

The brief for this project was to create a level concept for a Halloween-themed video game. This game would be a group PVP between two factions. In the level, I coded functions relating to player health alongside building and arranging the level as a whole.

Much of the knowledge and many of the techniques for making this level came from tutor and peer support. Examples include coding health bars, health pickups, damaging regions and in the creation of fireflies. This creation is documented within the Games Development Diary.

Games such as Sonic the Hedgehog and Mario had some influence when building the level. This can mainly be seen in the vast array of jumping platforms alongside the use of Lava as a damaging region to the player. However, the research for this level wasn't very in depth, nor did it come from a vast array of sources. For next time I need to more broadly and independently research the theme my work focuses on. I should also look to academic design theory throughout the level's creation. Instead of building a region and filling it with unconnected pathways, I should have designed the level in a way that would facilitate the gameplay. In this instance, creating a PVP zone connected to spawn areas would have been a better layout overall as it would lead the players into conflict.

This project was my first experience using Unreal Engine and also was my first experience in level design overall. Much of the work, done was, therefore, the result of tutor guidance. Very little of my own time went into exploring the functions of Unreal Engine further. This was likely a poor decision, as it prevented me from learning new features about the engine for myself. Likewise, my hesitance preventing me from becoming comfortable with the coding aspect of the engine as a whole. I am however more comfortable with accessing and building environments through the use of entities within the engine, as that is where much of my development was focused.

While I am happy with what I produced to some extent, It is not anywhere close to a professional standard and I would not take the level much further. This is due to how it lacks purpose and much thought into where the player can and should go. There is not a clear pathway for them to follow, and it also barely fits the requirements of terrain needed for an arena. This is primarily due to how it is too small to work effectively for its intended purpose. Furthermore, there is poor use of elevated terrain throughout the level which creates pathways leading to nowhere. In the future, noting down what the level is intended for prior to building would not only need to a more focused design but would also cause me to focus more on how terrain can be used to enhance the gameplay.

While I am now far more familiar with Unreal Engine then I was prior to this project, I could have used more of my own time to improve my own skills within it. In the next project, I will aim to focus my efforts more on understanding and exploring the code.

My role within this project was to code small aspects of the level (such as the player health bar) as well as build the terrain within the game. Overall I do not feel this project was well planned on my part. As a result, my work had little structure to it. Designing the level first on paper through iterating may have improved the process however may have been unnecessarily time-consuming. Either way, that could be an option in the future for improving the level design as a whole.

Much of my creative thinking within the project was finding a purpose for elements coded into the map. For example, after I was taught to code a region damaging to the player I used a lava entity to give the impression that it was the lava itself causing the damage. On reflection, this could have been created more efficiently through skinning the damage box or through coding the damage directly to the lava entity. In future, I will look to use one or both of these options for similar scenarios.

While the level does fit the aesthetic of Halloween, fitting the brief, there are two competing art styles in the

level. One is a more 'spooky' but cartoon-styled set of entities, whereas the other is more realistic in style. Both of these styles could have been incorporated together far better with more thought put into them. However, I feel this is largely a consequence of not having a set art style for the level as a whole. I will endeavour to ensure the entities used have a unified or matching feel to them in the next project.

I did not manage my time effectively throughout this project. On multiple occasions, I did not or came close to not meeting deadlines. I feel this could be improved through making my own list of goals and deadlines in order to break the task into smaller pieces. As I have mentioned previously, I feel it is the lack of planning on my part that was the greatest contributor to the issues I faced within this project. Therefore by ensuring I plan the aspects of future projects, I will remind myself what I am working towards and therefore be less likely to squander my time outside of scheduled sessions.