**To the Core**

**Summary:**

Everybody has something to say about the ancients and their planet-size machines, but no one really knows what happened in the past. What is a fact is that miles and miles of pipes, metal panels and copper-wires can be found under the earth, proof of a long gone people, which — legends say — could turn stone into water. And now that the lakes are going dry and the oceans give way to a sand desert, there might be no other choice than dig for secrets, grasping to the hope that some sort of salvation can be found. And, of course, do it while not thinking about the strange things that grow in the tunnels, used to the dark and always hungry. ***To the Core*** is a spelunking adventure that follows a desperate hero trying to uncover the secrets of an ancient civilization, digging his way to the core of the planet in search of a legendary machine capable of terraforming the earth and giving the people another chance of survival. To do this, the player will be equipped with a pickaxe and a headlamp, with which he can dig through tunnels, search for a path in the dark and be protected from the strange creatures that live underground. The headlamp, though, has a limited life, and without it the creatures will be free to attack. To make things worse, the ancient tech only glows in the dark, which makes turning off the headlamp necessary to search for clues and secrets.

**Game identity** :

The idea of ***To the Core*** is giving the player a dark environment to explore, where gooey creatures crawl towards anything alive, to try and eat them. At any sign of light, though, the creatures crawl back into the ceiling or floor, awaiting for the darkness to come back so they can follow their prey again. The dark, then, is something to be feared, since when the lights are off, all the player can do is hear the enemies getting closer. But the objects the player searches for glow in the dark, which means he can’t keep the headlamp on all the time. All of this makes the game atmosphere dense, since the player must risk his life to find his reward.

**Pillars of design:**

* Exploration-rewarding
* Mysterious
* Dark

**Mechanics:**

The spelunking of the game will open paths where mechanical parts might be seen glowing in the dark, which will allow the player to recharge the headlamp battery, get bits of information about what happened in the past or tips about which direction to follow. The goal is to clear blocks of dirt to try and find ladders and passages that guides the player to another screen. Digging some pieces of dirt, though, can release a monster that moves towards the player when there’s no light upon it.

**Controls:**

With a gamepad or the keyboard/mouse the hero player can:

* Move in the four cardinal directions
* Use a pickaxe to destroy pieces of ground
* Turn the headlamp on and off
* Point the headlamp in a straight direction (the headlamp direction can be different from the movement direction)
* Interact with objects

The game will respond by:

* Making enemies disappear and stop moving while on the light
* Spawning an enemy when some pieces of ground are broke
* Spawning a glowing arrow that can only be seen after the headlamp was turned off for a while
* Spawning a recharge station
* Spawning a computer with a secret message
* Spawning a hatch that can only be seen after the headlamp was turned off for a while (and takes the player to the next floor)
* Make interactable objects glow in the dark when the player is close by

**Basic Objects:**

* Player
* Headlamp
* Pickaxe
* Enemy (slow moving)
* Ground Tile
* Ladder (exit to next floor)
* Glowing Arrow (8-direction limit)
* Recharge Station (infinite recharge)
* Glowing Crystal (One time recharge)
* Screen with message from the past

**Visual art style:**

2.5D top-down perspective. A color palette that mix ground colors, to reflect the spelunking nature of the game, and sci-fi metal colors, to create the ancient machines.

**Music and sound**:

The creature walk sound effect must increase its volume proportionally to the distance of the player; this way, even in the dark, when nothing can be seen, the player will know that the enemy is getting closer, and can decide by sound if he can risk keeping the headlamp off and wait for something to glow. This means the soundtrack must be discreet enough that the player can pay attention to the sound effects.

**Intended Platforms:** Computers (Itch.io)

**Intended schedule of production:** 15 to 30 work days

**Expansion plans:**

After putting the main loop together and testing the dynamic between resources, enemies and items to find, the next step could be to create procedurally generated levels, where the position of exits, enemies, clues and recharge stations might be randomized, to allow more replayability. If the prototype is expanded in the future, boss-like sections where levels lamps needs to be lighten might be included; as puzzle-like sections where fixed lamps in the level (timed or not) need to be interacted with to clear a path, by controlling the creatures possible paths.