Game Design Document

Title

* Vela: The Star Hunter
* Named after the main character, and her profession.

Genre

* Action/Platformer, Space Opera, Metroidvania/Mega Man-like, 2D-Platformer

ESRB

* E10+ sounds like the best option to me. I don’t see us needing any higher.

Platform

* Windows/PC.

Target Audience

* Platformer-players, average-above average skill level.
* I don’t think we should target peoples’ nostalgia in any specific way, since the market is flooded with them already

Character

* Main character, who’s a mercenary, is on a quest of revenge to fight the final boss of the game.
* More info in character design.
* Vela is her first name. Last name is shrouded in mystery.

Story

* Each of the worlds has a subordinate of the final boss. Your character must defeat them to progress.
* Main character, who’s a mercenary, is on a quest of revenge to fight the final boss of the game.
* The tutorial features Vela and a scientist who’s working on a special power armor. The scientist is assassinated and a prototype armor is stolen.

Game World

* (Potentially for the future, but not now) Platformer through multiple unique worlds. Multiple worlds with various scenery/themes. Estimated between 2-4 to start with, options for 2-4 more other worlds may be designed at a later time.
* Start with only 1 since it’s a single person project, and use that as a stepping platform to build the others.
  + Space prison: You start in the prison’s hangar (in the middle) and fight your way through riots and prisoners to the warden’s office (at the top of the prison), after meeting with the warden you need to go to the high security section to find your target (at the bottom) when you get there fight the mini boss and find out the prisoner escaped and damaged the gravity shields, work your way back to the warden’s office with the gravity flipped after the warden’s office you make your way back to the hangar where you fight the boss.
  + Riots will be happening in the first half of the stage, and a hostile takeover in the 2nd, which will culminate in a boss fight with a strong, dumb muscle kind of personality at the end.
* There will be many constellation names used throughout the game for thematic purposes.

Gameplay

* Gunplay elements, similar to the Mega Man games or Metroid to a lesser level. As far as mega man goes, I’m referring more to Zero’s gameplay in particular, with a gun and a sword.
* Lots of movement options for our main character would be ideal. Wall jump, crawl, double jump, etc. Maybe unlock more movement abilities as you progress or find them hidden in the levels.
* Mega Man Zero-like combat gameplay.
* Instakill moves are a massive no-no, especially when it's not even end game.
* Game will be slightly challenging. Solutions can either be beaten with high skill or creative use of the weapon loadouts.
* Customizable weapon loadout which introduces strategy and creativity to the otherwise sterile platformer genre.

User Interface

* Toned-down version of the main character’s colors so as to not be too distracting.

Level Progression

* One level Gimmick will be Random Gas Filled portions of the level. Inhibiting Vision, and hurting the character if inside of it too long.  
  Another level will be pretty flat, with platforming options to get over certain enemies and gas areas.  
  also, Level Event 1: Mini-Boss comes out of the first Gas portion-Character has to fight it. Level Event 2: After turning off the gas (which are the vents helping with keeping the thing afloat on the Gas Giant) The level becomes Timed, because the level is falling into the planet.

Technical capabilities and limits

* Limited manpower, general knowledge in various aspects of game design but no specializations outside of programming.
* I only have high school level art training. None of which is for digital art.

Art Bible

* Sprite-based with an anime-esque style is how I’d prefer it to look.
  + Examples of this style would be Mega Man X/Zero, Metroid (kinda), Shantae, etc.
* I have software that would make sprite based animation easy.
* Space theme, various kinds of planets in a single solar system, possibly with accurate planet types and positions (example, gas giant in the further reaches of the system
* I pretty much 100% don’t want to have any sort of super colorless, boring art style. I want the game to be more vibrant and colorful.
* Super realism is boring.

Character Design

* Nameable female main character with a motive of revenge.
* MC: No-nonsense, mercenary type in terms of personality and outlook?
  + I’m imagining the armor as similar to the likes of Samus Aran’s suit from metroid, but differentiated by color scheme, the shape of parts of it, and I was thinking we’d go with it not having a physical helmet.
  + The suit shouldn’t be super bulky if we’re going with a mobile style of combat and platforming, so nothing like a Brotherhood of Steel member or something. -Dan
  + For the melee weapon we should have the attacks be fast and fluid, something like a katana or a laser sword, anything lending well to a quick style of fighting. Katana is my preference though, since it differentiates our character from Zero, who we’re seemingly already taking enough basis from.
* Factory Stage Boss
  + backstory:  
    Race: Human  
    Hailing from and currently headquartered on the practically corporate-run urban world of (?), she is the CEO of one of the top weapons manufacturers, dealing in guns, ships, warheads, and more recently experimental (mecha) and selling to anyone with the bankroll to afford it, including terrorist and insurrectionist factions. Hardly remorseful, she has long harbored a belief in survival of the fittest, thinking it is simply human nature to suppress the weak and helpless. Thanks to her numerous governmental ties, very little can or has been done about the corporation’s numerous illegal and unethical practices. She has recently entered into close partnership with (bad guys) in hopes of lucrative ventures.
  + Wears professional business attire (i.e. business suit). Pilots a mech which will be what you’re actually fighting in their fight, rather than them being on foot. Mech would attack with frontal guns and missile launchers, maybe also having a melee option that it would use if you stay too close to it for too long.
* Boss Idea for a world: Female Dictator with a Mechanical Scorpion Tail.

World Design

* Very much a sci-fi game. Lots of cool, technological stuff.
* One idea is like a Steam Punk-esque Level on a gas giant planet.
* Factory/City level: Highly technologically advanced city with flashy signs and billboards, yet strewn with trash and appearance of low quality of life. Halfway through becomes a massive factory complex.
  + Think Blade Runner and such for how the city half would look.
  + Pretty, bright alpine scenery marred by an artificial skyline with smog, machinery, and billboards, leading to a large, sprawling mech weapons factory full of production equipment and finished and unfinished mechs.
* Space prison level with design similar to Number 68: the sky prison.
  + An ellipsoid city with floating in the atmosphere of a gas giant where the gravity is too intense for usual spacecraft, the only way in is to use the prison transports, both the transports and the prison have gravity shields around them to stabilize the G-force

Sound Design

* I would suggest the music maybe be done in the style of old chip-based music. (i.e. SNES or Genesis)
* Do we want more “cool” sounding music or maybe something more upbeat?
  + A vaguely spaceish soundtrack?
* The mech factory will have techno synths (square synths) along with heavy, grunge metal sound parts (think FTL’s soundtrack of the final battle or Engi space and it has cool techno parts but with deep, more metallic/harder parts)
* The space prison will be a forebodding yet tense theme fitting the environment and ensuing chaos.

Script

* Preferably kinda serious but not super angsty/edgy, with some actual humor on occasion.
* A more lighthearted with serious parts at points. Think Megaman in terms of seriousness. There are serious parts, but it’s not depressingly serious.

Software Engineering

* Windows compatibility, 7,8,10 anticipated development platforms. Use of game engine is recommended for compatibility, Unreal Engine may be a viable choice. Potential to expand to Mac OS X, and Linux are not in initial development but may be planned for later. 32 or 64 bit, the low amount of processing power will probably leave flexibility for this.

Marketing Strategy

* Social Media, Word of Mouth

Project Management

* Potential ideas for budgeting, schedules, team management, and others.