

THE RESONANT BLADE



Game Design Document

v 1.9

Change Log

Date	Version	Change Author	Changes
19/07/2023	0.0	Sophie Butcher	Initial Document Creation.
19/07/2023	0.1	Sam Benson	Added additional sections to document (Not filled out). Core Mechanics, Story/Narrative, Level Layout, Interfaces, Camera POV, Menu Influences.
19/07/2023	0.2	Sophie Butcher	Added initial information in Overview, Game Overview, Setting Overview, Selling Points, and Magic (Mechanic).
19/07/2023	0.3	Louis Pisani	Added initial information in Movement (Mechanic).
20/07/2023	0.4	Sam Benson	Cleaned up Change Log. Added initial information for Camera POV, Menu Influences, Health (Mechanic), Melee Combat (Mechanic), Checkpoints (Mechanic). Reworded Movement (Mechanic), Magic (Mechanic). Added reference image for Enemies.
21/07/2023	0.5	Sam Benson	Added initial information for Interface (Title Screen, Main Menu, Options Menu, Pause Menu, HUD), Added Economies Section, Divided Enemies (Melee,

			Ranged), Environment Traps (Mechanic), Moved Game Flowchart to Interfaces.
23/07/2023	0.6	Sam Benson	Added images for Controls, Enemies intro.
24/07/2023	0.7	Louis Pisani	Added Puzzles section, Added Tutorial Puzzle and Wire Puzzle.
27/07/2023	0.8	Sam Benson	Revised Movement (Mechanic) - Removed Running, Added Walking. Revised Magic (Mechanic) - Changed requirements to cast spells, allowing casts at any available mana. Revised Mana Economy - Changed requirements to cast spells. Cleaned up Enemies and added armour appearing with an example image.
28/07/2023	0.9	Sophie Butcher	Revised Game Overview, Game Setting and Selling Points editing its language for clarity Added additional information in Game Loops and Target Audience Dot points
01/08/2023	0.10	Sophie Butcher	Added initial information to Audio Overview Added photo references to Level layout Edited titles and formatting for Puzzle Clean up Game Overview wording
01/08/2023	0.11	Louis Pisani	Updated Headings in Puzzles.
02/08/2023	0.12	Sophie Butcher	Added initial information to Puzzles Reformatting and Editing Sizing/Spacing of Full Document
03/08/2023	0.13	Sam Benson	Added Story/Narrative, Art Style, Moodboard. Removed Environmental Traps.
07/08/2023	0.14	Sophie Butcher	Edited Narrative, Core Mechanics and Game Loops Language and formatting
07/08/2023	0.15	Sam Benson	Added Dungeon Scrawl Layouts to Level Layouts.
11/08/2023	1.0	Sam Benson	Updated Enemies section. Initial Draft Complete.
30/08/2023	1.1	Sophie Butcher	Change Jumping puzzle to Garden puzzle.
31/08/2023	1.2	Sam Benson	Updated the Story Narrative to be more in depth rather than a rough overview.
01/09/2023	1.3	Sophie Butcher	Narrative read through and edit.

06/09/2023	1.4	Sam Benson	Added Menu/UI Controls.
26/09/2023	1.5	Sophie Butcher	Title Change.
06/11/2023	1.6	Sophie Butcher	Updated document up to enemies.
08/11/2023	1.7	Sophie Butcher	Full document edit and update.
21/11/2023	1.8	Sophie Butcher	Doc Check before sign off.
22/11/2023	1.9	Sam Benson	Final Updates to Doc for Gold Build.

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OVERVIEW

Genre	RPG, Action, Fantasy
Platform	PC (Keyboard + Mouse and Gamepad/Controller)
Point of View	First Person
Theme / Mood	Dark, Moody, Suspenseful, Wonder, Glowing
Target Audience	Teenagers, Young Adults, Puzzle, Action or Fantasy fans

Elevator Pitch

“Uncover the hidden secrets, lost to history and sealed away by the ancient relics.”

Game Overview

The Resonant Blade is a first person, fantasy game that's filled with action and adventure. In this game, players can explore the secrets of the relics hidden deep within the earth. The game is set in an ancient underground temple/tunnel system that was built to protect people from the relics and lock away long forgotten secrets. Players in this game must find the relics and try to escape the temple by fighting its ancient protectors and solving puzzles to unlock various rooms.



Setting Overview

The game is set in an underground temple/tunnel system which holds powerful relics, locked away and abandoned by people long ago. The tunnel system is constructed like an ancient temple which holds larger, more open spaces and rooms, some locked with puzzles and others guarded by ancient protectors of the temple. This underground temple is presumed to protect people from getting in to steal its treasure or from something horrible getting out.

Selling Points

The Resonant Blade is a game filled with action, fighting, puzzles and magic. By exploring the magical underground temple, players can uncover the mystery of the ancient relics and why they were hidden and protected so deep within the earth.

From relics that grant their users magical abilities to sentient cursed items that help the player along the way, this game has a lot to uncover and enjoy.

GAMEPLAY

Core Mechanics

Movement

Forward/Backward

The player will have sagittal movement in The Resonant Blade. The player will be able to achieve this by pressing the W key (Forward) and S key (Backward) when using a mouse and keyboard, or by pushing the Left Stick forward or backward on a gamepad/controller.

Strafing Left/Right

The player will have lateral movement in The Resonant Blade by strafing left and right. The player will be able to strafe by pressing the A key (Left Strafe) or D key (Right Strafe) when using a mouse and keyboard or by pushing the Left Stick left or right on a gamepad/controller.

Walking

The player will be able to reduce their movement speed allowing them to walk. The player will be able to do this by pressing and holding Shift when using a mouse and keyboard, or partially pushing the left stick on a gamepad/controller.

Jumping

The player will be able to jump, allowing traversal of obstacles throughout the level. The player will be able to do this by pressing the Space key when using a mouse and keyboard or by pressing the South Button (A - Xbox, X - PlayStation) on a gamepad.

Health

Player Health

The player's health will determine a restart condition for the player throughout the progression of the game. When the player is forced to 0 health, the game will stop and restart in the current condition of the world. The player's health will be displayed to the player with a UI element on screen.



Example health UI elements from Dishonored 2 and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim



Enemy Health

Enemy Health will provide the player a target for the amount of damage an enemy needs to take before it is considered dead. With the enemies dying after taking a certain amount of damage, this will allow the player to know when the encounter with that enemy has ended. Enemy health is shown to the player via stages of their armour being broken / dining from loss of power.



Example enemy health bar from The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim.

Melee Combat

Melee Attack

The player will have a melee attack, which will allow them to swing their sword dealing damage to enemies within 2 metres in front of them upon contact. Players will be able to swing their sword by pressing the Left Mouse Click when using a mouse and keyboard or by pressing the Right Trigger on a gamepad/controller.

Block

The player will have a Block action as a defensive option. The player will be able to use this to prevent incoming damage from in front of the player. The player will achieve a block by pressing and holding the Right Mouse Click when using a mouse and keyboard or by pressing the Left Trigger on a gamepad/controller. This will block enemy melee attacks.

Magic

Talisman

The Talisman is a magical object that the player acquires early in the game that provides the player with the ability to heal themselves. The player will also be able to recharge their mana through the central mana pool within the heart of the map.

The player can interact with the mana pool by pressing the E key when using a keyboard and mouse or by pressing the East or West Button (X - Xbox, Square - PlayStation) on a gamepad/controller.

Additionally if the player has enough mana they are able to heal at any point (outside of cutscenes). They can do this by pressing the Q key when using a keyboard and mouse or by pressing the left bumper on a gamepad/controller.

Mana

Mana is the source of magic in The Resonant Blade, both for the player and for the world around. The player will be able to find and acquire mana from the Mana Pool. The player's mana will be displayed to the player with a UI element on screen.

Magic Healing

If the player has mana available, the player will be able to cast a magic heal, consuming mana. The magic heal will require the player to sustain the healing spell to heal over time. The player will consume mana as well as heal periodically as the spell is sustained.

The player will be able to achieve this by pressing the Q when using a keyboard and mouse or by pressing the Left Bumper when using a gamepad/controller.

Mana Pools

Mana Pools are sources of mana scattered throughout the underground temple, but will need to be activated for the player to use. The player can activate them by pressing the Interact Button when they approach them. When the player interacts with a Mana Pool, the player's mana bar will be fully refilled.

Mana Pools also act as the locations for Checkpoints throughout the game.

Interacting

Throughout the temple, there will be various assets that the player will be able to interact with. These include:

- Puzzle Assets
 - Rotating parts
 - Activating Levers
- Mana Pools

The player will be able to achieve this by pressing the E or F key when using a keyboard and mouse or by pressing the East Button (B - Xbox, Circle - PlayStation) on a gamepad/controller.

Checkpoints

Checkpoints will be how the player is able to maintain progression throughout a level after their character dies. Checkpoints are automatically triggered and placed strategically throughout the world after cutscenes and after the players world interactions, saving their progress up till the point of death and respawning them will full health and mana in a safe location.

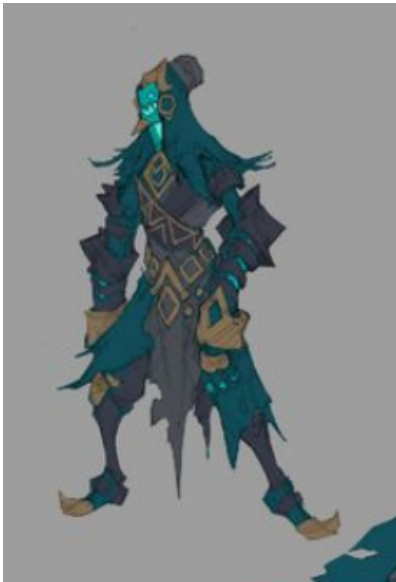
Checkpoints will save the progression of the level and revert the level to that state if the player character dies.

Enemies

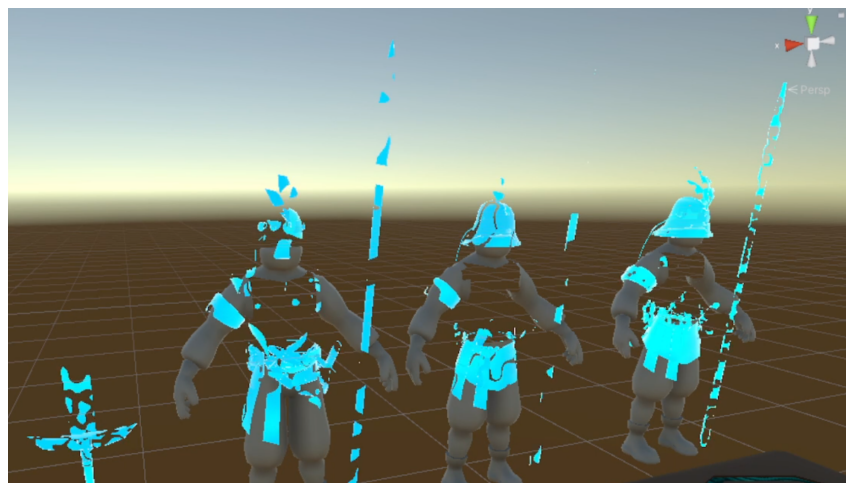
The enemies in The Resonant Blade will be the same enemy type repeated over and over, this enemy will fight in melee combat.

The enemies will first appear to the player as statues. When the player enters a new room or fails a puzzle element, the enemies will then “awake” transforming from stone to their standard form. This will then reveal the enemies glowing armour, which breaks and fades as they take damage.

The enemies will draw inspiration from the enemies in the Shadow Isles in Ruined King: A League of Legends Story.



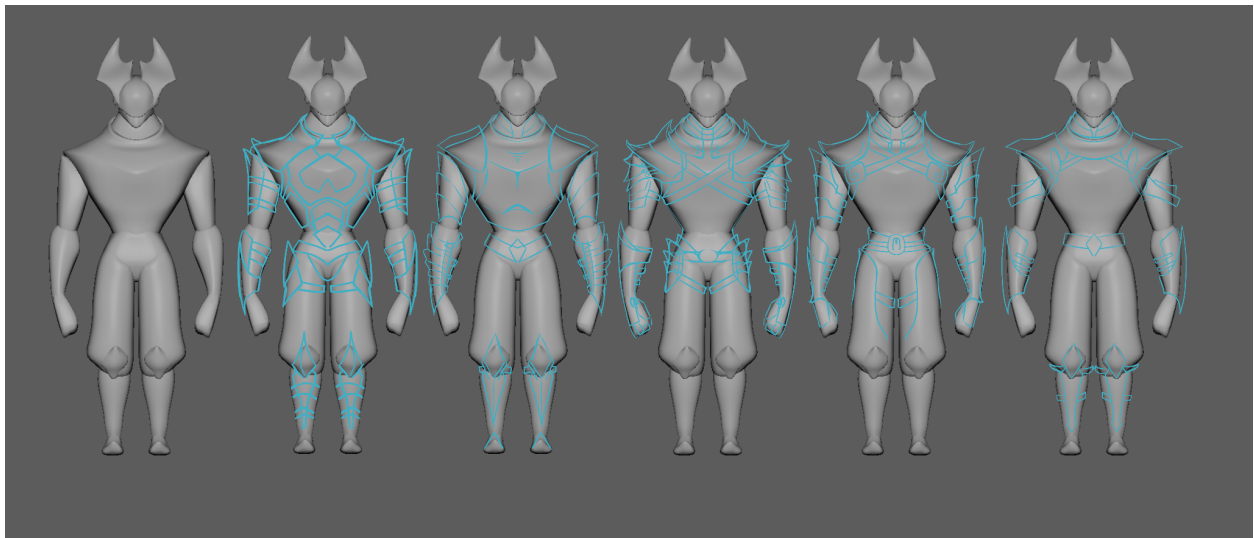
Initial reference image for Enemies



Example of Enemy armour slowly revealing

The enemies will be armed with a one handed sword and draw near to the player in order to attack.

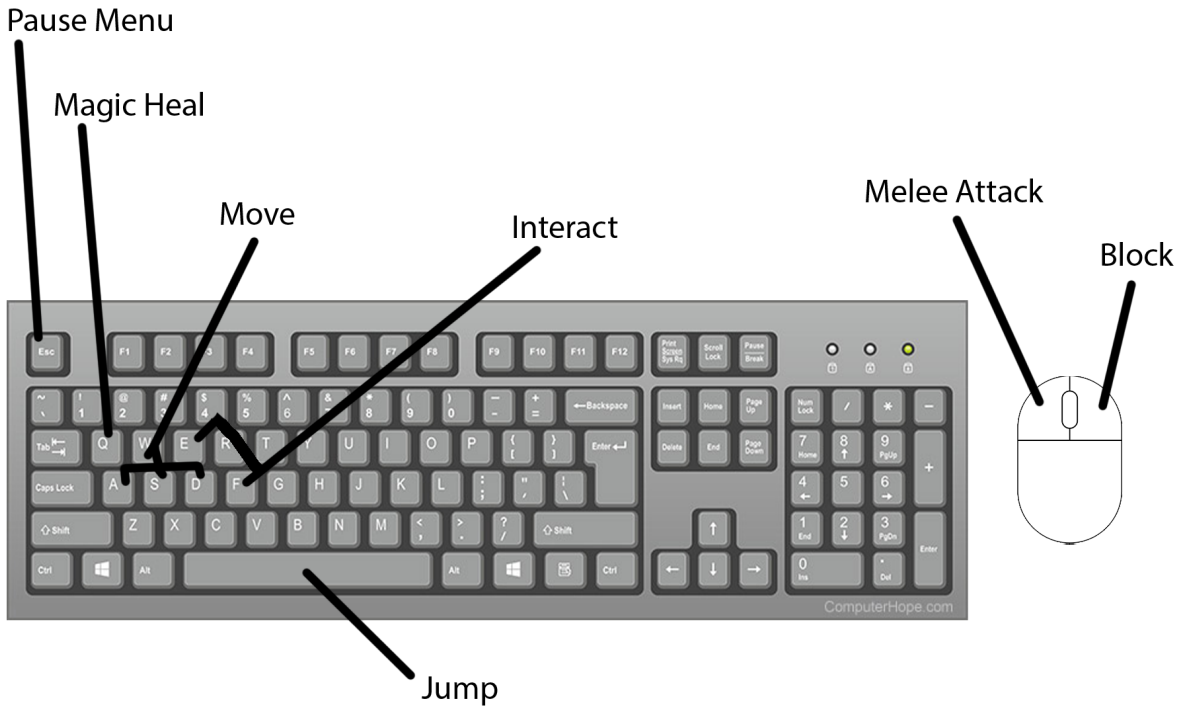
The enemies will be noticeably unique with their pointy horns and bulky upper body armour.



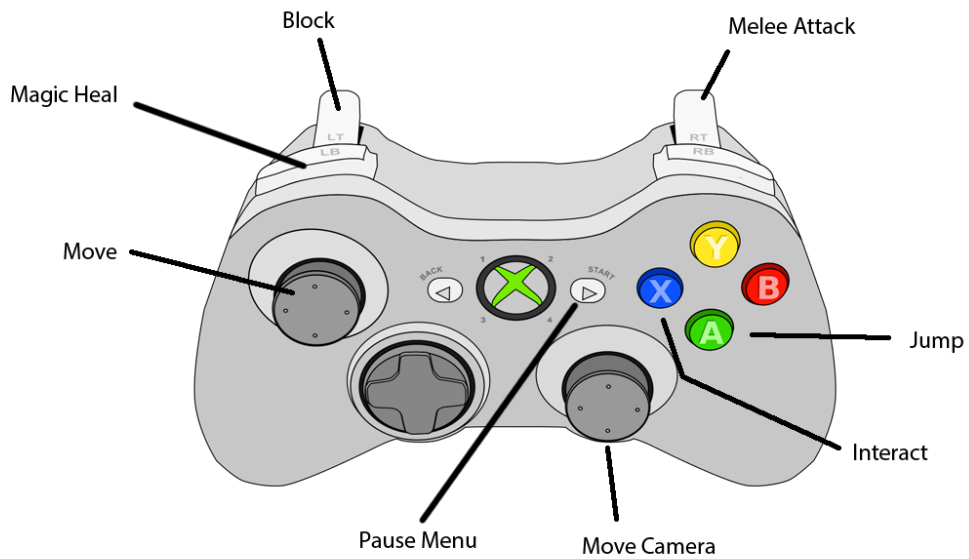
Early model/sketches of Melee Enemy Variant.

Controls

Gameplay

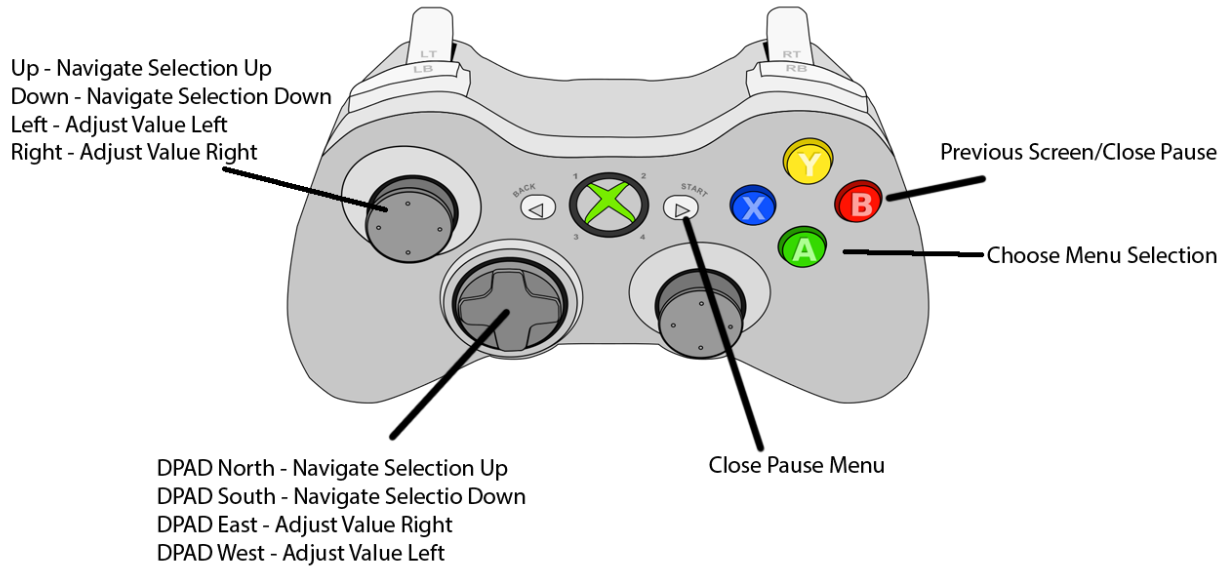


The Resonant Blade Controls on Keyboard and Mouse



The Resonant Blade Controls on Xbox Controller

Menus/Pause Screen



The Resonant Blade Menu Controls on Xbox Controller

Puzzles

Details and further information on the puzzles can be found at: [Puzzle Design Document](#)

Tutorial Puzzle

The “tutorial” section of the dungeon contains a simple puzzle. It requires the player to correctly align a mana channel, running through rotating circular disks in the ground, to the mana channels running through the floor. Once successfully lined up, the player can then activate the lever connecting to the mana channels, activating the flow of mana. This, when done correctly, will activate a bridge to appear over the pit which divides the room in two, separating where the player/puzzle is and the wall with the door on it, in addition to opening the door.



Circle Puzzle

The first ‘official’ puzzle features concentric circles in the middle of the room. Each circle has two connecting pipes for mana flow, half of them leading to levers, outside of the circle while the others lead to activations. Activations, depending on the button it’s connected to, will either light one of two sconces beside the locked door (helping to unlock it) or will awaken enemies which the player will have to defeat to move on. The player, to finish the puzzle, must successfully activate the two levers leading to each of the sconces adjacent to the locked door for it to unlock/open. When players activate a lever, they can observe the mana flow through the connecting lines/pipes and the circles to its activation.



Rotating Disk Puzzle

The second puzzle features a number of circular disks in the ground, all next to one another in a somewhat lined up pattern on the ground. Each circle is divided into thirds, by pipes which allow mana to flow through it when activated. Some of the disks have only two pipes dividing it by a third, these disks can be rotated by the player. Outside of the disks area are a number of statues which if connected to a pipe in the ground when the mana is activated will be awakened. Players to solve this puzzle must correctly rotate the disks in the ground to make the flow of mana reach the door which will then open it.



Story/Narrative

Players in The Resonant Blade, play as an adventuring thief known as The Phantom Knight, on a quest to acquire the magical talisman. Upon acquiring the talisman, The Phantom Knight is teleported to an ancient unknown temple, hidden underground and lost to history.

Upon entering the ancient temple, The Phantom Knight discovers and claims a mysterious magical sword that speaks with him as he progresses through the temple. Once the sword is claimed, the temple comes to life and magical guards awaken to attack The Phantom Knight, in an attempt to prevent him from leaving.

Whilst trying to progress through the temple and survive the onslaught of magical guards, The Phantom Knight must solve two puzzles to unlock a hidden path which leads further out of the temple.

By completing those puzzles and unlocking the hidden path, The Phantom Knight is able to make it out of the central chamber just to find himself in a long corridor filled with enemies. A number of the enemies awake, while some stay still and just watch as The Phantom Knight battles his way to the final room.

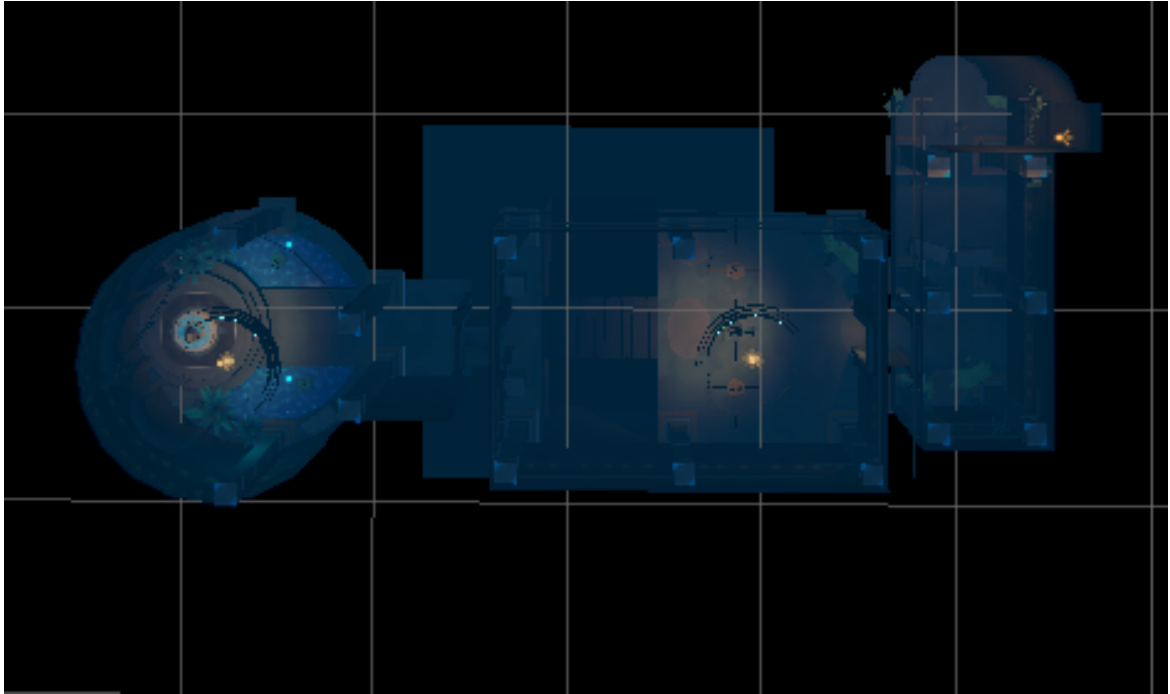
The final chamber is unnervingly similar to the one The Phantom Knight was teleported to in the beginning except for the back of the room. On the back wall is a sigil carved into the wall and in place of where the sword was in the beginning, there is instead an altar. The sword asks The Phantom Knight to place it on the altar, which she claims will open the door to their freedom.

The Phantom Knight does so, and after a pause of eerie silence the sigil carved into the wall behind the altar begins to glow and the room begins to shake violently. This earthquake causes the wall behind the altar to start collapsing, only to reveal the impenetrable darkness beyond it.

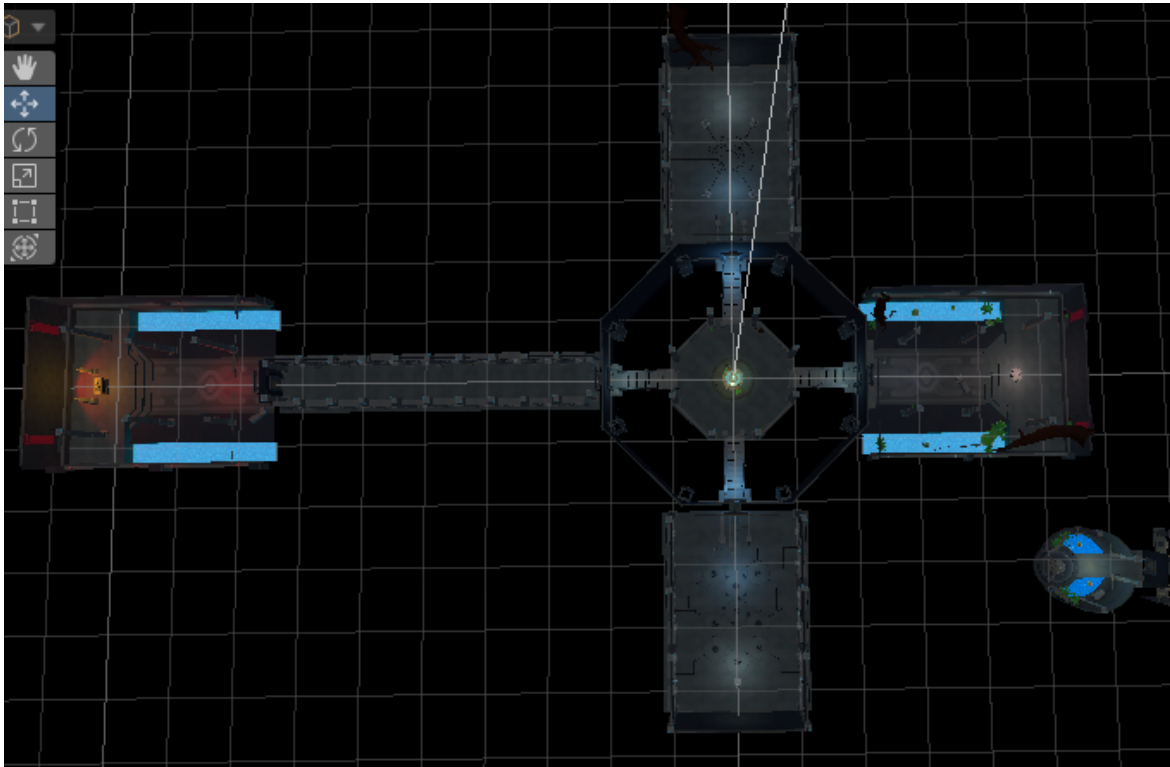
Suddenly a giant eye starts to glow in the darkness staring at The Phantom Knight, and from the monstrous creature erupts a scream.

The End

Level Layout



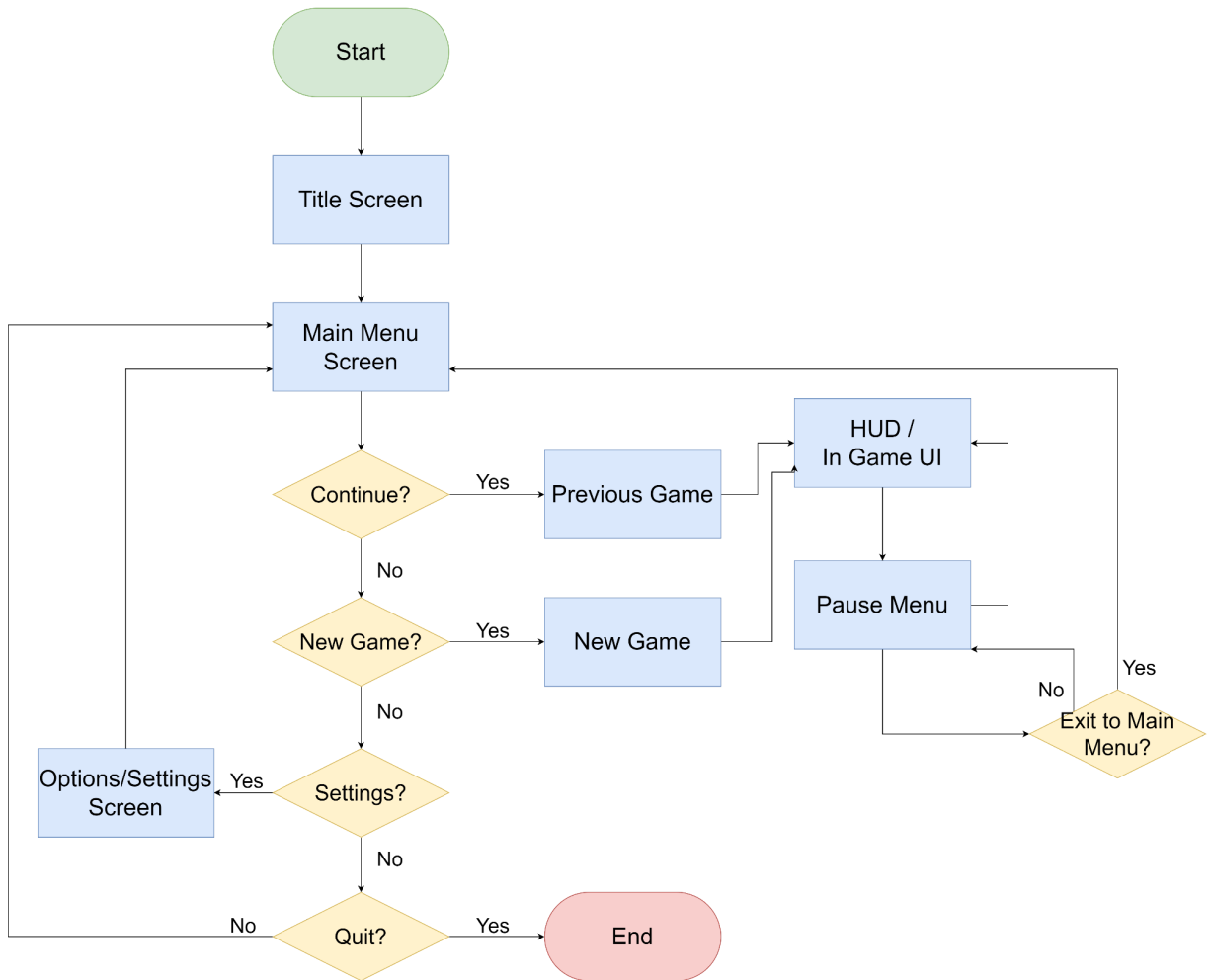
Dungeon Layout - Intro Level Layout



Dungeon Layout - Ground level

Interface

Game Flowchart

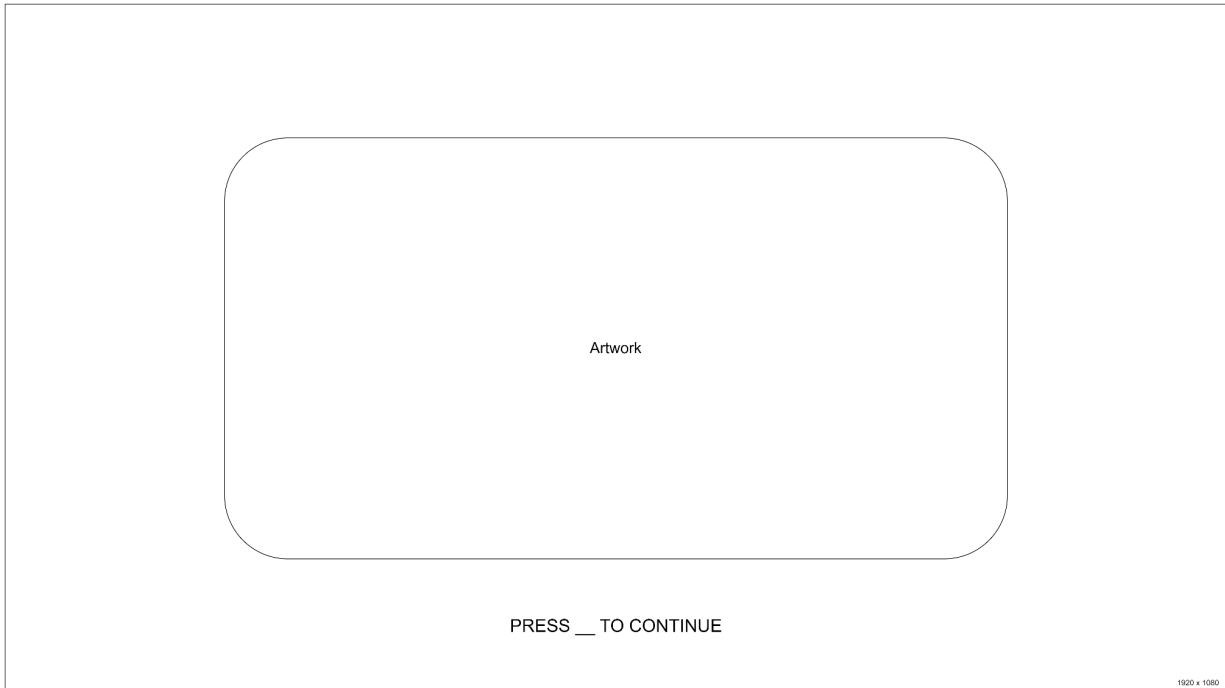


Title Screen

Functional Requirements

- To provide the player with engaging game relevant artwork that will excite them and entice them to play the game.
- To tell the player what button to press to proceed to the next screen.

Mockups



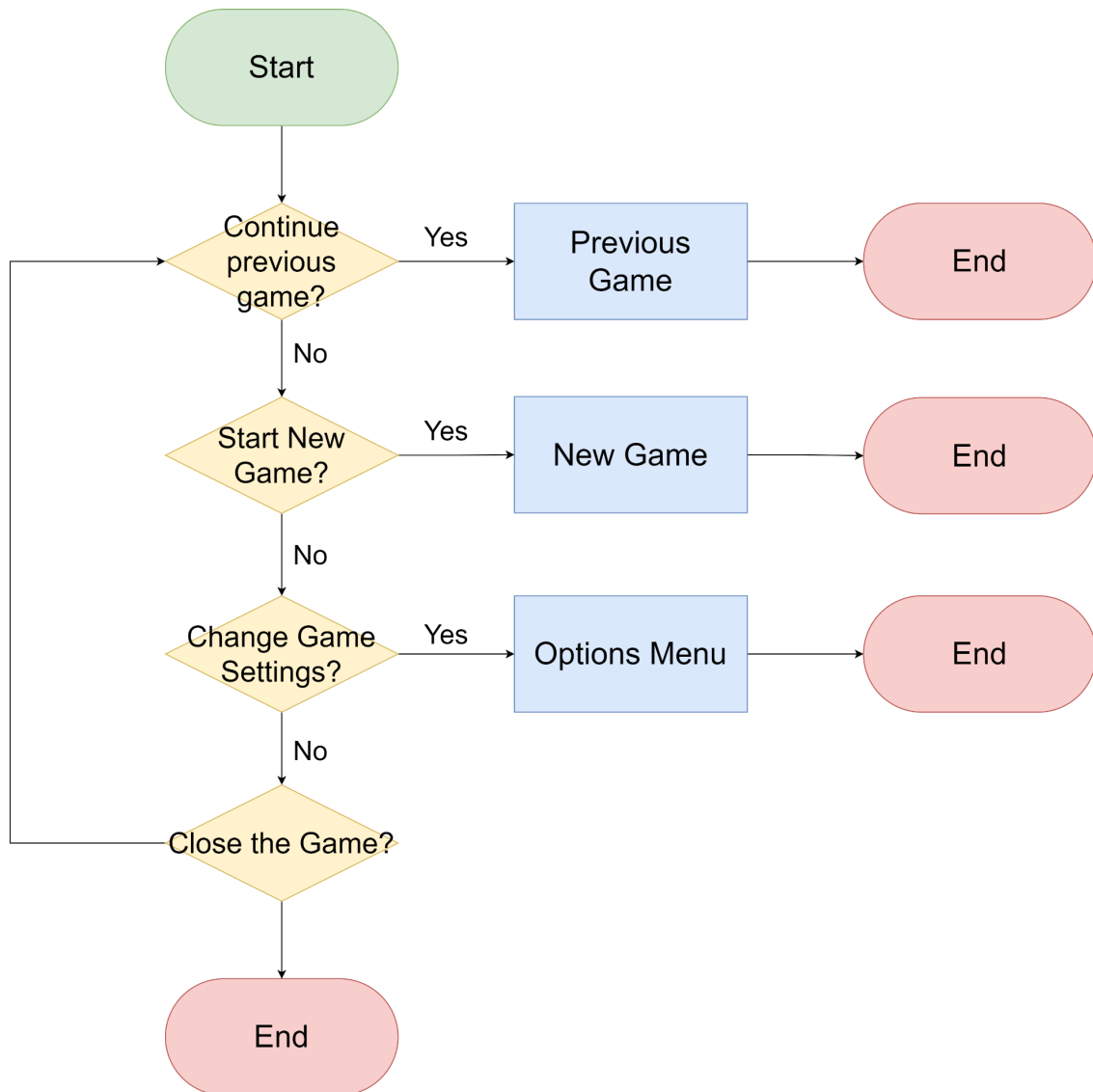
Example of Title Screen Layout for Talisman.

Main Menu

Functional Requirements

- To provide the player with engaging game relevant artwork.
- To provide the player with a pathway to play the game.
- To provide the player with the option to adjust the game's settings.
- To allow the player to close the game.

Flow Chart

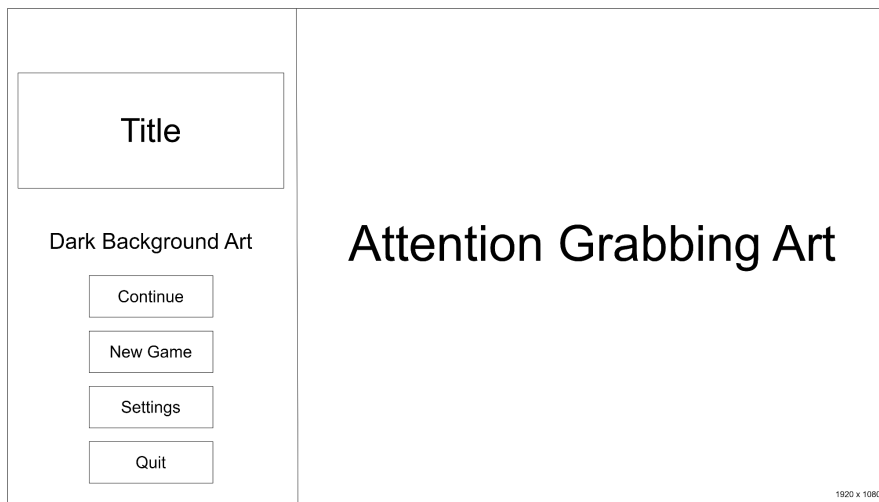


Mockups

Below are Layout Mockups of the Main Menu with a Central Focus and Left/Right Split Focus.



Example of The Resonant Blade Main Menu with a Central Focus.



Example of The Resonant Blade Main Menu Layout with the menu on the left with Split Focus.



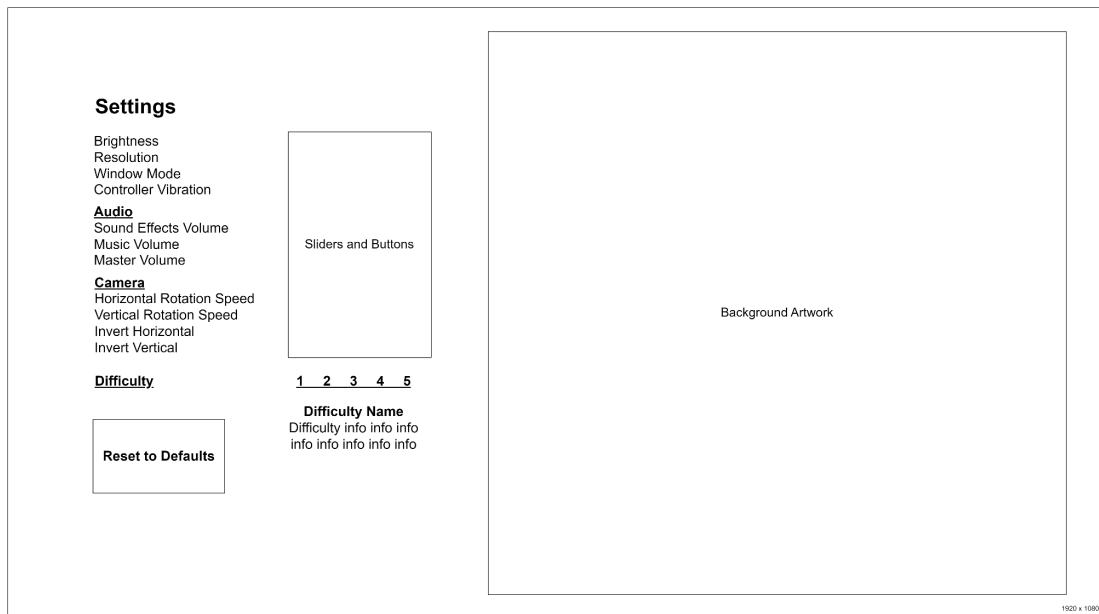
Example of The Resonant Blade Main Menu Layout with the menu on the right with Split Focus.

Options Screen

Functional Requirements

- To provide the player with options to adjust in-game settings.
- To provide the player with options to adjust in-game Audio.
- To provide the player with options to adjust in-game Visuals.
- To provide the player with options to adjust the in-game Camera Settings.
- To provide the player with the option to set the game's difficulty.
- To provide the player with the option to reset settings to the defaults.

Mockups



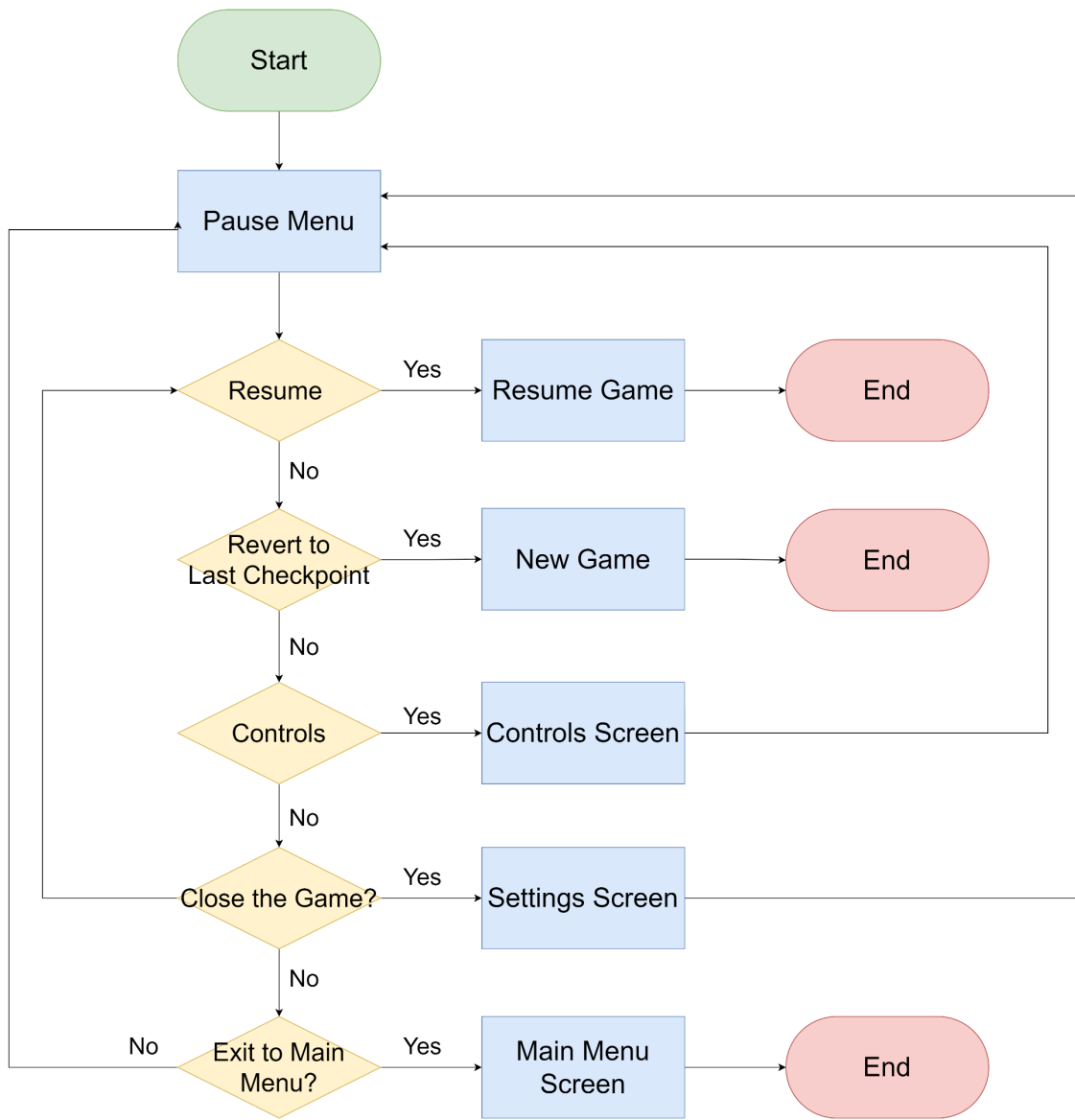
Example of The Resonant Blade Options/Settings Menu Layout

Pause Screen

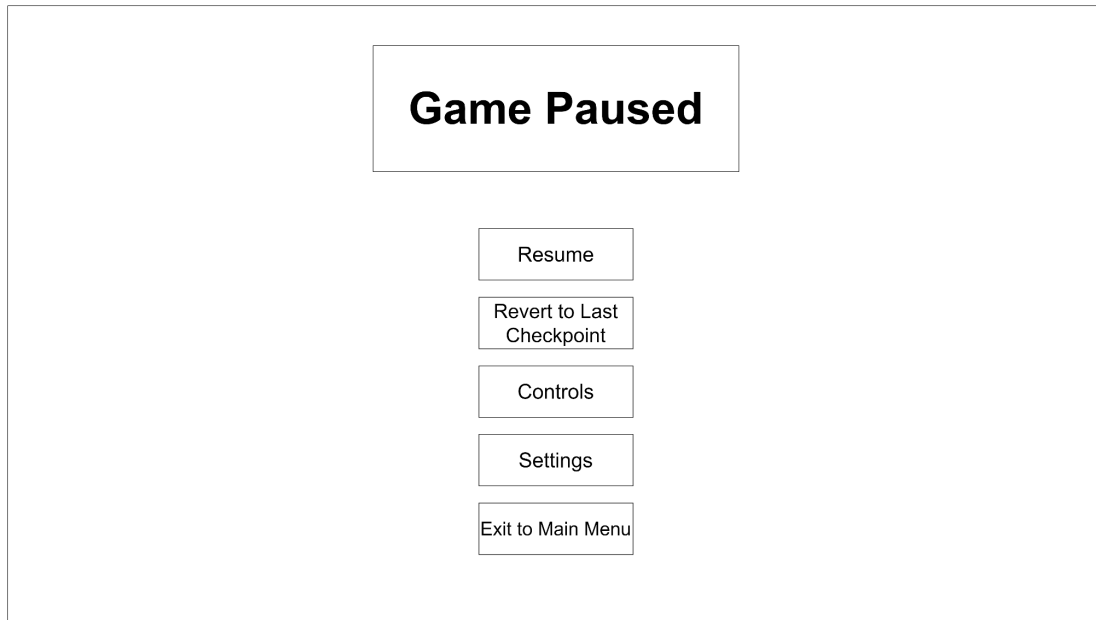
Functional Requirements

- To provide the player with the ability to stop the game due to an interruption.
- To provide the player with the option to revert the game's progress to the last checkpoint.
- To provide the player with a reminder of the game's controls.
- To provide the player access to the Options/Settings.
- To provide the player with the option to Exit to the Main Menu.

Flow Chart



Mockups



Example of The Resonant Blade Pause Menu Layout

HUD / In Game UI

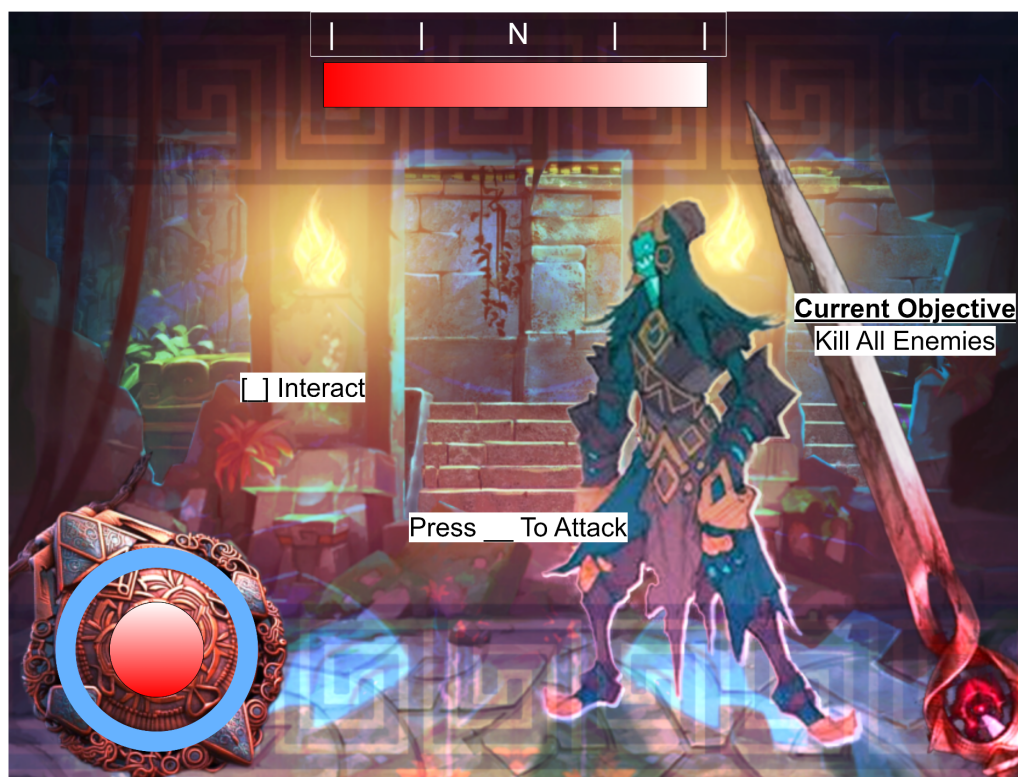
Functional Requirements

- To provide the player with all necessary in-game information.
 - Player Health
 - Player Mana
 - Enemy Health
 - Tutorial Instructions
 - Current Objective/Quest
 - In-Game Interaction
 - Rough Travel Direction (Compass)
- To provide the player with a clean undistracted game experience.

Mockups



Example of The Resonant Blade HUD/In-Game UI Layout

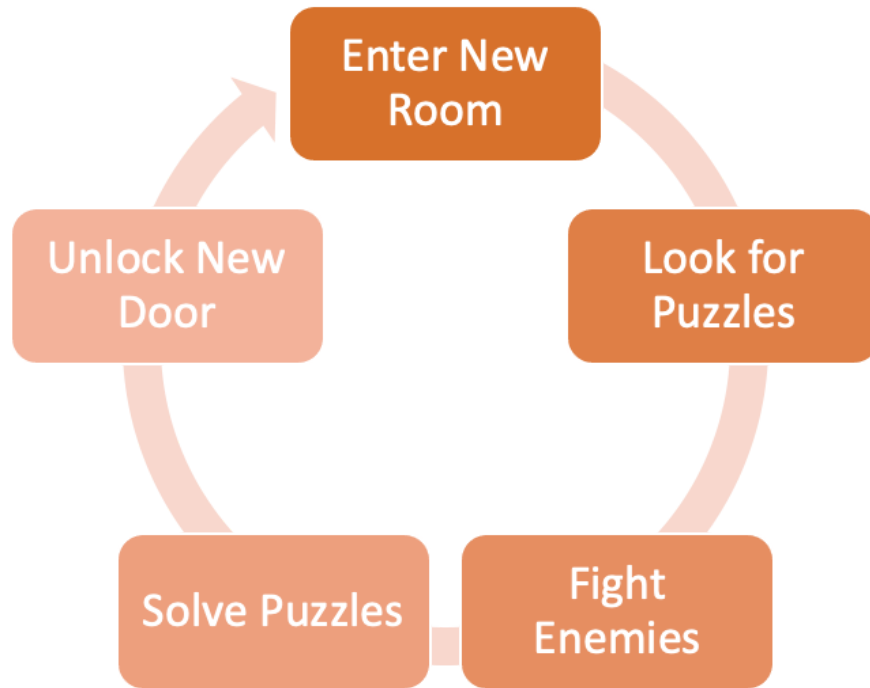


Example of The Resonant Blade HUD/In-Game UI with Reference Art and Diegetic Health/Mana UI

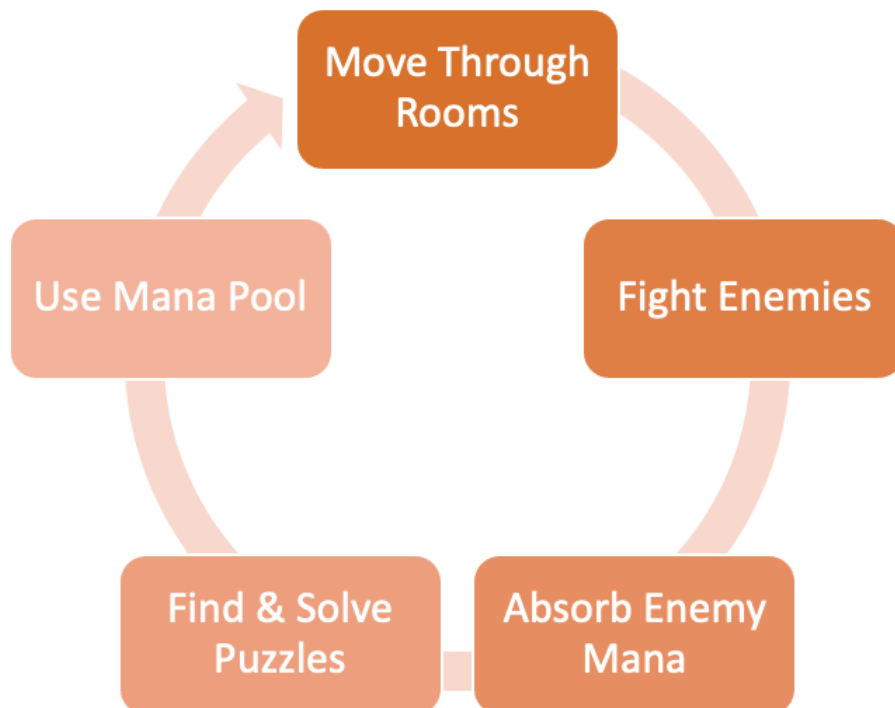
Game Loops & Economy Charts

Loops

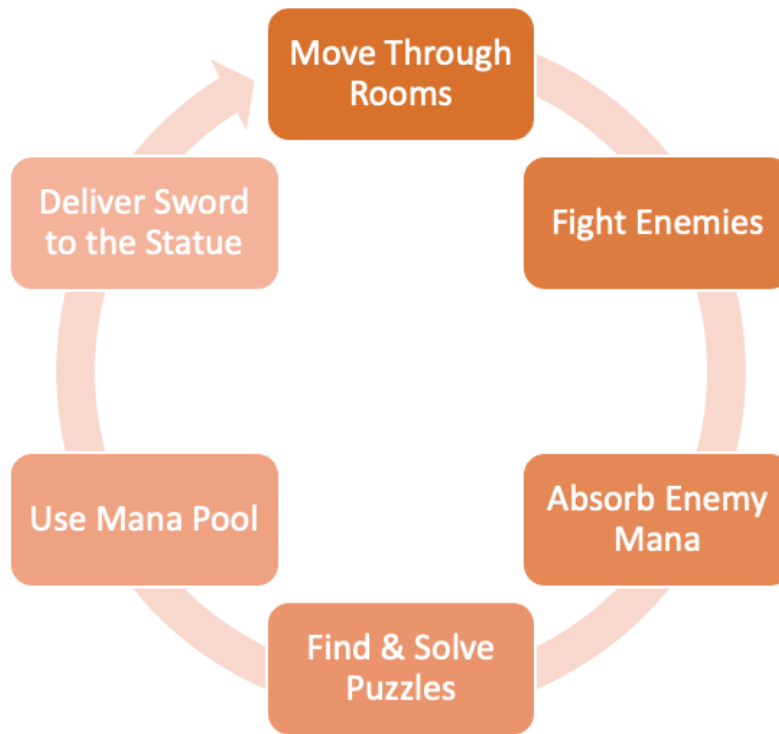
Moment to Moment Loops



Level Loops



Game Loop



Exit Points



Economies

Health

The player's and enemies' health is only reduced when taking damage from combat or traps.

The player's and enemies' health does not regenerate over time.

The player can heal using a magical heal to recover health.

Unit Health values and Damage dealt per damage instance.

Unit	Max Health Value	Damage Type	Damage Value
Player	30	Melee	10
Melee Enemy	60	Melee	5

Mana

The player/Talisman will have a maximum of 30 mana which can be used to cast magical abilities.

The player will be able to cast a magical ability if they have enough available mana to meet the spells minimum mana requirement.

Mana will not naturally recharge, but can be replenished by extracting it from corpses or fully replenishing it at a Mana Pool.

Mana cost of the player's magical abilities.

Cast	Mana Required + Cost per Second
Magic Heal	5

LOOK & FEEL

Art Style

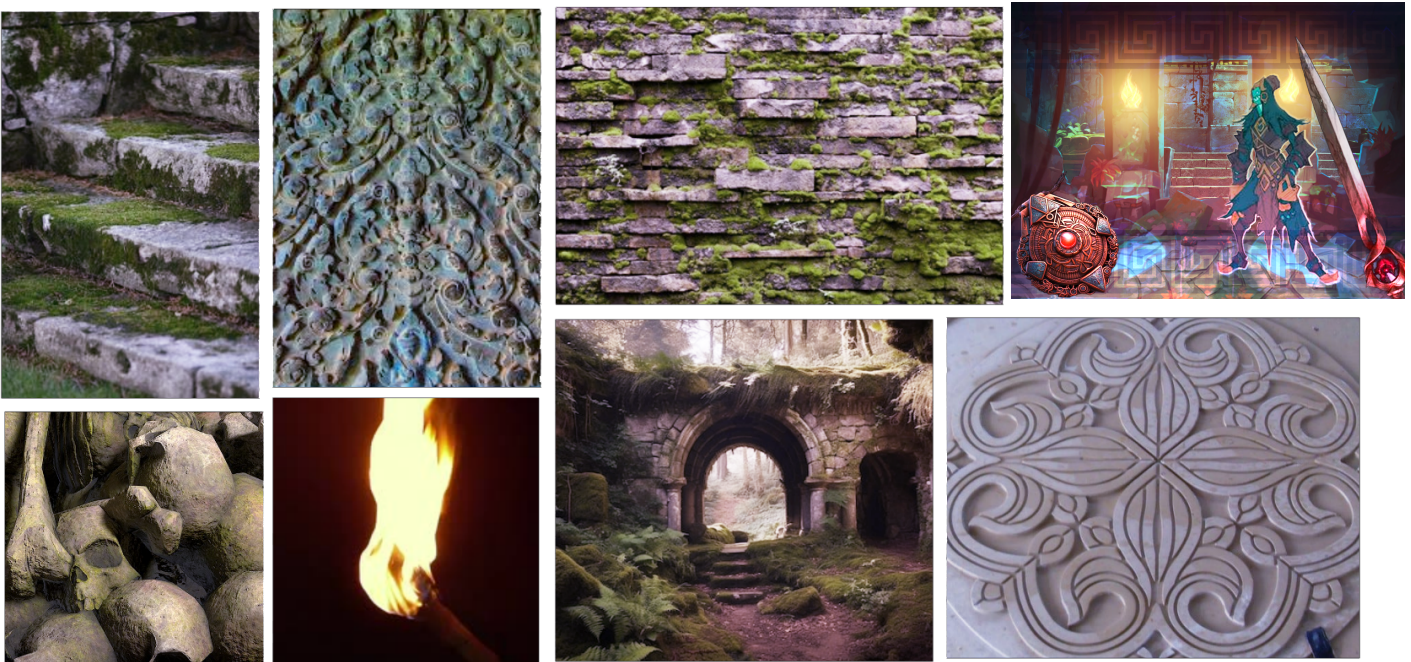
The Resonant Blade will have a hand painted art style incorporating specific shape language to differentiate the three keys parts of the world/ancient temple.

These shapes are Circles for the Talisman and Mana, Squares for the Architecture, and Triangles/Diamonds for the Enemies.



To see more depth into The Resonant Blade's Art Style, refer to the Art Team's Art Bible.

Mood Board



Camera Point of View

In The Resonant Blade the player's view will be a First Person Point of View. This is aimed to provide the player with an immersive role-playing experience.



First Person Camera view from initial animation tests.

Audio Overview

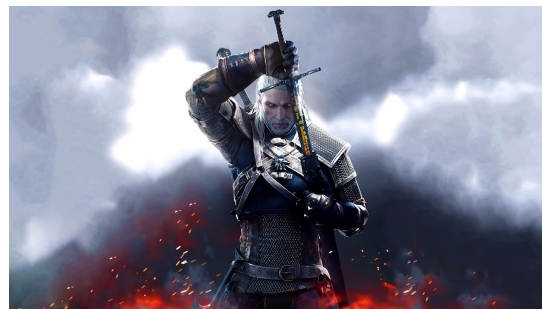
The music should encapsulate the adventure, wonder, unease and magic of our game. Taking influence from 'Hollow Knight', 'Bloodborne' and 'The Witcher 3's' soundtracks, we want a short soundtrack that is both intense and peaceful but overall shows the magic within the world of The Resonant Blade.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=243Uguc-6mQ&list=PLmOldskd2VbKCFNaN2kRCGbFVZaKPpeZ-&index=1>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axhtmPLpOrg&list=PLKzq0DeoAjD-cGZOEspgvDGpFal8S2aS-&index=26>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzqBLhxbPtE&t=9007s>

The sound effects should cover all Diegetic sounds, including: All player sounds, battle sounds, environmental and puzzle sounds and enemy sounds.

In addition we plan on having voice acting present in our game. This should include player dialogue and the swords' dialogue. Further details on character gender, personality and influences can be found here: [Voice Acting Character Sheet](#)

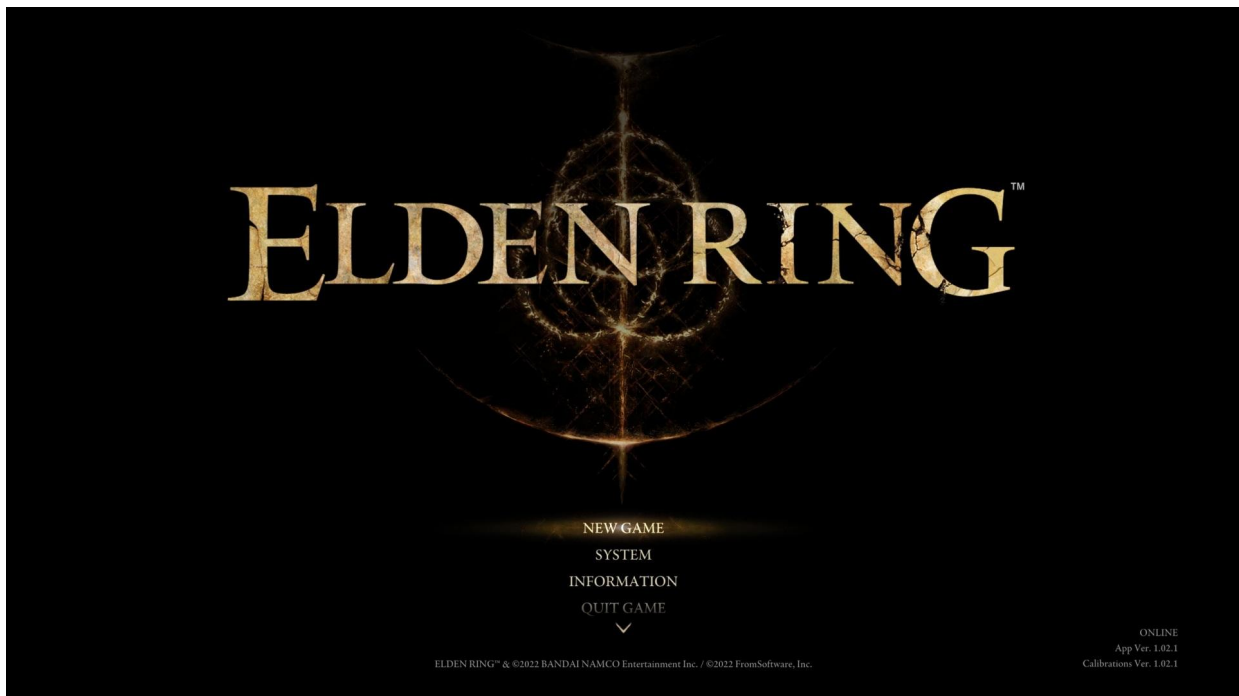
Menu Influences

When looking at popular role playing games, it can be seen that there are common patterns for the layout of the main menu. These are typically seen as having a Central Focus, Left/Right Split Focus, or occasionally having the screen divided further.

Central Focus

Elden Ring

Elden Ring has its main menu screen organised with a central focus. By having the game logo coloured in light warm colours, contrasting against a dark background draws the players focus to the centre. It then has the menu options placed below the logo, maintaining the player's focus to the centre of the screen and limiting distractions to the sides of the screens.



Elden Ring - Main Menu Screen

Hollow Knight

Hollow Knight also has a central focus for its main menu screen. By having the game logo a light colour against a dark background only decorated with small glowing dust particles and a vibrant central downwards spotlight, this use of composition draws the players focus to the centre of the screen. Additionally, it also has the menu options placed centrally below the title, maintaining the player's focus to the centre of the screen and limiting distractions to the sides of the screens. Additionally, Hollow Knights use of text borders adds good detail despite its minimalism.



Hollow Knight - Classic Main Menu Screen



Hollow Knight - Godmaster Main Menu Screen

Left/Right Split Focus

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (Skyrim) splits its main menu screen into two sections:

- Left two thirds, light key art elements
- Right third, dark with menu options

The player's attention is drawn to the Skyrim symbol and bright smoke.

The menu options are to the right side of the screen in the dark part of the screen preventing the player from getting confused or distracted by background art elements.



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim - Main Menu Screen

Dishonored 2

Similarly to Skyrim, Dishonored 2 has split its main menu screen into two halves, though in a less clear and distinct manner. With a full screen key art piece, Dishonored 2 has darkened a section of the screen and placed the main characters on the other, drawing the player's focus to one half of the screen and creating the split.



Dishonored 2 - Main Menu Screen

The Last of Us: Part 1

Similarly, thought slightly more clearly to Dishonored 2, The Last of Us: Part 1 separates its main menu into two halves:

- The left half, a dark deteriorating wall.
- The right half, a bright, well light window.

The player's attention is immediately drawn to the bright right half, with the main menu on the dark left half to not distract the player from the key art element. The left half contrasts to the window, and gives the screen “empty” space to locate the menu selections.



The Last of Us: Part 1 - Main Menu Screen

Three Area Focus

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild could arguably be considered a Left/Right Split Focus main menu, though it is slightly different to the above mentioned menu screens.

Similarly to the above menu screens it has the menu options to the side in a dark area of the screen, but the remaining key art is also split into two (foreground and background).

This effectively acts the same way for the player's focus, but gives the player more to look at prior to going through the menu options.



The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild - Main Menu Screen

Scope and Resources

Team Members

Gnasty Gnomes

Producer

Sam Benson

Designers

Sam Benson

Sophie Butcher

Louis Pisani

Programmers

Harley Clark

Artists

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Aaron Hunter

Melody Leach

Isabella McDonald

Star Van Wageningen

Logan Wilson

References

A list of the references used to help create The Resonant Blade.

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TARGET AUDIENCE

“The Resonant Blade” is a game targeted at audiences between the ages of 13 and 30. Due to its heavy focus on Problem solving, combat and adventuring, this game is recommended to fans of fantasy RPGs, puzzle platformers and general adventure games. Games similar to The Resonant Blade include Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, Portal 2, Bioshock and Dishonored 2.

Additionally this game can be enjoyed to anyone interested in Puzzles, Adventure, Action/Fighting, Sword Fighting, Magic, Fantasy, History, Relics and Artefacts, First Person POV Games, Character Development, Mystery, Plot twists, talking Objects/Possessed Items, Underground Temples, Lost Overgrown Cities, Lost Histories or Dungeons.

The Resonant Blade takes the magical and dangerous world of Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim and mixes it in with the mystery, problem solving and uneasy yet beautiful world of Portal 2. This is the game that RPG fans didn't know they NEEDED!

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