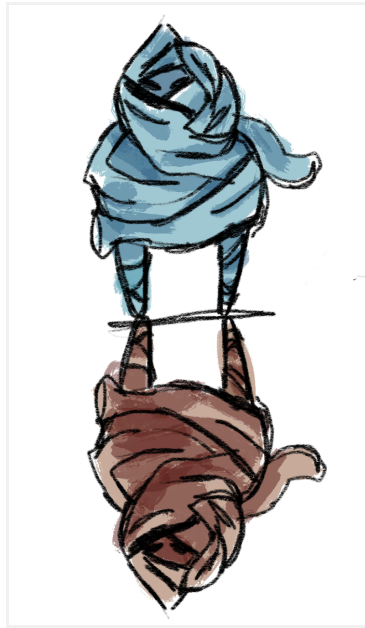




Alpha Release

Soulbound Escape



Lukas Liu

Mariia Iurtaeva

Arda Karaman



Overview

In the last milestone, we still had to tie up some loose ends and combine our game assets to make a fully functioning playable game. So we first took some time to finish up the game and then dived into our first playtesting session to see how the game feels to the player and whether it needs adjusting in terms of mechanics, balancing or feel. In the following chapters we describe our playtesting session, the questions asked and the resulting answers and which of those answers we used to improve the game experience.

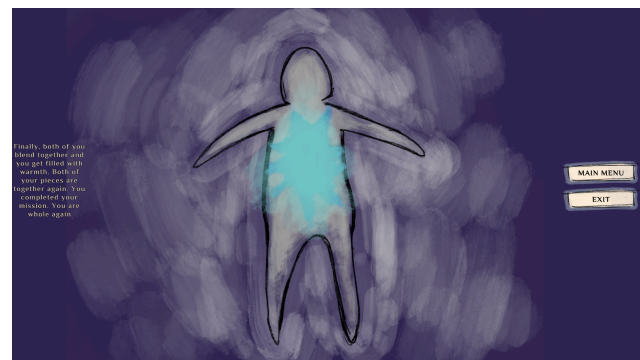
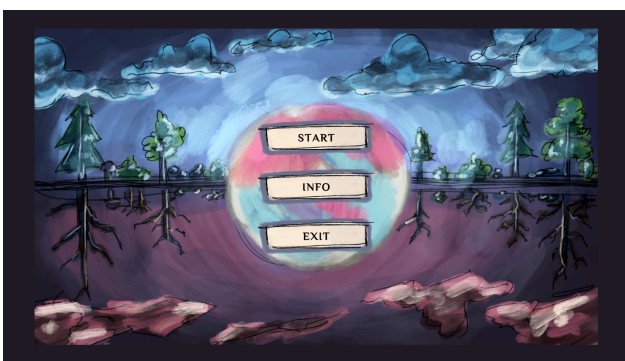
Pre-Testing Changes

Firstly, we are going to describe which changes were made after the Alpha release to make playtesting possible and to elevate users' experience. This was necessary, so we could get more data about the core mechanics and gameflow without the player being confused about missing parts in the flow itself.

Gameflow

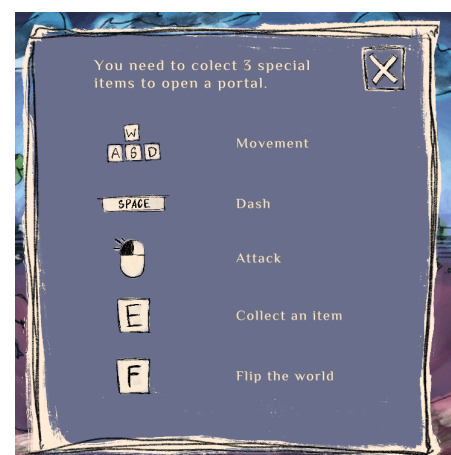
As mentioned before, we combined our assets and made a consistent gameflow with all the main scenes connected. Now we have a full gameflow with a start in the main menu, continuing with the story, the main part with the game and an ending scene. The main part was drastically improved as well. Those improvements include everything from small balancing and some mechanics' fixes to adding a boss scene. Potential game balance improvements should surface once we do our playtesting.

Aesthetic



Firstly, in order to create a better experience with immersion into the story, a new design for the main menu and an ending scene were created. The main menu scene now also offers information about controls and the player's task for our game.

Additionally, we created 3 background music compositions for different scenes, to give the player a better feeling of





the game. For the same purpose we also added new sound effects, covering the main actions in the game.

Boss

We implemented a boss encounter after collecting the key items and going through the portal. A simple version of the map is generated and the boss enemies are spawned on each overworld and underworld.

Smaller Fixes

We fixed several small bugs and made various adjustments in different aspects of the game, such as scenes' connection, combat mechanics, map generation, items' appearance and so on.

Playtesting Session

Our playtest session involved inviting a student dorm to play the alpha version which included friends and strangers alike. Each of them played the game for roughly 10 minutes to gain a general feel of the game and should be able to play through the game at least once.

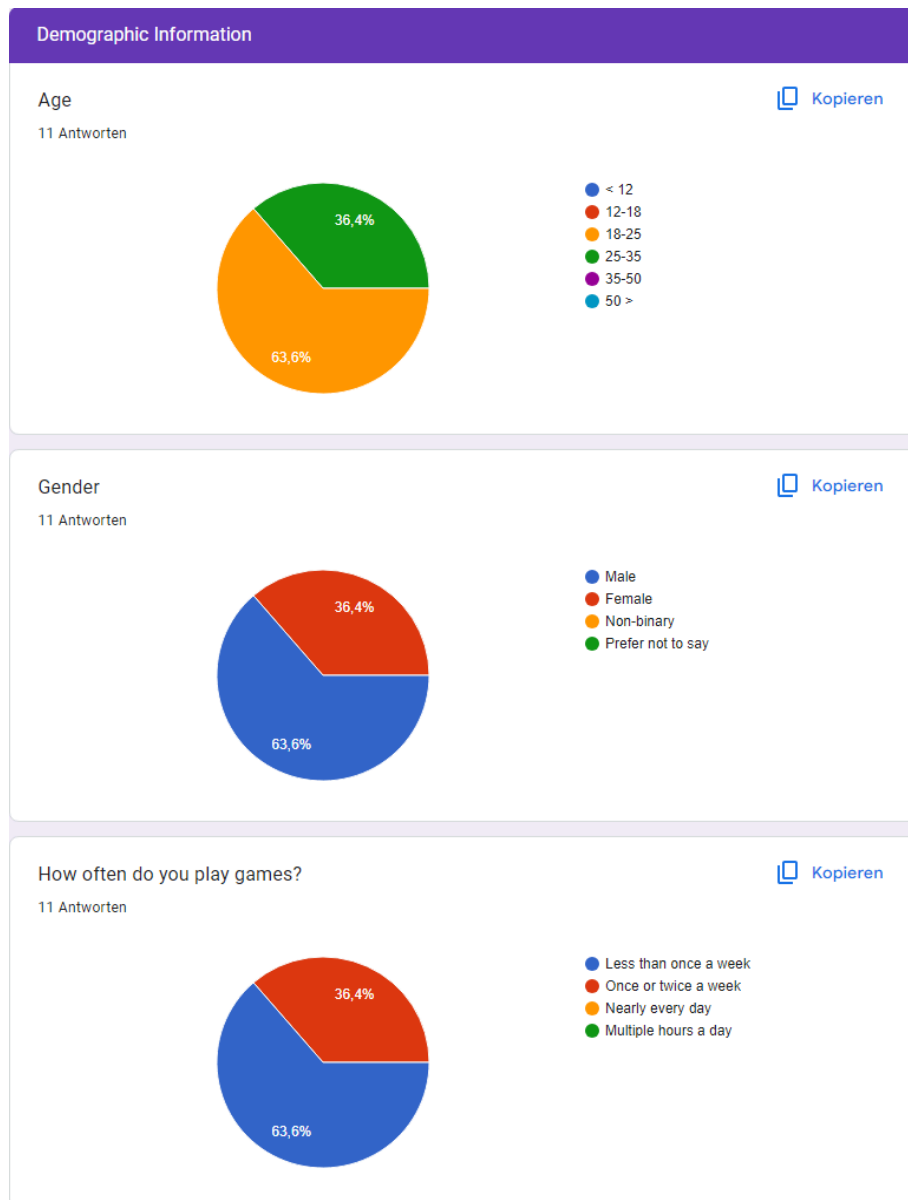
We used a Google Form to gain feedback and sentiment from the players once they were done with their session with the following questions:

- Demographic information: Age, Gender and how regular they play games
- Game experience:
 - How good was your overall game experience?
 - Were the goal of the game and controls clear and easy to understand?
 - Did you like the game's artstyle and aesthetics?
 - How was the game experience in terms of difficulty?
 - How was the game experience in terms of length?
 - How did the controls feel?
 - Was the user UI understandable and sufficient?
 - How do you like the game's audio and sound design?
- Feedback:
 - What aspect(s) of the game did you like?
 - What aspect(s) did you dislike?
 - What would you improve or add on to the game to make it more enjoyable?
 - What in the game is currently lacking and needs to be improved or potentially removed?



Once every player tested the alpha version, they each submitted their feedback through the forms and we evaluated its results.

Results



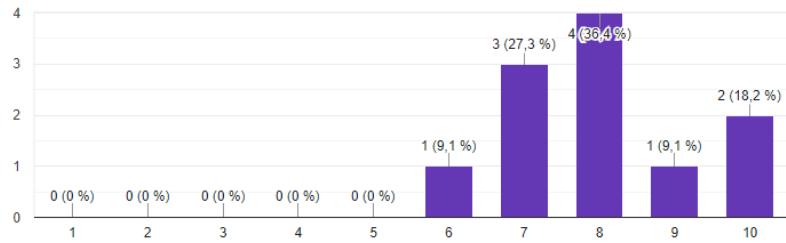


Game experience

How good was your overall game experience?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Comments

4 Antworten

A few glitches with main screen

Fantastic Game Concept and Design. I loved esp. the feature that you can switch worlds and game play seemed pretty smooth.

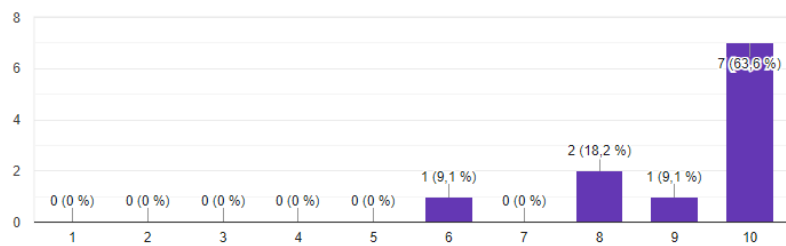
Glitches a bit too much

Nice atmosphere, good animations and design, good mechanics, limited content

Were the goal of the game and controls clear and easy to understand?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

3 Antworten

Key counter and some tip on when to change "universes"

Adding an Inventory Count, with a progress bar so you see that collecting things furthers the game story.

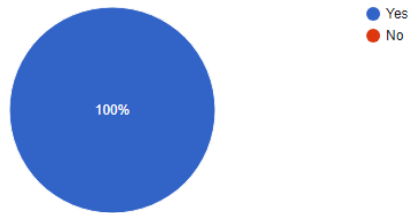
More weapons and more stuff to do ;)



Did you like the game's artstyle and aesthetics?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

2 Antworten

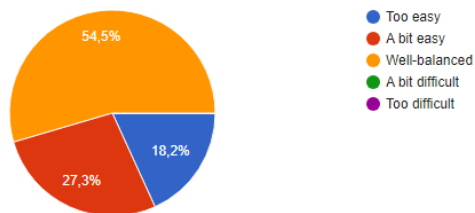
as a designer i am really impressed with the design

Definitely! Loved the beginning/ start screen of the game, i would suggest to make the aesthetic more coherent, so also the game itself has this hand drawn vibe.

How was the game experience in terms of difficulty?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

2 Antworten

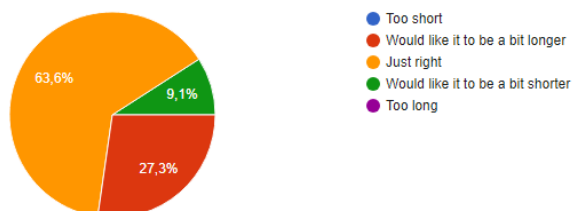
Was neither too hard nor too easy imo.

Bosses can be more strong

How was the game experience in terms of length?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Comments

1 Antwort

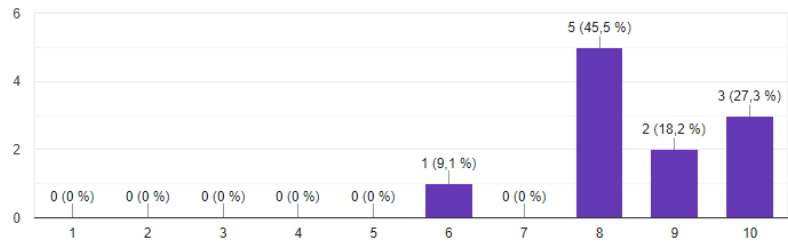
The searching around takes a little too long but the fights with the enemies are great length wise.



How did the controls feel?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

2 Antworten

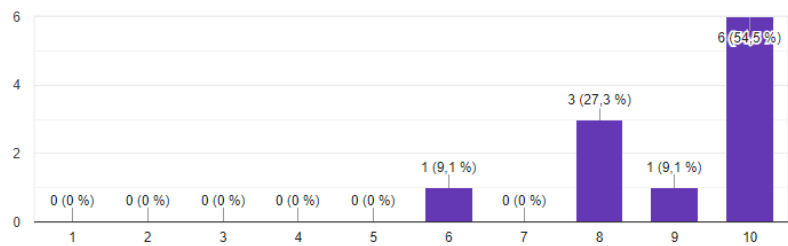
The mouse didn't turn the direction which the character was facing and the attack cooldown was not obvious at first

Pretty easy to understand, due too the similarity to other games. Really well done!

Was the user UI understandable and sufficient?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

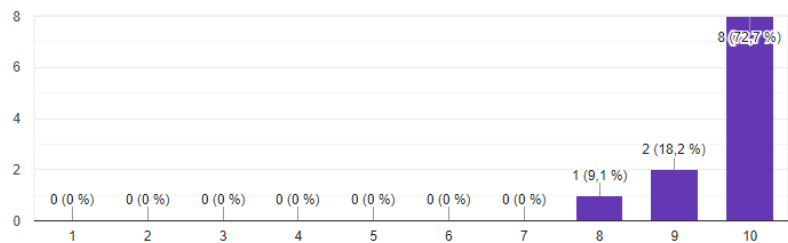
1 Antwort

Some stamina bar would be helpful

How do you like the game's audio and sound design?

[Kopieren](#)

11 Antworten



Suggestions

2 Antworten

Would be of course awesome, to have fitting music specifically made for the game. But that's of course pretty expensive, so the royalty music is nice and well chosen.

More sound effects



Feedback

What aspect(s) of the game did you like?

8 Antworten

- the art, the idea with the two worlds, the enemies, the world design
- The concept and the artwork
- The creativity in story telling and the art style/ artistic choices made, like the enemies being mushrooms.
- Hack and slash
- Intuitive, easy to play
- The switch between worlds was very nice and the for every new Start different map
- Graphics, sounds, easy controls
- The two different worlds and how you smoothly switch between them

What aspect(s) did you dislike?

6 Antworten

- nothing
- The controls weren't that intuitive at first
- A bit buggy and glitchy, you could just fly through trees.
- No character damage animation
- The attack trigger on the mouse left-click
- Too easy

What would you improve or add on to the game to make it more enjoyable?

4 Antworten

- More Collision detection and more progress bars to let the user know where they are in the storyline currently.
- Other weapons, more sounds effects, visual effects fix the glitches
- Story line, more interactive elements
- They keys number should maybe be shown in the screen as well

What in the game is currently lacking and needs to be improved or potentially removed?

2 Antworten

- The fact that you can't fall down the island. I think you should die when you walk off.
- The hit of the sword was sometimes not recognized at the enemies



Evaluation:

- Overall enjoyment good
- Game objective well communicated
- Audio and sound design good
- Controls decent

Problems most testers encountered:

- Sprites in the main menu
 - Some problems with sprites most likely caused by different screen resolutions
 - We should check that our game works with different screens and sprites are adjusted correctly
- Glitches with collisions
 - Problems in several areas with collisions
 - Collisions of the character with some objects on the map are working with glitches
 - Collisions of the sword with enemies cause some problems for combat mechanics
- Attack doesn't feel responsive
 - We need to polish the controls of the sword
 - Collisions must be fixed
 - Better feedback to the user might help
- Some attacks are not properly registered by enemies
 - Again, that might be a problem with collisions
- Users wish for a better feedback on receiving damage/damaging enemies
 - Adding damage animations might help (for the main character/enemies)
 - Adding more sfx could help to intensify the feedback
 - Polishing the combat mechanics should be a big priority for us

Evaluation and Takeaways

Overall, we are happy with the results and now we have an understanding, what we need to focus on before the release. Players gave positive feedback about the game, gameflow, story and design in general, so we have been working in the right direction. Nevertheless, the game still needs polishing and work.

Planned Changes

Top priority:

- Fixing glitches
- Polishing combat mechanics
- UI items
 - Key item counter/Inventory
 - Attack cooldown
 - Sound slider
- Directional indicator for key items



Additional Changes to Uplift the Player's Experience:

- Working with design and atmosphere
 - Shaders
 - More music, sfx
 - Custom in-game UI design
 - More visual effects
- Making the gameplay more diverse
 - Harder boss battle
 - More buffs
 - More mechanics connected with the world flip
 - More interactables
 - Harder difficulty
 - New weapon

The additional changes are closer to “nice to have” features and might not be implemented in the full scale. The top priority is to make the game as smooth as possible to play and intuitive for the user. Uplifting player experience can only work in the case, where the basic experience is good already and is not limited with bugs and glitches. For example, it would make no sense to add a new weapon, when the combat mechanics with the old one doesn't feel good enough.

To sum up, right now we will focus on the planned changes, so we can create the best experience for people who will play the release version.