Number One With A Bullet

Game Design Document

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Overview

Theme / Setting / Genre

- *Number One With A Bullet* (hereafter referred to as *N1WaB*) is an isometric beat-em up + rhythm game mash-up taking place in a campy 80s style dystopian/cyberpunk setting

Core Gameplay Mechanics Brief

- Rhythm based combat

- Fighting/dance modes

- Energy

- Ultimate Abilities

Targeted platforms

- PC Windows initial release

- Option for porting to Mac or consoles based on reception

Monetization model

- "Free as in beer"... unless it's really good, then we'll worry about it later

What sets this project apart?

- This genre mashup doesn't exist in the market

- Other rhythm games are pacifist in nature

- Gamers who currently use existing games like *osu!* to train mechanical skills for competitive gaming will find a closer analogue to action games

- Focus on style and substance

The Elevator Pitch

Remember Michael Jackson's legendary music video for the 1982 megahit Thriller? What if it was all an illusion of virtual reality, and MJ was actually a super soldier in the not so distant future? While his mind sees the flashy choreography, his body is executing the grim choreography of single-handedly taking down the infestation. *Number One With a Bullet* is a hybrid twin-stick shooter and rhythm game that blurs the lines between the tight moves of a bonafide pop star, and the deadly moves of a trained killer. To make it to the top of the charts here, you'll need to climb a mountain of dead bodies.

Influences

Michael Jackson's Moonwalker

While it wasn't a rhythm game, the levels in *Moonwalker* were thematically based on MJ music videos such as Smooth Criminal, and Thriller. *N1WaB* similarly sees the player action take place within the facade of a music video or concert.

osu!

osu! is a rhythm game where players click on circles, requiring both timing and precision. *N1WaB* follows a similar philosophy of testing both timing and mechanical skill, but taking it to the next level through additional combat mechanics.

Hotline Miami

Hotline Miami made waves in the indie game world with its fast, stylish and visceral combat. *N1WaB* aims to convey the same sense of stylized violence that is reminiscent of a Tarantino movie, using a similar isometric/top-down perspective.

Ender's Game

The central premise of *Ender's Game* is that Ender's game-like training simulations are, unknown to him, used to command real forces against an invading alien species.

The Matrix

"What is reality?"

Core Gameplay Mechanics

Rhythm based combat

- Like any other rhythm game, moves must be executed in a tight timing window in order to be successful

- Timing is indicated by a shrinking reticle around the target, similar to the timing circles in *osu!*

- Enemies that require specific moves to counter will show an icon for which move to use

Fighting/Dance modes

- Following the alternate reality premise, all moves and enemies have a combat and dance mode counterpart

- The player's vision will tend toward the grim "actual reality" of combat when energy (health) is low

- Certain sections may be scripted to appear one way another

- Purely visual; gameplay remains functionally the same

Energy

- The player's health is represented by energy, as it applies to both combat and dance modes (life energy/crowd energy)

- Energy is lost by missing or mistiming moves and getting hit by stage hazards/projectiles

- Energy is gained from successful moves

Ultimate Abilities

- The player has access to two unique Ultimate Abilities that provide a buff over a fixed duration

- Ultimate Abilities are gained by hitting moves to fill the meter

- See *Gameplay Details* section for detailed descriptions

Story

Synopsis

You're a pop star doing pop star things until strange things happen and you discover you've been living in an illusion. The real world has actually gone to hell and it's up to you to clean up the mess.

Plot

You are Lance Tyson "LT" Sparx, a fresh faced pop music sensation, newly signed to a big time record label. You embark on a career of performing sold out concerts and flashy music videos as you climb your way to the top of the charts. Every spectacular performance brings you legions of new fans and heaps of cash that allow you to unlock bigger and better productions.

As your stardom grows, you start to experience some odd hallucinations. You tell yourself you're going to start cutting down on your pre-show "cocktail" habit, but the hallucinations persist. While filming your next music video, you're caught in a freak pyrotechnics accident. As your consciousness starts to slip away, you catch a glimpse of a horrifying world of death and destruction. In your daze, you're visited by a stranger who tells you that the world as you know it is a lie. The year isn't 1984; it's 2084 and humanity is on the brink.

In 2081, shortly after the BioMaxx Corporation successfully lobbied World Congress to approve mandatory vaccinations, the first cases of a previously undiscovered neurodegenerative disease were reported. The disease severely degrades cognitive function while also causing victims to become highly aggressive and violent. Urban areas quickly fell into anarchy, and the military was called in.

LT Sparx, aka Lt. Sparx, you were amongst the first class of an experimental super soldier program. During the first year of the outbreak, the military discovered that no amount of hardened training could prepare soldiers for the psychological impact of a mass euthanasia mission. Combat fatigue was rampant. Desertions and suicides occurred at an alarming rate. The decision was made to outfit a select group of elite soldiers with a neural implant that interfaces the brain's sensory inputs with an artificial intelligence.

The Overseer Targeting AI uses mission data to reinterpret your sensory information into deadly choreography that targets the optimal windows of attack. As an elite former gymnast, you have no trouble keeping up with the moves, but as you've discovered, the system isn't flawless. You've seen the outside now.

The stranger offers to unplug you, if you're willing to join her cause. The world could use a hero. But you? All you've known is the good life. They must have overwritten your memories. Still, there's a soldier in you somewhere; the choice is yours. You hear a distant noise. It's time to wake up.

Gameplay Details

Moves

Melee

- Alternates between blade slash, kick and nunchuk animations

- Dance versions: high five, kick, microphone swing

- Effect is same regardless of animation

Ranged

- Akimbo pistols

- Dance version: flash the finger guns

Parry

- Counter with blade

- Dance version results in a spin into dip of backup dancer

Dash

- Quick movement ability

- Dance version is same but more fabulous

Slash Dash

- Melee + Dash input

- Cuts through multiple enemies in a line

Ultimate Abilities

Ultimate ability uses are gained through filling the Ultimate Meter. Meter charge is gained from successful execution of move sequences. One Ultimate can be held while the meter is full, and deployed at any time. Using an Ultimate resets the meter.

The Ultimate itself provides the player with a temporary buff that lasts for 20 seconds. The player has two versions to choose from:

Disco Inferno

- Embrace your inner superstar
- Duration effect: extra energy gain from successful moves
- Vision switches to extra vibrant dance mode
- Power through difficult move sequences

Full Metal Jacket

- Embrace your inner warrior
- Duration effect: take no damage from projectiles
- Vision switches to extra dark combat mode
- Power through overwhelming danger

Enemy Classes

Goons (Fans)

- throw various objects (bottles, flowers, undergarments)

- defeat with melee/high five

- reality version throws grenades and weapons

Grunts (Male Backup Dancers)

- main common enemy type

- defeat with either melee or pistols

Assassins (Female Backup Dancers)

- dashing melee attacker, defeat with parry

- fantasy version is backup dancer that performs twirl with you if timed correctly, otherwise stumbles you

Snipers (Paparazzi)

- Give him your best finger guns pose

- Cannot be reached with melee

Bosses (Extended Dance Solo)

- various forms depending on level

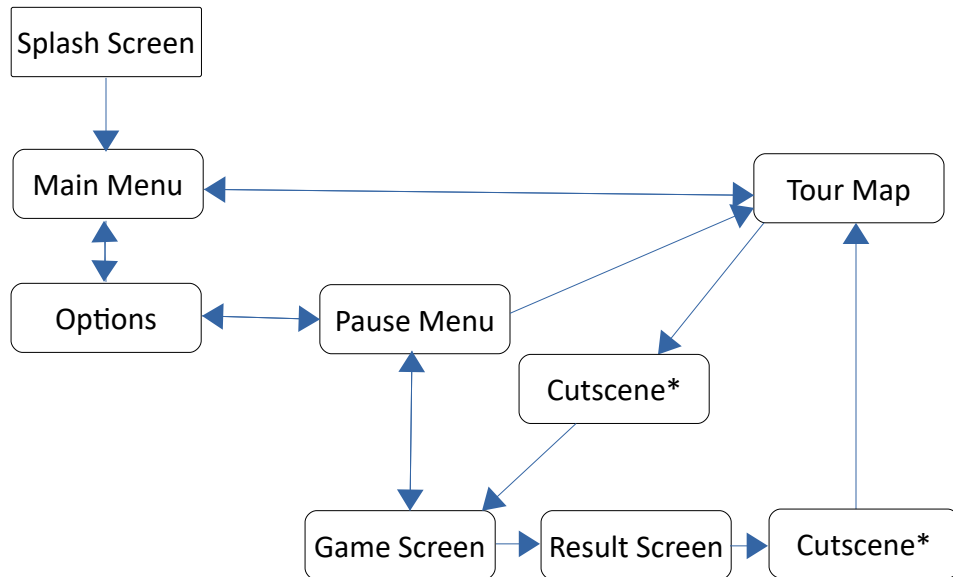- will require extended choreography of multiple moves to pass

Level/Enemy Themes

The Infected (as inspired by Thriller)

Wasteland Gangs (...Beat It)

BioMaxx Corporation (...Smooth Criminal)

User Interface

UI Flow Diagram

*Optional feature

UI Mockups

Fig. 1 Early proof of concept build demonstrating the targeting system. Timing for moves is indicated when the red square shrinks into the centre of the crosshair. Additional icons will indicate correct move type.
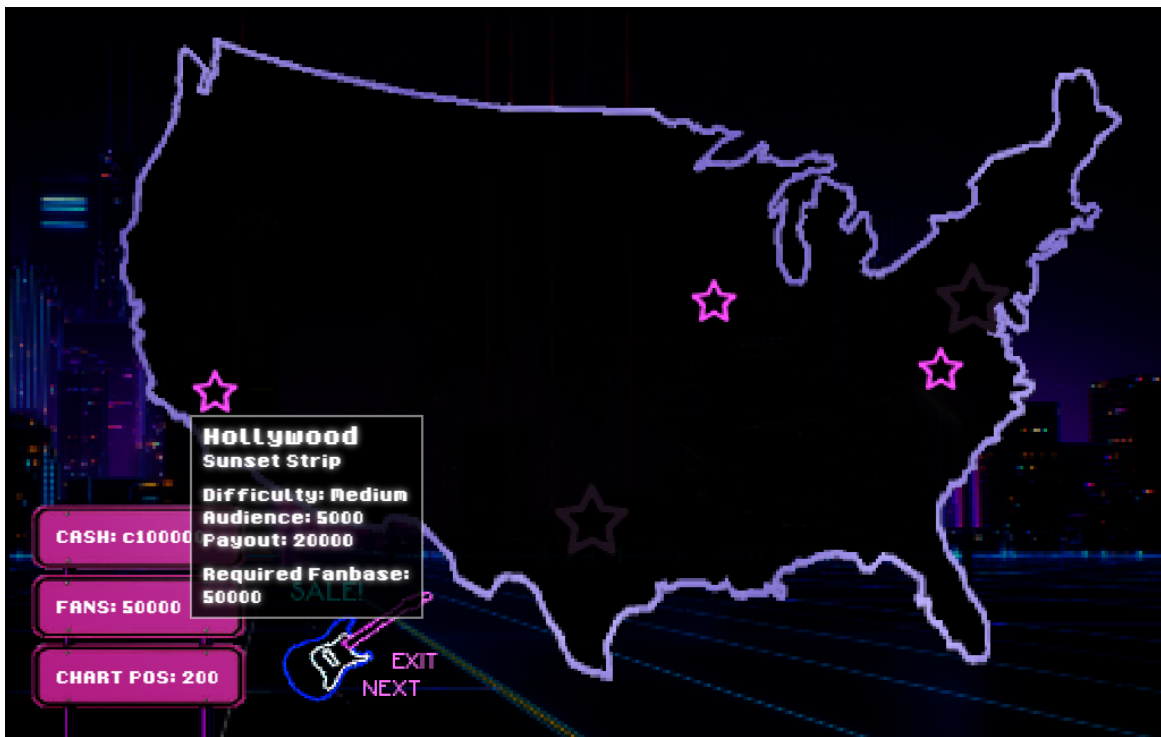
Fig. 2 Tour Map design concept. Venue (level) information is displayed on hover over.
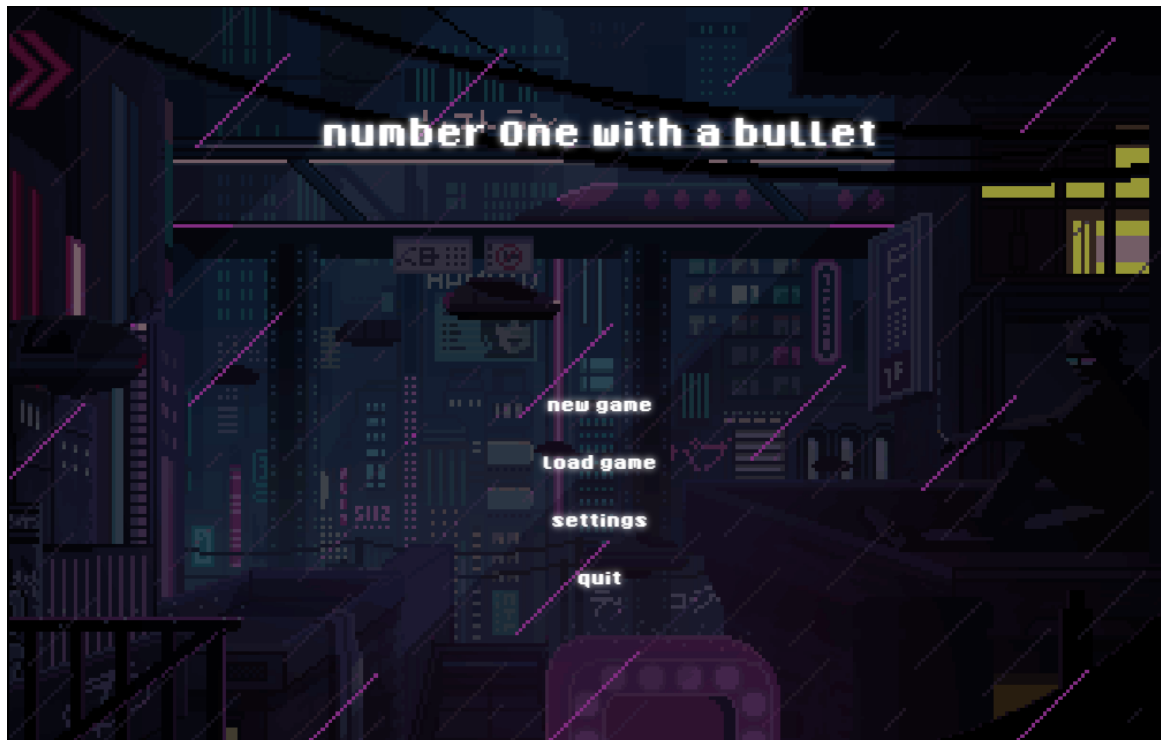

Fig. 3 Main Menu design concept. Background features continuous looping animation.

Assets Needed

Art

- Player spritesheets
- Enemy spritesheets
- Boss spritesheets
- Level tilesets
- Environment sprites
- Cutscene art
- Dialogue portraits
- UI graphics

Animations

- Player idle
- Player movement
- Player attacks
- Player hurt
- Player fail level
- Player ultimate deploy
- Enemy movement
- Enemy attacks
- Enemy death
- Boss animations
- Boss destruction
- Environmental
- Explosions/particle effects
- UI effects

Sound

- Gameplay music tracks

- Menu and cutscene music

- Sound effects

    ◦ Attacks/Moves

    ◦ Ambient crowd noise

    ◦ Environmental effects

    ◦ Fanfare effects

    ◦ UI effects

- Voice lines (optional)

Code

- Beatmap data structure for storing enemy patterns in sync with music

- Enemy controller

- Player controller

- Save game manager

- UI and special effects