No Prey, No Pay

Fabrício Guedes Faria
Gabriel Arantes
João Victor Almeida
Rafael Pedrosa Clerici
Willian Gonzaga Leodegario

Available Platforms: Personal Computer (PC)
Target demographic: teen and young adults
Expected ESRB rating: TEEN

Overview

Amidst the foggy streets of *New Calderia*, a gang of scoundrels do their business. But, after a successful heist, they now argue about how much of the cash each one is supposed to get. And what they call "arguing", normal folks call "deranged brawling". Pistols, swords and fists drawn; the last one standing gets the best loot!

Each player picks a rascal, and now must fight each other throughout multiple locations of the city, such as taverns, ports, flying airships and otherworldly portals. Each round, everyone got a single "life". If you are shot, trampled or slashed, you are out until the next round. Whoever scores more kills wins!

The battles are fast-paced, and players must use the environment to their advantage. Weapons and other items are randomly scattered across the area. Even though you are fully able to defeat your rivals with fists, feet and sheer rudeness, controlling them will greatly aid in winning the match

Characters

The game features four gang members. Each player chooses one of them before the beginning a match, and their differences are merely cosmetic. All of them are creatures commonly known as "Kobolds", even though their overall appearance is quite different.

The first one is the skipper, known by his nickname of "King". Vainglorious and a bit uppish, he is the one who commands the gang and made the plan for the heist. Because of that, he claims to be the one who deserves the largest share of the loot.

The second one is the pyro, dubbed "Jack" by the rest of the crew. As the name suggests, he loves to set things on fire and being really reckless, if not mad. By his deliberate exposure to danger when needed, he has dibs on most of the loot.

The third one is the brawler, or simply "Ace". Even though he has only one eye left, his accuracy and piloting skills are uncanny, being able to do completely absurd maneuvers with the gang's craft and still keeping it in one piece. Well, most of it in one piece. By slyly escaping through the thick of the fight, while carrying all the crew and their loot, he demands to earn a major amount of what they earned.

And last, but not least, is the rogue, or "Queen". Her ability to crawl through any surface and hide in plain sight is only matched by her cunning mechanical skills and deadly aim. Without the vital pieces of information she gathered, the heist wouldn't have been as successful as it was. In her stance, that entitles her to the lion's share of the acquired loot.

Because of the obvious disagreements, all of them engage in the honored and time-tested method of fighting it out.

Controls

Even though the game is being developed for the PC market, the planned controls are for video game console controllers, such as XBOX's or Playstation's. This is due to the local multiplayer nature of the game, as multiple people using the keyboard would be unfeasible for the proposed gameplay experience.
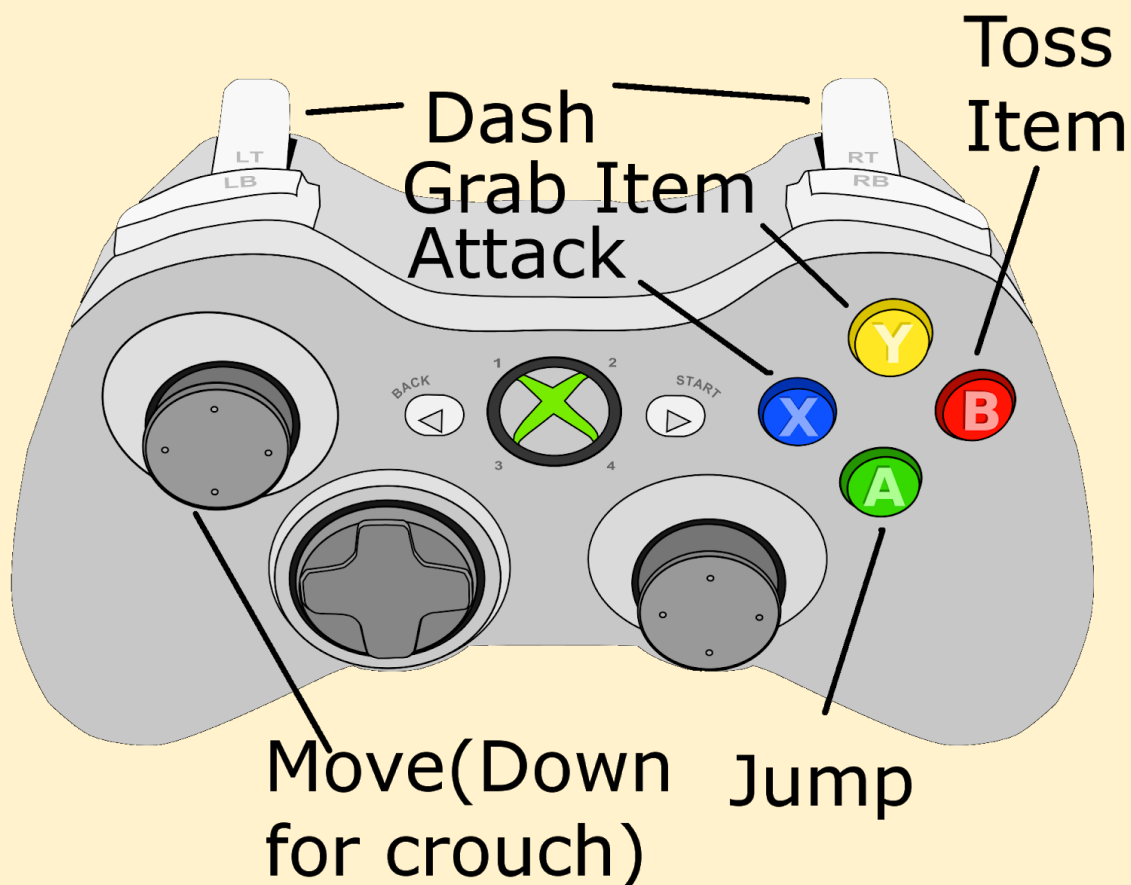
Players may crouch in order to dodge blows or equip weapons. The attack button throws a non-lethal punch, only stunning whoever it hits. Equipping a weapon replaces the standard attack with a lethal one, which varies with the weapon equipped. Attacks will be performed in the direction pointed by the analog stick. If the analog stick is released, the attack will be performed pointed at the way faced by the character. The toss causes the character to throw whichever weapon they are holding, un-equipping it. The direction of the toss is similar to how attacks work. Tossing may produce different results: the hit from a tossed pistol is not lethal, while a sword's is.

Main gameplay aspects

The game is strictly local-multiplayer. Each player selects a character and a color. If the "Team Battle" rule is set up, two players with the same color will be considered to be on the same team, and their score will be summed up as the score of the team.

The gameplay consists of matches, each match being divided in rounds. At the end of a match, one player or team is deemed the winner. To win, one must succeed in the majority of individual rounds. Victory conditions on each round can be set up before the match, like scoring points whenever you defeat a foe. Victories obtained in a round will not grant benefits to the next rounds.

At the beginning of each round, all player characters are sorted in predetermined locations throughout the map. All players share the same screen, and may always see everything that goes on in the arena. Items will be randomly scattered, and may be picked up or tossed by the players. Only one item may be equipped by a character at a time, that is, one may not carry two items at the same time. Characters that are killed will not be able to do any actions until the next round, when they are brought back and the game soft-resets.

There are two distinct items: Sabers and Pistols. If the game development progresses more rapidly than expected, more weapons might be added.

Sabers can be swung by pressing the attack button while equipped. Being hit by a saber is lethal, killing any other player hit by it. Players might defend themselves from such strikes in two different manners: by pressing the Dash button, which makes your character briefly immune to any attack, and by swinging another saber at it the same time, making a parry and interrupting the action. Tossing a Saber is still a lethal move, and kills whoever it hits. Tossed Sabers will fall down, as affected by gravity.

Pistols can shoot at the direction the character is facing by pressing the attack button while equipped. Pistol shots are not affected by gravity, and will kill whoever it hits. Pistol shots also will pass through multiple targets, stopping only when hitting solid walls, allowing multiple kills with a single shot to be made. However, pistols have only one shot loaded, and may only be used as a tossable non-lethal object after firing it. Players can evade the shot by dashing. Tossed Pistols will fall down, as they are affected by gravity.

If a player attacks while having no equipped item, the character will throw a punch. Punches are not lethal, and only stun whoever it hits. Players may not toss items when there are none equipped. If a character steps or falls on top of someone else, whoever was stepped on is killed.

Setting and locations

The game takes place in the fantasy city of *New Calderia* and its surroundings. With a victorian aesthetic, one must expect smoke, steam and villainous scum in most of the visited places, as pirates tend to gravitate away from well policed places. Planned locations for maps are:

The Tavern: a pretty standard map, with no big hazards or weird elements around. A classic of brawls and kerfuffles since the dawn of civilization.

The Arcane Academy: somewhat similar to the tavern, but with multiple vials and potions lying around. Who knows what could happen if someone, say, shot a couple of them?

The Docks: big empty spaces broken by the tall silhouettes of cranes, loading cargo into ships. One should be careful to not get crushed under a random crate!

The Airship: what would a contemporaneous-looking fantasy setting be without giant steam-powered aircraft hovering in the skies? Fighting in the upper deck of these lumbering beasts is, obviously, not free of dangers, as intense gusts of wind might throw you overboard.

The Portal: who the hell thought it was a good idea to simply start fighting on this eldritch portal? Leap through floating platforms and get teleported at the other side of the screen whenever you try leaving it.

All locations, except the tavern, are "stretch goals", or, in other words, things that will only be implemented if the core game is polished and already fun to play.

Game experience

Fast-paced combat is what drives this game. Players should feel a constant need to evaluate the battlefield and search for weapons, discarding and picking up new ones all the time. Even the player in the lead should feel like they could be de-throned at any time, as any slip or delay will cause their defeat.

The art style will be manually drawn (vectorized art). Battle arenas will be composed of somewhat abstract "pieces" in order to clearly transmit to the player what each area of the stage is capable of. Some detail might be added in order to help players notice differences between stages of different areas of the game, as previously discussed on the "Setting and locations" page.

On the sound design, game effects should be quick and snappy, as they must not distract the players from the action, but rather enhance it. "Boom" of explosions, "Clang" of clashing swords and "Boos" from defeated characters are planned. A little bit of dubbing might be added for the kobolds, in order to add a comical note to the game, much like what was done in games like *Worms 2: armageddon*. The music should keep up with the fast pace, but can't draw much of the attention, once again to avoid distracting the players.

On the other hand, the menu must evoke the feeling of a calm place. Players must not feel pressure while they are out of the game, allowing them to enter the mindset they need to perform at their best in the actual game.
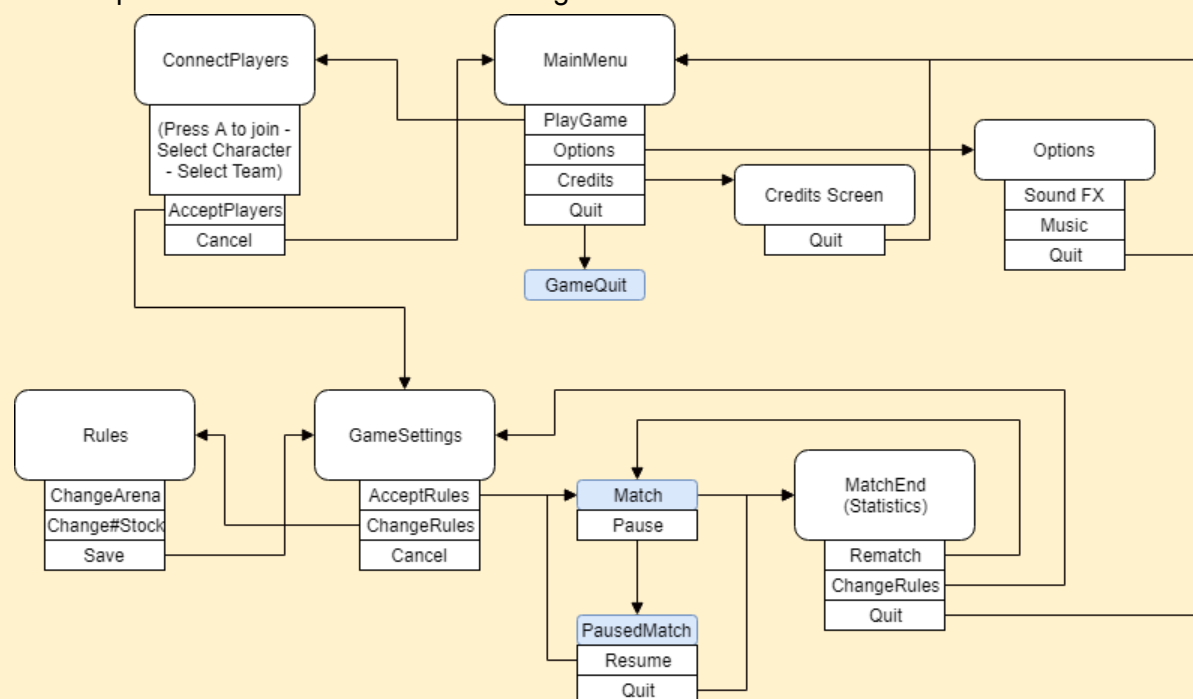
This is a flowchart detailing the planned menu interactions. Players will see only three different screens before actually playing the game: the main menu, a character selection screen and a rules screen. Simply mashing the "accept" button will promptly begin the game.

Other features

The game itself has few mechanics and hazards, both being restricted to a single one per location, previously mentioned in the "Setting and locations" section.

Potions and vials may explode in a lethal cloud of gases when hit. Falling crates will push the character down and kill them if there is nowhere else to be pushed, crushing them. The gusts of wind will randomly push all characters in a single direction. Little flags through the map will show whenever wind starts to build up, and which direction will it blow. In the airship maps, falling through the bottom of the screen kills the character.

Power-ups may be divided into two categories: items and effects. Items are weapons, which were previously elaborated on the "Main gameplay aspects" section. Effects will only be introduced if the development process is faster than expected, and they consist on pickups that alter the state of the character, such as allowing them to take one extra hit before being defeated, being able to do a mid-air jump or throwing a deadly fire punch.

Enemies controlled by Artificial Intelligence are not present. All combat is within players. Cutscenes are also absent, with most screen changes happening with a fade-out, if needed.

Concept-art might be made available in an additional menu screen, unlocked by playing multiple rounds. Tidbits of lore and trivia about the world and the gangsters might be available as well.