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# ETHERSHIFT

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Design Document





Presented by  
Ditto Studios

## Table of Contents

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I.	Team	3
II.	Synopsis, Setting and Story	4
III.	Enemy Units	5
IV.	Characters	6
V.	Gameplay	7
VI.	Level-Design	8
VII.	Level syste	9

## Team

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Derek Kwan ..... Executive Producer  
Jianfei Ma ..... Writer  
Nelson Chen ..... Lead Designer / Artist  
Taylor Folkersen ..... Producer / Programmer  
Xinyu Chen..... Programmer  
Tianqi Wang ..... Programmer  
Alexander Schafer ..... Sound Effect Technician  
Hongji Zhang [External member] ..... Musician



## Synopsis

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The recent discovery of a mysterious material has lead mankind to a technological breakthrough. This material has been dubbed as Ether, a substance that has caught the world's attention due to its unique properties. To manipulate Ether, research methods had to turn to a new approach—Alchemy. However, despite its invaluable properties that can benefit the good of society, there are those who wish to exploit it for power and greed. In order to combat this, Shifters, an authoritative body, has been deployed to crack down on unjust use of Ether. You follow Meo and Wing, elite officers of the Ether Shifters who are investigating an unusual amount of Ether energy that has been coming from the mountains. However, after careful examination, they suspect that this may be one of the biggest illegal Ether operations they've ever encountered.

## Setting

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White Gravity takes place in a cave system connected to the snowy mountains, hidden away from most of the public. The technology of the world has been dominated by Alchemic practices and the strange material of Ether. Almost all tools are designed in some way to harness the power of the material, including Meo and Wing's weapons. This underground system reveals devices that have never been seen before. There are smuggled robotic units that had their motors replaced with unstable Ether, grotesque humanoid creatures that roam around the area, and as you progress, more and more parts are seen that look nothing from this world.

The cave system is quite illuminated, hinting out that this place is definitely still in use.

## Story

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Other than the opening scene, there will be no real indication of story for this game.

Keeping it simple and having on screen text, the idea that Meo and Wing are "shifters" and are on a mission is as straightforward as it's going to be.

Reason for this is our *shift* in game feel. Heavily focusing on the mechanics of the game for a Fun experience rather than a story intensive game to promote progression.

# Enemy Units

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## Sentries

### Rigid Sentry

This unit is a very simple unit that patrols the area in a set path. Though they're equipped with a small amount of Ether and arm mounted ranged weapons, their performance is quite rigid and have limited speed.

They make up for this by their numbers and are programmed to keep their distance from any aggressors.

### Pavise Sentry

A stronger variation of the Sentry that has been equipped with shields to make up for its rigid performance. These units are designed to support the rigid sentry units by strengthening where they lack. Their mounted ranged weapons have been replaced with shield attachments for ramming.

This enemy Unit is weaker to Wing - requiring him to damage it the most.

## Evo

### Evo F

A mutated body that has unfortunately been experimented on to the point of no return. They're extremely aggressive creatures that attack any lifeform that comes from the outside. Evo F's are very agile and will attack you with no question. Best to finish them off while they're far away otherwise be ready for them up close.

## Golems

### Golem Type 1

An unidentified unit that doesn't look man-made. They're streamlined oval shaped units that hover right above the ground. Strong units that launch slow but powerful projectiles. They explode upon defeat.

### Golem Type 2

A Stronger variant of the Golem Units. This Golem has two states. They have an existing plasma shield in front of them that defends against projectiles. Their second state is when there is no shield. This is their vulnerable state to projectiles.

This enemy Unit requires both Meo and Wing to defeat:

State 1 - requires Wing's melee attacks to destroy its shield

State 2 - Requires Meo's ranged attacks to pierce through the armour.

# Characters

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## Playable Characters

### Meo

She is a calculated EtherShifter agent that has been deployed to investigate the mountains with her partner, Wing. Her expressionless demeanor tends to unsettle people, causing others to distance themselves from her. This does not bother her however since she deems social interactions a hindrance to her performance level.

She specializes in ranged weaponry and has a high aptitude for accuracy.

Equipped with dual handguns:

- A traditional Ether infused handgun that uses custom cartridges issued by the Ether Shifters
- A Customized Handgun that launches concentrated Unstable Ether. Explodes upon impact.

### Wing

A more aloof Shifter that has been partnered up with Meo to investigate the area. His origins are unclear and no one is sure if Wing is his real name or not. Some Ether Shifters say that he obtained his name due to his unreal physical performance during missions - stating that his speed makes him appear as if he's flying. His peculiar interest in things and carefree attitude makes him a perfect match with Meo. Meo's expressionless attitude doesn't stop Wing from trying to make her laugh, though he has never succeeded yet.

Wing specializes in close-combat.

Equipped with knucklers that extend to his forearms. They help concentrate his melee prowess and increases the impact.

## Non Playable Characters

### HQ

Central command which Meo and Wing "reports" too. They're an entity which gives out orders and are the ones who deployed Meo and Wing in the area.

Meo and Wing keep tabs of their investigation by reporting to HQ.

This is also the players way of saving within the game.

# Gameplay

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The game plays as a top-down shooter, where the player swaps between Meo and Wing, each having their own abilities. Meo uses two guns, each with their own resources and strengths, and she's a fragile character who has to keep her distance, while Wing is a melee character with one resource bar, and he's more durable and has to block attacks and get up close to deal damage. Resources are limited and only regenerate for the inactive character, and enemies are weak to certain abilities, so the player has to manage both characters so as to not waste their resources.

## Meo

Main Weapon: Left Mouse Click

Hand Guns - Uses bullets

Secondary Weapon: Right Mouse Click

Various - Includes spreadshots, lazer rifles, etc. Can be changed through a shop/crafting table.

Swap: Keybind - F

Allows you to change characters to Wing.

Perks

Speedy, has a small variety of different weapon upgrades obtainable in the crafting table

## Wing

Main Weapon: Left Mouse Click

Physical Attack - no limit

Secondary Weapon: Right Mouse Click

Blink - Offensive teleportation skill. Upon use on an enemy causes excessive damage.

Uses energy

Swap: Keybind - F

Allows you to change characters to Meo

Perks

Mobile character that can teleport around the map. Has a stun ability that can be combo'd with other attacks.



# Level Design

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The first level is a snowy mountain with Evo F, Rigid Sentry, Shield Sentry, and a few Golem 1 type enemies. As you climb the mountain, more enemy types are introduced and combat becomes progressively more difficult. (NOTE: A little bit more work needs to happen to level 1 to integrate it with level 2, which is to be done at a later time). Level 2 is in a cave system and

## Stage 1 - Snowy Mountain

Setting: Outdoors, Bridges, small creeks, pine trees

Tileset: Snowy Outdoor Tileset

## Stage 2 - Cave Hideout

Setting: cave, Indoor, rocky, militray tileset, pipes, sci-fi materials

Tileset: Military base tileset

## Stage 3 - Final Map

A single large map that requires the player to survive various rounds of enemies.

## Stage ?? - Bulitko Beach (Hidden Cow Level)

Setting: Beach

Tileset: sand, grass, water, etc.

Instantly warps the player into a map that has a bunch of crudely formed cow enemies. They have heavy damage. You're forced to avoid the cows (but if you want a challenge, go ahead and try to kill em all.)

The map loops.

## Level System

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A levelling system will be implemented based on the enemies killed.

Those points can be allocated to the passive points when you press P to access the skills menu