

Escape the Room

Escape the room is an action puzzle game in which the player controls 2 different characters trying to run from the lava that is slowly swallowing the rooms that they have been trapped in. Each character can press buttons and manipulate objects in order to open doors and cause other events to occur in their partner's room. It is the player's job to maneuver the characters simultaneously so that they can open the doors to the next room for their partner and prevent them from getting burned by the lava.

The first game that comes to mind when thinking about Escape the Room is Cookies and Cream, an action-platformer for the PS2. Cookies and Cream is very similar to Escape the Room in that it has the player control 2 separate characters which cannot stray from their designated area and they can help each other to reach the goal at the end of the level.

One of the first ways that the two differ is in the gameplay. Cookies and Cream is primarily a platformer which means that the player is more concerned with maneuvering the characters around the level by running and jumping and they are not as concerned with trying to figure out how to move their partner forward. This is because when there is an obstacle that requires one character to perform an action so that the other character can move forward it is typically just one simple action like pushing a button or moving a lever. This differs from Escape the Room in that Escape the Room has multiple actions that will need to be performed by each character in order to access the final switches, opening the final door to each room. This means that the player will need to take more time figuring out what order to perform actions as opposed to figuring out how to move around the map.

The other key difference between Escape the Room and Cookies and Cream is how they encourage the player to get through the level as quickly as possible. Cookies and Cream

has a timer running and Escape the Room constantly has lava moving towards the characters. I feel that the lava gives much more of a feeling of impending doom and makes it tougher to figure out the puzzles because there is that constant fear of failure looming at the bottom of the screen. The timer gives much more of a feel of achievement and trying to get a high score which I think makes it easier on the player mentally.

The other game that came to mind while creating this game was the Portal 2 co-op mode. Portal 2 is a first person puzzle game where the player uses a portal gun to create portals on walls, which they can use to maneuver themselves and objects around the level. They use this maneuverability in order to perform actions in a certain order that will allow them to open a door at the end of a level. The co-op mode is very similar to this in that both players have a portal gun used to complete the puzzles, but the puzzles are structured so that one player needs to perform an action so that the other player can complete the next action. This is how I wanted to structure Escape the Room, have one character perform an action so that the other character can perform their next action. The main difference between the two being time restraints. In Portal 2 you do not have a time limit so levels can be extremely long and convoluted, whereas in Escape the Room you are under constant pressure from the lava to do it quickly and you are controlling both characters so the puzzles need to be simplified a fair amount.