



Lawless

GDD 101 Final Design Document

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Overview

Theme / Setting / Genre

2D Action-Adventure set in a ruinous city ruled by crime

Genre- Turn-based Combat, Action-Adventure, RPG

Setting- The Neighborhood: An urban part of town riddled with goons, rats, questionable cats, and illegal activity.

Theme- Edgy, Violence, Dark

Core Gameplay Mechanics

- **Fighting and Using Items**

- Fighting functions on a turn-based system. The player will always have the turn first and must choose one action to act upon for the turn. Once a player has chosen an action (i.e. using an ability, weapon, or melee attack.) their turn has ended, and it is the enemy's turn to attack. This will be repeated until the player has lost all health for both characters, or until all the enemies are defeated.
 - If one character loses all HP, they are unusable until the next fight (No access to stores or cats depending on character)
- Items
 - Items can be used during combat or while exploring. Only one item can be used per turn and using an item does not end the player's turn. (For example, they can use an item and still choose a combat option.)
 - Once an item is used, it is discarded and can no longer be used.
- Weapons
 - Weapons are used to have more damage on enemies (They are separate from melee attack damage)
 - Weapons can only be used five times before they break and are discarded

- **Healing**

- Items
 - Stolen or crafted items can heal characters

- If a character is unconscious after an encounter, they can be brought back with an item that heals. They will then have the amount of HP that is disclosed by the item.
- Once healing items are used, they are discarded
- **Abilities**
 - Each character has two combat abilities, and one passive ability, unique to each character.
 - Once combat abilities are used, they can no longer be used until the level is completed, where they will replenish.
 - Passive abilities are permanent and do not wear out
 - Replenish
 - Some crafted or stolen items can replenish all abilities.
 - All abilities can be replenished when finishing a level in the area
 - Stealing
 - Only Laz can enter stores for special items
 - Cats
 - Only Astor can communicate with cats for special items
- **Crafting**
 - Items can be crafted during the phases of exploring a level (Not during combat).
 - Players can craft certain items that will heal the character that is used on or replenish the abilities of the character it is used on. Players will have a craft manual within their inventory.
 - Using Crafted items results in them being discarded right after

- **Inventory**

- Characters can only hold one weapon, but can swap them should they encounter another weapon.
 - Weapons can be used five times before they break
- Characters can only hold four crafted or stolen items, and cannot craft or steal any more items if they already hold four.
- Characters can hold up to eight crafting components (l.e. spoiled milk, acorn, mouse, etc.) and can swap them should they run out of space and find another component.

- **Switching (Exploring)**

- Players can switch between both characters without limitation, but there is a 30s cooldown before switching back to the other character.

- **Switching (Combat)**

- Players can switch between both characters without limitation during combat.

- **Winning**

- Fighting all enemies and reaching the end of the area by traversing all levels.
- Winning space indicated by an alleyway leading to a new area

- **Losing**

- Player loses when both characters are rendered unconscious by enemies.
- Upon respawn, they will spawn at the beginning of a level rather than the beginning of the entire area

Influences

Charlie Murder [Video Game]



Charlie Murder had an impact on me from a young age, as I played it when I was younger. The ability system tied to each character was a feature that I found very compelling. The strong art style and themes throughout the game allowed me to draw inspiration from it. The crafting mechanic that healed characters and restored their abilities came from this game.

Sally Face [Video Game]



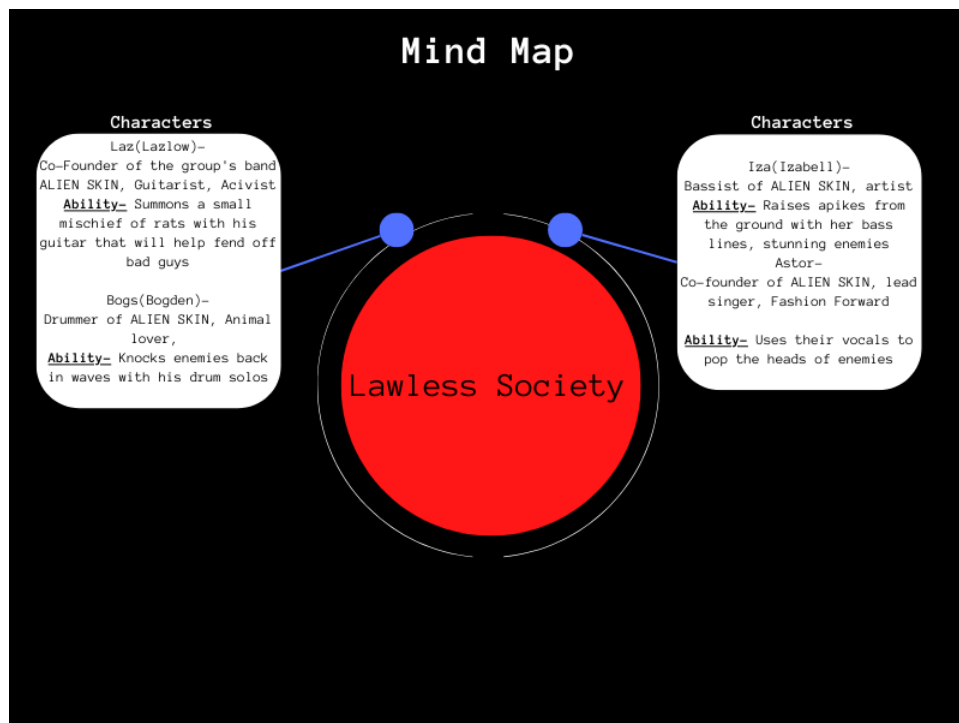
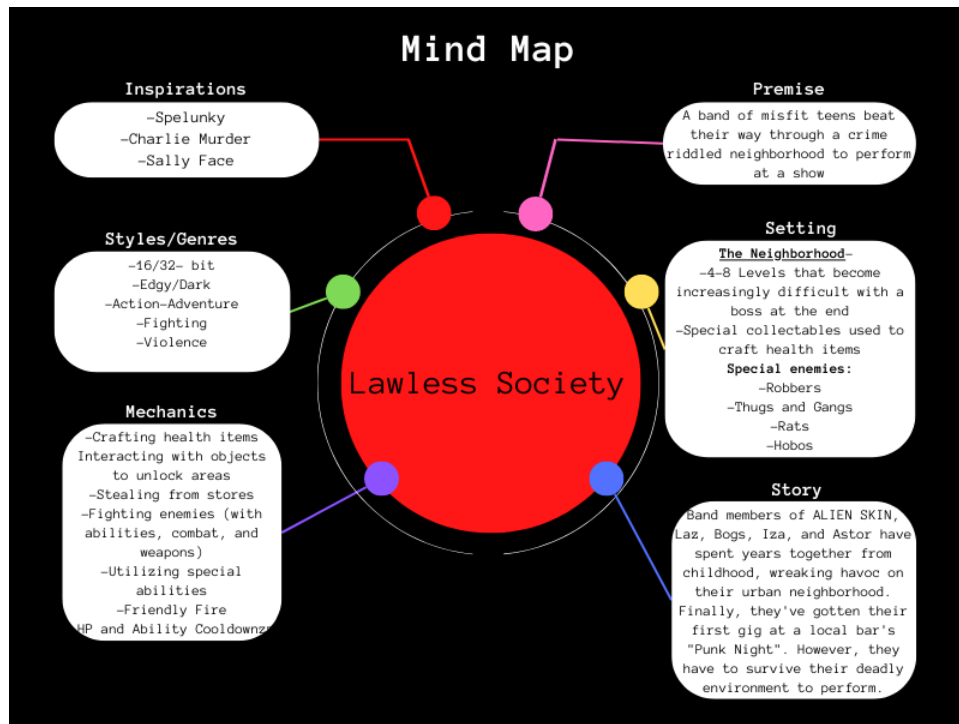
The style and dark humor rooted throughout Sally Face inspired me to implement similar aspects in *Lawless*. The characters' association with a certain type of music had interested me, and I used this type of music as a point of interest for my characters in *Lawless*. The characters in Sally Face are young and growing up in a poorer environment, much like my characters. The ability to switch between two characters at one point in Sally Face fascinated me, and this is where the mechanic of switching between my characters came from.

The Elevator Pitch

Lawless is an action-adventure game using turn-based combat. You can switch between two characters who have their own set of unique abilities to traverse a ruinous neighborhood and craft helpful objects through a unique crafting system.

Project Description (Brief):

Mind Map.



Concept Level

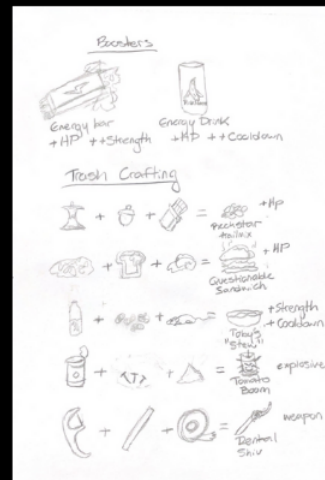


Concept Art

Characters



Items/Craftables



violence. Although the game has issues with narrative, its style and topics have truly inspired some of my interests while I was growing up. I knew that making this game, I wanted to not only represent a part of my childhood, but a large part of who I still am. A game of this aesthetic would also appeal to others who have shown interest in the style or grew up playing games with similar visuals. Not many games are associated with “alt” settings, characters, or styles. I wanted to represent those things in my game for other groups of people that would enjoy it. I referred to the readings on representation in video games:

“My research has found that the primary benefit of diversity in games is that it makes narratives more interesting and engaging,” Cole said. “Our lives are diverse, so it makes sense that our games should be too if they want to tell stories that keep our attention.” (para. 16)

Not only will expanding upon this type of game draw more attention, but people can find themselves relating to parts of it. This is mainly in the characters I have created, and how I have styled them. Both characters Laz and Astor have generally neutral attributes but maintain their own senses of fashion and overall aesthetic. I wanted them to be representative of several types of people within one community and referenced the gender and race readings in video games. Generally, my characters are neutral in gender and have no specified race. It is the choice of the players to interpret how these characters are conveyed

Trying to keep the theme within joining games from my childhood, I also considered drawing some aspects from *Spelunky*. The main inspiration to draw aspects of this game came from a class demo. Playing the game and experiencing

all of its complexities, however, made me realize that implementing too many advanced mechanics could harm my game. I decided not to use any of *Spelunky's* mechanics. Instead, I looked toward a game like *Sally Face*, with a similar style to *Charlie Murder*, but an entirely different game, with strong narrative and some unique mechanics. I found that in *Sally Face* having the ability to switch between Sal and Larry was interesting. Each character had their own abilities and limitations to what they could do within a level.

Attempting to create a fighting mechanic proved a little difficult to me. I first wanted a mechanic where the game was posed more like a “Beat ‘Em Up” style game that involved the players running around and beating up as many enemies as they could. However, remembering a system where one party is challenged would maintain a more organized fighting system within my game. I recalled my card game, *Food Fight!* Where I implemented challenge spaces for players to choose an enemy to fight against. I turned the free-for-all fighting style into a turn-based battle style. I found this would make the fighting mechanic much more organized and give players the opportunity to use items and abilities more orderly.

Project Description (Detailed)

The player is loaded into the world as Laz (default), leaving an apartment building with Astor ready to go to their first music gig for their band “ALIEN SKIN”. They’ve agreed to meet their bandmates Bogs and Iza at the venue. However, they must make their way through several areas with all sorts of enemies to get there. There

are as many as five areas for them to venture through, encountering thugs, rats, homeless people, rival bands, and other enemies throughout their journey. Along the way, they pick up new abilities exclusive to their person and encounter new bosses unique to each area. Each area will increasingly get more difficult and have a boss within the last level. New crafting recipes will be learned upon discovering new areas and items.

As new areas unlock, there will be short minigames as a “break” from the main premise and mechanics of the game. Some minigames might include platformer-type parkour minigames, rhythm minigames, and puzzle minigames. The idea is to have the player not grow tedious of the otherwise seemingly repetitive concept of the game, despite new functions being added through progression. The game will comprise of five areas, each set with 3-5 levels. After Astor and Laz reach and defeat the final boss, they will be reunited with Bogs and Iza at their gig and perform, ending the game.

The part of the game that I will be focusing on is the very beginning of the game. Both Astor and Laz will have their first two abilities, and the first level will softly introduce enemies with lower health points. This is to understand the basic mechanics of fighting and abilities within the game. Within the second level, more intermediate play is at hand, encountering more difficult enemies and passive character-based abilities. Players are expected to have some sort of useable or craftable item within this level, familiarizing themselves with how to use these items.

As the players reach the end of the level, they will encounter their first boss, having used both characters including their passive and combat abilities.

The first boss has lots of health points and deals a reasonable amount of damage. This is for players to have the chance to use all sorts of items, weapons, and abilities. Through this first level, players will understand the mechanics of the game, how to strategize and manage their resources and health

PROTOTYPE DOCUMENT

Lawless

Characters

Laz: A troublesome teenager, known for vandalism, tomfoolery, and loitering. Locally skilled guitarist that blasts metal music through the night.

HP: 250

Melee Damage: 25

Abilities: (Both combat abilities can only be used once per level)
(Passive abilities can be used if the character is conscious [has more than 0 HP])

- **Conjure:** Can conjure 3 helpers (rats) with guitar that add onto normal melee ability (Each helper adds +5 damage to current attack damage for the rest of the encounter)
- **Jab:** Raises a spike through one enemy that will cause them to constantly take small amounts of damage each turn (Enemy will take 5 damage each turn in addition to any damage from attacks)

- (PASSIVE) **Lockpick**: Can break into stores

Astor: Misunderstood individual with a hate for people and a love for their feline friends. Skilled vocalist that can range from a soothing voice to growling scream music.

HP: 250

Melee Damage: 25

Abilities: (Both combat abilities can only be used once per level)
(Passive abilities can be used if the character is conscious [has more than 0 HP])

- **Belt**: Can do damage to enemies with vocals and allow them to miss one turn of combat (Enemies take 45 HP in damage, and cannot fight on their next turn)
- **Shriek**: Uses vocals to weaken enemies' attack (Enemies will deal 10 less damage for the rest of the encounter)
- (PASSIVE) **Whisperer**: Can interact with cats (Cats give special craft items)

Switching (Exploring)

- Players can switch between both characters without limitation, but there is a 30s cooldown before switching back to the other character.

Switching (Combat)

- Players can switch between both characters without limitation during combat.

Weapons:	Damage:
Pipe	40
Plank	30
Wrench	50
Saw	65

How to Play

Your Objective

Make it through each area without losing both characters. Collect items and craft new ones along the way that will help you!

You Lose

When both characters have lost all HP.

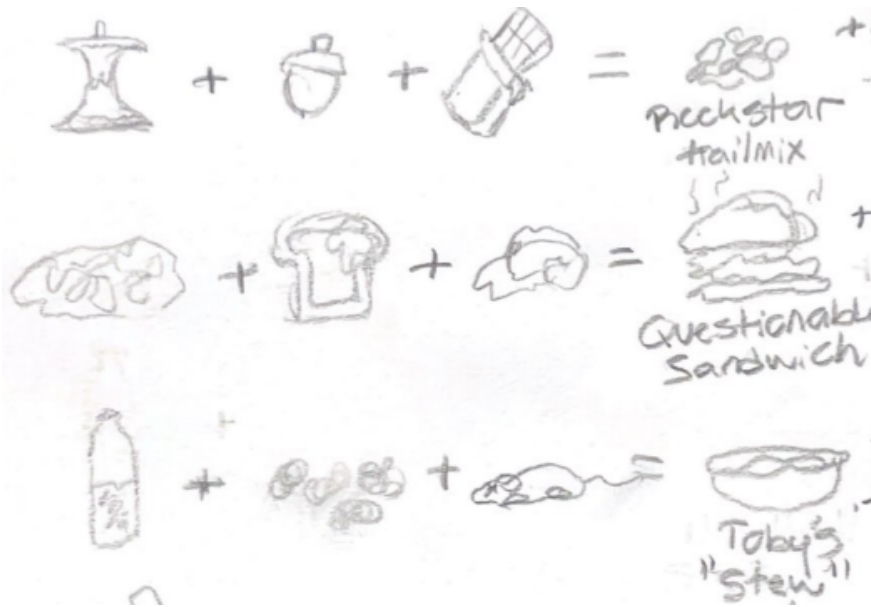
You Win

When you have defeated all enemies in the area.

How Crafting Works

- Find Items around each area to pick up through cats or dumpster cans. A certain combination of these items could lead to some promising things.
- You can hold up to eight crafting components (acorn, apple core, mouse), but can swap them.
- You can hold four crafted or stolen items. You will not be able to craft anything else if you have four crafted or stolen items.
- Interacting with a dumpster can gives you one random item, you can only interact with it two more times after your first time.
- Crafting an item gives you TWO of that item to use
- If you cannot make a combination, these items are useless. You can only hold six items, but can swap them if you find something more useful.

Here is a Crafting Manual (You should also have a physical one):



Using Items

- Items can be used during combat or while exploring. Only one item can be used per turn and using an item does not end the player's turn. (For example, they can use an item and still choose a combat option.)
- Once an item is used, it is discarded and can no longer be used.

How Fighting Works

- When engaging in a fight with enemies, you get the first attack.
- You can use items during combat,
- Once an item is used it will be discarded
- After you've made your first attack, the enemy will make their attack.
- Using a shield* against an enemy will block only ONE enemy attack for that turn.

*You can get shields from dumpsters, these are garbage lids

- If one character loses all HP, they are unusable until the next fight
(No access to stores or cats depending on character)

(You will be given an HP and Weapon Durability Tracker)

Picking Up Weapons

- Weapons deal damage to your enemies
- Weapons DO NOT add to your melee damage, they are separate.
- You can only hold ONE weapon, but you can swap them upon finding another.
- Weapons can only be used FIVE times before they break

(You will be given an HP and Weapon Durability Tracker)

Using Abilities

- The characters you can swap between each have two unique COMBAT abilities and one unique PASSIVE ability.
- When you use an ability, it will count as your turn
- Once you use a combat ability during an encounter, you can still use the other one, but they can be used once unless it is replenished by an item or you advance to the next level.
- Passive abilities can be used if the character is conscious (has more than 0 HP)

Stores

Laz can ransack stores for extra items but can only do this once per area.

Cats

Astor can communicate with their feline friends. Maybe they will give you a special gift. (Cats give special items used to craft a very useful healing item called “Toby’s ‘Stew’”)

Enemies and the damage they deal, and their health points

Thugs

HP: 250

Damage: 25

Big Thugs

HP: 300

Damage: 30

Rats

HP: 100

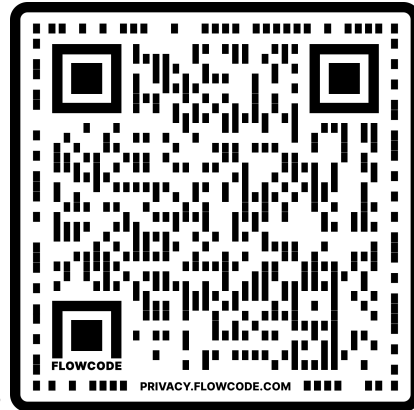
Damage: 10

Area Boss:

Toby, a mutated cat who has betrayed his very own kind

HP: 500

Damage: 50



Questionnaire---->

Questionnaire Questions:

- What did you anticipate about my game based on first glance?
(Before playing) Example: I found that this game looked very complex
- (After playing) What was enjoyable about the complexities of the game? Example: I found that managing multiple resources and trying to keep my characters alive to use their abilities allowed me to think about my next move.
- Did having two characters with abilities make the game more engaging? Please elaborate on your answer.
- Did a turn-based combat system allow you to be concise in your actions? Please elaborate on your answer.
- How did or didn't the items in the game influence what occurred next? (Example: There were too many items in the game, I didn't understand how to use them and I died.)
- How likely are you to recommend this game to friends? (1-5)
- How likely are you to purchase and play a game like this? (1-5)

Iterative Process

Test #1- The initial playtest of *Lawless* included every enemy that I have made intended for the area. Enemies had very high health, and there was no HP

visualization or crafting sheets. A friend of mine, Zoe, had play-tested the game for me and was not afraid to assert her confusions or concerns. There was concern expressed with the HP system, as lots of the enemies had extremely high health, and would often drag battles on for a longer amount of time. To fix this I had initially just taken some enemies out of the game, but the issue persisted. Further going into this issue, I decreased enemy HP by around 100HP each to pose a fair battle. The Boss HP remained the same as a challenge to players to fully utilize objects and strategies learned about the game. For the Boss, Zoe did not enjoy the large amount of damage that he did, as the characters did not have lots of health to begin with. She was still able to beat him, but just barely. I resolved this by simply removing 15 points of damage. Zoe had also expressed difficulty collecting items. I had initially made the inventory storage in a way where players could only hold three crafted items, and three item components. This made it really hard to collect proper materials. In resolve to this issue, crafted items were unlimited, and players could collect up to eight crafting components. A personal insight by me, I noticed that weapons broke very quickly, and would have wanted them to last longer. To counteract this, I removed some weapons from the game and changed the durability from three uses to five uses. Another personal insight, players had taken lots of the game simply collecting items to craft, and it didn't feel very rewarding only gaining one crafted item. I changed the crafting reward from one crafted item to two. I unfortunately forgot to take a picture of this playtest.

Test #2- This playtest was conducted during the prototype presentations in class. Stephen and Kevin played my game. After analyzing the answers to my questionnaire, someone said that they had forgotten what certain items could be used for. The entire response was not very clear to me, and I wasn't sure how to fix a problem like this, as all items had information about the HP they healed, or whether or not they replenished abilities.



Pictures of Prototype





