

Game Pitch Document

Team #15

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Hive Mind Ranching: Texas Edition

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Version 1.0

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Executive Summary

High Concept

An alien hive mind has migrated west to take up ranching on the Texas frontier! Prepare to strategically lead bug-like alien ranch-hands as you hunt, kill, and eat herds of pioneers in order to expand your hive. But watch out; the local Texans have banded together, are armed to the teeth, and refuse to be grilled medium-rare!

Core Gameplay: Mechanics and Dynamics

Land with a small Alien force in a remote part of Texas and rampage your way to the Capitol, overwhelming towns along the way. To take down a town, you need to avoid the patrolling gun-slingers as much as you can, eventually picking them off one by one, infecting them and the citizens, and using their bodies to make new units for the Swarm. This turn-based strategy game uses simple grid-based movement and a simple single-action combat system, allowing the player's units to attack anything next to them and the enemy Gunslingers to shoot anything within their predefined view-cone. The gunslinger's view-cone will rotate each turn in a predictable fashion. After the combat, players can either infect defeated enemies and civilians, turning them into more bodies for the Swarm, or eat them, restoring health. These mechanics should allow the players to engage in the following dynamics: prioritizing targets based on risk/reward, evading the enemies by predicting their changes in view-cone, eliminating enemies, and building up the Swarm.

Core Gameplay Aesthetic

Hive Mind Ranching: Texas Edition will provide the player with a lighthearted satirical challenge. The game will humorously bridge the western and space fiction genres while darkly clashing genre-specific features in suggestive ways. Specifically, the names of alien units and actions will be drawn directly from the western dialect, drawing a parallel between the hive mind's attitude towards its human prey and the treatment of cattle in Texas' history of open-range cattle ranching.

The gameplay will capitalize on this satire by forcing the player to make difficult decisions that prioritize maintaining the growth of their alien hive at the expense of human life. The player will focus on apprehensively approaching pioneer prey without placing alien units within a cowboy's attack range. They will have to anticipate the frequency of the cowboy's rotation and tentatively strategize the placement of their units where available tiles are limited. When evasion is not possible, the player will have to deftly balance the decision of which of their existing units will risk damage to acquire the reward of human meat, the necessary resource for building new units. The accumulation, or diminution of, the player's alien swarm yields a competitive attitude to dominate the enemy and evade elimination.

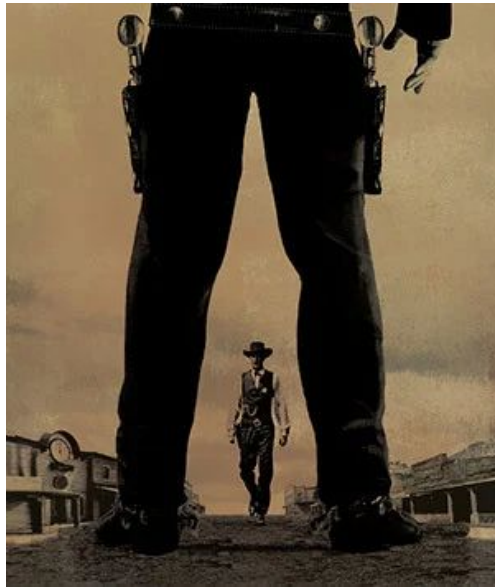
Look, Feel, and Sound Aesthetic

The game's aesthetic features must balance the improbability of the presence of an alien hive mind on the Texan frontier with the darkness of the game's goal to defeat and commoditize the human pioneers. We will implement a colorful pixelated graphical design that hearkens back to

the early days of video games to represent the Texas landscape and character sprites. This will be done to maintain the lighthearted appearance of the game. The absurdity of the game's premise will be enhanced through the use of western costumes on the bug-like alien sprites, such as the inclusion of cowboy hats, revolvers, or lassos. Finally, the game's darker undertones will be conveyed through its word-choice and the audio score, which will primarily consist of ominous western showdown and tumbleweed music accented with the sound effects of gunshots and the screams of pioneers being devoured.



Advance Wars' colorful pixelated landscape invites a playful attitude to the game's amusing portrayal of warfare. We hope to emulate this style graphically.



An old western film conveys the dark apprehensive gravity of an impending showdown. We hope to convey this feeling through the game's audio and connotatively through the game's word-choice.

Genre, Platform, and ESRB

The platform that the game will be deployed on is online through itch.io. It is expected to have an ESRB rating of T for Teen as it will have moderate amounts of violence and crude humor. It will be a turn based strategy game that fuses the western and space game genres.

Audience and Targeted Customers

The audience that we are hoping to reach are casual strategy inclined players. The game will be simplified in comparison to other strategy games in the genre, e.g. XCOM or Sid Meier's Civilization, but seeing as the game is web based we believe those that would seek a strategy game online would seek a more simplified experience, as seen by Diplomacy or Risk. The game's pixelated graphics will attract any players seeking the experience of a simple retro game.

Game Differentiators/Unique Selling Points

- Theme - Although the idea of playing as invading aliens has been used before in video games (Destroy All Humans) and in comics and movies (Cowboys and Aliens). However, we do not believe it has been done as a strategy game before, nor have I seen it with a joking take on ranching Texas ranchers.
- Swarming - This game's simplified form of 'economy' allows the player to stay in constant motion with little time put into the economy, but still allows for feelings of growing overwhelming power.
- Play at your own pace - *Hive Mind Ranching* has no time limit, nor any enemies that get stronger. This allows even the most casual of players to complete the game by taking their time, but also allows players to challenge themselves in how quickly they can finish the game
- Easy to Get Into - There are two total units (three if you count civilians) with each unit only having one attack, two unique types of terrain, one resource, and only two ways to use that

resource. Unlike many strategy games, this will require almost no instructions, and we expect players can master the basics and start having fun within a minute

Current Status, Timeline and Costs

The current status is the game concept phase.

The timeline is the same for all the teams and requires completion in 12 weeks.

Per Week Team Costs:

Kevin Woo – 7 hours

Eiler Schiotz – 7 hours

Henry Arjet – 7 hours

Total – 21 hours

21 hours/week * 12 weeks = 252 hours

252 hours * \$37.50 per hour = \$9,450

Signatures verifying agreement:

Kevin Woo

Henry Arjet

Eiler Schiotz