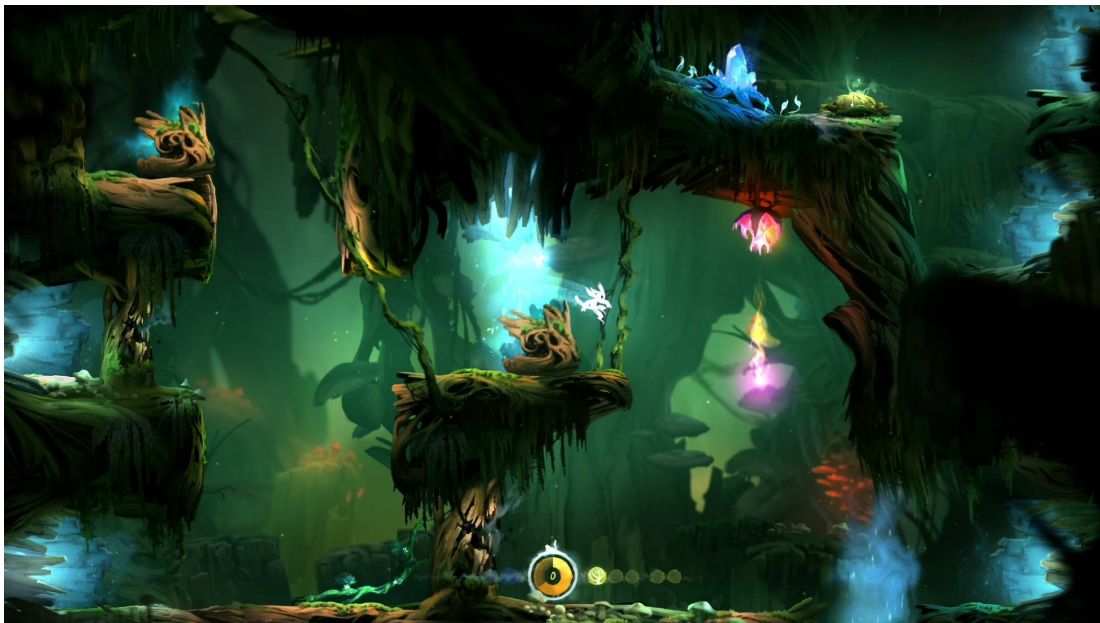
The idea was also inspired by some real world events that we'd like to garner more attention towards including the increasing worries about animal extinction and nature preservation and also the social exclusion of people with different traits.

Player personas

Name: Eugénio Monte
Gender: Male
Age: 23
Profession: University Student
Favourite games: Mega Man 11, Super Metroid
Favourite style of games: Platformer Games
Player type: Seeker

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

Name: André Fernandes
Gender: Male
Age: 18
Profession: Unemployed
Favourite games: Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Kingdom Hearts 3
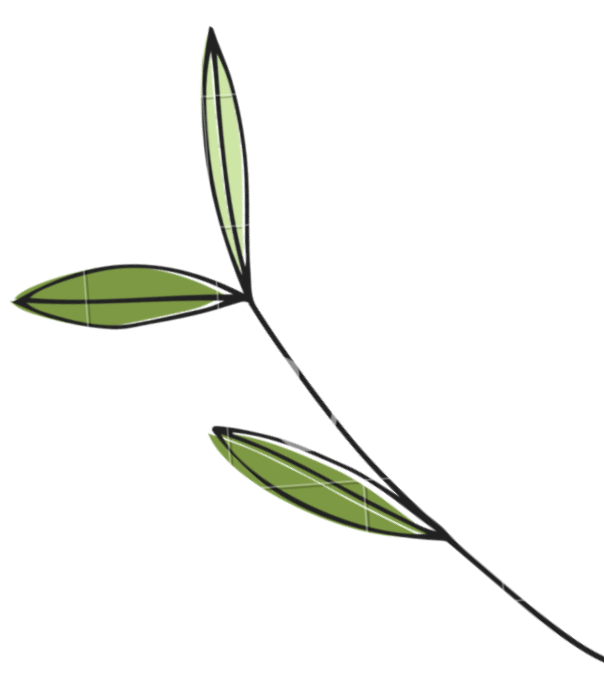**Favourite style of games:** Action RPGs
Player type: Achiever
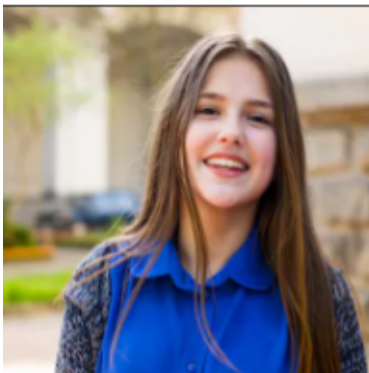
Name: Joana Silva
Gender: Female
Age: 15
Profession: Student
Favourite games: Super Mario, Sonic Mania
Favourite style of games: Platformer Games
Player type: Conqueror

Relevancy of these archetypes to our game

- The seeker archetype enjoys exploring worlds and finding hidden and mysterious things. Since exploration will be a large focus of our game, we feel these types of players will feel at home trying to explore our hidden collectible, treasure and scenarios.
- The conqueror archetype enjoys a challenge and defeating strong enemies. Our game will feature several bosses and enemies that will require dynamic stance switching and precise actions to defeat. Other than the combat we will also feature difficult platforming challenges that also require precise actions to succeed.
- The achiever class enjoys collecting everything the game has to offer. Since we want to have achievements in our game related to collecting missing pandas and possibly other collectibles we feel these players will enjoy our game. We will also have a skill tree with optional skill nodes to unlock, which may require some additional playtime to unlock everything.
- Finally, the daredevil class fits pretty well in our game since we will feature challenging platforming sections that require specific actions or require completion in a specific time.

We feel that these 4 classes cover most aspects of our game, allowing us to get a better overview and feedback of all the different components of our game.

FOCUSGROUP

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.

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 the games in the competition and related references section, 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 stance switching 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 garner more niche audiences, such as speedrunners.
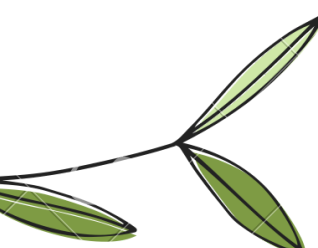
PLAY SCENARIOS

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 theres 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 some time trying to find all the collectibles.

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.

After two weeks, André Fernandes finally fought the Giant Spider boss. The battle was intense. First, he started with a Ground Slam but he was traped by the web that the boss throws. André took a hit and lost some life. After the web trap ended, he went all in with a powerfull punch, followed by a Dash and a Ground Slam. That left the spider with less than half her life so it entered rage mode. André was unaware of that possibility, so he was caught by surprise. The spider started throwing eggs at him. André dodged them but they still remained in the ground. After a while, a baby spider spawned from one of the eggs and attacked him. Once again, he lost life. Now he knew he had to destroy the eggs. Still, he decided to risk it and focus only on the spider mother to kill her quickly. He did some Wall Jumps, followed by a Mid Air Dash, then activated the Rage Mode and delivered a powerfull Ground Slam, killing the mother spider. He was relieved but at the same time still excited. He opened the chest and received a new skill: X-Ray Goggles.

ENTITIES

Mookie: Our main character. Due to a mutation caused by human interference he has a very aggressive side. This is the only character the player will control, and he will go through Mookie's journey alongside him, from the moment he leaves the village to the moment he saves his family. As the player progresses, Mookie will unlock special habilities that will help him along his travels.

Mutant Spider: This enemy will be a boss. It will have the same mutations as our pandas and, as such, it will feature 2 phases, the first phase is its "normal" calm phase and the second harder phase will be its rage mode. The spider will enter rage mode once a certain life threshold has been reached and will execute different attacks.

Humans with exosqueletons: These will be common enemies that represent some of the human threats in our game. They will be shown later in the game, when Mookie starts getting closer to the cities. Some of these enemies will have a shield that needs to be broken using a specific ability (Ground Slam) first before being able to do any damage to them.

Mutant animals: Besides the spider boss we also think it's interesting to feature animals with small mutations in our game world. These will mostly be common enemies with less noticeable mutation effects. A specific instance of this case that we were thinking about would be an eagle that starts flying after it's enraged. It becomes enraged after staying in combat some time.
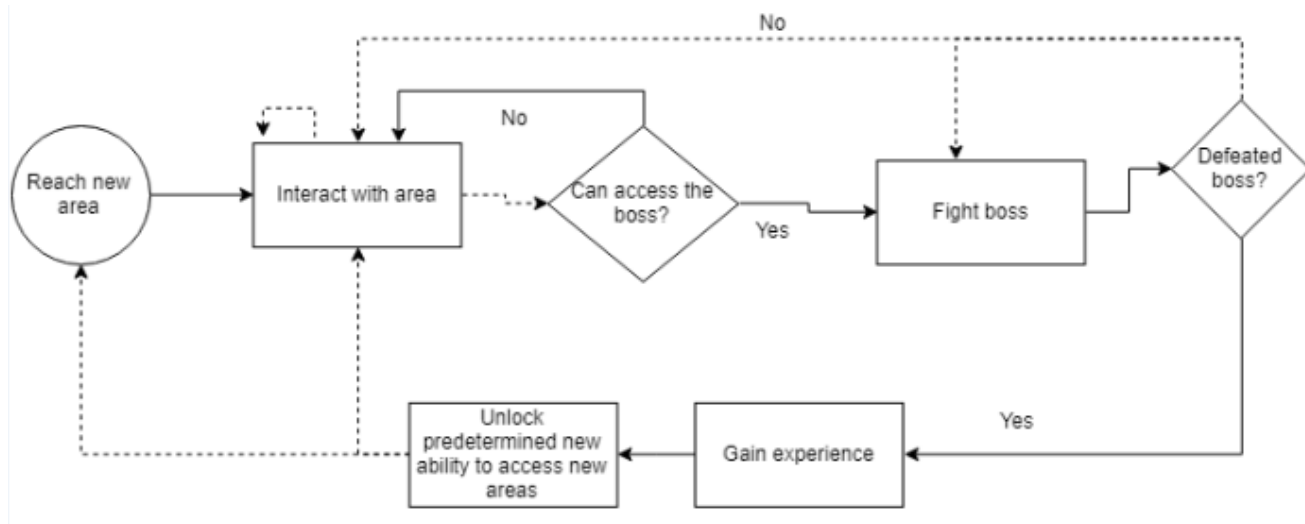
Lost/Trapped Pandas: These will be pandas that escaped entrapment from the humans and have fled. They will be collectibles for our player to find and, as such, they will be hidden in harder to find areas.
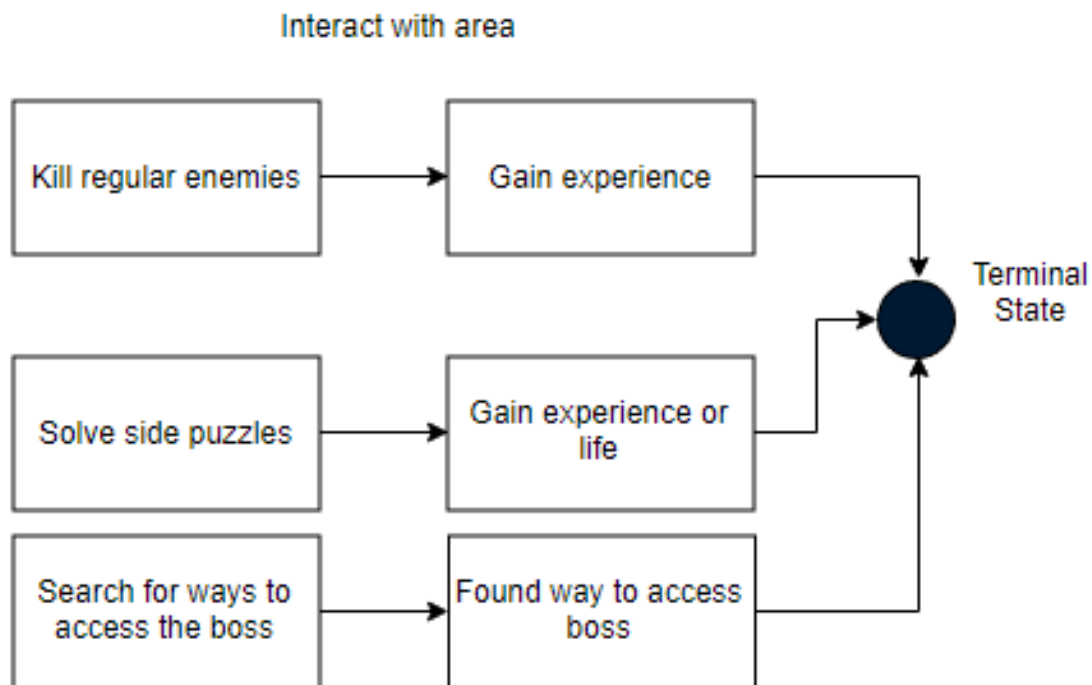
Core gameplay loop(s)

When a box has multiple dotted lines coming out of it, that means the player is able to select one of the possible paths
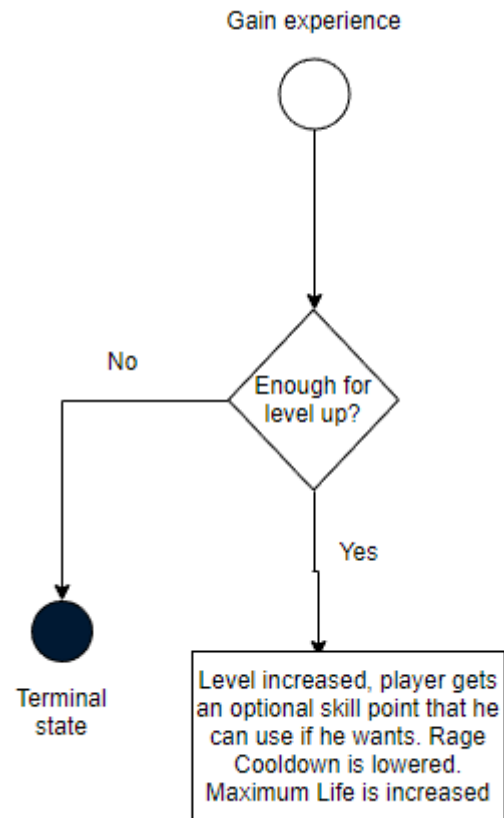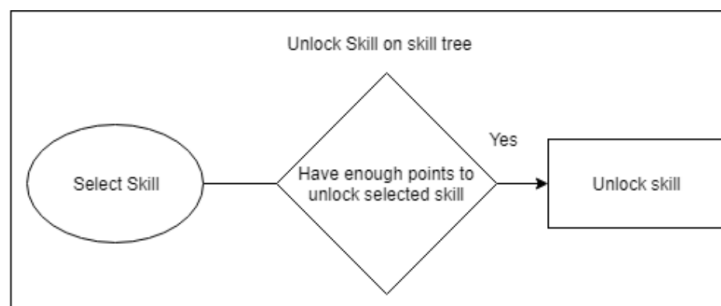
Core gameplay loop:

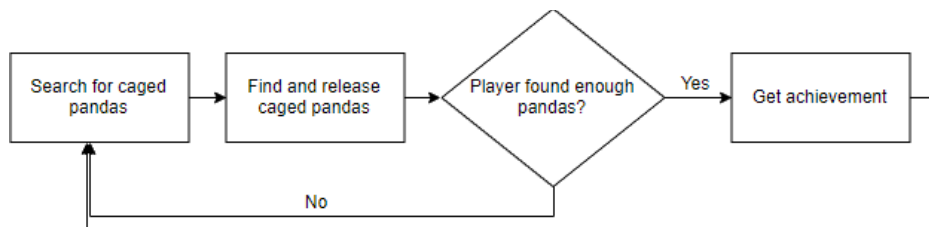

Definition of "Interact with area":

Level up:

Gain experience

○

No

Enough for
level up?

Yes

Terminal
state

Level increased, player gets
an optional skill point that he
can use if he wants. Rage
Cooldown is lowered.
Maximum Life is increased

How new optional skills are unlocked:

Unlock Skill on skill tree

Select Skill

Have enough points to
unlock selected skill

Yes

Unlock skill

Achievement loop:

Search for caged
pandas

Find and release
caged pandas

Player found enough
pandas?

Yes

Get achievement

No

Skills

NORMAL MODE

- Double jump
- Wall jump
- Mid air dash
- X-ray googles (can see hidden objects)
- Cuteness overload (stuns enemies briefly)
- Increase the maximum amount of life

RAGE MODE

- Wall break (Increases normal attack damage and allows Mookie to break some walls)
- Gound slam (Stuns enemies and deals damage)
- Ground slam with jump (Enables Ground Slam after a jump, deal more damage than a normal Ground Slam)
- Ground slam with roar (Roars while slamming, stunning enemies at a distance)
- Chi manipulation (More time in rage mode)
- Mookie roll (Travels a large distance, knocking up and dealing damage to enemies)

Control Scheme

Action	Keybind
Normal Attack	Spacebar
Walk Left	Left arrow
Walk Right	Right arrow
Jump	Up arrow
Double Jump	Double click up arrow
Ground Slam	Down arrow
Open Map	M
Open Skill Tree	Tab
X-ray Googles	Q
Mid-air Dash	Jump and double click a direction
Cuteness Overload	W
Mookie Roll	E
Menu/Pause	P
Unlock new skill in skill tree	Left mouse click
Read a skill description in the skill tree	Hover mouse over skill
Rage Mode	R

Only the actions corresponding to the opening of the map, opening of the skill tree and rage mode switching are reversible.
Jumping can be combined with the left or right arrow to perform diagonal jumps.

Sketches

In this section we will present some work made in collaboration with our designers

Some ideias for logos:

pandamonium

PANDAMONIUM

PANDAMONIUM

The yin-yang symbol comes from the fact that our panda has a calmer (good) lando and a more aggressive side associated with the bad side
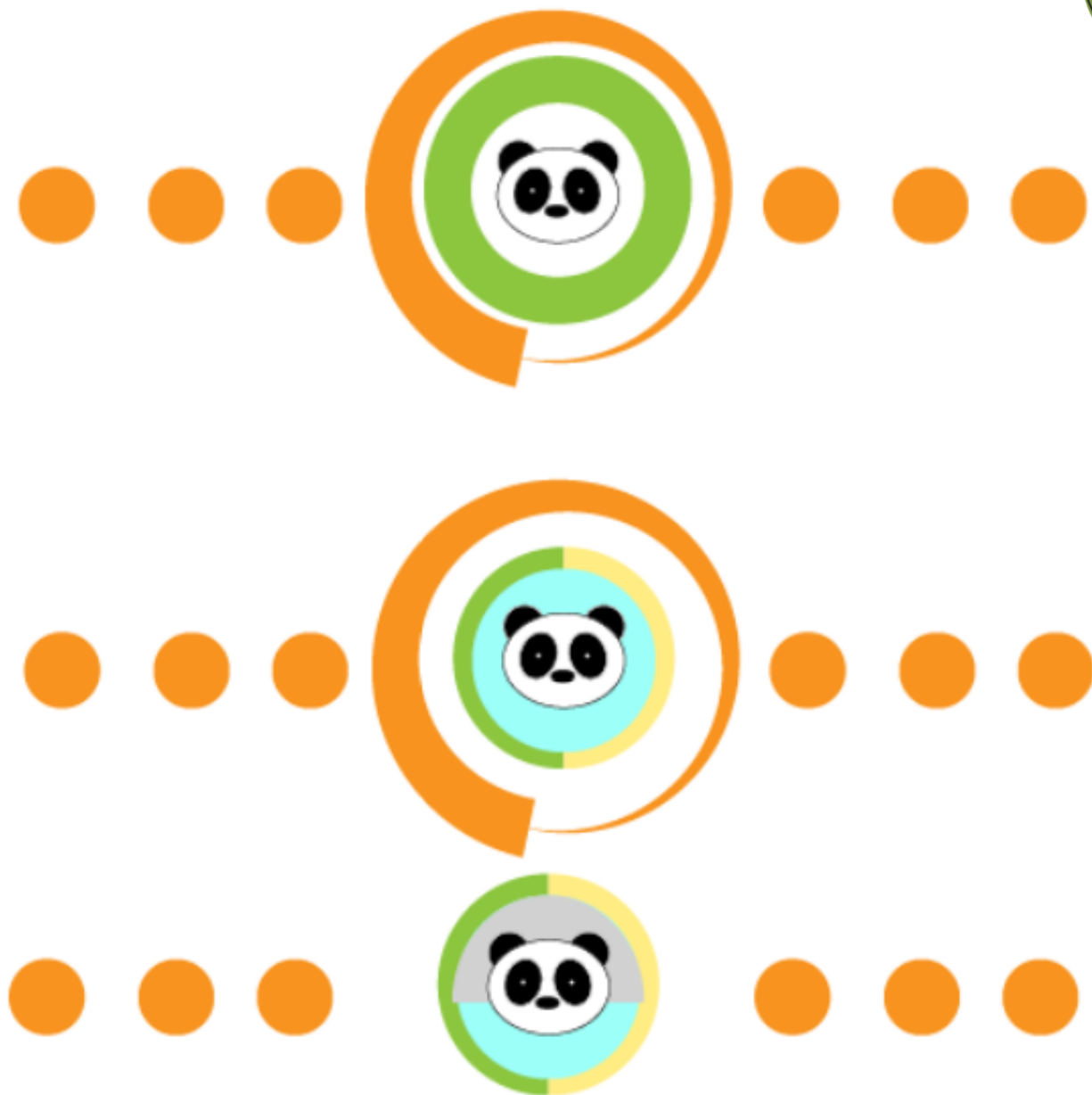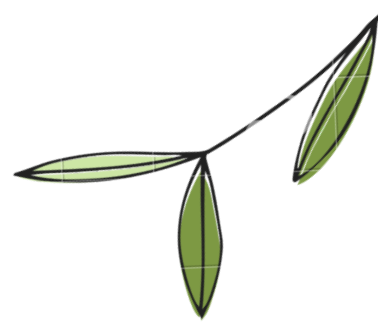
PANDAMONIUM

Some ideias for our UI:

The orange circles represent the skills and where your cooldown will be shown. If a skill is usable the circle will be filled. If a skill is on cooldown the circle will be gradually filled until the skill is usable again. The circles will also display an icon to easily identify each ability.

The green the life. When a player takes damage a portion of the circle/half-circle is grayed out and the player performs an animation.

The yellow the xp (there is an image without yellow since we are exploring a ideia of not having the XP in our UI).

The blue filling inside the main circle in the last sketch and the orange spiral in the other sketches represents the rage mode. If the circle/bar is filled the player can use the rage mode, while using the circle/bar will decrease the same way life does. After being used the circle/bar will start to fill up again.

The UI is designed to be placed at the bottom center of the screen.

Our panda:
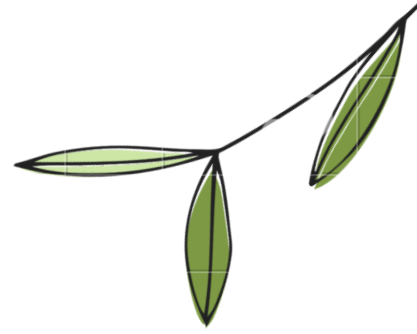
Some ideias for scenarios and objects: