The Key to Victory is W
DESIGN DOCUMENT

By Keyantic as a template for the
2024 Shadows & Alchemy Pirate Software Game Jam
(Original document copied as a template - By Aizin for the
2022 Pirate Software Game Jam)

Development Timeline   **8**

Introduction

Game Summary Pitch

TktviW is primarily about how the W key is best managed in an uncomfortably 'w keyed' 2D environment.

Inspiration

Asteroids

Asteroids is the backbone of this project, more or less, as it was firstly meant to be just a tutorial I was following..

▶ How To Make A Classic Arcade Game in G…

..and then after I saw how the rocks and player worked, I started slowly branching off into new ideas and edits.

Rogue-ish type games (ie.Binding of Isaac)

While most roguelikes/lites tend to have a deep fascination with numbers, my (at least initial) aim is to instead have relationships with each element within. Starting with how bullets decrease from whole damage as they propel into the obscurity of space, and further into what trajectory you launch yourself in order to counter-thrust while hugging a rock.
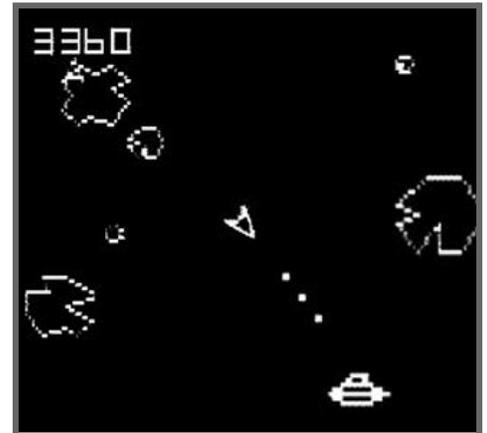
Player Experience

The player gets thrust directly into the space rocks without much inclination other than the temperance of trial, error, and self-made inqueery made theoretical practice with the mundane mechanics. They'd likely learn to shoot, maybe how to shoot the missile, or glide around well enough to avoid being in a dangerous flight path.

Platform

The game is developed to be released on windows PC, although as learning progresses this may always change or become abandoned. Currently it's on HTML5 only for the purposes of this jam and reducing the amount of versions I need to distribute to the void of itch.io.

Development Software

- Gamemaker Free
- Built in sprite editor, some concept design done in MSPaint.
- Gimp for the itch.io display image for the game.

Genre

Singleplayer, Bullet-Hell (projective), Incremental (in the jrpg *and* physics sandbox senses, emphasis on the latter).

Target Audience

Anyone who likes physics more than the labeled ideals most games tend to prioritize over making new mechanics. Despite this game being

without depth, this is the design philosophy from a personal perspective.

Concept

Gameplay overview

Fly and follow your survival instincts into a *meteor* kind of spaceship bullet hell, looking to bring component based ship augments, accessories, tuning, and perhaps more as restructuring progresses.

Theme Interpretation (Praise the W key)

> **W key - Must go. No stop. All skill. Clearly not, but the art of articulating this wholehearted idea to it's max is ingrained into the competitive spirit of most hardcore FPS gamers, rogue-likers, and toybox fiddlers alike.**

Sincerely put there is no room to grind or provoke a larger sustain of wealth for yourself, because it will do nothing but stagnate. Intentionally 'stagnation' will come through experimentation of what works, and having touched that stone with the foundation of this game's development I believe it will remain true through it's development. *Or in other words, it does not help you to unlock everything since you won't have a hold on it, it will have to be earned between each change in a way that puts enough tension on the player in the game's scope that they are looking to push ahead more than explore the current grounds.*

Primary Mechanics

Moving the ship, accelerating it, butt wiggles to attempt to no-no-no-no-no-no away from impending doom once it's too late (or as a deceleration/positional nudge). Shooting, lot's of it. Missile, initially wanting it to become a 1hp shield from damage/missile to shoot, but then I realized every component can have that 'feature' of breaking away once coming into physical contact with the rock & stone! Thor's face.. wait, what? Hmm, 7, yes.. 7..   (7)

Secondary Mechanics
The visual flair. Might sound arbitrary, but I've already seeded some lackluster findies inside of the game, nothing crazy, maybe, but the feelgood of what color your are (currently random) is highly important to me, and having the comfort of mind in a game that intends to be exceptionally hardcore could not go a moment being removed from player expression, fung-shway (I am not spelling that correctly you can't make me), etc. I don't know what having a heavily personalized code editor is like, but I'll leave you with that thought, becoming a microtransaction for the player, makes me want to vomit.

Art

Theme Interpretation

Darkness happens to be implicit in space, meaning all of that empty space gives me room for some scary shit in the future (such as subtle black holes distorting the faint glimmer of stars, a means of negative discernment of it's presence). Alchemy almost got no love, although it got some indirect pieces of candy with the generic esoteric (what could this mechanic also do?), but to a linear degree, if you find it here. I have more notes about this, from having a rear-shot that exists only

as a means to buildup lost speed from the upgrade to eject said projectiles (more W more better). Things like that which make your *ship itself* the alchemical madness the wormhole creators crave.

Design

Not too honed in yet, but where it is it has become increasingly complex. I learned to use Game Maker's data structures just for an AOE hit, and I continue to open pandora's gift favors looking for more. Again, another self projected idea I went into in the game's design for how playing it should feel (in the future).

Audio

None. I have an audio interface and some familiarity with DAW softwares (mostly LMMS), I am too much of a perfectionist, and I want to save the auditory excellence for a far off day where it makes much more sense to achieve.

Game Experience

UI

Right now it's just functional, but it should be relatively as raw in comparison to the grade of the game as it goes up. Mostly wherever empty gameplay space is (did you use your bomb, then your cursor isn't going to be as visible since it is your indicator if it is up and ready to blow or not). It could be anywhere, in the walls, the grains of sand.. you get the idea (ie. the rocks may have a health bar now, or at least when it means something, but that rule could change if some *ahem* *nebulous horse*-sh*t would occur, very ftl I know).

Controls

Keyboard
  Arrow keys / WAD
Mouse / LMB & RMB
W / W / W

Gamepad
  Nope! Controls that are catered to a degree that changing them ruins the experience have always been my jam, and only because in being forced to respect the engineer's controls do you get a sense of what you are working with and the mind behind them. That could just be a deeply personal motif, but also it just isn't going to work on a controller with the amount of hyper-meticulous nonsense I want it to be.

Development Timeline

MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT
I actually was inspired to do that Game Maker tutorial because the jam was livening on in the discord's announcement's/news, and realized " ' / Well, I guess I could submit this and see if it produces a smile \ ' ". Will it? Dunno, but a whole realm of things clicked all at once and I am here for it.

What's Next?

Bunch of fun work. Restructuring the entire game to stop using built-ins like image_angle, or relying on GML Visual to grasp things (a soft cumulative goal as scripts are used and created). Going to be a day by day, and hopefully it will go from an idea I surprisingly came to love, into something actually playable. So far, I have spat in the face of sacrifice and compelled myself past what I thought was possible, feasible, or 'shouldn't

be done', and instead grabbed life by the lemons, twisted them into a fine jelly bean Pâté, and served it back to life with a scented calling card. I fully intend to punch a hole in the brick wall instead of attempting intimate skelepathy with it like most people I've caught whispers of do.

Non-comprehensive, chronological note document made tandem use in prodding this game to it's first life.

The Key to Victory is W
moving in the majoral sense is done with the W key, but everything else helps meticulate your ship's movement in slight ways here and there. Also, the 1 hitpoint separating your next being your death, can also be used as a bomb/missile if you are feeling daring enough. (this could change to have a cockpit chassis, which will be a temporary hitpoint you can take once when your missile is on cooldown, otherwise it won't be consumed, giving you a 2 hit buffer in the worst case scenario that goes away once it is damaged and must be repurchased if you can even do that idk yet :D. The front cockpit looks like a W, so it is a highlite inclusion to the movement being w on the keyboard for the game's namesake.

do different ship colors, an upgrade menu for it, extra 'exhaust' shot out the back end's gap, particles that react to the ship speed to help liven the movement.
modifer for the exhaust shot that lets you burn speed for a shot that's superheated
separate wings to two objects for their own collisions, so that wings can be damage with a small invuln time once it happens, to let you emergency ding a single wing once, and when the wing is hit a 2nd time it is destroyed, raising speed but also crippling or removing your ability to turn in that direction. Idea: wing modifier that adds aerodynamic and non-aerodnyamic blade(s) to the wings for doing 'close to the rocks' impact/slicing/drilling damage.

thrusters for left and right might also share this, and are tied to the wings, but not the wings taking damage if the boosters do, meaning you could get unlucky and have your hind booster hit instead which would make turning pretty bad.
maybe even a core object for the gun module, so you can still survive, and even use blades if you have them, meaning until you are completely destroyed you are still trudging on forward.
modular ship is cool.
equipable parts
better turn radius for faster movement
adds backthrust to turning for finer control (it's like a handbrake now)
missile not being used should power up your shots better.
'system diagnostics HUD/screen/partitionOf' to see active dynamic feedback of ship stats and how it will respond to your control.
use the color bug that would cause rocks to spawn in that cool purple color to instead use the player color to 'anti-color' the rocks, and have their color go in a gradual color parameter like it already does (look more into this)
still need to restructure the entire thing, but I also can add small things to it still like; spawning an object after the 'room reset alarm0' that fades in to allow you to reset the run with a keypress instead of forcing this behaviour in case the player wants to bask in their accomplishment.
note: putting the 'create starry sky' object into the 'applies to: bombable' will use the on screen instances of rocks to multiply the output of your rockos/rockies score due to it creating multiple sky objects per rock instance destroyed.
sidenote: this could be a cool thing for when this game is further developed, and upgrades increase screen bounds due to room size, and other factors that would increment the game's fun and difficulty.

Thank you for your time, tried making it a wee bit entertaining :)