ChaosInitiative – Sticky Jam Post-Mortem

# Peer Marking

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Team** | **Mark Allocation** |
| Jake King | 26 |
| Owen Ruddle | 26 |
| Matt Gray | 26 |
| Elliot Fenton | 2 |
| Tom Redwood | 0 |

# Game Reflection

We started with spending time solidifying our high concept, this allowed us to find problems with the concept that otherwise would have caused problems later in the build. Such as; when we were discussing how the bullets would work we had thought about having different types of bullet only killing their matching enemy type. This however warped the main mechanic in to matching game rather than defence so we decided to steer away from that to just have the different types of bullet have different effects.

We aimed to create the high concept that was feasible. We managed to achieve this without much of any feature creep by setting the height of the project so that we started with the main features and setting locked down stretch goals that would then complement the main game features. We managed to reach all of our original stretch goals.

By the end of the build we found more areas for further development like; more levels, boss levels, user creation of levels, different enemies. We need to devise a normal for balancing the levels, maybe even a tool that allows the creation of a rule set to make the levels to be fair.

One of the considerations from the advice we had been given was that the movement might be frustrating, not being able to move through other players. One example might be of another player boxes another into the corner not allowing them to move. However, our personal reasoning on the matter go against this advice because one of the main concepts of the game was it to be a cooperative defensive game. Working together is a main part of the game, if you don’t then you will lose.

Finally, asset consistency was addressed, because none of the group are artists we decided to keep things simple with pixel style art. Although as the build went on art styles ended up conflicting in areas. The sprites for the shields didn’t match with the rest of the game and of course the main start menu had not had its sprites updated so they were of poor quality.

# Action Plan

* Increase replay-ability of the concept (meta)
* Better, balanced user guidance (possible narrative/tutorial level)
* Diversify levels and level content (enemy combinations)

# Group Reflection

We started the jam with a group of 4, not including the master student. However, after the first session we did not see and could not communicate with one of the other members. This just made the workload a bit heavier for the remaining members but aside from that the group worked well together.

This was not to say that improvements could not be made to our teamwork. Although we split the task fairly and helped each other while we were working together, communication outside of face to face talking was not really used. The use of slack would have made communicating more fluent and on demand thanks to the mobile app. Shaun recommended using Trello, a website that allows you to create a virtual pin board for sharing ideas and taking notes of task that need to be done. Using this would definitely improve team fluidity because as we were building the game when one task was finished we just ask around if there was anything to do, wasting time essentially. The use of issues on GitHub would have also been helpful to use.

Another thing we could have improved on was that we relied on Shaun for too much of the frame work at the beginning of the project; object pools and managers were added to speed up the development however when it came to using them we need Shaun to explain how to use them. Although It was helpful not needing to worry about the framework as that allowed the rest of the group to focus on the gameplay elements. Which worked to our advantage, allowing us to get a pretty much finished version of the game ready for presentation.

# Senior Developer

Shaun overviewed the conceptualisation and guided us when we were bogged down by feature creep. He didn’t lead the high concept planning, however, he directed us as a group to more plausible ideas.

In development, Shaun initially helped by building a framework for the project and we were then able to work with it for the games logic. The team distributed roles equally and Shaun typically assisted members when requested.

As a member of the team, Shaun was always on hand to communicate and gave his time as much as the rest of the team.

# Personal Reflection

Jake king

I think the game jam went really well, work went smoothly and kept up to date with the project’s development. At the start of the project I volunteered to do the visuals; sprites and effects. In addition to doing the sounds and main menu. I did this because on projects like these visuals are most of the time secondary to us programmers. More often than not the task is spread around the group and an inconstant mix of styles is created for the game. With this in mind I wanted to treat the task as I would any other and try to keep the style consistent. I believed in my ability to use programs like Adobe fireworks and Adobe Photoshop to create simple enough sprites, but I think what failed me was my artistic sense. The failed asset consistency was all down to me, I could have possibly researched a bit of inspiration during the build to make the assets more consistent with our style. If I end up with similar task in the future, I’ll make sure to not make the same mistakes again.

On one hand creating the audio was a completely alien task for me. I found that using the internet to find free SFX creators was the best option as it was fast and didn’t require much skill. When I couldn’t find an appropriate sound for one of our effects I had to edit a similar sound. To do this I chose to use Adobe audition, a program I had never used before. However, after 1 or 2 quick tutorials from YouTube, I had the general knack of it.

On the other hand, I should have pushed for more technical tasks to do as I thought I had a lot to contribute. In this respect I tried to offer my assistant where I could, helping with; the bounce physics, player shield selection and player death. Finally, I didn’t communicate the best to the group, not using slack and sometimes almost unhelpful use of GitHub, I believe slowed the team down.

In conclusion I thought my contribution to the team is in need of improvement along with my amount of communication. However, I do believe that my mind-set for group work like this is on point and that future work together will go well.

Owen Ruddle

This jam although intensive was enjoyable. It was definitely a challenge at times but overall I felt it went very well and we ended up with a presentable game. As a team although there were only four of us including our Masters student we all made the effort to pull an equal amount of weight. This being said I feel that I was possible less effective than the other members of the team due to an inexperience in coding C# and using unity. This being said although I was a weaker member the more capable members helped me when I asked and often how I was planning to implement things were right or at least on the right track and the confirmation of my method helped improve my confidence in my coding skill.

In the initial break down of tasks I volunteered to work on the physics for the bouncing bullets. The first day experimenting with physics materials however after chatting to the team on it we decided that it wouldn’t work using unity’s inbuilt gravity as the rounds needed to bounce for as long as their lives aloud and the gravity and drag meant that they would often slow down and just sit in the screen. To fix this we simply scripted an initial for to be applied to the bullet and then once it made contact the physics engine worked well to achieve the desired result.

One of the more challenging elements of the build that I encountered was making the base shield as the bullets needed to be able to collide with it and then bounce away however the way that the update phase works it was counting the collision and then deleting the block before calculating the balls bounce so would end up with the ball going straight through instead of bouncing off. After attempting to add a late update, a Boolean switch and a timer I asked the team for some advice, we decided that the best method was to implement a co routine. Although this can cause issues we made them as stable as possible and were unable to find issues with them after a few hours testing.

Overall I felt that what I implemented worked well and although I was a weaker member of the team I wasn’t left behind nor did I hinder the games creation. The main thing I feel I need to work on for next time is improve my coding skill and try to be more efficient while coding.

Matt Gray

Throughout the Jam, I thought our team worked very well together. I contributed to the initial planning of the game where we then went on to delegate tasks. I decided to take on the logic of the game itself, this included player movement, enemy movement and the connections between them.

On the whole I feel I was an effective member of the team. I was able to complete tasks on time and this may be due to my previous experiences of creating logic for group projects. I often had conversations with Shaun and the other members of the team to decide how we would go about doing certain tasks and I feel my input was helpful to others in that regard. I feel I could have improved by being slightly more involved in fleshing out elements of the game as I often took a step back to confirm with others which in some cases is useful but I feel it may have not been required as much as I took part in it. This would have allowed the game to be more developed even though as a team I feel we all believe it was a playable loop with repeatability. Additionally, I have a slight arty background but took a back seat on the art based assets to allow other members to gain experience, I feel i could have assisted in this area if I would have managed my own time better.

Overall I feel I was a useful member of the team and I completed all my required tasks by the end of the project. The only change I would make is that I would have worked harder to develop the game further to really impress during our presentation. I also could have offered my time to others more evenly, however I feel the project was a success.