Design Document: Play With Fire

1.3. Branding Choices

There are two options for the brand image for the game, and which is used depends entirely upon the needs of the choice of the publishing partners:

- **Fireball Brand:** this approach targets impulse purchasers and is suitable for where the primary sales channels for the game are in mass market catchment areas e.g. supermarkets. In this case, the game packaging should draw attention to the fact that it is **Easy to Play**, in order to appeal to the Casual audience, who typically finds most games are too hard to control.

- **Hidama Brand:** the Hidama (Japanese for 'fireball' or 'falling star') approach is targeting the Hardcore gaming community's desire for new and innovative product. A Japanese sub-title for the game serves to intrigue, and suggest that this may be an interesting and hitherto overlooked title (such as *Katamari Damacy)*. The game packaging should draw attention to the games **Unique Gameplay**. This approach is best suited if the publisher is expecting to sel the game primarily through specialist game shops or online.

A hybrid approach may also be undertaken.

2. Core Gameplay

2.1. Game Subsystems

All the play in *Fireball* originates from three simple to implement core subsystems:

- **Avatar** concerns the player's ability to negotiate the landscape.
- **Temperature** concerns the ignition of blocks in the playing field, and how fire spreads between blocks.
- **Gravity** concerns the collapse of objects and blocks in the playing field as a result of fires.

We will discuss each in turn.

2.2. Avatar

2.2.1 Overview

The player's Avatar is a glowing ball of fire, considered to be 1 unit in diameter. The player's abilities are as follows:

- **Move** around the environment. The player turns left and right, and pushes forward to move (relative controls).

- **Jump** up to a (relative) height determined by the heat of the ball. The characteristics of this jump are that the player rises rapidly up to their maximum (relative) height, and then slowly descend.
- **Burning** blocks is achieved simply by pushing into them. If the player is just hot enough to ignite a block, they will need to push into the block for a short while to start a fire – but if they are considerably hotter, fires will start just by them passing by.
- **Slamming** can be done after the player has jumped – it causes the fireball to come crashing down to the first surface beneath them, igniting fires quickly in a wide area of impact where they come down. These fires are slightly hotter than the player's default temperature.

These are all the player's abilities.

2.2.2 Avatar Temperature

The basis of fire starting rests in a simple system of temperature based upon colours. The avatar increases in heat permanently when it touches a burning block that is hotter than the avatar's current temperature.

Colour	Jump Height	Description
1: Yellow	+2 units	Yellow flames; bunsen burner style
2: Orange	+4 units	Bright orange flames.
3: Red	+8 units	Glowing red with heat haze.
4: Blue	+12 units	Blue-white flame, like a blowtorch.
5: White	+16 units	Bright white glow – very bright.

2.3. Controls

Basic Controls

Jump

The fireball jumps up to its maximum height, then begins to drift slowly down towards the ground.

Slam

Crash down to ground rapidly and then explode, igniting nearby blocks. If already on the ground, just explodes.

Jump and **Top Down View**

The fireball jumps, but the camera view tilts to give a top down view. Press again to cancel top down view. (Toggles top down view).

Pause/Map

Reset Field

Hold for 0.5 seconds to begin the current field again

Advanced Controls

Roll Left

Move Sideways to Left i.e. strafe left

Roll Right

Move Sideways to Right i.e. strafe right

Turn Left

Turn 90 degrees left

Turn Right

Turn 90 degrees right

2.3.1 Jump Profile

The following is a description of the jump profile for the fireball:

- **Start** at any given height. This may be the ground (0 height) or on a platform (>0 height).
- **Press Jump** to begin the jump. In less than a second, the fireball goes up in the air by +x units, where x is determined by the current temperature.
  If the player initiates jump with Triangle, they also get a top down view, so they can judge their

landing place.

- **Drifting** begins immediately. The player descends at the rate of about 1 unit per second.
  At any point, the player can use Triangle to toggle between a top down view and a regular view.

- **Pick Target** by looking at the shadow of the fireball. This is easiest in the top down view. Regardless of lighting, the shadow of the fireball always shows precisely where the player will land if they press Slam.

- **Slam** by pressing the appropriate control. The fireball descends almost instantly to the shadow-point and explodes – possibly igniting everything at this point. The slam fires are at a temperature one higher than the avatar's current temperature.

Note that it is not possible to jump again once in the air – the fireball must be in contact with a block in order to jump.

Also note that there is no quick way to descend except for slamming.

2.3.2 Slam Profile

Whenever the player slams, they raise every block in a 3 unit spherical radius of the point of impact (or point of explosion if they were on the ground) up to one higher than their current temperature. (The colour of the explosion effect should correspond to the higher temperature).

If this temperature is high enough to ignite a block, the block begins burning.

2.4. The Player's Goal

The player's goal is always to move, burn and melt their way around the environment in order to reach the torch – a symbolic brazier item – which they ignite on contact.

As soon as this is done, the playing field is cleared.

Advanced players will attempt to clear the playing field in the shortest play time, and/or cause the biggest Chain – achieved by having large number of blocks burning at the same time.

The player scores more for big Chains, and their score contributes to an overall progress mechanism which unlocks new collections of levels and simple cosmetic rewards.

2.5. Gaining Temperature

Increasing avatar temperature is (usually) one of the key steps the player undertakes towards their goal. To overcome various barriers, the player must often become hotter. This is achieved by touching a block that is burning at a higher temperature than the avatar. This can happen:

- If the avatar slams a material they could not usually burn in order to ignite it. This would immediately 'level up' the avatar to the new temperature
- If the avatar touches a material burning at a higher temperature. Such a block could be ignited by the heat of other blocks the player has ignited.

Once the avatar temperature increases, it is permanently at the higher degree for the rest of the current field.

2.6. Chains

2.6.1 Overview

Although it is not the player's stated goal to get a big Chain, the game is structured to imply that ending the level is not really victory – getting a large Chain is victory. This allows players to find their own level of challenge… If just reaching the brazier is challenging, the player will feel satisfied by this goal. If not, scoring a high Chain will seem like the goal, with the brazier merely being the end of the current field.

2.6.2 The Chain Counter

The size of the player's current Chain combo is displayed on the screen. This is the only text overlaid on the screen (except when the name of a field is displayed at the start).

The size of the current Chain is equal to the number of blocks currently burning.

2.6.3 Font Size of the Chain Counter

The size of the text which displays the current Chain count depends upon whether or not the Chain number has been growing or receding. A strict rubric defines this relationship:

- When no blocks are burning, no Chain is displayed.
- The first time a block is ignited, the font size is "100%". (All other sizes are relative to this size). This text will remain displayed for 10 seconds, gradually fading out if it is not 'replaced' with a new Chain value.

- The next time that the Chain value is updated (which may happen several times a second), if the Chain value is larger, the font size should be increased by the amount the chain is larger.

  Font Size = 100 + [Chain value] *percentiles*
- If the Chain value remains the same, the font size remains the same.
- If the Chain value decreases, the font size decreases accordingly.
- A maximum font size should be specified, based upon the largest size that can be displayed without obscuring the player's view.

If the text can only be displayed at certain discrete sizes, then the Font Size variable should be used to test whether or not the threshold for the next font size applies, rather than as a direct scaling factor.

2.7. Field Reset

The fields in *Fireball* often present mini-puzzles. Sometimes, these puzzl