

XAX

A Playstation Game

High Concept

XAX (working title) is a *back-to-basics* 3D arcade style game that brings a twist on classic “Defender” style gameplay to the 3D gaming arena.

The player pilots a spaceship around a series of small planets or asteroids. Each planet is inhabited by small beings or “men” who are under attack by evil aliens. The player’s primary objective is to rescue the beings from certain abduction and to annihilate the aliens by shooting down their UFOs.

Game Proposal

Description of gameplay

XAX will feature a spaceship that will be flown around a 3D planet. The ship may be flown from either a 3rd person or 1st person view. The ship may be navigated in any direction - forward, backward, left and right and may move up and down. Downward movement is constrained only by the planet’s surface; upward movement is constrained by an invisible ceiling.

The game levels are made up by “waves” of attacking aliens. In each wave, the player must protect the men residing on the asteroid terrain and kill the attacking aliens.

Points

The player earns points for alien kills. Bonus points are awarded for men saved and for low amounts of time taken to clear levels. Points will earn extra lives and power-ups for the player, when various point values are reached.

The goal of game is to get the highest score possible, and complete as many waves as possible.

Game levels

Game levels will be ramped so that with each subsequent level the game gradually gets more difficult. In addition, new aliens will be introduced every 2 or 3 levels. Power-ups will also be added in later levels, enabling the player with additional firepower, abilities or lives.

There will also be bonus game levels that will allow the player to earn power-ups. The bonus levels will have simple goals, such as “shoot as much as possible within a fixed time limit”.

The 3D World

While moving this mechanic to a 3D world adds new gameplay opportunities and visual depth, it also adds some challenges. The player will require additional information in order to react to aliens and succeed in defeating them. The gameplay challenge and fun will come more from the sheer quantity of easy to hit aliens rather than the challenge of trying to battle very few hard to kill aliens. Some of the solutions and compensations that we propose to give the player the best possible gaming experience are:

Homing projectiles: The player's missiles are semi-intelligent and will home-in on targets when they are anywhere close. This will prevent problems of inaccurate aiming in 3D space.

Alien AI: Aliens are relatively slow moving (especially in early levels) allowing the player ample time to react. In addition, Aliens on early levels will only shoot at the player when the player is at same altitude as the alien. This will make it easier for the player to shoot back. The aliens use a "strength through numbers" strategy.

Excellent ship control: The player's flight mechanics are simple and responsive. In addition, the player's arsenal is more potent than his foes'.

Player power-ups: The player can earn or pickup even smarter, stronger weapons with power-ups: proximity mines, better homing missiles, star burst etc.. The player may also get shields and speed-ups.

Weapons and power-up play tuning will be carefully balanced to make sure the game is challenging and exciting without being frustrating or difficult.

Tools for 3D visualization: In order for the player to know what is happening all over the planet and to play an exciting *proactive style* of game, we will provide tools for 3D visualization. Many of these will be displayed as translucent HUD displays to be useful, but not eat up screen real estate. These will include:

- Visual gauge cues such as a **3D radar** or a **plane scanner** (Elite style) to indicate where men or aliens are located relative to the player
- Sound cues such as **doppler** or **panning sounds**
- Visual effects cues such as depth /**distance cueing**
- **Threat displays** or alarms to indicate when the player is in impending danger, such as from an incoming missile
- **Border indicators**, such as a border fish eye lens to give the player a greater view volume

The final game interface will be made up of a combination of visualization aids working together. We may allow the player to configure their own combination techniques that best suit them.

Key Selling Points

This game is an excellent risk for development, not only because of the key selling features that will take it to market, but also the advantages to developing it initially:

Low cost: The game can be prototyped with an extremely small (and therefore less expensive) team. Because the proof of concept is primarily in the code, assets can be added once the concept is accepted. And, once it is past TDR, the team can stay relatively small as it is a low asset game.

Motivated, talented team members: The small core team is enthusiastic about the concept and there is little doubt that they will be able to successfully implement it. And, this can be proven very quickly.

Tangible game goal: This is not a game that will require a long schedule or an excess of level design. It is a clear concept that is easy to describe and ensures that everyone is headed toward the same shining goal.

And, when it gets to market, there are no shortage of features:

Classic game mechanic: This is a game that is 80% gameplay and 20% assets. People will immediately be able to pick this up and have fun with it and excellent graphics and great sounds will only add to the appeal. There is little risk in this genre.

Good market niche: Original “classic” arcade games (Namco Museum) and versions with added value (Tempest X, Robotron X) have sold well. And, the straightforward action arcade market is not flooded. In addition, this type of game has a broad target audience.

Proposed Prototype

The prototype of XAX will follow the “defender” game mechanic quite closely. This will allow for a straightforward proof of concept in translating it to the 3D universe.

The prototype will only have test art (no artist required) and will include:

- One prototype planet
- Player controllable ship that can:
 - fly around the planet
 - collide with the planet surface, the “invisible ceiling” and other UFOs
 - shoot at UFOs
 - collect men
- UFO ship with simple AI (including abducting men)
- Men on planet surface with simple AI
- Lots of fun gameplay!