

Dave's Drawn Adventures

Design document (brief version)

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The main idea:

Dave's Drawn Adventures is a 2d platformer about a little human-like cartoon called Dave, drawn with a pencil in a copybook.

The story of the game is about a young boy (and later a young man and an adult) who draws cartoons and the world they live in, when he gets bored. Dave actually symbolizes the boy himself, while the levels and events there tacitly show his emotional experience. The main enemies represent the people who hurt the boy's feelings, and the friends he saves during the game are the people he loves in real life.

Gameplay:

Levels of the game are the spreads of a copybook with drawn platforms and other objects. Each level has an exit door and the next level begins after a player goes through it. If the player has to complete some specific goals in order to finish the level, the door will remain closed until they are completed. A level is not necessarily situated on a single spread – there is a possibility to use multiple spreads and switch between them using some certain points on the pages, like hatches and doors (they look slightly different from the previous type of doors in order to keep it clear for the player).

Dave has a melee weapon – a pencil with an eraser on its end. He holds it with the eraser frontwards. The enemies can be destroyed by erasing them from pages. Besides that, Dave has a ranged weapon - vials with correction fluid. Vials are grenade-like weapons.

Dave takes damage when he touches his enemies and while his health level is reducing, he is slowly getting erased from the copybook. Dave's health level is displayed with the brightness of his coloring – that shows the measure of him being erased. For the player's convenience there is a health bar in the left upper corner of the screen in a form of hand-written numbers (from 0 to 100). Dave has an ability to cure himself by using lead of his pencil to color up his shape. This side of the pencil will be grinding off after every usage. The current sharpness of the pencil is shown in the right upper corner of the screen. It is visually represented as a pencil-drawn strip which is reducing after each treatment. There will be pencil sharpeners situated in difficult areas of the game – a player will be able to restore the pencil sharpness level by using them.

In order to complete a level, the player has to achieve one or several objectives from the following list (the first one is necessary for each level of the game). The list of the objectives will be announced to the player in the beginning of each level.

Level objectives classification:

- 1) Reach the end of the level (that means finding the door which leads to the next level)
- 2) Rescue a friend (erase a rope tied around him/her, a cage padlock, etc.)
- 3) Erase all the enemies on the level
- 4) Defeat the boss

Gameplay sketch:

Besides classic jumping through platforms and destroying the enemies, gameplay also includes solving puzzles.

Why this game is going to be needed:

A huge demand of retro-genre games appeared in recent years (2008-2011). Particularly it concerned 2d-platformers with original content. Games of this genre not only comprise fresh quality content but give the player an opportunity to get the same experience he had while playing an 8- or 16-bit console in front of his TV-set years ago.

It is appropriate to enumerate following projects which belong to this genre as the successful ones: Braid (2008), Blueberry Garden (2008), And yet it moves (2009), Lucidity (2009), Shank (2010), Super Meat Boy (2010), Limbo (2010), Outland (2011), Death and the Fly (2011), Fancy Pants Adventures (2011).

Games, where events take place on a piece of paper with “drawn” objects have also obtained popularity recently. The examples are: Blueberry Garden (2008), Crayon Physics (2009), Line Rider (2008-2009), Your Doodles are bugged (2011), Fancy Pants Adventures (2011), a great number of games on mobile platforms like Slice it!, Doodle Jump, Parachute Panic.

Development of the project like this does not cost a lot, while it belongs to the intersection of two popular subgenres, which makes it a potentially successful product.

Story:

The story of the game is generally about the boy growing up and it involves different important periods of his life. The game cartoon character is called Dave, while a person who is drawing Dave according to the story, is called “the boy” or “the artist” further in the document.

There are 5 stages (periods) like this in the game, each of them consists of 5 levels. The ending of each stage symbolizes the ending of a phase in the boy’s life.

Every next level of the stage is more difficult than the previous one. Every next stage, in general, is more difficult than the previous stage.

The game consists of the following stages: Kindergarten, Elementary School, High School, College and the first job, Maturity.

Enemies:

Regular enemies in the game are various objects with legs or wings, depending on whether they are of ground or flying type. These objects are the drawn versions of the items that hurt the artist in real life, directly or associatively. For instance, on the Kindergarten stage, the enemy for Dave is healthy food, because it is very tasteless and a pillow, because, like many children, he doesn’t want to go to sleep while there are so many things to explore.

Dave can destroy his enemies by erasing them, though usually it is not necessary unless specifically stated in the objectives of the level. Contact with enemies harms Dave, and the amount of damage depends on the enemy. Some of the enemies are able to shoot.

Enemies are divided on three basic classes: *ground type*, *flying type* and *bosses*.

About levels:

Stages’ atmosphere should strongly differ, because at different times the artist is being in different mood. When he is delighted, he draws friendly landscapes with small amount of enemies for Dave, and the gameplay is more oriented on solving puzzles than on fighting. When the artist is depressed, he draws more aggressive locations. The atmosphere type is also stressed with background music: there is a calm, cheerful soundtrack on peaceful levels, and the more aggressive the environment is, the heavier and more disturbing the music gets.

Since the main subject of the game is growing up, level content changes, depending on problems and feelings the boy experiences on current life phase (stage).

The level number is displayed in the right lower corner of the screen, where the field for a page number in a copybook is usually printed.

All the permanent (non-erasable) items of the location are “pen-drawn” and they are blue. Everything that is erasable is “pencil-drawn” and is black.

There are lakes of correction fluid situated on some levels. Falling down in one of these lakes means the character's being completely erased (destroyed). Dave may use lakes with correction fluid to push his enemies there.

To diversify the gameplay, there are puzzles on different levels.

Puzzles:

Most puzzles are based on erasing objects (ropes, obstacles, etc.)

Examples:

1) There is a log hanging above the platforms. It is too high to jump on it for Dave, but at the same time the gap under the bridge is too long to jump across. The only way to pass this part of the level is to erase the rope holding the log on the left, using upper pushing attack, then walk across the log and erase the right rope, or simply jump on the next platform.

2) Reinforcing squads of enemies attack you near the door to the level exit which is blocked with obstacles. Dave has to fight back to keep safe, but he also has to find time to erase the obstacles, or he will never finish this level:



Development schedule:

Required staff: 2d-level designer, artist/ animator, programmer, composer.

Level designer tasks:

1) Create prototypes of all levels (25) and pass them to the artist and to the programmer for implementation (1.5 months)

Total: 1.5 months.

Artist/animator tasks:

1) Draw all the characters and enemies, create all the required animations for them and pass the result to the programmer (1.5 months)

2) Draw the levels using prototypes received from the designer (1.5 month)

Total: 3 months.

Programmer tasks:

1) Implement all game features and possibilities on the test levels set (2.5 months)

2) Create working models of the actual levels using the prototype received from the designer (1 month)

3) Compile the whole project with images and animations received from the artist/animator (2 weeks)

Total: 4 months.

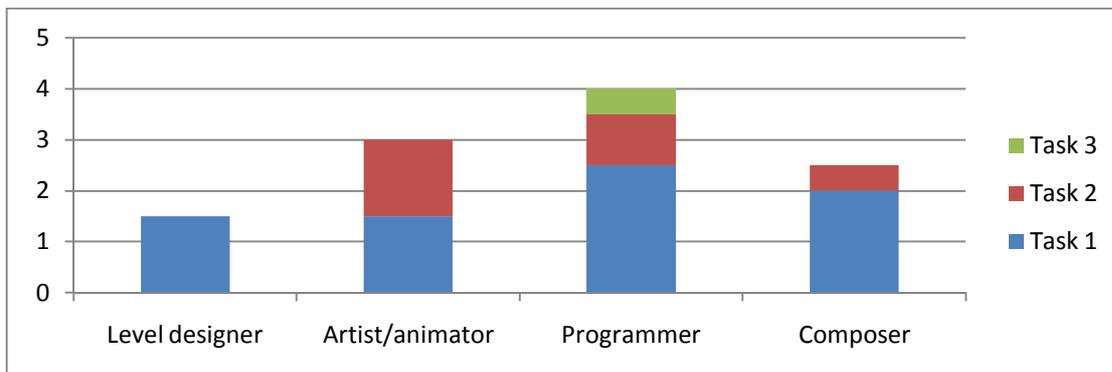
Composer tasks:

1) Write background music for every stage of the game – that makes 5 different themes, and create variations for every level. That means 25 tracks in total (2 months)

2) Record/collect from free sources other sound effects required for the game (2 weeks)

Total: 2.5 months.

In this project parallel working is possible without idle periods when staff members are inactive because of waiting for another specialist to finish his job.



Total: 4 months of work on development.