Front-of-House Frenzy

Mission statement:
Front-of-House Frenzy is a 3D grid-based game where you control a restaurant server, your objective is to serve food and drinks to customers while navigating a restaurant environment full of obstacles.

Genre Target:
Time management, strategy, simulation, memory.

Audience:
Family-friendly, kids - elders, anyone interested in time-management games.

Gameplay

How does the game play?
The server moves around the restaurant via vacant tiles in the map grid. The game progresses in real-time as customers arrive and require to be attended to before they lose patience. The aim is to manage the restaurant as long as possible and earn as many coins as you can before too many customers walk out.

What can the player do?
- Control the movement of the server around a grid-based map
- Greet customers
- Take orders from customers
- Get reminders of orders from customers
- Select food items from kitchen
- Select drink items from bar
- Deliver items to customers
- Clear tables
- Discard dishes in bin

What should the player do?
- Effectively and efficiently plan movement and interactions around the map to successfully manage the flow of customers in and out of the restaurant.
- Avoid obstacles as they will slow down the service thus causing customers to lose patience.
- Remember orders correctly/avoid needing reminders of them.
- Avoid throwing items in the bin as this will subtract from the coins earned.
- Manage and serve customers for as long as possible to achieve the most coins possible.

How does the game world respond to the player?
Each successfully served customer will gradually increase the amount of difficulty by changing the rate of existing factors and introducing new factors;
- Increasing the rate at which customers arrive.
- Increasing the number of customers per party.
- Increasing the number of obstacles that occur in the map.
- Customers will begin ordering drinks as an extra course as well as food.
- Decreasing patience levels faster.

Drinks will be ordered, collected and served the same way as food but must be collected from the bar rather than the kitchen. Drinks dishes will not need to be cleared before customers order food.

Outline of progression
- As the game starts, customers will arrive at the door. As customers appear in the game they will have a full patience meter which will deteriorate with time as the player neglects interaction with them. Each successful interaction that advances the gameplay will slightly replenish their patience.
- The player must navigate the server to the door and greet the customer, the customer will now be 'highlighted' and be sent to the next vacant table selected by the player. The player may deselect the 'highlighted' customer at the door by interacting with them again.
- The server can then walk to a vacant table of their choice and seat the following customer, the customer will walk to the table, sit down and look at the menu for some time.
- The customer will signal when they are ready to order.
- The server must then move to the table to take the order which will be displayed in a bubble above the customer's head as long as the server is standing next to their table. When the server moves away from the table the order bubble will remain on show for a number of seconds before disappearing, the server must now remember what was ordered. At any time, the player may walk back to a table and select it to show what the customer ordered again.
- The server will then need to navigate to the kitchen window where they can choose from a dropdown menu of different food items, the player must select the items the customer ordered. These items will now be added to the server's tray/inventory, there will be a maximum number of items you may carry on the tray. If the player selects an incorrect item they may navigate to the dishwasher/bin and discard it, this will cause the player to lose coins.
- The server must then bring the food to the correct table, the food will disappear from your serving tray and be given to the customer. The customer will then take some time to eat.
- The customer will get up from the table once they are done and walk to the exit of the restaurant by themself. Coins will be earned upon a customer leaving the restaurant fed.

- The server must then walk to the table to collect the dishes off the table and drop them off at the dishwasher/bin.
- Throughout all of this, the player must aim to navigate the server in order to avoid obstacles that will hinder them.
- The game will end when 3-5 customers walk out of the restaurant unfed.

Game mechanics

- Walk left, right, up and down
- Interact (when next to either a customer, table, kitchen, bar or bin)

Interactive elements

Items

Food and drink items:
- Required to be correctly selected and delivered to customers to complete orders.
- Required to earn coins.
- Takes up space on the server's tray.
- Penalises player if wasted.

Dishes:
- Take up space on the server's tray.
- Must be cleared from tables and transported on the server's tray to the dishwasher before a new party can be seated at that table.

Obstacles/Hazards

- Customers - customers may be walking around the map towards the exit after being served. The player must navigate the server around them to avoid getting blocked/held up.
- Spills - cause the server to drop some items on their tray/lose them from their inventory meaning they will need to go back to the kitchen to retrieve them again. The player can navigate the server around these.
- Map obstacles (tables, walls, decor) - the server cannot pass through these obstacles nor resolve them from being obstacles. The player must navigate around these.

NPCs

Customers are all NPCs. They are what will increase or decrease the player's score based on how quick the interactions the player makes with them are and whether they will be the correct interactions. The player's 'lives' will decrease if customers run out of patience, causing them to walk out of the restaurant.

Control scheme

WASD keys: moves the server left, right, up, down on the map.
Left mouse button: click to interact with an entity when the player is adjacent to it.
Mouse scroll wheel: scrolls down the kitchen and bar dropdown menus.

Art direction
- All entities, environment, objects, characters etc. will be 3D.
- The mood should aim to be cute, joyful and charming.
- Music should reflect this.
- Lots of use of sound effects which will act as successful and negative interaction cues as well as warning cues.
- Short, chunky, cartoon-looking characters.
- The atmosphere should start calm and increasingly become bustling with many things happening at once, many things to attend to, lots of movement around the map etc.
- The map will be on a 45-degree angle rather than the typical 90-degree angle - this technically means movement will be NW, NE, SE and SW.

Vision sketch
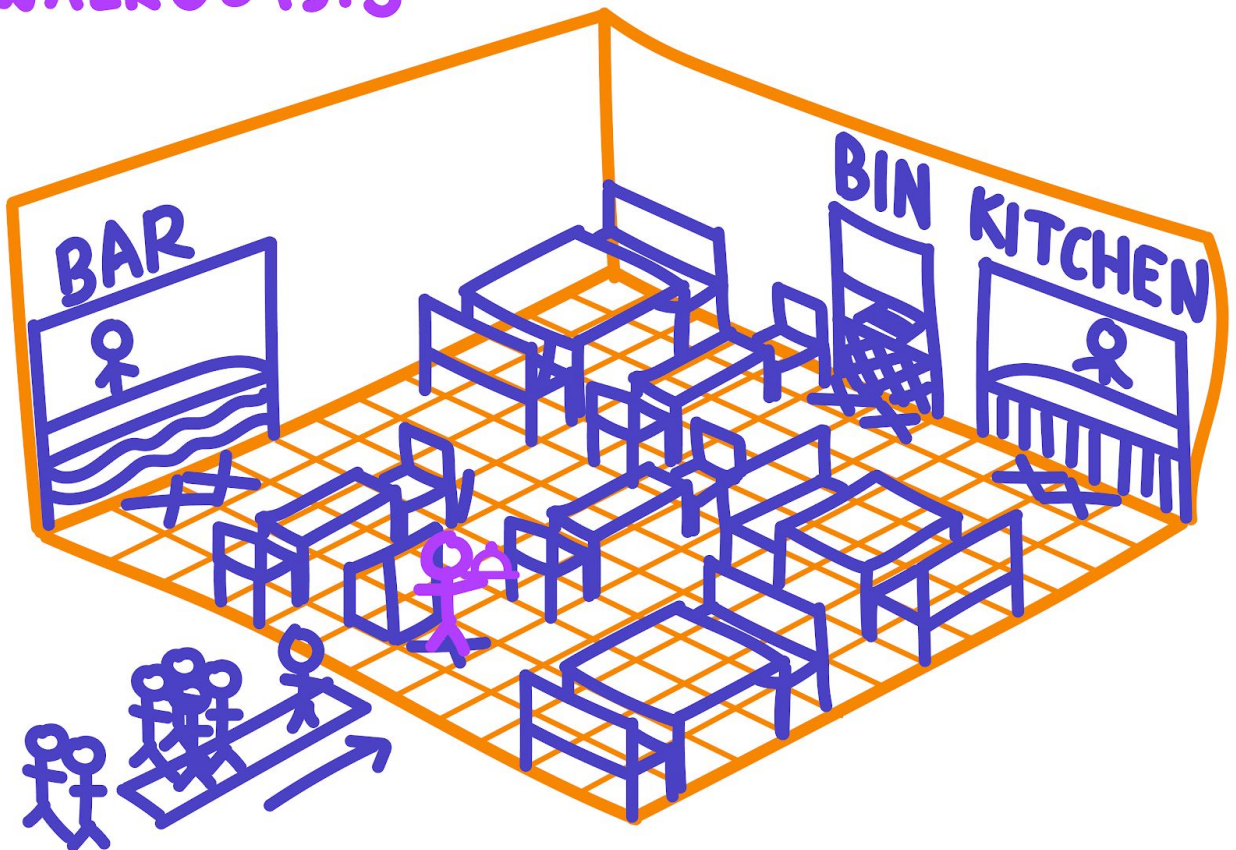
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User interface
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Main menu:
- Requires a start button that launches the level.
- Instructions button which shows a screen with controls and the objective.
- Tutorial button which launches a basic run-through level with follow-along instructions.
- New game button that creates a new game, takes the player to a screen with a text box for the player to enter the name they want to save the game under.
- Load game button that takes the player to a screen with all the previously saved games, the player can select to continue an existing game (the game will be saved automatically after a level/game ends without being forced to quit).
- Quit game button which closes the application.

Kitchen and bar menu:
- When interacted with, launches a scrollable pop-up window.
- Features toggle buttons with names/images of food/drinks. The player may only select as much food as there is space on their serving tray.
- Optional scroll bar to view more items.
- Request button which sends all the selected food/drink to the player's tray.
- Close button which closes the window without requesting any food/drinks.

High score list (for score-based):
- Screen appears once a player has lost too many customers. Will feature a text box where they may enter their name to save in a high score list.
- Save score button.
- Return to main menu button.

Level select screen (for level-based):
- Buttons which launch levels accordingly. Levels will become unlocked as the previous level is completed.
- Return to main menu button.

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Score-based gameplay or level-based gameplay
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Scores could be based one of two ways:
- Untimed high-score - player continues to run the restaurant and earn as many coins as possible while the difficulty increases until they cannot keep up and lose all their lives.
- Levels - each level is designed with increasing difficulty and the player has to progress as far as they can through these.