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Project 3 Postmortem for *Space Race 7000*

What Went Right:

1. **I didn't get stuck on one thing:** Unlike my last game, I didn't really get hung up on one problem or feature. The time I spent on the game was spent well. In my opinion this is because of a combination of becoming better at game design and at working with Zenilib. It still wasn't enough to get everything I wanted done and working perfectly though.
2. **I kept the scope smaller and more realistic:** With this game my estimation of how much work I could do and how long things would take were a little better. I only had to scrap a few features, most of them already of the lowest priority. With more practice I can write more accurate burn down charts and better decide which features are most important.
3. **The map editor worked out well:** I took the normal play state and built a map editor on top of it. This avoided copying code, and allowed me to see exactly how maps would look in game. This also made it so I didn't have to use any outside programs and convert into a format readable by my game. Since I wrote both the editor and the game it was easy to transfer the maps between the two.

What Went Wrong:

1. **Not enough play testing:** I got some good ideas from the play testers who did try the game, but I feel like I didn't get nearly enough feedback to know how the average person feels about the controls, physics, look, etc. Just because one person says the game should be a certain way doesn't necessarily mean that's the right design choice. For the final project I will definitely make sure to get play tests sooner and more often.
2. **I didn't prioritize very well:** I saved the hardest piece, the map editor, for last, but this made it hard to fully test the game mechanics. With only a small map without any interesting geography it's impossible to tell how the game with feel and handle on a larger busier map. I should have tackled the editor earlier and designed a good test map for the remaining features. I also jumped around a lot on tasks, which gave me time to figure out what I how I should do the first task, but also left some things unfinished.
3. **Cutting corners is okay at first, but should be fixed before release:** To get prototypes out faster hacks can be employed, but before the final build these should be smoothed out. I never went back and did this and my final product is filled with many known bugs and memory leaks.

Joshua Kahn
October 21, 2013
First Playtest for *Space Race 7000*

Playtester Suggestions:

- **Introduce power-ups or boost**: I've started adding boost, but may ultimately decide to simply raise the maximum speed and take it out.
- **Do something with the triggers:** I'm using the right trigger for shooting lasers now and will probably use the left as some sort of a hand/air brake.
- **More inertia; turning is a bit boring:** I'll mess with the feel of the ship for next playtest and try to get controlling it to be more exciting.
- **Wider tunnels:** Once the map maker is implemented I will create a mix of wide spaces and narrow passages.
- **Introduce a plot:** May either add a blob of text in the instructions screen or an specific aesthetic to set the scene (whatever that may be).
- **Hard to tell where the collision box for the ship is in first person:** I've switched to a pulled back third person view that should give the player a better feel for the ship dimensions.
- **Make rotation snap to larger increments:** I will try this feature out once I design a map with narrow passages that require rotation.
- **Make it feel like the player is moving really fast:** I've increased the movement speed and will try to design wall textures in such a way that they appear to be going by quickly.
- **Add a way to take corners really fast:** Suggestion was something such as a sideways grappling gun to hook onto corners, but I don't think I have the time for something like that, so my plan is to turn up inertia and add the braking system and maybe boost to allow players to slide into a corner sideways and launch out at high speed.

Observations:

- Players seemed to like the sixaxis control and didn't have much trouble picking it up
- Players didn't use the rotation much, might be interesting and make players think in new ways if I force them to orient a certain way to fit down passages.
- The first vertical tunnel seemed to take players by surprise, maybe design the first level to be only lefts and rights for a while to make the first vertical turn even more exciting.

Conclusions:

- Need to decide on a story and a distinct aesthetic to match it.
- Make sure the game feels fast, but still keeps the player in control.
- Larger environments.
- Third person view.
- Add some or all of these to make it more interesting: Boost, power-ups, narrow tunnels, air brake

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Second Playtest for *Space Race 7000*

Playtester Suggestions:

- **Make the ship always go forwards and sideways instead of drifting in any direction:** This is a good idea to make controlling the ship easier for the player, unfortunately I wasn't able to figure out how to do this in time.
- **Camera is getting blocked by walls; either make walls see-through when camera is behind them or make camera collide with walls:** I decided to make the camera collide with walls and pull closer to the ship when it does. This feature is still a bit buggy but usually works okay.
- **The ship appears to be rotating around the camera:** Turns out the ship was centered around its corner. I adjusted the Model to be centered and its center and now the rotation is much better.