COMP3218 - Sprint 1 - Game Notes

Flood Escape

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**Describe your game’s design in terms of one of the two design frameworks discussed in class (Fullerton’s formal elements or MDA):**

Fullerton’s formal elements:

**Player**: Takes on a player vs game role. A single player is sufficient for our game, as they are trying to survive whilst being presented with different obstacles. The player is also competing with their previous performances, trying to collect as many coins as possible and survive longer.

**Objective**: Survial, the player is trying to stay ahead of the flood for as long as possible.

**Procedures**: The player achieves their objective by jumping from platform to platform, rising up throughout the leve. The player is given agency by having different possible routes and being given the choice to take a harder or longer route in order to collect more coins.

**Rules:** The player can only jump a fixed height, picking up the double jump powerup allows the player to jump an additional time while in the air. If the player falls into the flood then they are killed and must restart the level.

**Resources:** Coins are the most common resource, which determine the players score for the level. These control how the player acts, as the player will change their actions in order to collect the maximum amount of coins. There are also power ups, which give the player additional abilities.

**Conflict:** The rising flood is the main conflict for the player. The player has to choose their path through the level and progress fast enough to stay ahead of the flood.

**Boundaries:** The player is restricted by each levels boundary to the left and right, which limit where the player can move.

**Outcome:** The player either completes the level by reaching the end, or more likely is defeated by being caught up by the flood.

**What Core Dynamic do you feel your game possesses and why?**

The core dynamic of our game is survival, as the player tries to evade the flood that is chasing them throughout the level.

**Describe the type of level layout you have used in this level design and why that suits this particular game.**

Our tutorial has a linear level layout, the player starts at the bottom of the level and moves to the top to reach the end goal. Once an element has been introduced, the larger platforms stop the player falling back to the bottom, only to the start of the section. The flood doesn’t rise until all the mechanics have been introduced. This suits our game as a linear layout allows us to introduce the different mechanics to the player gradually. The level design forces the player to use these mechanics in order to progress, which ensures that the player learns everything they need to before completing the level.

**What was the process you went through to tune the difficulty of this game, and how have you have made it feel fair?**

We felt it was important to introduce the different game mechanics gradually, to avoid overwhelming the player. For this reason, the tutorial level has been split up into four stages, with each stage showing the player a different element of the game. Furthermore, we stop the flood from chasing the player for the first 3 stages, giving the player time to get to grips with the movement mechanics. We’ve made the game feel fair by ensuring the flood isn’t too fast, giving the player time to reach the end goal, even if they make a mistake or two. The player is only killed if the flood completely obscures them, as being killed upon just touching the water felt unfair towards the player. The positions of platforms and coins, and the speed of the wave, when it starts moving, and when it speeds up were all tuned by playing the game and having different people play the game. From this we could see if people often took the same route, if the wave was generally catching up with people to early on, or if the wave was too slow and the game did not get difficult enough fast enough. For example, we found the position of arcs of coins in the air in the tutorial indicated well to the player when to time their double jump. We also initially made the powerup give unlimited double jumps, but we found this made it too easy to then reach the end – it now only gives 10 which the player has to use strategically.