

**CS4480Y: Game Development Project**

**Totem Stack**

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## Premise

Totem Stack is a 2D competitive multiplayer Platform-Fighter, in which each player plays as one section of a totem pole. Players must stack together in teams and battle to become the ultimate totem pole!

## Player Motivation

Players compete to be on the winning totem pole. In order to win, players must be on a stack of at least two and be the last totem pole alive. After winning battles, players will unlock new totems and upgrades.

## Unique Selling Proposition

Totem Stack is unique because players stack to create one 'super-totem-pole' and each control their own player to contribute to the teams overall success. The game has a unique social dynamic because players are forced to pick a team in what begins as basically a free-for-all match, and may break alliances by disconnecting from the stack below.

## Competitive Analysis

### ***TowerFall Ascension (Multiplayer Mode)***

Similarities: Team-based 2D platform-fighter on PC & Consoles

Pros:

- Very fun & competitive platform fighter
- Single Player / Co-op campaign mode
- Competitive multiplayer battle mode

Cons:

- No online mode, only local multiplayer

How this game will compare:

TowerFall is a very fast-paced game, and because of this, there is no online mode in this game. Totem Stack will not require as much speed or precision as TowerFall, and having 10-12 players is more than a local match would typically have, so it will make sense to implement online gameplay.

### ***Super Smash Bros. Series (Multiplayer Mode)***

Similarities: Free-for-all or team-based platform fighter, with unique characters and abilities, melee and ranged attacks, and special movement mechanics.

Pros:

- You can play as Nintendo Characters like Mario or Link
- You can play as Pokemon
- Lots of characters
- Unique abilities
- Unique movement mechanics for each character

Cons:

- Large skill gaps exist between experienced and non-experienced players
- All players may pause the game at any time and do that annoying thing where they zoom in on their character and move the camera around and waste the time of everybody else....

How this game will compare:

Totem Stack will differ from Super Smash Bros. both mechanically and strategically. Since players must win as a team, lower skill players have a better chance of being victorious by forming alliances with others. Forming and breaking alliances on the fly will result in matches that are much different from free-for-all and preset team fighting modes. Since players stack on top of each other, players may not always be focused on controlling their movement and may instead focus on combat and other strategy.

***Darkest Dungeon (Single Player Mode)***

Similarities: 2D, turn-based combat, with strategy relating to the position of your characters in a linear order. Characters have different abilities, strengths, and weaknesses like the totems.

Pros:

- Good Story & Theme
- Good battle mechanics
- Looks amazing (excellent art style)
- Extra features like character upgrades / recruiting
- Permanent lasting effects

Cons:

- Good strategy generally trends toward recruiting low-level characters and treating them as disposable in order to gain the most resources and spend the least, thus the systems to upgrade characters and fix their ailments aren't very useful and are often obsolete
- Lots of 'grinding'

How this game will compare:

The single player mode of Totem Stack will be similar in some mechanical aspects to Darkest Dungeon, such as the fact that totem-order like character order will play a big role in the combat strategy. However, Totem Stack will reward players with more useful upgrades and will consist of one head-to-head match up at a time against a tough enemy instead of crawling through a dungeon and enduring multiple fights against weaker enemies. This offers players a different experience with more focus on the current battle.

## Genre

2D Platform-Fighter

Turn based 1-on-1 combat (single player mode)

Upgrade & Unlock

Totem Stack is a 2D Platform-Fighter which adds a new social dynamic in which players must choose to form and break alliances on the fly in order to achieve victory. The game plays similar to other platform combat games like Super Smash Bros. and TowerFall, but players gain an advantage by working together to control a totem pole made from their individual characters.

## Gameplay

### *1. Multiplayer Arena Combat*

This is the primary focus of the game. 10-12 players are placed together in the battle stage, and must form alliances on the fly by jumping onto other totems, forming a totem pole.

In the pole, primary movement is controlled by the player on the bottom, who cannot choose to remove other players from above. Players at any other point in the stack can jump off taking everybody above with them, breaking the alliance with those below.

Stacks will have a maximum of 5 players, and must have at least two players in order to win. Players will gain access to additional abilities depending on their position in the stack, so forming a bigger team is generally better, although it may be more chaotic.

There does not strictly need to be two teams, depending on how players form alliances there might be 6 stacks of height two, 4 stacks of height 3, and so on in any particular combination. A stack of two can jump onto another stack of two to form a stack of 4, combining alliances, so long as the total height of the resulting totem pole does not exceed the maximum height.

## *2. Unlocking & Upgrading Totems*

Players will start out with a selection of a few basic totems with simple abilities. Each totem is given either a melee or ranged attack which can be used at level 2 and above, and each totem has a unique movement mechanic for level 1 (e.g. bird totems can double jump, aquatic totems can move better in water, cat totems are faster, etc.). The combat ability will improve the further up the pole the totem is placed, for example:

Level 2: Shoot an Arrow

Level 3: Increased Range (Can shoot up/down one totem level)

Level 4: Increased Power (Arrow can hit things further away)

Level 5 (top of the pole): Shoot a flaming arrow (does additional fire damage to target)

Upgrades may be bought in order to improve abilities or add new abilities to a totem.

Totems may have elemental types which give certain advantages and disadvantages in combat against other types. This will affect both single player and multiplayer combat, and introduce more strategy in the single player mode.

After unlocking a totem, players can further customize its appearance by selecting colours and some basic variants of facial features (different eyes, different mouth, a couple beak sizes for birds).

## *3. Single Player Mode*

In addition to the multiplayer mode, there is an optional single player mode, in which players choose 5 totems to put into a stack and play a turn-based combat mode against a computer totem-stack one on one in strategic turn-based combat. Play alternates back and forth, with each player choosing an ability from one of their totems at a time, and with each totem having a limited number of uses. Players target a specific totem on the other pole, and sections are eliminated one by one until one pole has been completely eliminated, leaving the other as the winner. Attacks will have limited range, for example, some melee attacks can only target totems at the same level, while ranged attacks may be able to target one above / one below on the other totem.

## Story Synopsis

Totems are competing to be the best in battle, in order to earn the position at the top of the totem pole, which is the greatest honour

for a totem. Story is not a very significant aspect of this game, but will be consistent with the overall theme.

### Target Market

This game targets everyone, in the sense that it can appeal to people of different age groups and does not have a mature theme. More specifically, those who enjoy platformers and fighting games. Target ESRB rating would probably be E10+ for cartoon violence.

### Target Platform

PC &/or Console (Steam, Nintendo Switch? ! ? ! That'd be cool...) These platforms are more equipped for real-time online gameplay than mobile platforms, and would allow for a flexible and responsive control scheme for using various abilities and moving around the stage.

#### Hardware Requirements:

- Fairly decent network connection for online multiplayer
- Memory: assume at least 4.0 Gb RAM
- Processor: assume at least 3.0 GHz
- Support for Windows, Mac, and Linux Operating Systems (PC)
- Support for Consoles: TBD

### Summary

Totem Stack will be a fun multiplayer game with interesting social interactions between players who must work together and compete with others in order to achieve victory! Every player will contribute something different to their team in order to gain an advantage.