

ANT LION GAME

HLDD on Redesign

TEAM GEMINI

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Core mechanics, organization

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Storyboard, testing plan

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Design of HLDD / presentation, game analysis

Next role: Test creation, report findings

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Processing prototype, secondary mechanics

Next role: Revise prototype

OVERVIEW

Main Concept

Antlion Game is a Flash-based video game designed by Andrew Thong, Ada Fu, Charles Cheung, and Wei-Li Tsai. This game is based on the natural antlion hunting pattern that the ant, who is played by the player, needs to escape from. The ant needs to avoid getting eaten by the antlion by avoiding the landslides.

The player controls the ant's movement by using the left, right and up arrow keys (or W, A and D). By using these game mechanics, the ant can be allowed to travel in a 12x6 grids board (as the antlion's trap area) in order to try escaping out of the trap. In addition, instead of moving continuously, the player has to move the ant step by step since some squares in the board are defined as special places that will affect the ant's position such as landslides.

Game Analysis

Issue 1: Lack of Strong Mechanics

As a type of "Escape" game, the game mechanics are lacking meaningful actions to improve the player's gameplay experience. Players are limited to three different movement options: left, right, and up. If the ant hits a landslide block, the ant drops down towards to the antlion.

Because there seems to be no real strategy to winning it, being mostly trial and error, the movements don't seem to be enough to really contribute the success of the game.

Issue 2: Low Motivation

Originally the game wanted to create fear through the movement of the antlion after the player's turn, but as it is not actually interacting with the player, the game fails to achieve fantasy successfully. It is also short of the necessary components to make player feel enough pressure as a "escape" game such as time counters or sounds to accompany the attacks. Also without a strong narrative for this game, this makes the game less feel engaging.

Issue 3: Low Dynamics

Actions feel like they have no effect of the outcome. There is no cause and effect mechanism at all which means the whole game is basically a random test. The causes are all hidden from the player, which means that they will never know why it causes them to fall backwards, and the fact that it is randomized every game, it feels like a fruitless effort.

OUR PROPOSAL FOR REVISION

Main Goal

Our project will be focused on adding challenge and submission into the game. We are aiming to achieve mostly easy fun, but also some hard fun by introducing the following features:

Challenge - The joy of overcoming obstacles or other players in getting to a goal.

The challenge aspect is added by having the antlion chase directly behind the player while attacking it. The player has to not only dodge the antlion but also the incoming rocks that lie ahead while collecting useful items. It is further enhanced when players choose to be closer to the antlion to gain more points.

Submission - The relaxation that comes from mindlessly following orders and not having to worry about anything beyond simple choices or rules.

Because the controls and rules are simple to learn, players will find it easy to play and find it relaxing as well. It is easy for players to pick up and play and addictive enough to go back and try to beat their past high scores.

Fantasy - The make-believe aspects of a game that resonate with the gamer and hereby make the game more enjoyable.

A background story for the game will let the player know why they have to save the ant, giving the player motivation and allowing personal connections to be made. This enhances the fantasy element by allowing the player to imagine themselves as the ant trying to escape the antlion.

Sensation - The raw pleasure a gamer gets from the look and feel or visceral experience of a game

We will change the game's looks and also add some new sounds to immerse the player into the game and make it more exciting.

Target Audience

The target audience this new concept will be: all ages, M/F, casual gamer, conqueror and achiever player type

Achievers will try to gain more exp through staying close to the antlion and gain coins to use for the coin shop.

Conquerors will find enjoyment from trying to beat the game, escaping the antlion and surviving.

NEW GAME FEATURES AND MECHANICS

Core Mechanics

These are the core mechanics we aim to implement:

- Players can now pick up items to aid them on their escape.
- Four movement options: left, right, up, down
- More obstacles: rocks, wood
- Sliding sand towards the antlion
- Antlion can move and attack the player
- The closer you move to the antlion, you gain more points
- Loses limbs (instead of HP) every time antlion hits player

Secondary Mechanics

These are the secondary mechanics we aim to implement:

- Coins drop randomly which can be used to unlock certain features.
- Coin shop allows for buying different things eg. powers
- Special pickups allow you to slow down the antlion or heal yourself. Can save powerups for bigger effects.

How These Mechanics Relate to our Game Goal and Player Description

The main goal of the game is to get the ant as far away from the antlion as possible while dodging obstacles and trying to gain as much points as possible. The players are able to use their movement controls for more options. This includes grabbing valuable items, avoiding new obstacles, and being in/out of the antlion's range. The obstacles provide a constant difficulty for the players while they also balance trying to gain more points by being closer to the antlion. The idea is that the course will be continually sped up so the player will have to choose between being safe and gaining less points, or be more risky by flirting with death by being closer to the antlion. The addition of powerups will allow the user to strategize the gameplay a bit more. There will be a progressive powerup system where the more powerups you collect, the greater the effect of the power when you do choose to use it. Simple powerups can be quick burst of speed, while bigger powerups might turn all the obstacles into coins. Single powerup effects won't be too powerful but will allow you to use more of them, while saving up a lot will give you a one time special power. This adds a new layer of strategy for the players on how to play the game.

TESTING PLAN

Play Testing

Later, we will test out our game by:

Low-fidelity programming prototype with Processing

We plan to program a simple prototype with all necessary features of our new game to illustrate the game function and visualize both the game UI and gameplay effect. By this way, we can have a clear visualization of what the game looks like and how it will work. Also, it is easier to us to identify if game is fun or not, and what concept we need to working more on it. We aim to test the core mechanics of the game and gain more information on new features to enhance the player's enjoyment.

Game testing and interviews

We plan to test our game between different player types and gamer types, such as casual gamers with achiever play style vs. casual gamers with conqueror play style. We will first introduce the game to them and then let them play the prototype. After they played the prototype, we will ask them some questions relating to how they thought about the features we implemented.

Storyboard

