Design Document for:

The 36 Chambers of the Panpipe Ninjas

Thief meets Loom

"Can you see in the dark?"

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Game Overview

The game takes place in a fantasy world set in ancient Asia where ninjas are still a common sight. The player is experiencing first the training of a young ninja apprentice of the panpipe clan who uses special songs played on an actual panpipe to perform different ninja moves. As the most important weapon of a ninja is his intellect the main challenge is that most of the game play takes place in complete darkness. For the training the young ninja has to complete missions inside of 23 chambers as well as 13 advanced levels inside a castle and master 5 songs on his panpipe. In the middle of the game the player will experience the game from the viewpoint of the wife of the young apprentice.

Philosophy

Simple gameplay mechanics!

Our game follows one main game play mechanic – moving in the dark. Beside that we will use one additional minor mechanic – playing a panpipe. We will use these two and tweak the level design to make the game as much polished as possible.

Lovely visuals and sounds!

As most of our game is playing in the dark we can make the parts that are visible like the chamber overviews before the actual game play takes place as well as the UI elements as lovely as possible. Also as sound plays an important role in our game we will make sure to have lots of small but funny sound pieces.

Common Questions

What is the game?

The game let´s you experience the training of a young panpipe ninja and an actual mission controlling his wife. Both are using a panpipe as their weapon of choice. By playing short melodies in his panpipe the ninja can perform special game moves like teleporting himself over a short distance.

As we are playing ninjas the game is basically a stealth game where the main goal is to move unseen from a starting point to a level exit.

In this sense it is a combination of Thief (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thief_(series)) and Loom (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loom_(video_game)).

Sneaking past guards in Thief

Playing songs in Loom

Why create this game?

Cause there has never been a combination of these two game mechanics before!

Where does the game take place?

The main setting is the training chambers of the panpipe ninjas. In the game there will be 23 chambers where each novice ninja has to move from an entrance to an exit by maneuvering around different obstacles in a chamber. Additionally there will be 13 levels taking place in a castle of a rivaling ninja clan.

What do I control?

You control a young novice panpipe ninja and his wife.

How many characters do I control?

You control just one character at a time during all of the game.

What is the main focus?

The main point of the game is to remember the layout of the level and its content like guards or furniture. Plus the player has to remember how special songs are played on his panpipe.

What's different?

The main difference of this game is the setting and the game mechanics.

Feature Set

General Features

Stealth plus music-based game play
Single player game
2D retro graphics

Gameplay

The game consists of 36 levels. In each level the player has to move his character from a starting point inside the level to a predefined exit. The main obstacle is that the level is only completely shown to the player in the beginning and then when the player moves the screen is turning black and only the eyes of his game character can be seen.

Now the player has to move his character without hitting any obstacle (furniture for example or moving to close to a standing or patrolling guard) to the level exit. To help complete a level the player can perform one of five songs in form of quick time events on his panpipe in every level.

5 songs represent the following game actions:
-   Sleep all guards
-   See the whole level again for a short amount of time again
-   Teleport over a short distance
-   Distract all guards and let them move to one specific point in the level
-   Eliminate one obstacle
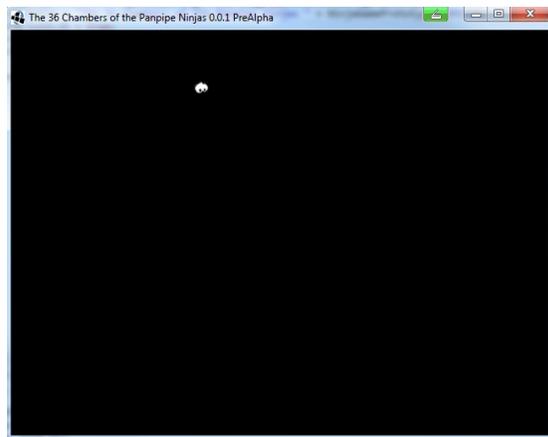
Gameplay example: The player sees the complete level in the beginning and then it gets dark and he has to get to the exit (without hitting an obstacle.

Playing songs on the panpipe triggers different game mechanics

Further gameplay ideas:

If you bump into an obstacle like furniture and there are guards there, they move slowly to the location where you bumped into it. This leaves the player time to move somewhere else in the meantime. Should he bump into another obstacle the guards move faster towards him and after the third time they follow him until they get him or until he manages to leave the level.

Level Idea: Ninja is looking at the level while hanging from the roof and when he begins the level it is turned 180 degrees.

The Game World

Overview
There will be two kinds of environments in the game: the training chambers and the castle of the rivalry ninja clan.

World Feature: Chambers
1 level in the house of the ninja
2 levels without available songs for getting the player used to moving in the dark
10 levels to introduce 2 songs and standing guards
10 levels to introduce 2 more songs and moving guards as well as a time limit to see the level in the beginning

Basic level color is black to represent complete darkness

World Feature: Castle
8 levels to introduce one more song
5 levels with a time limit to complete the level

Basic level color is grey to represent fog.

Game Characters

Early designs

Overview

Main Characters:
The young apprentice
Ms. X
The elders

Minor Characters:
The instructor
Guards
Opposing Ninjas
Opposing ninja lord

Creating a Character
A ninja with a panpipe to play songs with it

Enemies and Monsters
Guards and rival ninjas/samurai