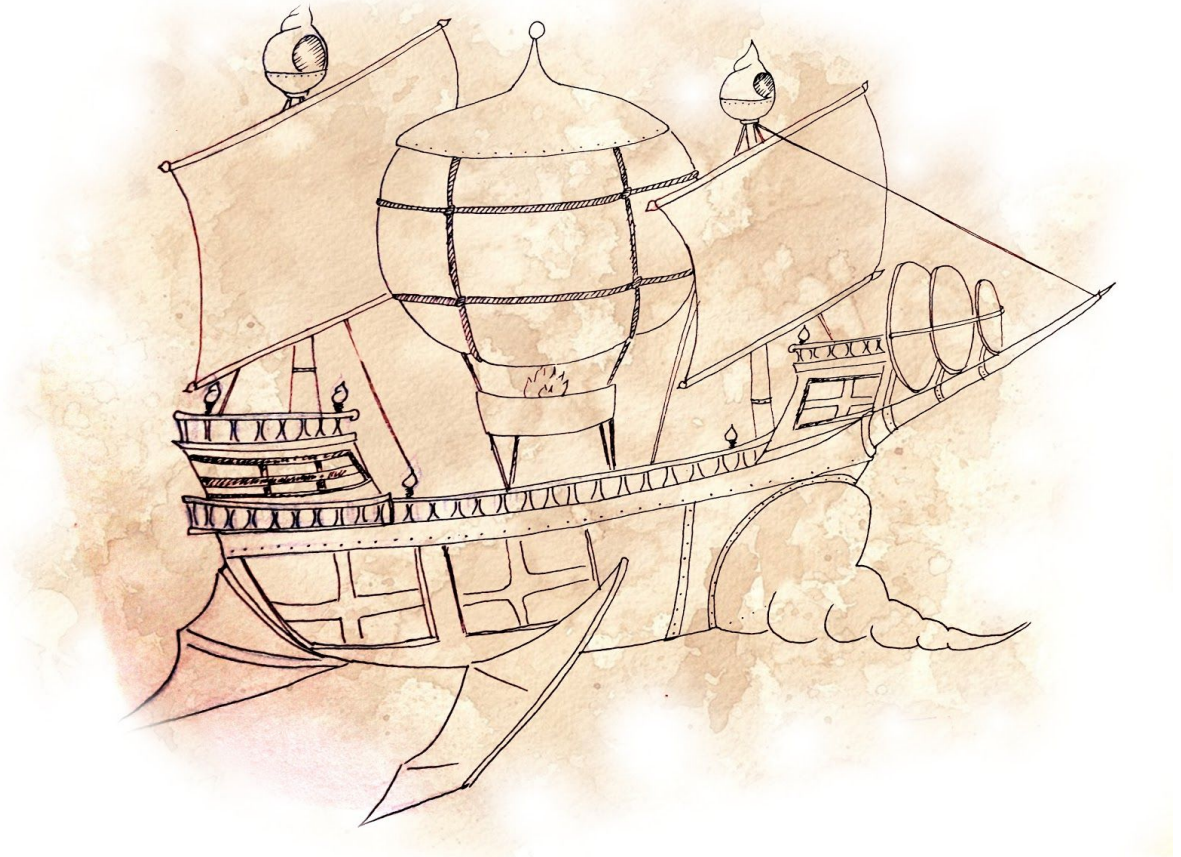# Alpha Release Report

for

Master of Tempest

A game made by The Twisted Trash Pandas

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1. Alpha Release - Self-assessment

At this point, we can tell, that we have achieved our low target goal. Additionally, a greater part of the desired target was also achieved. Which parts were achieved and which were not, are described below.

2. Networking

All the features of Networking are implemented. Performance and consistency improvements have been made since the Interim Report. There are still some minor issues with the transform updates because the game is played on a fast moving ship with a lot of obstacles flying around but the high target can be regarded as achieved.

3. Voice Chat

The big idea of our game is the asymmetric gameplay between two players which requires a lot of communication between them. The fact that this game is played over the internet means that the players would need to find a third party solution in order to talk to each other. This definitely is not a good solution because it requires an additional effort of the players before even starting the game. That's why in-game voice chat was implemented since the Interim Report. It uses push-to-talk with an option to toggle the recording permanently on which makes it easy to use without being distracting during gameplay. On top of that, the voice chat is also used in danger zones during gameplay. In such a zone the voice of both players will be distorted - introducing fun and also a meaningful barrier to the communication.

4. Player Controls

Shared player controls such as movement and interactions logic have been improved. The multiplayer nature of the game as well as the fact that the players move inside (on top) of the ship that itself travels with great velocities posed a few challenges and problems that we had to overcome.

4.a Wizard

The wizard gameplay was reconsidered. Going away from the quick time event mechanics, and trying to avoid using UI elements and rather give the information to the player through game world objects, we've changed the way spells are cast. Now the wizard has 4 different power sources and an altar with 4 crystals. The energy from the power sources can be drawn by the wizard and placed into the crystals. Depending on the configuration of the crystals, the spell will trigger. The energy placed in the crystals has a lifetime, and the wizard has to renew it if he wants to further support the spell. This makes the wizard's gameplay more dynamic and fun. Another new addition is the wizard's book, that is used to check the configuration for available spells. The wizard holds the book with his hand which also looks like a part of the game world and doesn't break the immersion. Animations for the wizard gameplay were also made, and we can say the the desirable target was reached.

4.b Apprentice

The apprentice gameplay was refined since the Interim Report. The apprentice now not only teleports to the crows nests to tell the Wizard what is happening but also has a hammer that can be used to

repair damaged parts of the ship. This hammer can be charged to become more effective and it can also be thrown at incoming rocks to damage and destroy them. This results in a gameplay loop where the apprentice constantly has to charge the hammer, talk to the Wizard, move around the ship and teleport to the crows nests. This is challenging and fun while avoiding boredom for the player. Logic, animations and visuals are fully implemented and the desirable target is definitely met for this part of the player controls. For the high target, more special effects can be added and animations could be improved.

5. Ship

 The ship was separated into multiple parts, each with its own attributes such as destruction value and status. The ship parts were then grouped up into three different areas, where every area can be repaired by the apprentice separately. When a component is hit by an obstacle only this component will be damaged and appears in a different color in the hologram for the wizard. Furthermore, the vertices of the corresponding ship part mesh are displaced into the direction of the impulse of the collision to give slight visual feedback to the apprentice as well. Instead of specifying four repairing areas we decided on three because that way we can cover all parts of the ship. Therefore, the desirable target is fulfilled.

6. Environment

Overall, the desirable target regarding the environment logic was reached, but instead of implementing areas which boost the ship in a certain direction we introduced a new type of zone.

6.a Danger Zones

To influence the ship directly two different danger zones were implemented. The first one impairs the ship's maneuverability by freezing the entire object, which can not be visible directly, but rather through the particles in this danger zone. These particles follow the rotation of the tornado. The second zone is an "instant kill" zone - all rocks in that zone can be destroyed fully by the apprentice without charging his hammer. However, the ship parts would also be completely destructed if they were hit by any obstacle.

6.b Obstacles

The obstacles represent the biggest threat to the players. They are the only game objects which can prevent the ship from reaching the eye of the storm. Currently, there are three different types of rocks which only differ in appearance but underlie the same logical behaviour. They can be destroyed by the apprentice if the health of the obstacles falls below zero. However, if the apprentice miscalculates his damage output and only hits the rock below 25 percent of the starting health, the obstacle will be split up into two new objects.

6.c Voice Chat Zones

Because we decided to add ingame voice chat, it only makes sense to increase the difficulty for the player by taking aways or disturbing the central gameplay element - the communication between the two characters. Therefore, we implemented voice chat zones which function as danger zones, but instead of influencing the direct game components such as the ship or rocks, the voices of the players

will be either distorted, changed to low-/high-pitch versions or additional echo is being added to them. Overall four different versions are present which can be distinguished by the players through their different distinct and colorful particle systems, similar to the ones of the danger zones.

7. Visuals

After the Interim Report the visuals of the game gained more importance and were added, edited and changed. Apart from the main look for the game itself, we realized that the visual feedback is important for the gameplay of both players. Through those the players could ascertain certain situations and gain a feeling of control for the game.

After finishing the alpha release version of the game, we can tell that we achieved our low target and a great part of our desired target.

7.a Ship

After recreating the ship-model, we can now tell that the ship is looking appealing to player. The design was changed. More sails were added to give the ship a more "realistic" look. Also, more decks are now available for the apprentice to walk on. Those new spots are now used for the placement of different repairpoints to make the gameplay more interesting for the apprentice.

Also, we left the balloon's colour at it's gray values, to leave ourselves the possibility to implement additional feedback about the current ship movement. This feature is not yet implemented, but will be added to the game later on.
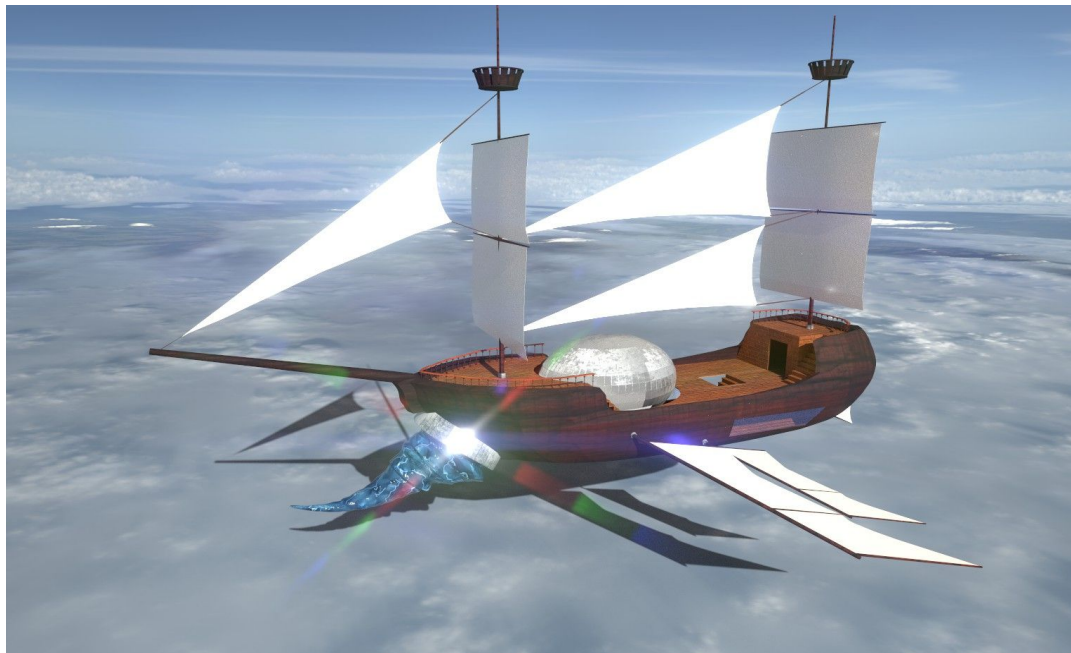

7.b Interactibales

Additional objects were added into the game. The most important objects for the wizard was his altar, which he uses to cast spells, and his spellbook, which he uses look up spells. Also, we needed energy sources as components for the spells.

The altar is circular with different energy points around it, so that wizard needs to move around the altar to cast a spell. As an addition, the hologram of the ship was placed above the altar. The Player can now cast spells and keep overview about the ships current status.

The spellbook can be used with one hand and is quick to be understood because only pictographic symbols were used to describe the spells.

The energy sources are placed around the room and are easily instiguishible from another.
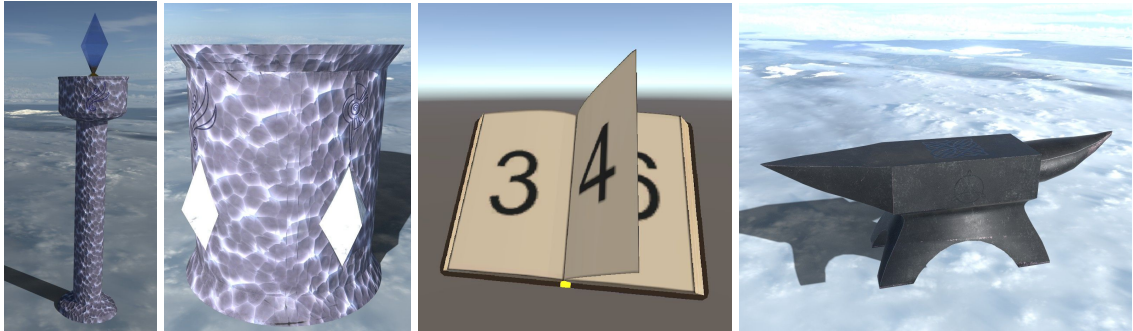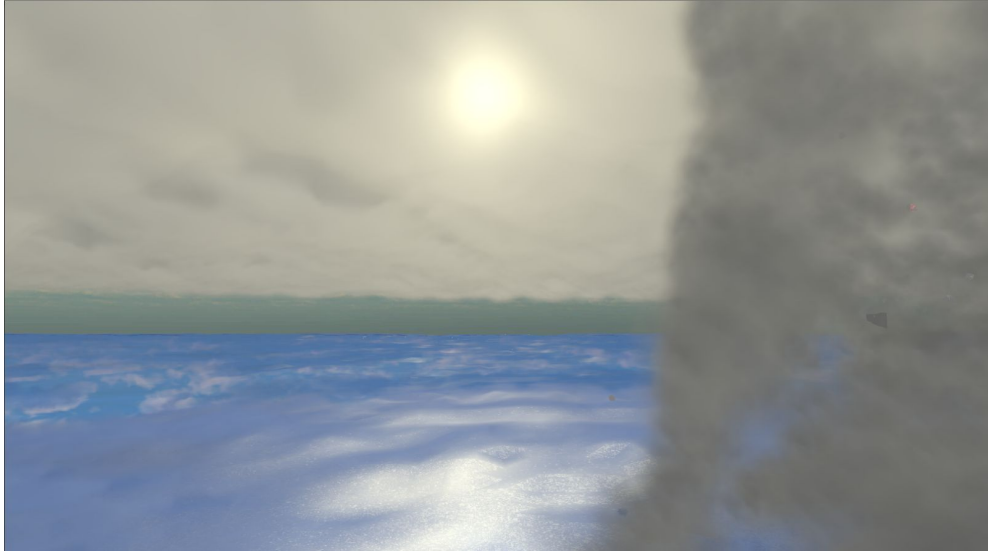

7.c Animations

Because of the first-person aspect of our game, only arm models were needed for the characters. For the sake of time, all ready made models and rigs were used for both player character. Nevertheless, custom textures and animation were made for them and added successfully into the game.
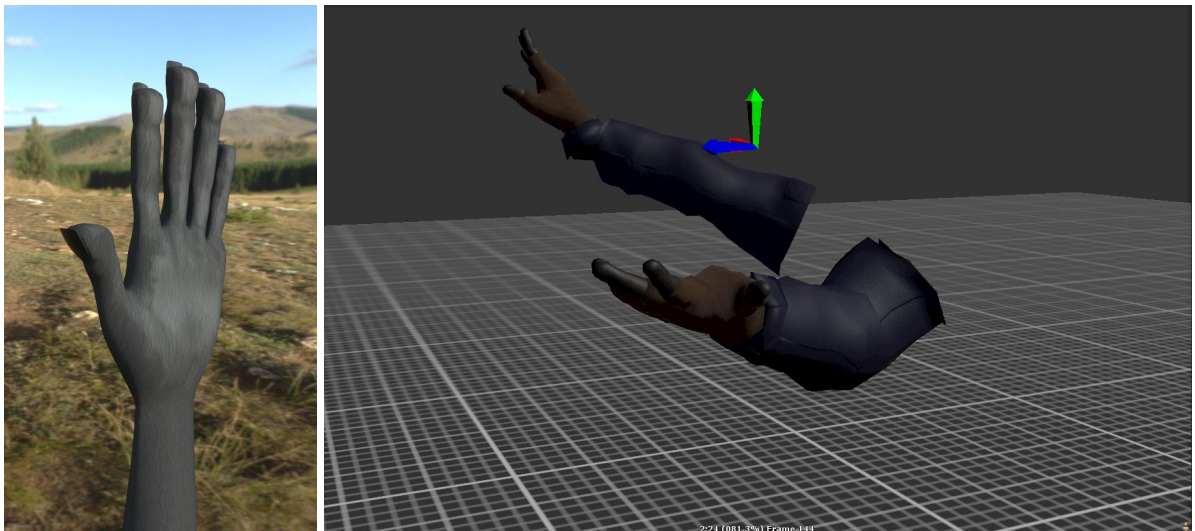
7.d Surrounding

The tornado still consists of multiple particles, but now they are increased in size and are rendered in a volumetric way by using look up tables. Instead of using weather effects the danger-/voice chat zones are more than enough to give additional visual details. To complete the whole world feeling we added strongly reflecting water and a cloudy sky which also consists of volumetric particles. They visual quality of the tornado decreased if looked at from the distance but being inside the storm feels a lot more natural.

8. Sound

Apart from background sound for the storm there is no sound implemented yet. This means that only the functional minimum for sound has been met.