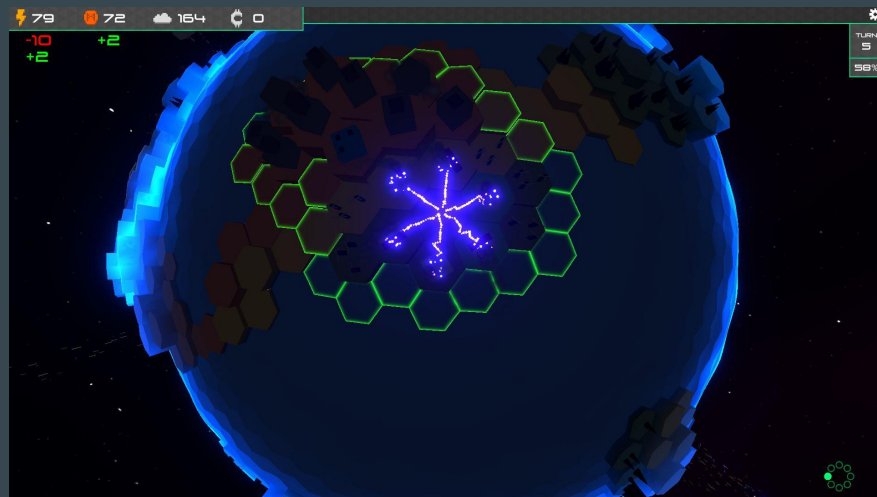# Terrafarm - Playtesting

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Playtesting sessions

- Most playtesting sessions were conducted remotely
- Mostly friends and family
- Focus on user experience and playability
- Keep helpful discussion during gameplay to a minimum
- Ask questions afterwards

Playtesting Questions

- Did you have trouble with the controls?
- How was the turn resolution? Did it confuse you? Was it clear what was happening?
- What was your first impression? How did it change as you played?
- Did the game drag at any point?
- What did you find frustrating?
- What did you like the most? What did you like the least?
- Were the game sessions too long or too short?
- Did you have a particular strategy?
- Did you understand what the individual buildings did?
- What would you like to add or remove?
- Did you feel the impending destruction of the planet was clear?
- Did you like the visual? Were they clear enough? What would you change?
- Is the audio too loud? Did you like the BGM and SFX?
- Was it fun?
- What would you say the target group would be?

Insights: First Gameplay Experiences

- Many people ignore the "Help" menu option and instantly start playing
- Even without reading the help menu, players quickly figured out the core gameplay
  - However, more obscure features like visualizations not used!
- No clear strategy on first playthrough
  - To be expected with an unknown game

=> Players are now forced to read the help text on first start

Insights: Usability

- Added more help text
- Implemented more explanatory elements in the gameplay scene
- Show more information to the player
  - Water Level
  - Tile Height
  - Required upkeep per turn
  - Turn progress animation

Insights: Usability

- Quality of Life improvements:
  - Hotkeys to construct buildings
  - Toggle overlays with per-tile information instead of holding a button
  - Reset camera position and rotation by pressing ESC
  - Many small UI improvements

Insights: Balancing

- On most planets a large amount of mass is available
  - Increased the cost for Streets, Bridges and Wind Turbines
  - Streets and bridges do not give any mass when sold
  - Increased the upkeep for Mass Extractors
  - Mass Extractors now consume the mass of their corresponding tile
- Wind Turbine's Energy-Pollution ratio was too good
  - Already dealt with this issue by increasing their cost
- Fission Reactors can now explode
  - Can cause a chain reaction => Placement is important!

Insights: Core Gameplay

- Sessions took too long
  - Made them shorter
- Water level jumps too quickly at the end of a sessions
  - Now updates every turn
- Turn updates took too long, especially later on
 - Massively sped up turn updates

Insights: Core Gameplay

- Meteors still felt too "random"
  - Often times meteors would fall on the other side of the world with little consequence
- Players often simply build a large "blob" of buildings
  - Not very interesting

Solution => Add per-tile pollution value

- Each tile has a pollution value that increases
- Meteors are now more localized
- Different strategies
  - Blobs: Makes best use of power amplifiers but attracts meteors
  - Stretched out: Safer against meteors, power amplifiers not very effective
- Allows more interesting expansion on the climate effect system

Per-Tile Pollution Visualization
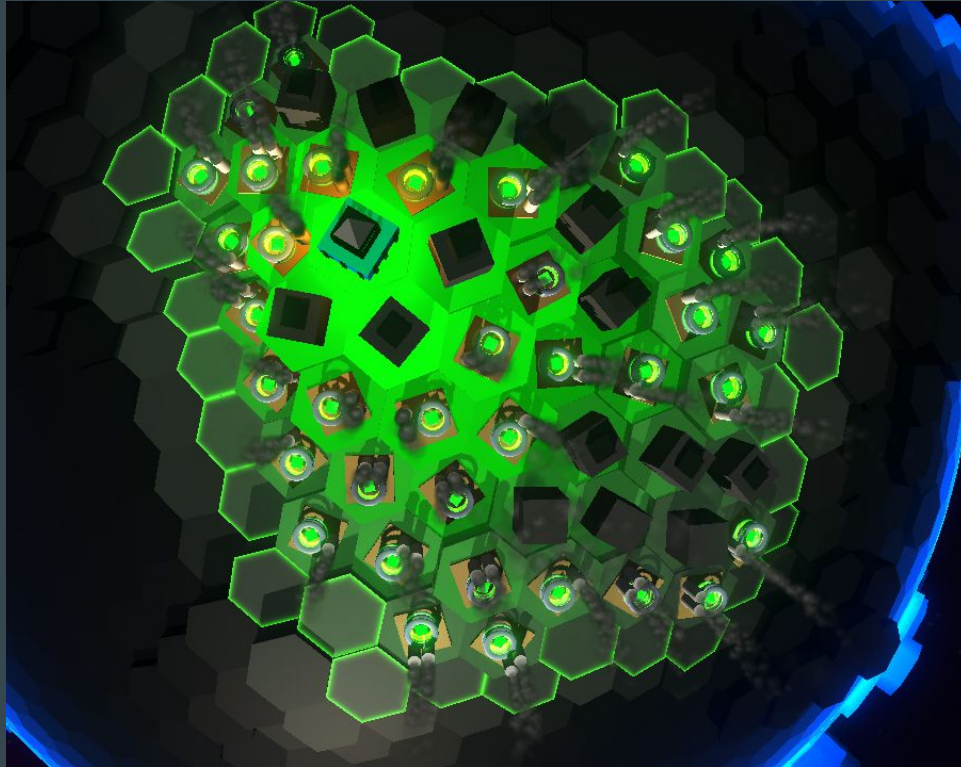
Changes

- Core
  - Reduced session length -> maximum of 50 rounds down from 100
  - Water level is adjusted every turn instead of every 5
    - Makes progression more clear
    - Water level interpolation time based off of amount

Changes

- Gameplay
  - Made turn updates complete much more quickly
  - Meteors now work differently
    - Tiles now spawn a danger sign before dropping the meteor
    - Each turn the tile has a chance to drop the meteor, letting players gauge risk / reward
  - Increased meteor spawn rate to compensate for danger warning, meteors have a higher chance of spawning on tiles with high pollution values
  - Fission reactors explode on death destroying all surrounding buildings, potentially causing a chain reaction
  - Rain extinguishes fire more quickly
  - Rain can now happen on lava planets
  - Bridges can be built on lava
  - Added per-tile pollution

Changes

- Balance
  - Wind Turbine cost up from 5 to 7
  - Street cost up from 2 to 3
  - Bridge cost up from 4 to 6
  - Mass extractor upkeep up from 6 to 8
  - Mass extractors now drain mass from the tile they are on
  - Mass extractor productions scales higher with more mass to offset tile drain
  - Streets and bridges now have 0% sell value down from 50%

Changes

- Quality of Life
  - Visualizations are now toggles instead of holding the key
  - Mass visualization is paused during turn upkeep
  - Settings toggle to turn building rotation on or off
  - Added "HP" to building HP to make it clear what was being shown
  - Added tile height to tile info panel to make it easier to compare tiles
  - Added energy upkeep UI
  - Added more help text to main menu
  - Added arrow pointing to help menu on first launch to make players more likely to click it
  - Added loading animation while turn is updating
  - Escape now centers camera to base, pressing again resets camera rotation
  - Increased build menu size
  - Added hotkeys to build menu

Changes

- Visuals
    - Changed the way the base looks
    - Changed the way fission reactors look
    - Sun direction changes on turn update
    - Base building explodes on destruction

Changes

And of course, many bug fixes!