Project Sound

By Dark Energy

Core Vision

Project Sound is a game based in a world without light. Years of diminishing light finally culminate in the death of the nearest star. Over the years lifeforms on the planet have managed to adapt to the lack of light and instead thrive upon sound energy. These lifeforms feed on the sounds made by other lifeforms and the environment, absorbing it through evolved auditory organs.

The primary inhabitants of the world have managed to adapt to their lightless environments as well by developing primitive echolocation technology. The player controls one of these inhabitants, Tom. In the midst of the chaos caused by the dying star, Tom's family has left to find supplies and haven't returned in a while. Tom's only companion in the darkness is Aria, his childhood friend.

One day Aria goes missing. Tom, in desperation, leaves the safety of his home to search for everyone. Armed with only his echolocation device he faces the dangers of the lightless world, including hostile creatures and deadly environmental hazards. In his pursuit he will uncover distant memories of a world not yet consumed by darkness.

Design Philosophy

Unique Qualities
- Blind and unarmed player must ping to reveal nearby obstacles and threats
- Pings and movement can either assist or endanger the player

Design Goals
Primary:
>   1. To create the experience of navigating an **unknown** area with limited sight
Secondary:
>   2. To instill a sense of **curiosity** despite the awareness of danger lurking in the darkness
>   3. To **challenge** the player to ping strategically
Optional:
>   4. To motivate the player with a **captivating** backstory unlocked at the end of each level

Graphics
Background: dark or black to represent the unknown
Obstacles: dull, but light in color as they are revealed in the background
Pings and Creatures: bright colors to contrast them from the background

Audio
Title Theme: adventurous, but not overly optimistic
Level Background: ambient and mysterious
Pings: recognizable above background music, but not obnoxious
Avalanches and Enemies: dark and edgy to represent immediate danger
End Credits: bittersweet; drowns the player in tears

Objectives

The primary player objective is to reach the marked end of every level. With regards to the core vision every level represents a separate area in the world. As players progress through the levels they get closer to finding their family and friends.

The secondary player objective is to explore every level to uncover hidden areas and landmarks. Player exploration is rewarded with audio notes, short recorded clips that explain sections of the background story. While the rewards from exploration are not necessary the audio clips are important in establishing the setting and story which are important in our core vision. This secondary objective can be dropped if necessary.

Actions

Verb	Description	Importance
Walk	Move forward, backward, left, or right on the ground	Critical
Ping	Release a sound wave to help detect nearby obstacles	Critical
Sneak	Move slower, with less noise	Desirable

Challenges

Navigate in the darkness
The whole level layout is dark with the exception of the player. The player will only be able to see

sections of walls and enemies at a time.

- The player has a harder time finding and reaching the exit goal
- With the exit and layout level hidden in darkness, the player has no idea where to go
- The player can either walk in the dark, or ping until he finds the exit
- Uncertainty and risk are involved as the player has to decide what to do next

Avoid enemies

Three different types of enemies are hidden throughout the levels. Enemies include hunters (chase after the player), campers (wander about at slower pace), and stompers (move around, not focused on the player).

- Players will have a harder time making it to the exit and exploring the levels
- If the player collides with an enemy, it is an instant kill
- Players can ping to identify enemies, and move away when spotted by one
- Enemies move around in the dark, and players may be uncertain where they are. Pings are also risky as they attract enemies

Watch out for avalanches

Avalanches originate from unstable rock formations. They occur when the player either runs into them or a ping reaches them. Potential avalanches are thus hidden, and results in instant death if the avalanche falls on the player.

- Avalanches prevent the player from blindly wandering without pinging to find the exit. Avalanches make exploring more difficult
- Players may be killed by avalanches, and avalanches will also block out paths
- Players must ping every once in awhile to prevent from being crushed by an avalanche
- Avalanches involve uncertainty as the player does not know where they are, and also risk as avalanches block out certain paths

Mechanics

Actions

Walking
- The player moves through the world at a set speed by holding down one of the directional movement keys, which by default are the widely used W=up, S=down, A=left, D=right.
- Walking is obstructed by walls, so a player cannot walk if doing so would cause him to intersect a wall.

- The player's position in the environment changes, moving in the direction indicated by the

movement keys. Monsters within a small radius are notified of the player's presence, and triggers based on player location are activated.

Pinging
- The player releases a burst of sound, activated by the space bar by default.
- A player may only ping when he has sufficient sound energy to do so, indicated by the "sound bar." The player's sound energy is partially restored when the environment interacts with him, i.e. when he is hit by sound generated by an enemy, critter, or avalanche.
- When the player pings, some of the player's sound energy is removed, and he generates a loud ping. This ping takes the form of an expanding ring around the player that illuminates the area around him. If any monsters were hit by the ping, they are notified of the player's position, and any object hit by the ping is made visible to the player. Avalanches and interactable objects are notified of the strength of the ping they were hit by, and may perform their logic appropriately.

Sneaking
- The player moves more slowly through the environment. This is implemented as a modifier key to the original movement keys, defaulting as shift.
- A player may sneak whenever he or she could walk.
- The player moves in the direction indicated at a slower pace, but does not notify nearby monsters or objects of his existence.

Interactions

Avalanche:
- The trigger event for this interaction is sound energy from a ping. The ping can be from player pings or from monster pings.
- The immediate outcome of this is a landslide of rocks that instantly kills players within its radius (exact specification to be decided). It can also kill monsters.
- The player can control this interaction by deciding not to ping next to it (you can see avalanches from far away without setting them off) or by pinging and running away quickly (so that the avalanche does not kill you, you can also lure monsters into avalanches this way).

Absorption of Sound Energy:
- The trigger event for this interaction is being in proximity of the enemy. For different types of enemies this interaction works differently. For stompers (large monsters that walk around and do not actively hunt the player) you have to be close to them to absorb sound energy from the sound they make while walking. For hunters and critters (monsters that do not threaten the player) you absorb sound energy by being within their ping radius when they ping. You will absorb part of their ping sound.
- The immediate outcome is that you get more sound energy in your sound energy bar.

- The player can control this interaction by purposely moving close to (or conversely, away from) stompers, hunters and/or critters.

Recovering Sound Energy
- The trigger event for this is time. You recover sound energy in your sound energy bar over time. However this process will be painfully slow so players are encouraged to seek out monsters to absorb sound from.
- The immediate outcome is an increase of sound in your sound energy bar.
- The player can not control this mechanism as it is passive.

Instant Death By Monsters
- The trigger event for this is being physically next to the enemy/ monsters. It doesn't matter whether you are near to it from its front, rear or side.
- The immediate outcome is the player's death. The player dies when he/she is too close to the monster.
- The player can control this mechanism by running away from the monsters so that they are never next to them. The player can also commit suicide by running deliberately into an enemy.