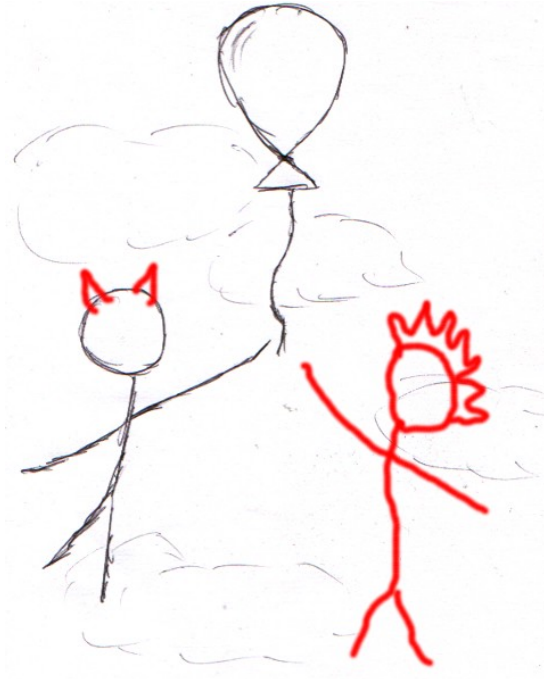


Balloon Balloon

(can you swing on the moon?)

Game Design Document (Future)



Balloon, Balloon

Can you swing on the moon?

Can you catch all the stars in the sky?

Can you keep up the pace

In this vertical race?

Can you float like a cloud up on high?

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Concept

Abstract

Balloon Balloon is a simple fun game in which players leap from one floating balloon to another to see how high they can get.

Theory & Design

While books can bring us into the narrative and experiences of a person, and video can show us fantastic imagery we couldn't otherwise experience, it falls to interactivity to allow us to experience feelings and emotions we couldn't normally experience – and what experience is more common to all humans than that of the wish to feel the freedom of floating care-free through the air, like a balloon?

Part of the imagery of balloons is always this innocent, childish freedom. We like to release them, watch them float away, or carry them and see them above us. With Balloon Balloon, we seek to recreate some of that child-like fun and freedom.

Balloon Balloon seeks to be a game of implied, but implicitly expressed aims; the player should feel guided towards particular goals (swinging on the moon, reaching as high as possible, hitting as many stars as possible) but with the freedom to interpret those goals as they see fit.

How It Works

Multiple balloons fly up in a staggered and slightly random pattern behind the players.

Players use their controller to move left and right on the ground, and to jump for a balloon. When the player's character touches a balloon string with their outstretched hand, they grab it.

Hanging from a balloon, however, will slow the balloon's ascent. To ascend faster, the player must jump from one balloon to another.

Development Plan

Time Scale

The aim will be to develop the game to its final state within 2 months.

- 1. Tweaking Collision – 1 day**
Fixing collision boxes – clouds in particular – that don't feel right.
- 2. Tweaking Controllers – 2 days**
Fixing Star Controllers and Balloon Controllers to smooth out positioning and avoid gaps.
- 3. Implementing Audio – 1 week - ?**
Time dependent on finalising the design for the audio.
- 4. X-Box Deployment & Testing – 1 week**
Dependent on getting access to an X-Box & Creators Club Account.
- 5. Implementing Multiplayer – 3 Weeks**
Could take some time
- 6. Character Customisation – 3 Weels - ?**
Dependent on decisions regarding Art direction.

Game Design

The Environment

The play field begins with players on the ground. The sky behind them is a clear blue.

Balloons float upward in a basic pattern, with their position and frequency and position randomised just slightly.

The frequency of the balloons will decrease slightly as the players progress upward.

As players progress upward, clouds will appear, and then the sky will begin to darken, signifying them passing out of the atmosphere and into space, where stars appear.

Players can reach the moon, but the game does not end there. Players can continue upward if they please.

Gameplay Elements

Player

The players are represented by simple stick figures that are under the players' control. They can move left and right, jump and hang from balloons.

Players can alter their player by selecting new heads before play begins, allowing them to distinguish themselves from one another in multiplayer games.

While hanging from balloons, players can swing from the balloon's string to move it slightly left or right.

While jumping left or right, they cannot change their direction.

The player's basic jump distance is equal to the distance between two adjacent balloons. The maximum jump distance should be the distance between three balloons.

If the player completes the parabola of a jump without grabbing a balloon, they begin to fall directly downward, gaining speed until they reach "terminal velocity", at which point they will fall faster than the camera.

Should they hit the ground at this speed, or (more likely) drop off the bottom of the screen, they are eliminated from the game.

Players do not collide with one another.

Balloons

Balloons float upward at a steady pace. This pace slows when you grab a hold of them, as it is determined by a weight/gravity algorithm, and the balloon is slowed by the weight of the player.

The balloons appear in a staggered pattern. The balloons in this pattern should be set apart by the distance of the player's basic jump. The pattern should be four balloons wide

The vertical position is randomised slightly to avoid too much repetition.

Clouds

When the player reaches a certain height, they will come into contact with clouds. When a player hits them, they will dissipate in a little puff, and boost the player's ascent for a second.

Stars

Once the player has left the atmosphere, they will see stars. Hitting a star will make the star “ting” with a musical and graphical effect, and will give the player a slight upward boost.

Moon

Eventually, the player will reach the moon. The moon function like a giant balloon, only without a string. Players coming in contact with the edge of the moon will grab the edge like a balloon's string and hang.

Releasing the moon will give players a huge boost, essentially ending the game but giving the player a very high final ascent score.

Winning & Losing

There is no positive end to the single player section of Balloon Balloon – essentially, no way to “win”

The game ends when the player drops off the bottom of the screen.

When either game ends, a report is shown of the various scores of each player.

Scoring

While the main element of Balloon Balloon is to create a carefree environment to play in, previous experience has shown that games without a clear, obvious goal coupled with ways in which progress to this goal can be measured.

Balloon Balloon will feature multiple scoring methods, none of which can be considered the most prominent scoring method.

- Height
The game tracks how high you have reached from the ground
- Balloons grabbed
The game counts the number of balloons you've grabbed
- Clouds Hit
The game counts how many clouds you've passed through
- Stars Touched
The game counts the number of stars you've touched
- Swung On The Moon
The game congratulates you if you've successfully swung on the moon.

Controls

Move Left / Right



Moving

On the ground, players can move left and right and jump.

Jumping

Jumping is simple. The force applied with each jump is the same. The vertical distance is aimed to be realistic for the height of the character. The horizontal distance is aimed to be roughly the distance between two balloons in their standard positions.

Code Issues

Physics

The game will be coded using the Farseer Physics engine

Custom Classes

BalloonController

Designed to handle all the balloons in the game

Balloon

Consists of Bballoon and BalloonString, both physics object

StarController

Star

CloudController

Cloud

Moon

Graphical Issues

Graphical Style

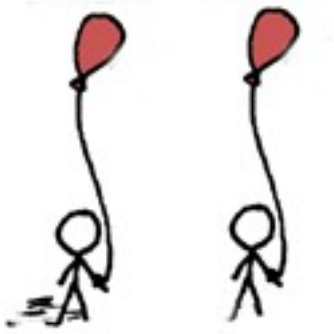
To reflect the innocent and carefree tone of the game, the art will be done in a hand-drawn style, with the players represented by stick figures.

Required Art Assets

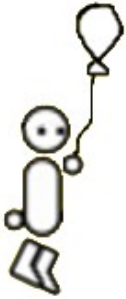
- Alternate player heads
- ~~Player -- run cycle~~
- ~~Player -- turn cycle~~
- ~~Player -- jump charge-release (from standing)~~
- ~~Player -- swing cycle~~
- ~~Player -- hanging cycle~~
- ~~Player -- jump charge-release (from hanging)~~
- ~~Balloon~~
- ~~Star~~
- ~~Star -- ping anim~~
- ~~Cloud~~
- ~~Cloud -- puff anim~~
- ~~Moon~~

References

- XKCD.com



- Zero Punctuation



Standing Issues & Bugs

Issues

- Balloons should be less frequent in space
- Should gravity change in space?
- Should players be able to collide/interact with one another?