„ S.A.W.Z.E.“

“The Super Awesome Wheelchair Zombie Escape”

Project Arbeit 1.Semester, Games Academy Berlin

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Inhalt

[1. Vision statement 1](#_Toc410476772)

[2. USPs 2](#_Toc410476773)

[3. Story and setting 2](#_Toc410476774)

[4. Game play and player tasks 3](#_Toc410476775)

[5. Game play summary and overview 3](#_Toc410476776)

[6. Visual presentation 4](#_Toc410476777)

[7. Features 4](#_Toc410476778)

[8. GUI 5](#_Toc410476779)

[9. Target group, genre and difficulty level 5](#_Toc410476780)

[10. Critical success factors 6](#_Toc410476781)

[11. Team Structure and Tasks 6](#_Toc410476782)

[12. Tools and Platform 7](#_Toc410476783)

[13. Development Stages 7](#_Toc410476784)

# Vision statement

The game S.A.W.Z.E. is inspired by the old school arcade legend “Pac-man” and it aims to bring out the hectic and dynamic game play into a modern theme with more complex mechanics. The main goal of S.A.W.Z.E. is to add diverse features like collectable power up items or different opponent types, as well as to add level objectives for the player to accomplish, while keeping simple and dynamic gameplay.

Signature game mechanics of pac-man such as the constant motion of the character who can be navigated by the player in all 4 directions, but cannot stop, the collection of point-giving items at each step, as well as the top-down view perspective over the level will be discovered in the mechanics of S.A.W.Z.E., however all of them will have a special and unique twist on them, thus adding to and expanding the classic game feeling and atmosphere without just being a blank copy of it.

# USPs

* **Level Objectives**

It is not enough just to escape from the level in order to be successful in SAWZE. Before the escape, the player needs to accomplish a task and by doing so the level exit is activated. These tasks will be always shortly communicated in the form of a level briefing and will be orientated in the context of supporting and protecting a group of survivors. This way the player will have a feeling of purpose when navigating through the levels, but will not be distracted by cut scenes or story telling elements.

* **Dynamic Gameplay**  
  The fact that the player cannot stop, but only determine the direction of movement, the Virus clouds draining the health bar, the limited antidotes placed on the level, which recover the health of the player and the constant danger of the zombies lurking around, combined with the limited possibility of eliminating these dangers, provided only by occasional and limited power ups, will provide the payer with a dynamic and hectic game experience and give him/her the sensation of constant necessity to move and escape.
* **Power ups**   
  Throughout the levels the player will have the chance to collect and use diverse but limited power up items, which will be of significant aid to him in accomplishing his tasks and escaping each level.
* **Art Stile**SAWZE will bring the player in a well-rounded and smooth cartoony environment, defined by bright and strong colors and simple, clear but organic shapes of assets and characters. Goal is to create a game world with abstract designs, which give the player a feeling of being in a comic book or a cartoon, but remain close to realistic objects and items that are easy to recognize and identify with. Such effect is to be achieved by the choice, balance and contrast of colors, dark outlines and smooth, round, low detail in both environment objects and characters.

# Story and setting

In the middle of a scary zombie virus outbreak a new hero rises. Not the classic fast, strong, charismatic, young action hero, who fights his way through Zombie hordes armed with nothing but his pocket knife and can run through walls, but a rather different hero: Major Tomahawk is a retired, grumpy, old war veteran in a wheelchair, due to an old injury. He lives alone and usually doesn’t favor the company of other people and neither do other people like being in his company.

Never the less, when helpless people need his aid in this scary zombie chaos, Major Tomahawk takes initiative in his hands and rises to any challenge, regardless the limits set to him by age and the wheelchair, which constantly has issues with the brakes.

Soon he finds himself protecting a group of survivors and volunteering for the most difficult of tasks.

# Game play and player tasks

(<What can the player do? Why and How?>)

In S.A.W.Z.E. each level has objective that needs to be accomplished in order to pass the level. When the objective is achieved the exit of the level will be activated and the player needs to enter the exit area. The different level objectives are defined by the game modus used in the level. The goal is to have at least 3 different game modus in order to bring variety in the challenges between different levels, however for the basic version one game modus will be enough for the game to be playable. *(For more Details on Game Modus, please see chapter 6. Core Features and their mechanics)*

The player can navigate the game hero in all 4 available directions in any level (up-down and left-right) by using the arrow controllers on the keyboard. The character is in constant motion so there is no way to stop. This makes the game play dynamic and the player needs to think quickly and on his feet regarding the directions he takes. This decision needs to take in account the following factors:

* Where is the game objective that the player needs to reach?
* After achieving the level objective: where is the level Exit?
* Where are the Zombie opponents?
* Will there be enough Oxygen to pass through “The Zombie-Virus Clouds”?
* Do I want to attempt to collect and use a “Power up Item”?

All Power up items are activated passively – the player needs only to drive through them and they are automatically activated. They can be of great help for the player but collecting them might put the player in great risk by exposing him to the Zombie opponents and draining the Health bar. This is why collecting these items will be among the critical decisions the player needs to make while playing the game.   
  
. *(For more Details on power up items, please see chapter 6. Core Features and their mechanics)*

# Game play summary and overview

(Game play summary and overview)

 In S.A.W.Z.E. (The Super Awesome Wheelchair Zombie) the player steers a wheelchair bound hero, whose wheelchair has broken brakes, through a zombie-infested labyrinth in a hectic chase, with the aim of protecting and caring for a group of survivors.

Before the level starts, the player sees a brief explanation of the setting, background as well as targets of the upcoming level on a mission briefing screen. After reading the briefing the player hits any button to start the level.

For example: "Jenny has gone off to search for food and hasn’t returned yet. You have to find her and bring her back to the group!” In addition there is also a picture of the objective and an object navigator icon on the side of the screen guides the player to the location of the objective. After successfully accomplishing the level objective the object navigator icon shows to the player the direction of the level exit.

The player then presses "Start" and is immediately taken to the level screen. The player figure is set in motion straight away (the wheelchair has broken brakes!) and the player navigates in the 4 directions.

Every step allows the player to collect distributed "Antidote Packs" which the hero needs to recover the health bar (located in the top-left hand corner of the screen), which constantly drops slowly as the air is contaminated throughout the whole level. Additional danger is presented by the clouds with concentrated zombie virus which drain the health bar significantly when the player drives straight through them. If the Health bar gets completely empty – the game is lost.

There are zombies lurking in the levels and the player must skilfully avoid any collision with them as this will mean the game is lost.

Due to the constantly dropping health bar, the lurking zombies and the fact that the hero can’t stop his wheelchair, a hectic and fast-paced game ensues.

There are a few "power up items” available to help the player. For details check Power ups

The player has to quickly decide, does he/she want to get a power up and risk low health bar and confronting zombies, or does he/she want to head straight to the level objective.

When the player accomplishes the level objective, the level exit is activated. The player now needs to manoeuvre the hero to reach the level exit quickly. When the hero reaches the level exit with the level has been successfully completed;

Straight away the player sees a message on the "level accomplished screen" with congratulations for a hard-earned success. Clicking any button will start the next level.

# Visual presentation

# Features

(Features)

() Controls and Basic obstacles  
 () Health bar, Contamination and Antidote  
 () Game Objectives  
 () Opponent types  
 () Power Ups

# GUI

(GUI)

+mock up

# Target group, genre and difficulty level

(Target Group, Genre and Difficulty level )

(<)The content of the game allows a brought specter of players as it contains no violence or horror, thus allowing a 6+ age group. The minimum age is set at 6 years as suggested by the USK, due to the considerable pressure to act exerted in action packed sequences.

Age restriction: 6+

Gender: both

Gaming experience: none required

(<)The genre of the game also reinforces the placement of the player age restriction at 6+ as it is a combination of “arcade” and “jump and run”. The essential aspects of the classic arcade gameplay such as easy to access, simple controls and a clear game task, as well as skill and speed of reaction requirement are characteristic for S.A.W.Z.E. Some major jump and run gameplay aspects, such as the comical figures controlled by the player, who seek to run their way through various levels whilst overcoming a range of obstacles is the second key flavor of the game. Recent trends in this genre are also represented in the game play of S.A.W.Z.E., which is enhanced with missions, adventure elements and collectable items in 3D environment.

Source: <http://www.usk.de/en/classification/genres/>

(<)The level of difficulty of the game play allows a brought specter of players. The controls are fairly simple and intuitive and the difficulty of the levels increases in small steps adjusted to a general learning curve regarding the game mechanics. The idea behind the level progression is “easy to learn, difficult to master”.

The difficulty of the levels will be defined by the following components and increasing difficulty will be achieved in the level design by adding one of the factors below on top of each next level (or each second level):

* the size of the level (bigger levels allow more “dead-end” paths),
* the quantity of Zombie Opponents,
* the quality of Zombie opponents (additional Zombie types with more efficient Path finding scripts, faster movement or special features such as additional Z-Virus trail behind the Zombie for a number of map tiles)
* the quantity of collectable objective items
* the areas infected from Z-Virus
* the quantity of Antidotes placed on the level

# 10. Critical success factors

(Critical Success factors)

()Pacman+  
The game experience should be associated with the game experience in pacman. The core features of pacman should be represented but adjusted. The changes on these core features should not be too big and afar from the original – they should remind the player of the pacman game experience. At the same time the game should also have its unique traits.

()Visual Presentation

() Level Balance  
The level design and the balancing of level objects it a major critical success factor. All levels will be in one size and with a fixed top-down camera, which means that the various obstacles and features of a level are limited to one-screen view. A very balanced and smart placement of all level components and their balance is critical for the entertaining effect of the game. Poorly designed levels may end up being too easy to win or absolutely impossible to pass.

# 11. Team Structure and Tasks

(Team Structure and Tasks)

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# 12. Tools and Platform

(Tools and Platform)

**Platform:** S.A.W.Z.E. will be developed for PC at first. Later adjustment on other platforms will be possible.  
  
**Engine:** Unity3D  
  
**Audio:** SFXR  
  
**Graphics:** Maya; Blender; Max; ZBrush; Photoshop; After Fix; dDo; Knald; nDo²

# 13. Development Stages

(Development Stage Overview)

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