

AirShip

DESIGN DOCUMENT

By h0lybyte for the Pirate Software Game Jam 17

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Airship

Introduction

Game Summary Pitch

AirShip is a simple click-to-move (or WASD) tile game with JRPG battle elements, with the goal of upgrading your ship and traveling around the world to find the “One” piece of the Ring.

Inspiration

One Piece

As the theme suggested ‘One’ and since we are talking about pirates, it just makes sense to build a game around popular concepts that everyone can understand. One Piece is one of the longest running anime and manga, so it already has a large audience and fanbase that we can appeal towards. We could include more information regarding this series but it's not worth it for now. The story follows a young pirate that is on his quest to become the Pirate King, while expanding his crew and running around in wild adventures. We might also add the fruits but as rings into the game too!



Final Fantasy GBA

The *Final Fantasy* Game Boy titles featured turn-based JRPG combat systems adapted for handheld play. Basically, the battles would typically occur in a separate screen, where players selected actions like attack, magic, or item use from menus. Party members had distinct classes or species, influencing stats and abilities, the humans leveled through items, while monsters evolved by consuming meat. Strategy revolved around resource management, as weapon durability and magic usage were limited. Despite hardware constraints, these systems offered surprising depth and variety for early portable RPGs. We would do something very similar to that and how in *One piece*, eating different fruits would give the person different powers.



Player Experience



Players control a zeppelin as it navigates a tile-based world using either click-to-move or traditional WASD controls. The world is filled with distinct trading outposts, pirate dens, and dangerous skies where battles can break out. Players earn gold by transporting cargo between regions, making smart trade decisions based on risk and distance. Gold can then be used to recruit and upgrade crew members or enhance the zeppelin with new weapons, armor, and abilities. Combat unfolds in classic JRPG style, with turn-based battles that emphasize party synergy, strategic skill usage, and tactical planning.

Platform

The game is developed to be released on the web as a hobby project. We are using github actions to build the game.

Development Software

- Godot 4.4.1 for the game engine, with GDScript.
- Canva & Aseprite for graphics and UI
- No music yet.
- Nx MonoRepo/Github Actions for publishing the game.

Genre

Singleplayer, puzzle, casual, JRPG.

Target Audience

The game is designed for fans of classic JRPGs and tactical strategy games who enjoy a mix of exploration, trading, and turn-based combat. It appeals to players who appreciate progression systems, character upgrades, and resource management within a light steampunk or fantasy-pirate setting. Casual players can enjoy short trading runs and simple battles, while more dedicated players will find depth in optimizing their crew, cargo routes, and combat tactics. Its approachable controls and layered systems make it suitable for both younger audiences and nostalgic gamers alike. Whether you're in it for the adventure or the economics, there's something here for every kind of skyfarer.

Concept

Gameplay overview

The player controls an airship or zeppelin with a standard crew on a tile-based map with mini-objectives throughout the world. We might try

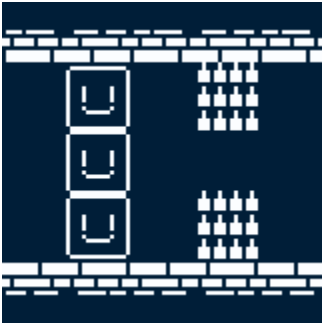
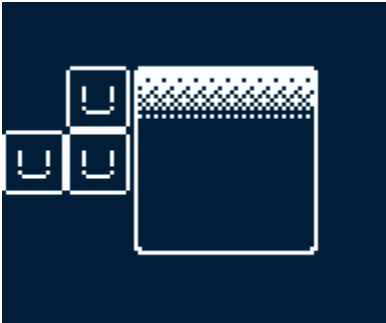
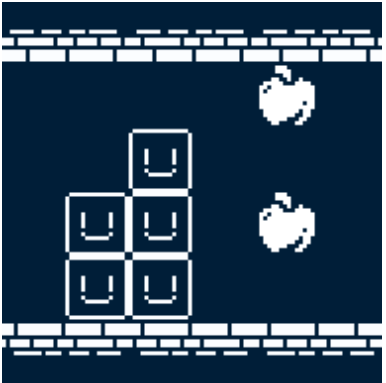
to have a semi-open world that the player can travel through but we might be limited on how much we can render without breaking the game. As the player navigates through the sky, they will encounter different structures, npcs and events that might end up taking their whole ship down. The goal will be to become the “One True King” by finding the “One Ring”, we might rename the item or concept a bit more to avoid any direct rip off.

Theme Interpretation (Sacrifice Is Strength)

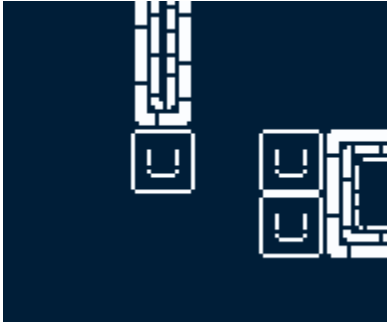
'Sacrifice' interpretation - The player voluntarily offers something they would otherwise use to their benefit to then gain something else of use in its stead.

Within the context of a puzzle game, rather than a sacrifice strictly being an optional upgrade of sorts, the timing, placement, and orientation a 'sacrifice' within this game instead occurs to allow the solution or progression of the puzzle. Only through careful planning of movement to remove parts of the player's mass can the player make their way to the exit. ***One must often sacrifice a part of the player mass to pass through specific areas as they may be too large or encompass the wrong shape.***

Primary Mechanics

Mechanic	Animated Mockup (Art not necessarily final)
<u>Walls</u> A stopping force to prevent a player too large to access a certain area. Otherwise to simply restrict movement.	
<u>Spikes</u> When a player cell walks on top of a spike, that cell will die and further simplify the player mass.	
<u>Holes</u> The player mass can walk freely over a hole as long as at least one cell is on a floor tile. If the entire mass is over the hole, the entire player mass dies.	
<u>Fruit</u> If a player cell moves over a fruit, it will eat the fruit and generate a new cell on the opposite side of the mass it is a part of.	

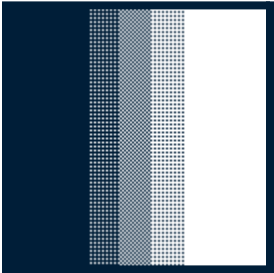
Secondary Mechanics

Mechanic	Animated Mockup <i>(Art not necessarily final)</i>
<u>Independence</u> If two player masses happen to separate, they will still move synchronously but interact with the environment independently. If then connected again, the two masses will join to act as one.	
<u>Set Spikes</u> When a player cell walks on top of a set spike, after moving off of it, it will then become a regular spike trap	

Art

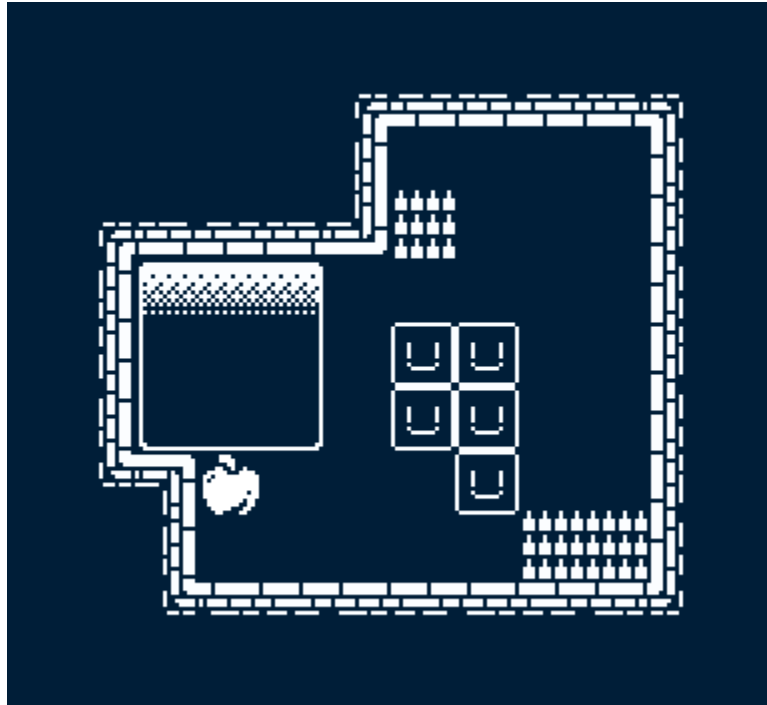
Theme Interpretation

While maintaining the very limited color palette theme, the sole use of black in white seems way too common, and a bit harsh as a color scheme for a relaxing puzzle game. To circumvent this, a soft, **dark blue color** will act as the unique accent color as opposed to black with white being the primary, carrying color to base the sprites off of.



Design

A very **minimalistic** approach will go into the design of the game, heavily relying on the severe contrast of the limited colors to provide detail. Though, the design still is clean and smooth in the sense that, the use of many shades of a color will not be as present to confront the **retro style** and pixel art.



Not an actual puzzle/level, merely a full example of the tileset and art style

Audio

Music

To add to the overall theme and vibe of the game, there will be minimalism incorporated into the music. Heavy use of reverb and effects to fill space within the few instruments. Bass and drums will generally constitute the majority of tracks with accompanying softer

sounds. Mainly through synthesized sounds rather than acoustic will further suggest the retro style.

Sound Effects

To add more flare and polish to the experience, a multitude of environmental sound effects will give weight and feedback to the player's actions. Rather than foley, or otherwise realistic sounds, synthesized blips, bloop, and whooshes are used.

Game Experience

UI

For the UI, we will try to keep everything modular and try to build them out as reusable components. The fantasy ui pack and some small custom ui packs will be our go to move for now.

Controls

Keyboard

Arrow keys / WASD + Click to Move.

Gamepad

Dpad support if we get enough time.

Development Timeline

For the development timeline, we will be using discord and github to keep track of it. I found that both provide the best support and utility for this project as of right now.