Shadow Games

Design Document

By Shawn Garrison for July 2024 Pirate Software Game Jam

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gpy86HZZq6wBqpCFAOjlw4WwDv5iGSGHvzKRoDTQv3E/edit?usp=sharing

Introduction

Game Summary Pitch

Shadow Games is a game around creating objects by trial and error as well as observing the game world. It includes mini games to farm resources needed to create more objects. These mini games have a hidden “cheat” mechanism that hurts the player over time. The goal is to make an item without losing all your hidden stats.

Inspiration

[yu -gi -oh](https://yugioh.fandom.com/wiki/Shadow_Game)  Shadow games in the manga / before the main show. The main character would play shadow games with other characters and other characters would cheat. (Cheating would cause a heavy penalty for the player.) so I wanted to have a similar idea with this game. It is just that people would learn to cheat by talking with their pet. (Basically, the pet would tempt them with cheats.)

[Neal.fun](https://neal.fun/infinite-craft/) instead of finding words by mixing things the player will need to type words out “pay” to summon the item and then try to fuse it with other words. The player will discover words by talking with their pet.

Player Experience

The player is presented with a dark screen, and they start the game by pressing A. This will give them magic to start summoning their first item. These items give them shadow points to be used to buy games to farm more magic to summon more items.

Platform

This game works on Desktop modern web browsers by going to itch.io to play.

Development Software

* Python 3.12.3 pygame-ce 2.5.0 pygame\_gui 0.6.12 pygbag 0.9.1 (for web build)
* Graphics pygame\_gui supports custom graphics and UI (software to make art TBD)
* Music TBD

Genre

Singleplayer, puzzle-lite, mini-game/ suspenseful

Target Audience

Any players into very scrapy simply games. Myself since I was able to learn more about pygame and making a game in python.

Concept

Gameplay overview

The player makes items, buys and plays games so that they can make more items, talk and care for pet. They can feed the pet items that they have created. The pet reveals more items that the player can make, gives hints on how to cheat at the games, steals the players special stats.

The goal is for the player to either make a special item or lose all their special stats. (When their special stat is below 50% the games and the pet start to reveal to the player that the games can cause damage to the player and the player starts to see the world in a darker sense.

Theme Interpretation

Shadows – the games are called shadow games and to unlock them the player needs shadow points. The games are called shadow games because they have a hidden cheat mechanism and that can cost the player a hidden stat value. (this stat value is their soul) Once their soul gets below 50% the name of the game’s changes and the themes of them become darker. (The games go from friendly names to names based on sins.) The pet is a demon trying to consume their soul.

Alchemy by playing more of the primary game the player can make items to feed their pet. Find a magically item that will reveal more of the world without costing their soul. Their end goal is to make the elixir of life which will free them from both games and allow them to live a free life.

Primary Mechanics

Press A to Alchemy this screen is what enters the player into the game giving them their first set of Alchemy points

Alchemy points – Used to make/combine items from the alchemy page (Get more alchemy points from Shadow games)

Alchemy page – allows the user to make items / combine items. Go to the Shadow game section / making items grants the player shadow points

Shadow games – a menu to play shadow games / unlocked by going to the store

Store – the player can buy shadow games and alchemy commands here / The player is gifted a pet (the 7th game after they buy their first game.)

Games

* Game Dark version
* Ball Wraith
  + The ball moves left to right. Keep clicking it to prevent the ball from touching the sides.
* Pet Pride/Demon
  + Feed the pet treats created from the alchemy game
  + Pet tells you tips about the games on how to cheat
  + Pet may eat your soul instead of items
* Slots Lust
  + A slots game
* Hi/low Envy
  + A hi/low game keep playing until you bust or quit
* Treasure Greed
  + Keep clicking on the treasure / run away before getting caught / more treasure means longer escape times
* Wake up Sloth
  + Keep clicking on the sleeping person / quit before they wake up
* Tree (collect fruit) Gluttony
  + A game where you move a basket to collect fruit that is falling / avoid the bees
* Alchemy
  + Basic items (all basic words can be typed at any time. Suggestions only turn on after “learning them”)
    - Taught at the opening
      * Fire
      * Water
      * Air
      * Earth
    - Taught after soul is drained to 50%
    - Light
    - Dark
  + Combos occur after buying them from shop after making the first 4 items
  + Fire + Air
    - Phoenix
  + Water + Earth
    - Tomb
  + Air + Earth
    - Cookies (for pet)
  + Phoenix + Tomb + Light
    - Book of Life
  + Book of Life + Light + Dark
    - Elixir of Life

Secondary Mechanics

Cheat system – Each game will have a way for the player to cheat to easily win. When cheating this will cost them a bit of their soul.

Dying – when the player reaches x (50?) % of their soul. The world changes to darker and harsher games.

Soul system – a third point system to track the player. For most of the game the player will not know about this stat. cheating and the pet can lower this stat. if the player reaches zero it Is game over. (Bad Ending)

Book of Life – creating this item and reading it will allow the user to see the real world and soul stats without taking a penalty.

Elixir of Life – Making this item ends the game (good Ending) (perfect ending if soul is 100%)

Art and Audio

The art/audio direction for this game is towards an 8-bit design. Out of the box pygame-gui does provide some simple looking buttons and menus so if time allowed to upgrade the menus and text to use more custom styles. The work style for this project was to always start small and build closer and closer to a “finish” product. So even if the art / music did not get touched there was always a working prototype at the end of every working session.

Game Experience

**UI**

The UI uses built-in pygame-gui features. This framework does allow for ease of use to plug in custom art from the assets folder. So once custom art is made adding it to the game can be easy.

Controls

Keyboard

A Key, the English letters on a keyboard

Mouse

Clicking on objects/buttons

Build Process

The code is stored on GitHub. For the build process GitHub actions can be used to run tests with python, run the “build” process with pygbag and upload the zip file to itch.io on each release. (For the game jam this feature was done manually the next steps for the build process can be easily configured on GitHub.)

Appendixes

Game Dev Journal

Game dev journal can be found [here.](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FEOKryijkVxuwcqpWTFRQCZMkmkKcoOM9ZLupRfR-sw/edit?usp=sharing) The approach used to build this game was to journal every day what I was thinking about and what to work on next. From these entries this doc was made.

Development timeline

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Assignment | Type | Status | Notes |
| 1 | Design Doc | doc | Ongoing |  |
| 2 | Game Dev Journal | Doc | Ongoing |  |
| 3 | Builds in web | Code | Completed |  |
| 4 | Press A screen | Code | Completed |  |
| 5 | Menu for shadow games | Code | Completed |  |
| 6 | Using pygame-gui | Code | Completed | Had to reach out for support in pygame discord |
| 7 | Menus to buy games | Code | Completed |  |
| 8 | UI for currency | Code | Completed |  |
| 9 | Ball Game | Code | Completed | Done in two waves. Took basic code and then made it into a game |
| 10 | Other games | Code | Not started |  |
| 11 | Alchemy game | Code | Ongoing | Need to be able combine items |
| 12 | Cheats to other games | Code | Not started |  |
| 13 | Saving/getting state from cookies | Code | Ongoing/Completed | Basic use case seems to meet needs |
| 14 | Graphics | Draw | Not Started |  |
| 15 | Music | Music | Not Started | (listened to some license free 8-bit horror music) |

Credits

Learn more about [me](https://www.linkedin.com/in/shawn-garrison-535940148/) on LinkedIn

Found out more about the communities I host from the links below:

[PyWonder](https://www.meetup.com/pywonder/)

[Infinite Wonder LLC’s Discord](https://discord.gg/zHHvrXHGKV)