

Motivation:

The initial idea comes from a science fiction. In the book the author keeps asking the readers: What if we are just the toy of a higher existence? What if our “free will” is manipulated by some higher existence for their fun?

In this game, after the first part where the player was to jump onto bricks, they found they were just a tool of a greater existence. (That is why the text “jump on the bricks to get points” is attached with the terrain. They are put by the aliens to encourage you jump.) I wish to create a little bit of ironic feeling that the player thought it's her playing the game in the first part but found she had been played by the game later in the second part.

Aside from philosophical view, I think letting the player to “design” a level is an interesting idea. Our actions in this kind of scrolling game is actually quite predictable. Trying to manipulate these actions to generate something you want should be very interesting.

Color trail vs. color dots:

The initial idea I had was to use colored trails rather than color dots, however I found it's too hard to draw a recognizable pattern using trail. Although increasing “resolution”, that is to have more jumps for a pattern, will solve this, one level becomes very long and lacks variation. (Imagine the player has to jump 10 times for a sloping line of the cat's ear). So eventually I decided to just let the ball leave dots when it lands on ground or bricks.

Heaven road mode:

The “heaven road” mode is an accident. When I tested it with friends in the early stage where both jumping and putting brick functions are on, many of them thought the goal is to climb higher and higher. I actually found it pretty interesting, so I added heaven road mode and put some backgrounds to make it more fun.

Level Design:

Initially, the first jumping level is cat pattern, but I found it too difficult for a first time player to follow the bricks after several friends tested it. Almost no one can follow the bricks and jump a recognizable cat in the first level. So I changed the pattern to a sun. Even the player missed a lot bricks, it is still likely to be recognizable as a sun. Also, the tutorial part comes from observing others playing it. Many of them didn't notice holding space can make them jump higher until they missed many bricks.

Another interesting thing I noticed was the dialog part. In my code, the player can press Enter, Space, or left click to continue dialog. During the dialog, there's no hint telling the player how to continue the dialog, but everyone played it had no problem with it. As long as it follows common sense, there's no need to tell the player what to do all the time, so tutorials might not be always needed.

Future ideas:

Although I don't have enough time to do them for this project, there are some variations I wish to implement. One variation in my mind is colored bricks. When the ball jumps on it, its color changes, so as the following dots. Another variation is a spring mat. When the ball touches it, the ball will be catapulted back. Combining these two, it should be possible to draw much complicated patterns than I have now.