

Potato

Platformer Design doc Gamesfleadh 2019

TU Dublin

Year 4

BA Game Design DT508

Team CorgiBits

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Introduction

Potato is a physics based platformer game featuring a hat wearing potato who has a grapple hook to get to his next destination. The game began with Ludum Dare 38 external to college just for fun. It was my first Ludum Dare, and also my first jam doing it solo. After Ludum Dare I picked it up again as part of a college jam and then continued with some minor polishing over two years when I had the time.

Design

The Ludum Dare theme was “Ancient technologies” and what immediately jumped to me was the grappling hook, something that has been featured in many games before, but also in movies such as Indiana Jones, I really wanted to make a platformer based around this.

My design pillars going into the jam were as followed:

Simple: One unique mechanic, the grapple hook. Nothing fancier than this and keep gameplay limited to this restriction.

Learning Curve: Make something that has a learning curve, Minor or massive doesn't matter as long as it takes a bit of practice to get use to.

Playful: Make a mechanic that is fun to play with regardless of end goals.

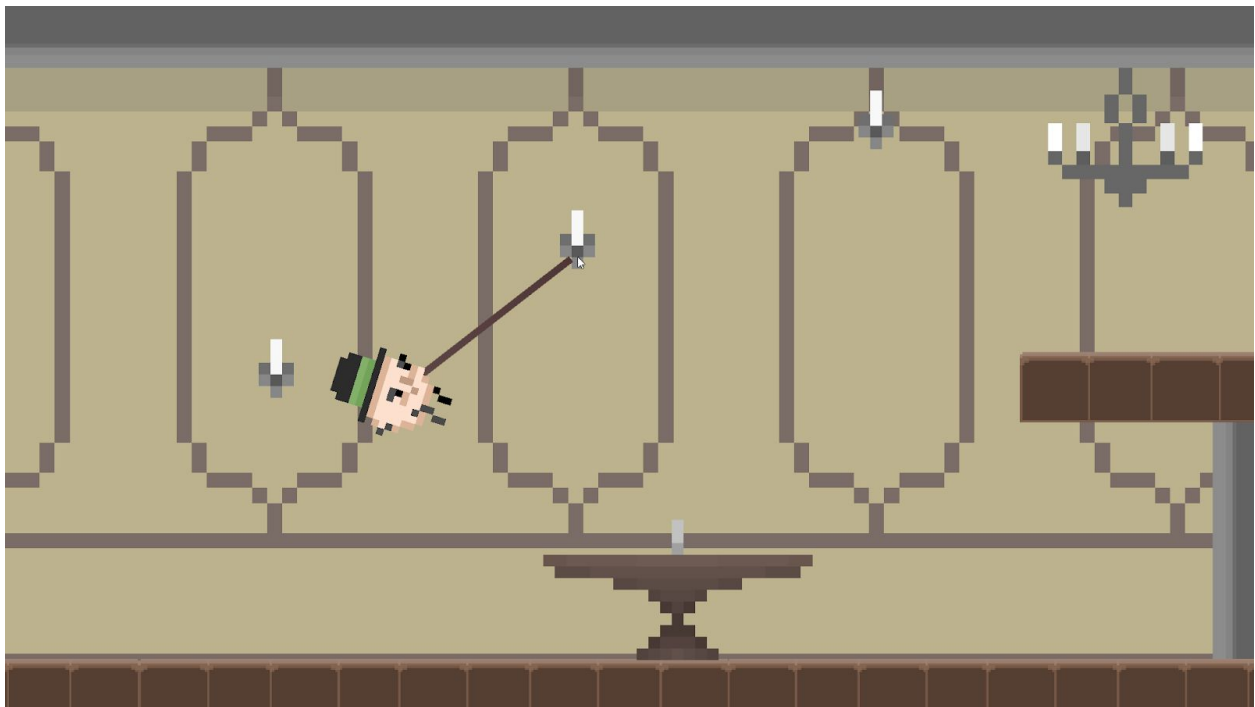
Implementation:

I settled on the grapple hook and only having that as my only mechanic, keeping the control scheme simple with, WSAD to move and rock back and forth, and single mouse click to shoot the grappling hook. Learning curve came into how the level was designed. I wanted to ease the player into the mechanic by creating a safe way to experiment with the grapple mechanic, any of the “death” boxes respawned the player right before they made the error so they could retry a challenge over and over until they achieved it. After the tutorial like area is finished the player can then continue into a harder challenge that respawns the player at the start of the challenge if they die. Felt this curve in difficulty was nice as it gave the player a chance to get used to how the game feels before presenting an actual challenge designed to challenge their newly learned skills. Finally the grappling hook mechanic had to feel fun by itself. I setup a scene purely to test and swing around with just the grappling hook and tweaked it endlessly until I felt it was fun to just play with, without any challenges.

Art

With art I aimed to make something that was cutesy and a bit humorous, as I was doodling out ideas I kinda just ended up with a potato looking creature and gave him a hat to give him some character. I'm a pixel artist/ animator and something small is very easy to get good results with animation wise within the time frame.

The art style ended up as a low resolution pixel art that was bright but not super colorful palette wise.



Development

The game was developed within Unity Ver 5.3.5f1 , when 2D was still quite limited within the engine but I enjoyed the challenge. Main mechanic of the grapplehook and movement were programmed with C#.

For the dialogue system and screen changes I used Fungus, a software developed by SnozBot's Chris Gregan.

Art and Animations were all done in Photoshop CC

Credits

Game Design, Art/Animation, Programming : Kalen O'Brien

Fungus Plugin (Dialogue system and view system): Chris gregan

Music: Robert Hughes