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CREATURE INVADERS

DESIGN DOCUMENT
VERSION 0.2
MAY 14, 2009

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VERSION HISTORY

Version 0.1 – May 5th, 2009
0.1: First version of the document.

Version 0.2 – May 14th, 2009
- Added UI – menu, restart screen
- Added demo mode – bullet generator sampler
- Added player character – movement, life bar, bullet generation
- Added enemies – generation, life bar, bullet generation

Version 0.3 – May 21st, 2009
- Added difficulty menu, and future variables to set it
- Added Collison detection between player and enemies
- Added Scrolling background screen (through a new level class)
- Added new graphics for bullets

GAME OVERVIEW

Game logline
Defend yourself from invaders by capturing them with a myriad of bullets.

Gameplay synopsis
You are a research scientist on an undiscovered planet. Your mission: capture exotic creatures and bring them back for research. Major scientific breakthroughs hinge on your success. Good luck!

Creature Invaders is a top down game where the player controls his own creatures to fight off the invading creatures. The hero, a research scientist, can be

moved around and can aim in different directions to target its darts in any direction. Each creature can shoot projectiles in different patterns.   These projectiles deal damage to the player if hit. Once a creature takes enough damage, the player captures it, adding it to its research menagerie. If the player takes too much damage, the game ends.

As the hero fights, he will gain experience based on the creatures he has captured. With the experience, new abilities and projectile patterns are gained and the game difficulty increases. Terrains and music will change to match the difficulty.

The game features resistance bars over each creature, representing the animal's tolerance of tranquilizers. The hero has his own health bar in the game display.

The capture mechanic and ally swapping were inspired by Pokemon but the game also features beautiful and elaborate projectile patterns reminiscent of fireworks (ally swapping is a mechanic that allows the player to use their captured creatures as allies on the field. Two accompanying creatures help the player by providing extra firepower and can be swapped in or out for any of the remaining four the player has brought to the field with him or her).

GAME DETAILS

Description
[Give a bit longer description]

Game genre?
Top-down 2d scroller/shooter.

Is this single-player or multiplayer game?
The game is a single player game, though it could later be expanded to have cooperative play.

Is this 2D or 3D?
The game is in 2d with a top down view.

Where does the game take place? (world)
The game takes place in a fantasy world where creatures encounter each other.

What do I control? How many characters? Can I use vehicles?
The player controls the current creature that he has out. The player is actually the person who has the set of creatures to be used. Vehicles are not in this game.

What is the main focus?
The main focus in this game is the current creature that is out and being controlled by the player. The player must pay attention to how much health the creature has, and keep it alive.

How long the game lasts? Or how long game matches last?
The game lasts until the player completes all of the levels, or runs out of health. Each level that the player advances through, the health of the player is reset to full. When the player runs out of health, the game returns to the main menu.

Comparison
Touhou series: The difficulty level has been vastly decreased to make the game accessible to a less niche audience while still keeping bullet pattern and generation intact.

R-Type series: Bullet and bullet patterns are characteristic of the firing entity, but enemies are given more durability to emphasize less drone-like behavior and wanton destruction. Control perspective is also different.

Space Harrier/Gradius: These games emphasized, to a fairly large degree, environment traversal (non-destructible object dodging in an "on-rails" environment), which this game won't focus on. The control perspectives are also different.

What is unique?
The game combines multiple elements from other games in ways not previously seen: creature capture, "bullet storm"-style games, and top-down 2d shooters.

Why create this game?

We're creating this game because we wanted to expand on a genre of games that is fun to begin with. With expanding it, we can simplify some game play elements, and expand upon others. With our own power-ups, textures, and game play ideas, we can combine genres to make an enjoyable game for a broader audience.

Curtain fire games are also a challenge for organizing object creation, management, and destruction. Maintaining game speed and performance is also an issue that is worth addressing, particularly regarding game programming.

AUDIENCE, PLATFORM, AND MARKETING

Target Audience

We're aiming for a broad audience by having game play elements that appeal to different crowds. Our game is not overly complicated, allowing the casual user to jump into it without a big learning curve. The more hardcore crowd will also like the game to try and get the highest score or to the last level, while we don't want to hold back either player.

Platform

Reasons to buy this game:

1-It's action-packed and engages the user

2-It puts a fresh twist on to older arcade games

3-It's not overly complicated, but leaves room for the player to develop skill

Top Performers

- Touhou series: Top down vertical curtain fire game. Players control characters set in an eastern fantasy backdrop. The general appeal comes from slower, more focused maneuverability and dodge gameplay as well as recurring cast.

- Raiden series: Top down vertical shooter with an emphasis on power ups and large bosses. Players control a ship in a postmodern sci-fi backdrop. The general appeal is the player's ability to possess overwhelming firepower capabilities.

- Radiant Silvergun: Top down vertical shooter featuring 2.5D graphics. Players control a ship in a semi-futaristic environment. The general appeal lies in the weapon choice and story.

- Ikaruga: Top down vertical shooter. Players control a ship in a sci-fi environment. Unlike most shooters, Ikaruga does not emphasize dodging or firepower. The general appeal, rather, lies in the polarity switching mechanic, where bullets of one pole are absorbed and only bullets of the opposite pole can damage enemies or the player's ship.

Feature comparison

Unlike most shooters, Creature Invaders does not adopt any one particular bullet style philosophy, i.e. the game does not hope to enforce pattern and bullet periphery recognition and cautious maneuverability common in curtain fire games, or uncanny reflexive skills prevalent in manic shooters. Instead, the game hopes to provide an enjoyable experience by allowing the player the ability to customize their character's bullet/dart creation capabilities and add variable types of firepower by employing the aid of captured creatures. The game also hopes to introduce a growth aspect for character ability; as the player's character gains experience and funds, the character's statistics grow and different tools and cannons become available. Also unconventionally, the game features a life bar. In almost every shooter, the player's character is destroyed after one hit; eliminating this restriction opens the opportunity for unexplored methods of play in the shooter category.

FEATURE SET

General features

- Single hero who navigates a 2d world
- Creatures that challenge the hero
- Projectile spray patterns
- Multiple levels and power-ups

Gameplay
- Thumbsticks control hero movement and projectile direction
- "A" button releases tranquilizer darts

THE GAME WORLD

Overview

Flat place with different textures

Key locations
- Laboratory
- Field Locations.

Travel

Hero flies and the world moves beneath the hero

Scale

Real life, if real life included fantastic monsters. Field objects should be close to real life scale. Movement speed in the field is presented by the scrolling background. World scale is limited to areas available through the travel UI.

Objects
- Projectiles
- Creatures
- Hero
- ~~Obstacles?~~

Weather
- Wind
- Rain
- Underwater

Day and night

Yes

Time
>Dodging creature projectiles is an important time-based element of the game.

Water
>*See weather*

Other elements

CAMERA

Overview
>Stationary camera with 2d top-down. We are considering camera "shakes" and "blurs" for boss creatures. We'll also have a scrolling background to create the illusion that the character is 'flying' through the world fighting.

GAME CHARACTERS

Overview
>- Research Scientist
>- Hero Creature
>- Creatures (1 – n)
>- Boss creatures

Character creation
>The hero is created at the bottom of the screen when the game begins.

Enemies and monsters
>Creatures enter from the top or sides of the world on a timer or in response to the capture of other creatures.
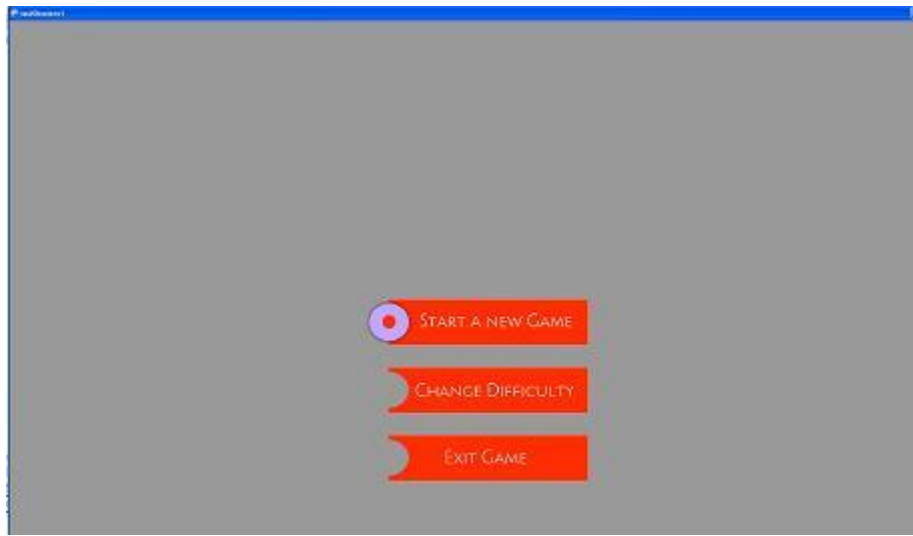
USER INTERFACE

Overview
>Main Menu:

- Start/Load/Delete game.
- ~~Change control specifications.~~
- Change game difficulty.
- Exit Game

Main menu :

Travel Menu:
- Features a list of travel locations/levels available to the player.
- Features lab access, in-game shop, upgrades, ally swapping.

Field:
- Main screen – the primary game world in the center where the hero and creatures interact.
- Left screen – contains hero vitals and available creatures.
- Right screen – displays icons of captured creatures.

Main menu screenshot:

Details

OBJECTS

Overview

The game will contain objects.

Weapons

The hero will have access to multiple tranquilizer guns and projectiles which will be upgradeable throughout the game.

Items

Powerups that affect the hero's attributes (movement, shooting patterns, health, dart strength, etc) will be available throughout the game, either as random drops or as a reward for defeating strong creatures.

Equipment

Equipment can be purchased from the in-game shop. Equipment can boost character stats such as health and movement speed, as well as amplify ally firepower. Also *see weapons*

Other

MUSIC AND SOUNDS EFFECTS

Overview

The game will have music and sound effects. They will change according to the level.

Details

TBD

Music tracks

TBD

Sound effects

TBD

3D sound

Probably not.

Other

ART

What kind of style will be used in the game?

Anime-style, cartoon.

Needed building models

?

Scenery models

?

Character models

TBD

Vehicle models

TBD

Particle effects
> TBD

Other

SINGLE-PLAYER GAME

Overview
> The game takes place on a series of levels, each of which feature a boss creature and potential mid-bosses.

Details
> Each level is unique in appearence and feature different enemy types. Levels may also employ global level effects, such as a wind parameter that blows bullets in a certain direction.

Story
> Research scientist on a new planet must perform a biological survey of the planet's organisms to benefit the scientific knowledge of the human race.

Victory conditions
> All levels defeated, all creatures caught.

RESOURCES & LINKS

Links to related resources
> Design document based on this template:
>
> HTTP://FORUMS.XNA.COM/FORUMS/T/229.ASPX
>
> HTTP://INDIEPATH.COM/PUBLIC/DESIGNDOCUMENTTEMPLATE01.DOC
>
> A few sections of the document are based on the design template in this book:
>> Fullerton, Tracy. Game Design Workshop, 2nd Edition: Elsevier Inc, 2008.

EXTRA MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Overview

Crazy ideas

Water effects.

Rotate world and have it effect the gameplay.

Vs. mode.