

Overall design goal

Our goal is to create a fast paced game that focuses on control, motion, and continuously rising tension.

Experience

Sensation

Art Style: The art style of the game consists of simple shapes with glowing neon effect. We feel this art style is appropriate for the game especially when combined with each of the different sprites' way of moving. The background is deliberately abstract, but with blurred lines as the game is all about motion. It changes colour to red when the player is hurt, and to a tint of orange when in slow motion.

First Enemy Type: The first type of enemy's shape resembles a spike or a star, which is in line with our intention of making it both the bad and good things. The enemy is given cool colours, neon green with blue trails to contrast with the player avatar. The colour also serves as an indication of their double nature, as cool colours such as green or blue are usually associated with good things. The blue trails makes the enemy seem more organic, especially as the enemy curves towards the player. When the enemy stops moving and turns into a good thing, its colours gradually change to warm colours as an indicator of it about to disappear, giving a warning of urgency to the player. Right before disappearing the enemy will "pop" to a smaller size indicating to the player that the enemy will disappear. On the other hand if the player manage to obtain a point, yellow orb particles will appear as a reward.

Second Enemy Type: The second type of enemy differs from the first in many ways. First of all they do not turn into points, but rather moves into and out of the screen. Therefore it has a more intimidating shape than the first enemy type. We also give it a neon purple colour to not only differ it from the other type, but also to give the player an indication that they do not turn into good things. The second also appears in a group and forms patterns. Unfortunately due to code constraint, we are only able to implement one type of pattern and we are also unable to give trails to this enemy type.

Avatar: In contrast with the enemies, the player avatar has a bright red colour. The avatar's red body also serves as a health bar. When the player gets hurt, the red decreases, revealing an almost white underneath. And when the player's health reach less than half, the edges of the avatar starts to blink. The blinking speed increases as the player's health decreases. When the avatar enters slow motion, it leaves behind after images as it moves to make it juicier. It moves fluidly in all directions, so the player can feel in control of the avatar. The avatar also moves at a fast speed in relation to the size of the game field. However it is also a bit larger than the enemies, which gives the game more difficulty.

Audio: We use a fast paced music to set the fast-paced sensation of the game and the feeling of tension. We feel that it is an appropriate music soundtrack considering our aim. Moreover the music track consists of 7 renditions of the same song titled 'Pursuit~Cornered'. Thus the players will not get bored of the music and at the same time they will not feel that the music is disconnected from one another. This way the music also becomes a kind of reward for the player that as they survive and play for a longer time, they will be able to hear more of the music.

In addition to the background music, there are three sound effects:

- A 'bling' sound to indicate obtaining point
- A 'slash' sound to indicate hurt
- A 'musical' sound to indicate getting to the next level

Challenge

Physical: This game is mainly focused on physical challenge. The player needs to master control of the avatar to avoid the moving enemies while obtaining points. The slow motion system, gives the player a bit of time to react. However, as the enemies are continuously moving, players still need to decide and execute their actions quickly.

Intellectual: As the enemies tend to move towards the player, the player has some control over the enemies. Players can plan where to position the enemies, so they will be easier to be picked up. The slow motion system that sets in when an enemy gets near the player, also means that player is given a bit of time to think and plan a route around the enemies.

Social: Players are sometimes required to stay calm, especially during slow motion. Panicking could lead to bad decisions or bad coordination which can cause the player dearly. The level and points system also allows player to compare their performances and try to best each other.

Drama

The main drama comes from the enemy's movement. The enemy's random spawn location, the nature of their movement and their speed, creates tension as the player tries to avoid them. Dramatic moments occur when the player manage to avoid the enemies by a hair breadth. The slow motion system also becomes an indicator of the rising tension as an enemy is seconds away from making contact with the player, and they need to make a split second decision on what to do. Tension also rises as the player's health decreases and the player tries to survive. Yet at the end of a level, a small period of time without any enemies as well as two health restore provides a moment of relief.

Flow is achieved mainly through the increasing speed and number of the enemies as the level increases. At levels where a change is introduced, we try to balance the difficulty to allow player to refamiliarise themselves with the changes. The second type of enemies that forms a pattern also provides tension and increases difficulty. Unfortunately due to code limit we are unable to implement more patterns or make it change dynamically. As such our game has a rather constant rising of flow without much modulation, and its continuously rising difficulty could eventually cause the player frustration or boredom as levels are generally very similar to each other.

Mechanics

Avatar movement: The avatar moves in 8 directions using arrow keys or WASD. The player's fingers movement translates directly to the avatar to give full control. The avatar also cannot pass through the edges of the screen. It also moves faster than the enemies, and it will move even faster once the player reaches level 5.

First enemy movement: The first enemy type spawns almost randomly and moves towards player. It also slowly homes towards the player as it is within a certain distance. Once it has travelled a certain amount of distance, it decelerates to stop inside the screen. Initially only 2 enemies spawn at a given time, but this number increases as the player progress to a maximum of 4 enemies spawning at a given time. After that, difficulty increases by increasing the enemies initial speed and the speed at which they appear at each level. Despite this, their speed will never exceed the player's speed. Additionally at level 6, the length of its blue trails decreases, making it harder for the player to assess the enemy's movements.

Second enemy movement: The second enemy type appears in a group and creates patterns. It follows a certain path, regardless of the player's location. The pattern that we manage to implement consists of 8 pieces of this enemy type forming a circle which moves towards the centre of the screen while shrinking in radius to a small amount and then grows outwardly until they exit the screen. They also appear after a certain amount of interval. Unlike the first enemy, the second enemy accelerates rather than decelerates and will never stop inside the screen. As mentioned above, due to Construct 2's limitation of events in the free version, we are unable to develop and implement the second enemy's movement as much as we want to.

Points: The first enemy type decelerates over time and when it stops, it turns into points that can be picked up. However they only stay on the screen for a few seconds before disappearing. This causes the player not only to try to avoid incoming enemies, but also to hurry back and pick up the points.

Level: When player manages to obtain a certain amount of points, unknown to the player, they will continue to the next level. Player will be rewarded with a congratulatory sound effect and a few seconds of relief from enemies. Nonetheless this also means an increase in the game's difficulty as the speed and number of the enemies increases.

Health: Considering the game's difficulty we give the player an initial of 10 health, giving the player chances to progress. Whenever the player manage to proceed to the next level, they also get a restore of health by two. However health cannot exceed a total of ten. This health system also means that level is not purely independent of each other, and getting hurt a lot in one level means you have less chance of surviving the next.

Slow motion: When moving enemies get close to the player, the game slows down, entering slow motion mode. This makes the threat of an approaching enemy apparent to the player while providing them a little bit of time to plan an escape route. Although the sudden change from fast to slow game environment and the imminent threat could also cause player to panic and make mistakes.

Dynamics

The most important dynamic in the game is the rising and falling of tension as player tries to avoid the enemies and advance to the next level. From time to time player will find themselves surrounded by incoming enemies. The slow motion that occurs when enemies close in on the player contributes to the rising or falling of tension. The sudden changes from fast to slow movement could either give the player a small relief and time to think or cause them to panic and fail. Another factor that contributes to the overall tension is the player's current health. As the player's health decreases their chance of survival also decreases, causing a rise in the tension of the game and pushing the player to hurry to the next level for the relief of little health restore. Depending on the player, tension could cause them to be more prone to mistakes or makes them more focus and play better.

The second important dynamic comes from the dual nature of the first enemy type and its movement. The fact that it starts as a bad thing, but turns into a good thing causes player to avoid them at first but then having to quickly detour to pick them up. Moreover the first type's nature of moving towards the player means that player can lure them so they stop close to each other and make for easier pick-ups. At the same time this poses a problem as more incoming enemies approaches the player that is in the process of picking up points. This is more apparent in later levels when the enemy's spawn speed increases causing less intervals between enemies appearance.

The third dynamic also comes from the enemy's movement. The first enemy type has a nature to gravitate towards the player. Player will soon realise that the best strategy to handle them will be to stay in the middle of the screen as much as possible as it provides more room for escape. The second enemy type, which moves independently from the player, is implemented in order to counter this and force the player to move to other parts of the screen. Although currently it is still not very successful in making the player explore the game field.

Improvements

There are, sadly, many things that we could not implement because of constraint in the amount of code.

Therefore this game could be improved by:

- Better level design, which also consists of more patterns and better implementation of the second enemy type. We want the game to have tension and relief not only in the big picture of the game, but also in each of its level and creating modulation in the flow. In the current game, there are not much difference between each levels except for the increasing enemy speed. Handcrafting and coding each level separately would increase the overall experience of the game.
- Finetuning the difficulty level of the game. Again this comes back to level design and modulating its difficulty level. We could have one level where only the enemy's numbers increases, or where the enemy's speed greatly increases but with less patterns, or where we introduce new patterns but only rising the enemy's speed slightly.
- Adding trail to the second enemy type. This could help balance the difficulty by allowing player to assess the enemy's movement. It also makes things prettier.
- Using gamepad controllers would give more control over the avatar.
- An indicator on the player's progress of the level, perhaps through a progress bar that moves or fill up as player obtain points.

Attempted challenges

- Highly original (yet appropriate) art style
- Appropriate music soundtrack