

WANTED

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WALKING IN THE WILD WEST

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In pulvinar tellus metus.



Games Design Document

V1.05



\$ 15.0000

CASH REWARD

DANGEROUS AND ALWAYS HEAVILY ARMED

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Game Overview

Brief Overview

Walking in the Wild West takes a typical first bullet hell, adds bottles, bullets, bullets, and bottles with a hint of mistrust and unjust envy. Taking place in the heart of the wild west, my game explores what a classic western saloon shootout would be like from the first-person perspective. I choose to develop a first-person shooter in the subgenre of a bullet hell because it fits the narrative perfectly; it's the stereotypical Hollywood movie scenario in which an outsider steps into a packed saloon. Silence... a lot of slow head turns and then chaos ensues.

Unique Selling Points

The first-person bullet hell that takes place in western saloon, with bullet time and possession. The interesting dynamics and gameplay choices possession provides players will be greatly emphasized and demonstrated. Also, a focus is the bullet time with the extremely cinematic epic nature of the mechanic during actual gameplay, rather than cutscenes like most other titles.

Bullet hells, such as Enter the Gungeon and Neon Abyss, are often played from a top down, third person, perspective. Walking in the Wild West takes a new approach to the genre by allowing players to experience the chaos from a first-person perspective. This allows players to be much closer to the action and feel each bullet fly past them in a satisfying and intense way.

Game Mechanics and Change Log

Bullet Time

Bullet time is not an original concept, famously featuring in the Matrix films and the Sniper Elite franchise (https://store.steampowered.com/app/728740/Sniper_Elite_V2_Remastered/), however the use of bullet time in a bullet hell is (from the research I conducted) a first.

The mechanic works as followed: when the player shoots an enemy, the camera follows the bullet fired and activates time dilation (slow motion). This means the player is watching their bullet travel towards the enemy with other bullets and objects everywhere, in slow motion, until their bullet hits the enemy.

The idea for implementing bullet time came when I was testing the enemy shooting mechanics out and saw all their bullets flying through the air. From the first-person perspective it felt very cinematic but needed to have slow motion to really sell the experience. It offers an intense and satisfying feeling for players, helping to maintain engagement with gameplay.

Change Log

A concept I debated is having the bullet time event only occur on headshots. This would incentivise precision and skill from players, rather than mindless shooting (which may lead to boredom/unsatisfactory feeling). The reason I decided not to implement this update due to the

Another update I considered was having the enemy bullet almost not visible (due to speed), when at standard time dilation, and once bullet time occurs their bullets slow drastically too, becoming visible. However, because of the fundamental nature of bullet hells requiring the player to dodge incoming fire, this would not work or be enjoyable for the player.

Enemy Possession

A unique aspect of my game is the enemy possession after bullet time. In a similar way to Super Mario Odysseys cap control mechanic and Kirby, I wanted enemy deaths to have more significance than simply removing them from the level.

The mechanic works as followed: Upon an enemy being hit by a player's bullet, the enemy is destroyed, and the first-person character is respawned at their death location (this occurs instantly, giving the illusion of possession).

This mechanic gives a fresh take on the bullet hell genre. Allowing players to travel to the other side of the room through their bullets means they can take on combat challenges in a unique way.

Change Log

The new player character then sets a random number of bullets in the revolver, between 2 and 6. I added this update because it would be highly unlikely that every enemy, who have been shooting for the whole levels time, would have a fully loaded revolver. It also keeps players engaged as they may possess an enemy with only 2 bullets, meaning they will have to use skill or think creatively to stay alive.

Throwables can kill and possess enemy after 3 hits. If the player throws 3 of any throwable (e.g., bottles, revolver) the enemy dies and is possessed by the player. This was added because the player could run out of bullets and be stuck in the level without any way of killing/possessing enemies.

A potential update for throwables possessing enemies was to remove the ability for them to possess, instead simply killing the enemy. I thought of the concept of disarming enemies when they are hit by the first throwable, allowing the player to pick up the dropped weapon. This would remove the need for possession as they could shoot them instead. Unfortunately, the issue of players missing all of their available bullets (including dropped weapons) could arise; meaning they would require some method to possess an enemy.

Upon further testing, removal of the throwable possession shall be implemented. Realising that players must have a penalty for missing all of their ammunition, and that disarmed enemies would have no revolver (therefore no new bullets), I decided to remove the mechanic. This incentives player skill as it provides a way of losing the game, something that (for unknown reasons) was avoided at early stages of development.

Throwable Objects

Classic movie scenes bar fights often feature somebody throwing a glass/bottle. For this reason, and for the cinematic satisfaction of slow-motion chaos, I believe it to be an imperative mechanic.

The mechanic works as followed: glasses, bottles and revolvers can all be picked up and held by the player. When the player wants to release the glass, they press right click and it throws the object in the direction the player is facing. When the object collides with an enemy it “disarms” them, making them drop their weapon. Only 1 object can be held at a time, alongside the player’s own revolver, and picking up a dropped revolver replaces the player's current gun.

The idea for implementing throwable objects, as an offensive option, stemmed from when I was testing enemy possession; I realised that if the player possessed an enemy and proceeded to miss all of their bullets, they would have no way of killing enemies.

Change Log

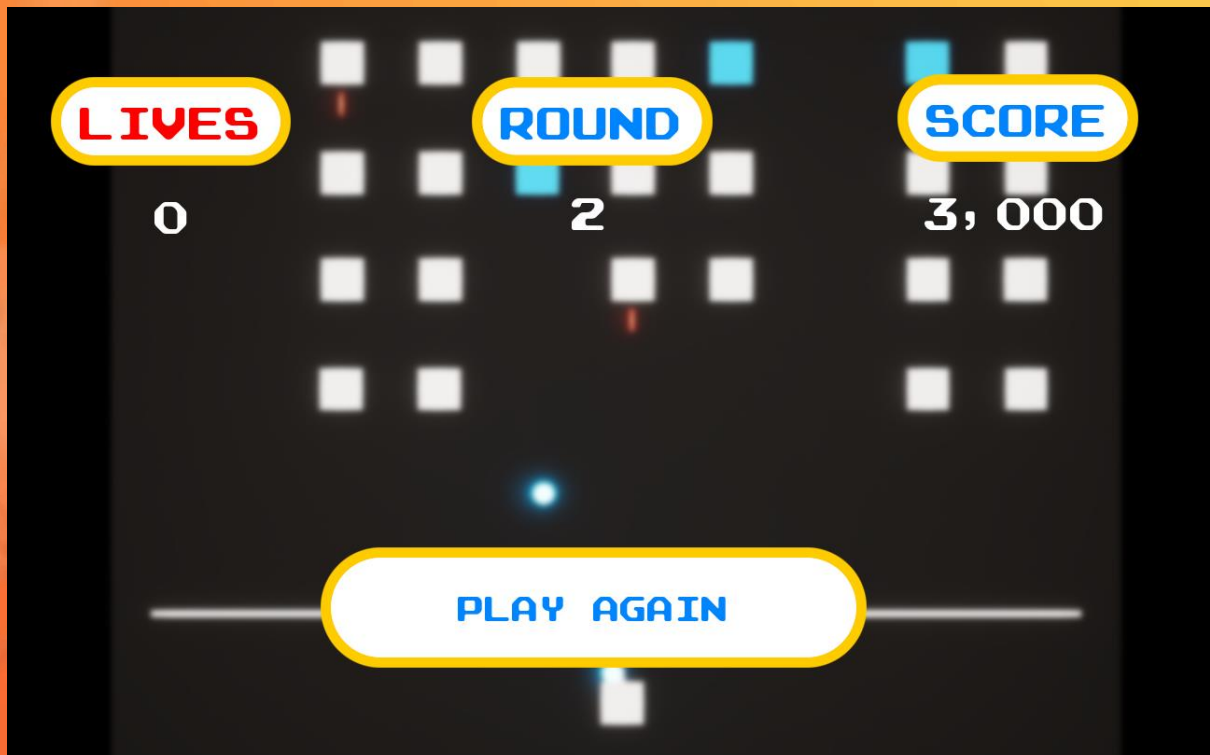
The idea of potentially allowing players to pick up larger objects, such as a chair, was investigated. It would work by making the player drop their current weapon, to use by arms, then reducing player movement as they held it (via slowing walk speed and disabling jump). When thrown they would either instantly kill the enemy or act as 2 throwable hits, meaning only 1 smaller object would kill the enemy. This would allow for more freedom in the level and would allow for combos, i.e. throwing your revolver, to deal 1 throwable hit, then throwing a chair to finish them off. The issues with this would be that it could either be too strong (allowing players to quickly combo through many enemies) or too weak as it leaves the player too vulnerable to attacks.

Victory

An end goal/target for players is essential for any game in order to maintain motivation and incentivise replayability.

There were a number of ways of developing a “winning” objective for players. The first of these ideas was the most obvious solution of eliminating all enemies in the level. However, the issue with this is that it would lack replayability; so, to create incentive, statistic trackers that record players performance could be implemented. These could track the measures: time taken, bullets fired, objects thrown, number of possessions and so forth. Adding such trackers would allow for self/peer competition, thus providing motivation to replay the game.

The second concept that I had was making it an endless wave system and tracking how many enemies defeated. The major issue that I had with this idea was that it may get boring for players after an extended period of time, mainly due to the smaller size of the level. Ultimately, I decided on the first idea because it has more player motivations.



Gameplay

Gameplay Loop

Players will spawn at the entrance to the saloon with a revolver and walk in through the classic saloon doors. Once inside they will have to engage in a shootout with the people inside, see the narrative section for more information. Using bullets and throwable to take out the waves of enemies. Once all the enemies are dead, they can see all their statistics from the run and then go again, attempting to beat said scores.

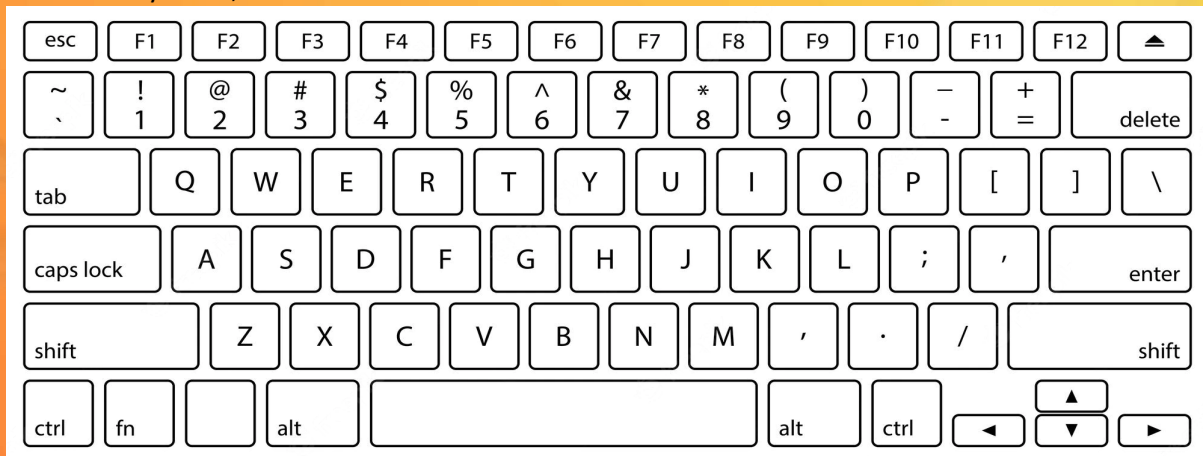
Level Design

The saloon is the arena for the game and will feature 2 stories. The ground floor shall be the bar floor with tables, chairs and the bar; it will be rather large and open, leaving the player exposed from a lot of angles but with time to react. The second floor shall feature a much more compact space, with corridors and smaller rooms, meaning players will not have to react far quicker to survive. This will allow for an exciting diversity in gameplay. The tables, chairs, a bar, support beams and other similar objects shall be used to give players cover and different dynamics throughout. On the tables shall be glasses and other props that are used within gameplay.



Control Scheme

Keyboard and controller control schemes shall be made to allow players to use whichever device they choose, on any platform. It has been designed to be as familiar to players as possible by using common key binds, such as R for reload.



WASD: Movement

R: Reload

Q: Throw

Shift: Walk

Space: Jump

E: Interact

Right Click: Shoot

A: Jump

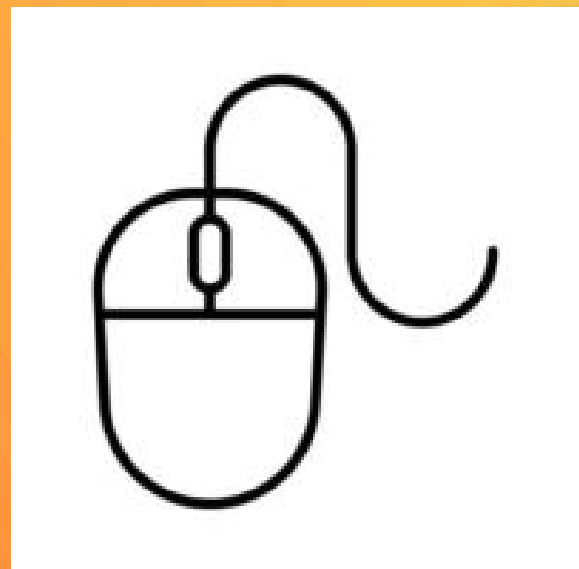
B: Crouch

X: Reload/Interact

Start: Pause

R2: Shoot

R1: Throw

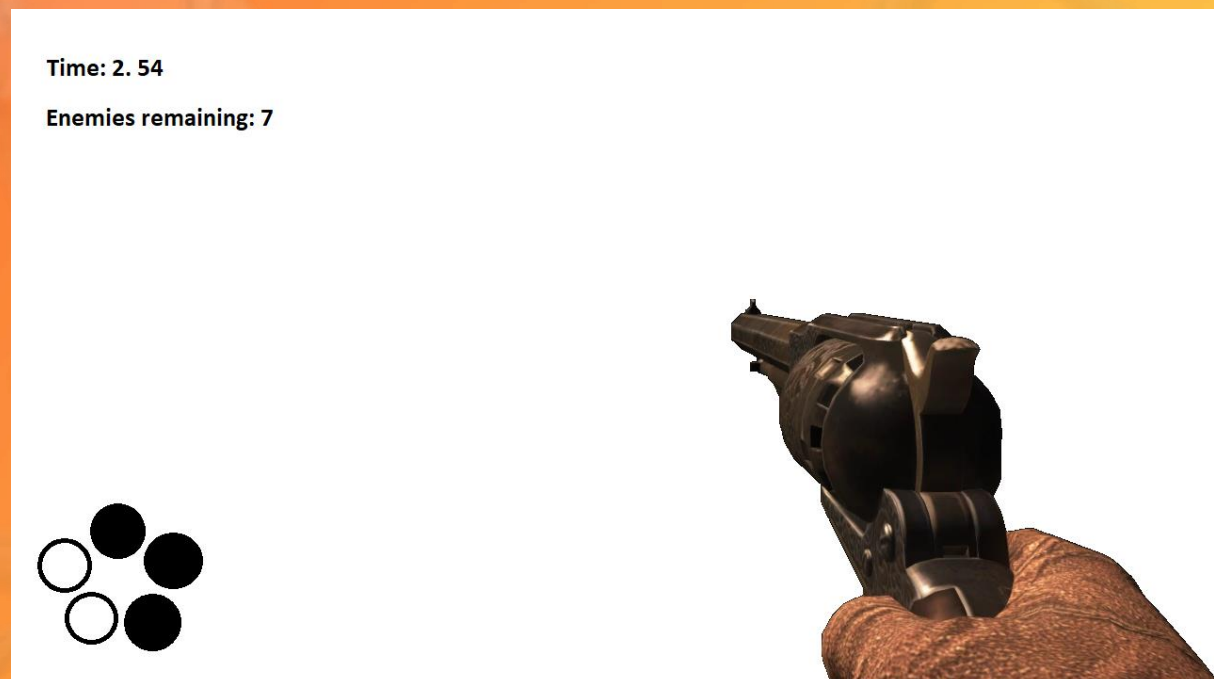


Sound Design

I will source the sound effects from <https://freesound.org/> as they have a large number of royalty free effects. The soundtrack shall be written and played by myself. Using Audacity, I will edit the sound effects and sound track to be unique to this project and fit thematically. There will be sound effects that create an immersive experience for players and potentially voice lines to further this. A soundtrack will be written to add emotion where needed, different sections of the game will require different paced soundtracks to accommodate for the gameplay, for example the main menu will not feature the same intense music as when mid firefight.

User Interface

User interface in the game will be kept minimal and clean. This is to allow for as high immersion levels as possible and to prevent distraction in such a fast paced game. Minimal interfaces are also less intimidating to new players, being easier to understand and digest. The user will look something like the image drawn below. The main focus of the interface is the object the player is holding and their ammo count (black represents a bullet, white is not a bullet, so in the image shown below the player has 3 ammo). A timer will also be visible and potentially the number of enemies remaining, this may change the way players choose to handle a situation.



Narrative

Storyline

1877 Chihuahuan Desert, Texas is where the events of Walking in the Wild West transpire. Jack Johnson, the protagonist, stops at a saloon whilst on the run from the law. Unknown to him, the saloon happens to be next door to the local police station and it's their lunch break. Jack goes in and is immediately recognised and a large shootout occurs. The story ends with Jack being victorious or dying.

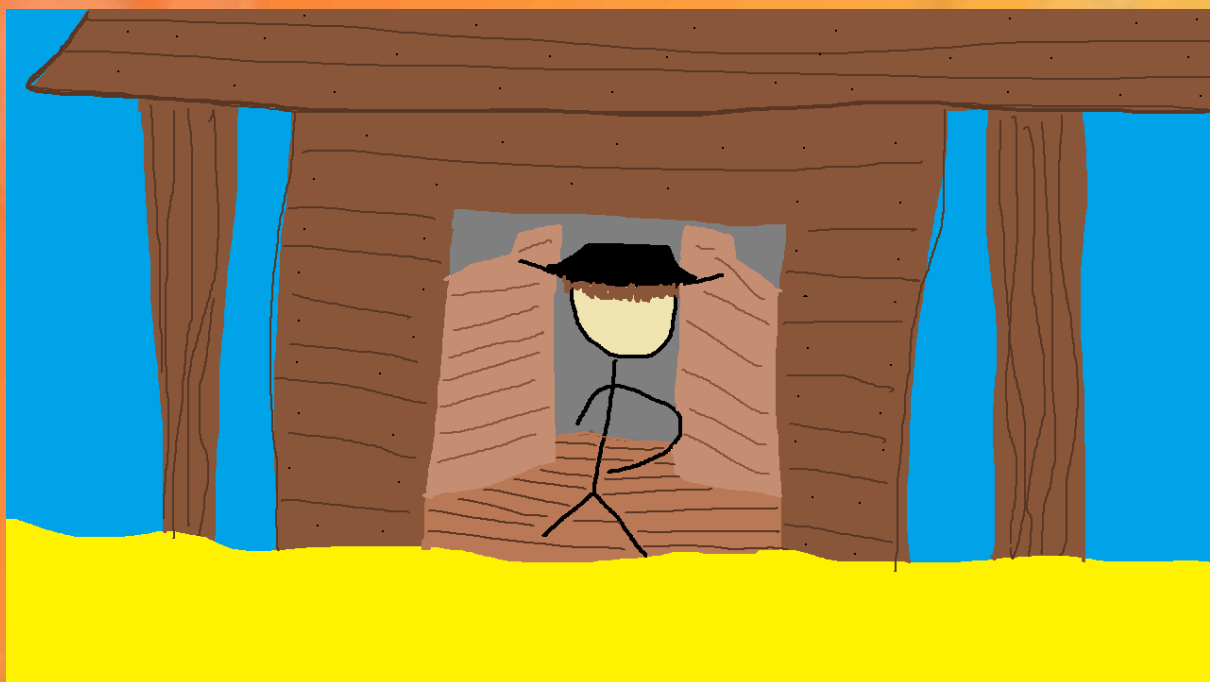
Characters

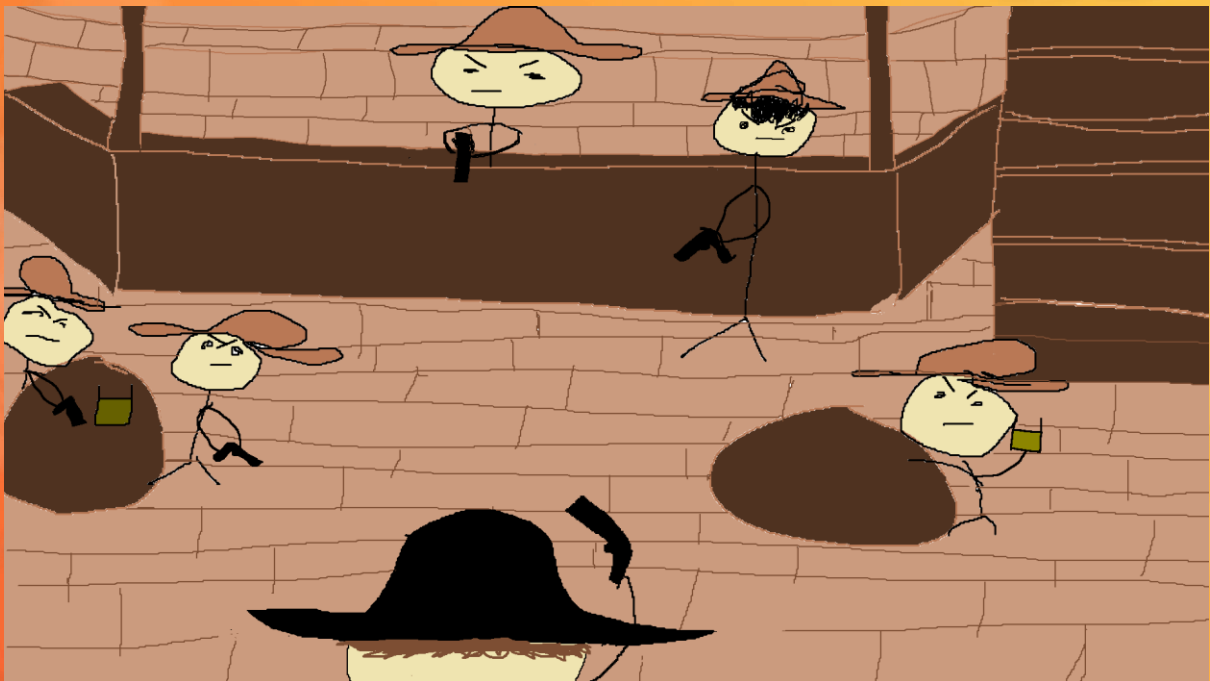
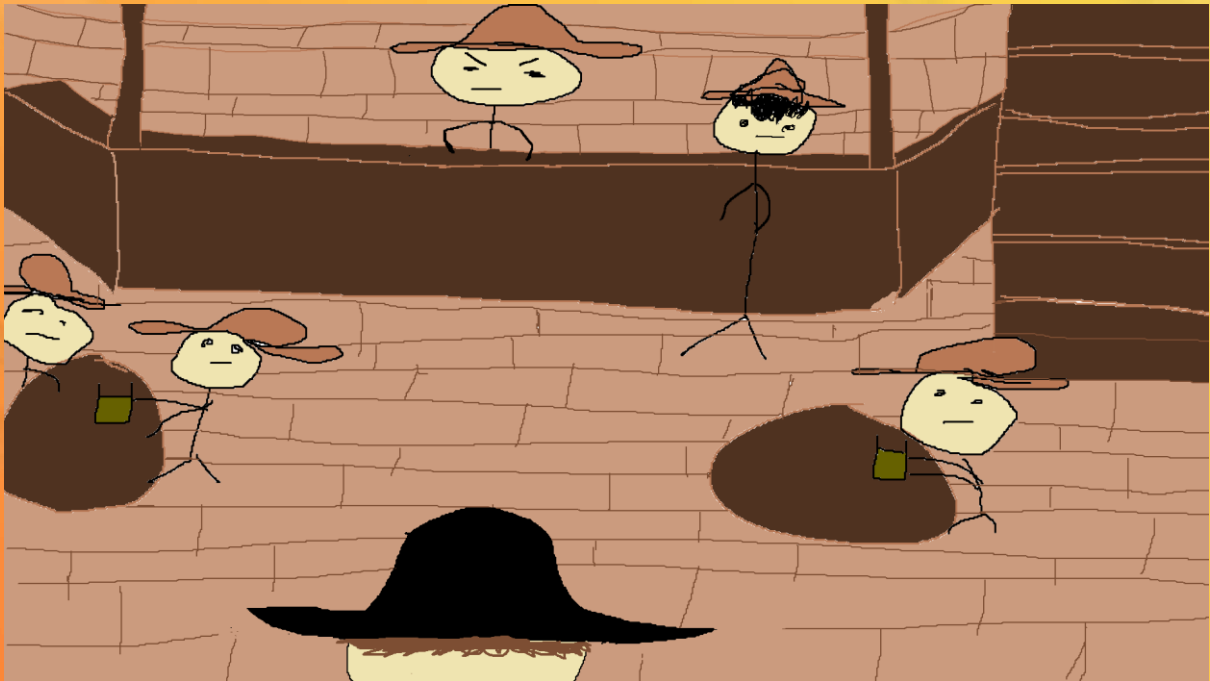
Name: Jack "Wildcard" Johnson

Background: In the year 1855, Jack Johnson was born in San Antonio, Texas. He was always captivated to the west's untamed nature. He spent years as a child scouting the rough mountains and deserts that surrounded San Antonio.

Jack gained a reputation as he grew older for being impulsive and having a short fuse. He earned the nickname "Wildcard" because he was constantly looking for a fight and wasn't scared to shoot anyone who crossed him. But Jack's penchant for violence finally landed him in trouble with local sheriffs. He was forced to flee into the desert in order to avoid being caught, wanted for multiple crimes (including theft and murder), nowhere is safe.







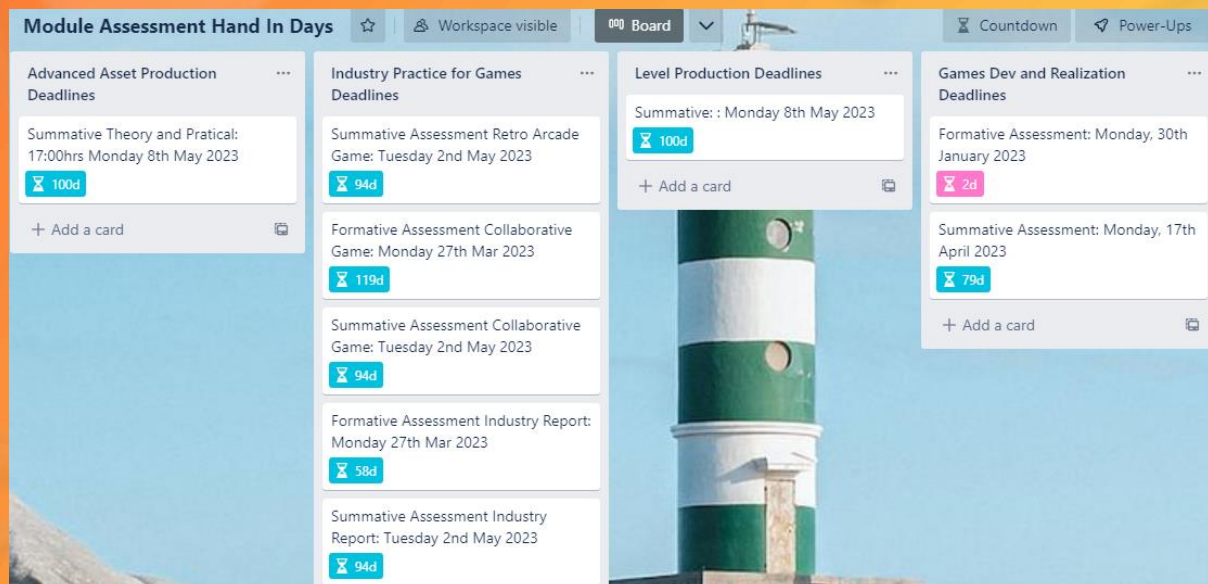
Miscellaneous

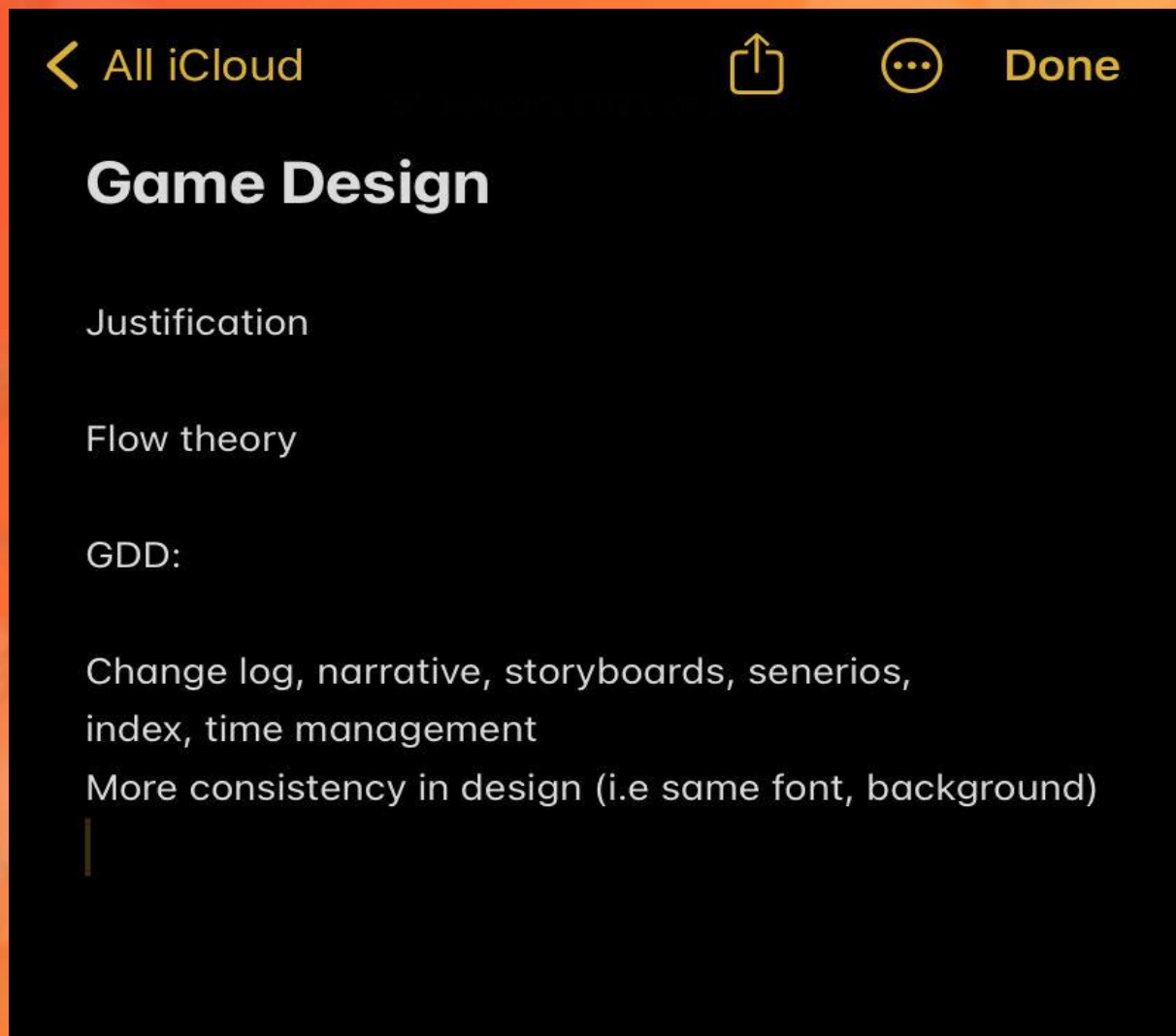
Target Audience

The target audience for the game is 16+ because of the violence in the game. Narrative aspects feature themes that are not suitable for a younger audience, contributing to the older age rating. Other similar titles, such as Sniper Elite, do have an 18+ age rating but often have more blood and/or gore on display; my title will not any blood or gore because of the possession mechanic. Research into bullet hells shows that the majority share the 12+ rating, however, they are more often than not “cartoony” and not from the first-person perspective. The audience will be focused more towards the casual gamer, with potentially difficulty options being available for more hardcore players, to allow for a broader potential player base.

Time Management

Shown below is the time management strategy I used to make sure the project was completed on time. “Trello” is the website I utilise because of its easy to create “cards” within a list, allowing me to organise different projects easily. The number of days until the due date is also extremely helpful for making it easy to put the time left into context. Time Management allowed for reduced stress and a more efficient workflow; knowing when specific things were due in meant I could optimise my time usage to complete necessary tasks without worrying about others, because I had allocated time for them elsewhere. I also utilise the notes app on my Iphone as a great way to quickly write something that needs to be done. It is something I almost always have on me and helps a lot with small pieces of information that needs to be remembered.





Hardware Requirements

For the hardware requirements I have used the unreal engine 5 minimum requirements. This is because the game is developed in this engine and is known to run completely functionally on the hardware needed for unreal.

Operating System: Windows 10 64-bit version 1909 revision .1350 or higher, or versions 2004 and 20H2 revision .789 or higher.

Processor: Quad-core Intel or AMD, 2.5 GHz or faster

Memory: 8 GB RAM

Graphics Card: DirectX 11 or 12 compatible graphics card

RHI Version: DirectX 11: Latest drivers or DirectX 12: Latest drivers

Vulkan: AMD (21.11.3+) and NVIDIA (496.76+)

Licenses

Unreal Engine 5 (UE5) will be the engine of choice to develop the game in. It offers an expansive number of tools and features suited specifically for the first-person shooter genre, allowing for an efficient workflow. UE5 is also the engine I am most accustomed to, meaning I know its limits and how to push them for full creative freedom. The software is free to use but once a game exceeds 1 million USD 5% royalties are claimed by Unreal.

Adobe Photoshop will be used to design any UI based assets. The suite is specifically designed with image editing in mind, which means it has extremely effective for producing such assets. Once more it is another piece of software, I am familiar with, so I can produce high quality work in a time efficient manner. Photoshop is £743.88 a year for businesses to license.









Autodesk Maya will be used to create the physical assets for the game world. This 3D modelling program allows for detailed 3D assets to be developed with a wide range of poly modelling tools. It is widely used across the industry and is another program I am proficient in. Maya is £1,968 a year to license.

Audacity will be used for the sound design as it is a free, open-source program that allows for in-depth audio editing.

Platform Releases

Steam will be the first platform for release. Steam is widely considered the best marketplace on Windows and has a large userbase. If successful, the goal would be to expand to console ports, the Switch in particular. The Switch Eshop is full of popular, smaller scale single player indie games, demonstrating its vast, potentially interested, userbase. Other home consoles, such as the Playstation 5 and Xbox Series, would also be of interest to port the game to because of their immense popularity with gamers. The game is also very suited to a more relaxed couch gaming experience that consoles can provide.

Asset List

Reference Images	Asset Name	Description	File Name	Priority	Modelled	Completed	Est. Time Taken	Actual Time Taken	Est. Completion Date	Est. Polycount
	Chair	Wooden western, basic style seat		High			5 hours			>1000
	Bottle	Various spirit/beer containers		High			3 hours			>150
	Glasses	Basic transparent glasses		Medium			2 hours			>100
	Barrel	Wooden barrels for tables or for behind the bar		High			2 hours			>300
	Fence Post	Wooden fence post for fence and for somewhere to leash up horses		Medium			2 hours			>300
	Rope	Generic rope		Low			1 hour			>100
	Revolver	Snub styled revolver for player to hold		High			3 days			>10000
	Wagon	Basic wooden cart		Medium			2 days			>5000

The use of an asset list helps time management, managing assets and inspiration. Establishing all the components that an asset needs to be made is vital when considering what needs to be done to develop an asset. The estimated poly count, estimated time taken and priority all help when planning the project with resource management, in terms of the project and time. Many of the assets within this list have been chosen because they suit the set and setting of the game; the other half have been chosen because of gameplay mechanics, such as the glasses and bottles.

Document Change Log

V1.0 Title Page and Index

A gradient title page and index are created. The index has all the headings to talk about

V1.01 Formatting

The format for the rest of the document is decided (fonts sizes, layout)

V1.02 Title Page Altered

Changed the title page to have a wanted poster background using photoshop, providing a more thematically linked opening to the document

V1.03 Main Body Background

Added the gradient background, without the poster, onto the main body of the document

V1.04 Redoing Main Body Background

Unsatisfied with the bland gradient, I used photoshop to add a variety of blurred bottles, bullets and glasses into the background.

V1.05 Images

Implemented images to provide evidence and reference to aspects of the document.

References

<https://pnghut.com/png/kUGMaLcZsG/xbox-360-controller-one-game-controllers-wiring-diagram-transparent-png>

<https://www.freepik.com/vectors/computer-keyboard>

<https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/computer-mouse>