

KEEP IT BURNING

Pitch Transcription

Patricio

What is it about?

Keep it burning is a survival, crafting, humorous game. The story begins with the arrival of our primitive heroes, to a new land. In this adventure, you play as Scrag or Skrog, guided in our quest, by the elder.

All members of a very special tribe in the early days of humankind.

They share a big secret: the art of mastering fire!

Nothing like a good fire to provide safety, cooking, socialisation and comfort to the clan.

This is an emotional journey: keep the fire alive to survive on a prehistoric dangerous environment.

Discover state of the art tools, and skills to overcome challenges, balance resource harvesting with sustainability. Scout out new and better locations. Craft and repair equipment. Learn to communicate.

This is also a family oriented product, without exposing young audiences to explicit violence.

We are going to discover soon enough, that keeping the flame alive, can be pretty complicated.

Phil

Game Concept

Keep it Burning is a blend of the survival and exploration aspects of Don't Starve, and the pixel art, crafting and home-base upgrading elements of Stardew Valley.

We draw inspiration from a number of different games and genres.

Don't Starve is a wilderness survival game with a complex crafting tree. It's essential to set up a campfire at night to prevent the things lurking in the dark from eating you.

In keep it burning the fire is essential to provide warmth and keep the camp safe from invaders, both animal and human.

Forager is a cute pixel art, crafting exploration and resource gathering game where you unlock new lands by finding new resources and then crafting tools and equipment to help explore those new lands.

In keep it burning, new crafting blueprints will be unlocked by discovering new resources such as animal hides and flint stone, allowing more advanced technologies, including Spears, knives, tanning, and cooking.

Dawn of man, a much lesser known prehistoric city builder in the loosest sense of the term, you can build a large camp and attempt to level up your tribe from the stone age into the iron age. We are going to focus on the prehistoric theme, but instead of base building and management, you are controlling each of the three tribes' people in an isometric view, each with different skills and specialisms, all of which will need to be mastered to be successful at staying alive.

Stardew Valley, a popular favourite, while primarily a casual farming game, has deep secondary crafting and social mechanics. In keeping it burning, through exploration you will be able to discover other tribes that have other technologies that you will need to acquire. This might be through trade, combat, or more stealthy means. Each method has its own longer term benefits or disadvantages.

Game Loop

Harvesting resources to keep the campfire burning is essential, because without the fire, you're not going to be able to stay warm, cook, or keep predators away, and death will come quickly.

Once you've mastered the core game loop, you will be able to unlock new tools, new player characters, upgrade your camp and gain access to new biomes, new resources and new tribes.

Game Mechanics

We're aiming for blend of different mechanics. The key mechanic is survival. You've got to keep that camp fire alive. This will initially be quite, time-consuming but you'll be able to

upgrade your home base and the core loop will become easier, allowing more time for exploration.

There's going to be a very extensive crafting tree which will allow access to new biomes, additional challenges, puzzles, and other tribes.

Sustainability is a key pillar of the mechanics in that if you over harvest your local natural resources, you will find that they do not regrow fast enough, and more time will need to be spent traveling further and further afield to look for the resources.

Scouting out new locations will open up new resources and allow for crafting of new items to make your campfire easier to maintain, easier to defend from incoming wild animal attacks, and unlock all three player characters.

1st Hour

The first hour's gameplay is going to be familiarisation with the core loop, balancing resource harvesting with sustainable growth, unlocking tools to make harvesting fuel and the campfire itself more efficient and experimenting with the playable characters.

Once you have a stable foundation, you can begin to explore new areas, interact with new tribes, relocate your camp to new areas with different resources, and experiment with new skills such as fishing, cooking, and strive towards the pinnacle of technology, the ability to start a new fire from scratch.

Debs

World Map / Mood board

Now I will introduce my concept design for the word map of "Keep It Burning."

One of the main characters (Skrog), starts his journey in the first level of the game, in a winter style theme, set in a numerous amount of cool tones.

We specifically wanted to create an environment, which made the player understand the importance of "keeping the fire alight", and for them to understand the urgency of needing to collect items before the timer runs out.

As you can see, the other areas surrounding the winter one, is partly hidden by the clouds to represent areas/ locations to be unlocked.

Yet, here the colour palette changes to more earthy tones, foliage is increased creating a much more dense atmosphere for the player to explore.

I packed as much around the forest as possible, once again to create the feeling of survival, knowing the second level may not consist of snow now, but the risks of predators is now increased.

Character Design

The game concept for Keep It Burning, is based around 3 main characters, each character is unique in their own way, with an individual item to support them in some way, on their journey. The woman has the torch, the man has the bag, the elder had hand protectors. The characters needed to have defined silhouettes, with recognisable features, that could be easily converted to the in-game pixel art.

My inspiration for the character design, first came from Pixars "Brave", where each character was inclined to have big hair, cloth like robes, finished with a material that would capture the sunlight.

I added the natural textures/tones to that of an animals skin, to help portray the characters to be seen as cavemen and woman from a tribe, only just surviving!

Will

Pixel Art slide

The team are all retro gaming enthusiasts and fondly remember the games we grew up playing on 8-bit and 16-bit era machines. It's this kind of sentimentality and nostalgia that we're aiming to evoke with our own isometric 2D pixel style. To ensure that Keep it Burning, we evoke these strong feelings of nostalgia, we've looked closely at similar styled games and themes on various retro platforms - games such as;

Knight Lore, Hydrofool, Head Over Heels, When time stood still, and Prehistoric 2. We have used these as our inspiration to create strong distinct character designs, detailed explorable environments and vibrant colour palette.

The Business model

Survival and crafting games, continue to be a popular choice for gamers, with high sales (ownership?) and install figures along with a steady flow of regular concurrent players.

A recent example of the popularity in the genre, is the successfully Kickstarter crowdfunded; Wanderlost which was well over 400% funded and, had close to 3600 backers, with an average pledge of 40 Euros.

All of the above, offer a medium to long average play through time with replay options - which we believe reflects on their continued sales and active user base.

Patricio

Pre - Production Grant

For a demo version of, "Keep It Burning", we are aiming for a Pre - Production Grant of 9550 Euros.

This money is going to be used to cover the salaries for the team members, working part-time on the project, also to cover the original music tracks, provided by external collaborators. Software Licenses and distribution fees, for GooglePlay, Steam, and the Apple store.

Localization is planned to be made in German, Italian and Spanish.

Production for the demo will start in October, with a release date of February 2022.

The Wild Branch Team slide

The Wild Branch is a small team of like minded people from diverse professional backgrounds, supervised by Giovanni Rubino, from Falmouth University.

Patricio Land – has 20+ years in indie games development and has been part of successful video game Kickstarter campaign, as well as self-published games.

Phil Lakin - Phil has over 20 years experience in IT management and Software development and is working on the code design, repository version control as well as game design and level design.

Debbie Norton – is the lead concept artist, narrative designer and sound designer, and in the last couple of years she has written and illustrated her own children's books.

Will Ward – is the pixel artist and will be sharing game and level design duties with Phil. Will comes from a Multimedia background and has spent the last 5 years teaching games design principles and has experience with tabletop games design.

