



Worm Heroes Postmortem

Project started: March 01, 2009 - Project finished: August 22, 2009

Development time: 3 .5 months (2 full time & 1.5 from March to May in spare time)

Time searching for sponsorship: 3 weeks.

Primary sponsor: Spil Games.

Game released: October 03, 2009.

The idea

The game comes from my passion around game design and prototyping. I was trying to develop XNA games but this requires more time than I expect so I started to search a fast way to develop games. Along my research I founded several sites than explain successful stories about flash game development so finally I decided to try several months that exciting development environment.

After a huge research about as3 tutorials, examples and resources I was ready to do several prototypes to try some game mechanics.

My full time job takes me the major part of my time so I was working in the game along the travel by train from my home to work, more or less two hours a day.

The prototype starts to work well and the first test was satisfactory. The initial idea was to create something easy with an easy mechanic, arrives from one side to another side like frog's game. Step by step the design of this simple idea was improved.

My lack of free time and my poor knowledge about actionscript slow down the development of the game but the 1st of June my company closes its doors and a lot of professionals lose our jobs. At this moment I decided to run with the game to finish it and two months later the game was finished. A lot of hours fighting with the code, meetings with the artist, lot of coffee and deals with my wife make the game a reality.

What went right?

Outsourcing

The graphics and the music were outsourcing. I contacted with two friends (artist & music) to explain them my project and they accept it quickly. Really was a risk because sometimes the work made by friends takes more time than from other people but in this case I worked with great professionals.

Prototyping & design

Initially I can't dedicate more than 2 hours a day to the game so that thing allows me to divide the game in small pieces. This method works well because each piece was a small prototype than I can improve day by day. Worms' movements; sea animation; apples position; etc. Each of these things was designed and tested individually and finally put it together.

Testing & focus testing

The game was tested a lot along the development time but in the last month I used focus testing with family & friends to get feedback, improve small details and to give a right order to the levels.

Resources

Internet resources were helpful for that project. There are a lot of great professionals than make tutorials, examples, sites with sounds, etc. To learn and improve actionscript I often visit *Emanuele Feronato site*, *8bitrocket.com*, *mochimedia.com*, *michaeljameswilliams.com* and several developers' forums. Thanks guys!

What went wrong?

Game design expectations

There were many design ideas to implement. Initially was planned 5 worms with different abilities, a lot of items, different environments but finally the development time pushes me to the reality. To close a project it's necessary to adjust the expectations to a reasonable scheduled time.

Time schedule

Working in a full time job and dedicate several hours to my wife, my daughter, family, etc. takes a lot of time and the initial time estimation for the project was wrong. Also this project was my first AS3 project so I can't know certainly how much time I need to close several features.

Lack of knowledge

The hurry for complete the project plus the lack of knowledge and experience in this platform makes a terrible optimization process. The optimization was very hard because I don't know the best practices and several pieces of code takes a lot of FPS. Finally internet gives me the solution, there are a lot of info about optimizations but I needed to spend a lot of hours searching and using the effective knowledge for my project.

Final words

Worm heroes was my first flash game project and results in a great experience. I learned a lot about this kind of projects and I hope to avoid all the mistakes in my next game.

Finalize a game and distribute it give us the opportunity to know a lot of people. This is a great feature for future projects.

Thanks to all the flash game developers than shares his knowledge and thanks to the people who play the games.

Enjoy!

*Worm Heroes is dedicated to my wife, my daughter, friends and family.
Thanks you!*