

Crazy Hat

Post Mortem
September 2016

When we started to work on Crazy Hat, the theme was "Gentleman" and the game had to be battle-arena style. My first idea was to have four characters fighting against one another in an old factory. They needed to **pile up an impossible amount of hats** in order to win a round. The basic experience was *"In this context, having so many hats on my head is extremely cool and I won't let the others look like me"*. In early development, players felt that this kind of *social climbing made them stand out from the lower class* - because in a fighting game, you want to crush others: Although it is an anti-gentlemanly behaviour, the gentleman is still there. This feature will remain throughout **whole conception and development**, because it was our main selling point and players actually loved it until the end.



First Playable Prototype - September 2015

About one of the 3C, we encountered some difficulties to figure out what point of view might be the best. From early development (first playable prototype) to pre-alpha version, the camera was full top, to get close to something like *Curve Fever*, *Bomberman 5* or even some board games. The main reason for changing from top view to $\frac{3}{4}$ view was because of the **hats-pile readability**: hats represent a player's score and this enables others to say "Hey! Why are you chasing me when HE is the leader ??". $\frac{3}{4}$ view enhanced the **social dimension** to our game

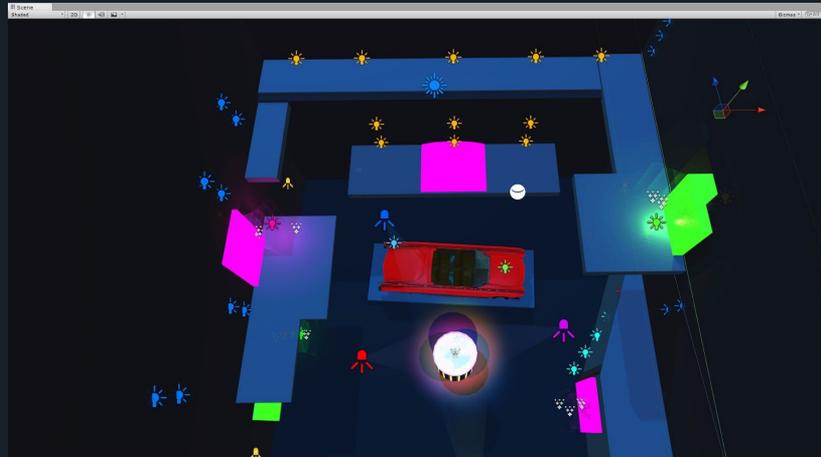
experience, which we figured out was as very important as anything else in a local battle-arena.

As a gameplay developer, working for a long period of time in the project, testing featured prototypes began to be **boring** in some ways. When I thought about some classic references (*Super Smash Bros*, *Power Stone...*), I started to believe that our game (now in $\frac{3}{4}$ view) had to be much more **dynamic**: the implementation of a dynamic and **following camera** was worth the time spent on its development, because it became **some kind of feature itself**, and distinguished our game from the other projects in class. The result was on players' behaviours: they were much more **attracted** by the screen and by what was going on; we had added a step in the **game flow understanding**.



Final game view - April 2016

But regardless of the key features (hats, attack, jump, dash, throw objects) that actually worked, the game was pretty **claustrophobic** ! Once we had put two pairs of teleporters on either side of the level, and managed them in order that the player would not block on any obstacle (and drawn an **infinite symbol** when travelling on the map), the feeling of an **endless space** was obvious. A "chase and escape" feature emerged: we didn't plan it but it gave **real interest** to the players who enjoyed playing the game for the first time. In this way players, who didn't understand the core mechanics well when starting out, could **still navigate fluently** on the map, letting time and other players teach them the main goal of the game.



White boxing for level design purpose (Unity3d) - April 2016

The main thing I personally learned from this project is that **I cannot do everything**. As a versatile and quick-thinking person, I liked to test too many things for one person to handle, yet we were five with **well balanced abilities**. I think it is a good thing to test most features / feedbacks and continue iteration all over the process, but my mistake was wasting time on **details**, while there were serious bugs remaining in the code, for example. I know from now on that my best weapon is organization: I just hope that there will be enough space on the wall to pin my notes.

Today, what makes *Crazy Hat* a good project for me remains the fact that we caught **something at the very beginning** and we worked around this from start to **release**. I learned that with a good base line, the players themselves will finally feel the game experience in its **entirety**.

I believe my course in Game design taught me to be versatile, attentive to others and curious.

Louis Magron, 2016

