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GAMEPLAY SPECIFICATION

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, life forms on the planet have managed to adapt to the lack of light and instead thrive upon sound energy. These life forms feed on the sounds made by other life forms 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 Tom, one of these inhabitants. In the midst of the chaos caused by the dying star, Tom's family left to find supplies and hasn'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

Sound Navigation: Blind and unarmed, the player must ping to reveal nearby obstacles and threats. The player also has a limited number of pings and must collect sound energy to recharge.

Action Tradeoffs: While pinging reveals the area around the player, it also has a downside of attracting enemies to the player's current location.

Limited Information: Players cannot see their surroundings unless they ping. Pinging can only reveal the last known location of the creatures around the player. Hence the player generally only knows that creatures are nearby, and not the exact location of the creatures.

PRIMARY DESIGN GOAL

Survival: Players must navigate an area with a limited and unusual method of sight, while trying to evade monsters.

SECONDARY DESIGN GOALS

Curiosity: Despite the awareness of danger lurking in the darkness, the player will be curious about his surroundings.

Strategy: Due to the dangerous enemies and limited resources, the player must use pings carefully to explore the level successfully.

GRAPHICS

Covered Background: The background is completely black except in places where the player stands or pings.

Open Background: When a player stands or pings in an area, the background changes to reveal a sandy or rocky floor texture in white and light greys.

Pings: Pings do not have an actual image, but they cause a transition between the covered and open background graphics. They appear as expanding white circles with an opacity that decreases at larger radii.

Animate Objects: The player avatar, critters, hunters, campers, and stompers have medium grey, sketchy outlines and a light grey fill. The shading is intentionally inconsistent for artistic effect.

Inanimate Objects: Rocks and avalanches are greyscale when revealed, with much more detailed shading than animate objects.

Walls: Walls use a dark grey texture and can be arbitrary polygon shapes created in the level editor. These shapes can be formed into hint words and symbols for the player to find.

Landmarks: Landmarks are light grey flowers with a medium grey outline so that the player can recognize them quickly.

Goal: The goal should be a white orb with a glowing effect just like the orb in the inverted Resonance logo. It should have a dark shadow so that the player can recognize it easily on open backgrounds.

AUDIO

Title Theme: The title theme is adventurous, but not overly optimistic.

Level Background: The level background music is ambient and subtle so that the player can easily recognize hunter growls and ping sound effects. The background music also has a hint of mystery.

Sound Effects: Sound effects such as pings, hunter growls, and rumbling rocks should be recognizable above background music, but not so obnoxious that it bothers the player.

Enemies: When enemies approach the player or enter chase mode, the music becomes dark and edgy to represent the immediate danger.

End Credits: This bittersweet melody 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 with very little noise	Critical
Ping	Release a sound wave to help detect nearby obstacles	Critical
Running	Faster, noisy movement that replenishes sound energy and attracts enemies	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 due to the hidden information

AVOID ENEMIES

Three different types of enemies are hidden throughout the levels. Enemies include hunters which chase after the player and eat critters, campers which wander around a limited region, and stompers which move around without regard for 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, while players are uncertain where they are
- Pinging is a risk as pings may 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
- Players may be killed by avalanches, and avalanches will also block out paths
- Players must ping every once in a while to prevent from being crushed by an avalanche
- Avalanches involve uncertainty as they are hidden throughout the levels

MECHANICS

ACTIONS

Walking

The player moves through the world at a set speed by holding down one of the directional arrow keys. Walking is obstructed by walls and rocks, which prevent the player from moving upon collision. The player emits a small radius of sound around their avatar while walking, but not enough to attract enemies or replenish sound energy.

Pinging

The player releases a burst of sound, activated by the space bar. A player may only ping when he has sufficient sound energy to do so, indicated by the battery bar in the top left corner of the screen. When the player pings, some of the player's sound energy is converted into a large ping. This ping takes the form of an expanding ring around the player that reveals the area around him. Pings all start at a specific intensity, and lose intensity as they expand outward.

Running

The player moves through the level at a slightly faster and noisier pace by holding down the shift key with the directional arrow keys. Running is noisier than walking, so the player's path is illuminated and can attract enemies. It can also replenish the player's sound energy, albeit slowly. However, just like with walking, running does not allow the player to pass through rocks or walls.

INTERACTIONS

Avalanche

The trigger event for this interaction is sound energy from a player's ping or direct physical contact. The immediate outcome of this is a landslide of rocks that kills players and monsters caught within its expanding radius. The player can control this interaction by deciding not to ping next to it after noticing it from far enough away, or by pinging and running away quickly to set it off on an enemy in pursuit.

Absorption of Sound Energy

The player absorbs sound energy from each ping he or she is hit by, proportional to the intensity of the ping at that point. The immediate outcome of this interaction is that the player gains more sound

energy to use for his own pings. The player can control this interaction by intentionally moving closer to or farther away from entities that generate pings, such as stompers, hunters and critters.

Instant Death by Monsters

The trigger event for this interaction is colliding with enemies or monsters. When the player collides with a monster other than a critter, the player dies immediately, causing the level to reset. The player can control this mechanism by strategically avoiding collisions with monsters. The player can also commit suicide by running deliberately into an enemy.

Breakable Rocks

The trigger event for this interaction is sound energy from a player's ping. The immediate outcome of this event is the rock breaking and clearing a passageway for the player to pass through. The player can control this interaction by deciding whether or not to ping next to the breakable rock after noticing it from far enough away.