

# **ZENITH REPORT**

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## **First Impressions:**

At first glance, when you look around (by moving the analogue stick) the level looks extremely large and colourful, and you expect to go hunting for lots of secret hidden missions.

The full control of the camera is nice, so you can look at every angle of a block or an area before you walk into it, to check for lurking baddies etc.

The character selecting screen is colourful and professional looking, with the varied option of selecting 3 characters out of a wide range; and it would be interesting if, when you selected a character, all her / his statistics and information appeared on the screen, i.e. weight, height etc., and the highlighted character started doing her / his special moves / fighting techniques etc., in the character box.

I also noticed that when you change character within the game, the icon at the bottom of the screen doesn't always change.

## **Animation & Graphics:**

Most of the animations look quite nice, but the main character doesn't move as smoothly as she / he could.

The different jumps are nice, (if sometimes taking a good few button presses to pull off) as is the "wobbling" animation when the character stands on the very edge of a ledge; although this can get irritating, as you cannot kick or punch during this.

When the character is climbing up a pillar, and automatically swings around to the nearest side of it, or jumps onto the back wall; this is quite effective, but at the moment, the character tends to disappear into the wall, crashing the game.

Sometimes the animation can get quite clumsy looking, especially when the character clambers onto a horizontal block from a vertical block.

At the moment, most of the tiles look far too sharp and blocky, and you can tell easily, that they've been placed / tiled in an editor.

On large areas of walls, the big windows, swords and shields etc., break up the expanse of the plain boring green tiles, and actually give the impression of a castle-style level.

Similarly, with large plain areas of floor (not lava or water) there's not enough variation in the tiles. A few more cracked and detailed blocks would help. The green "small rocks" tiles looks quite attractive, because it doesn't actually look like a tile; they just all merge in with each other.

The breakable blocks are a nice idea, and hopefully other styles, e.g. slime, ice, etc. could be used as well.

The background is quite pretty, and it does help to give a sense of depth, but doesn't really suit the colours of the rest of the game.

The colours are slightly garish at the moment, mostly the orange and green, clashing with the background and the main characters, which don't even seem to stand out as much as everything else!!

The brighter the tiles are, at the moment, the more unfinished they seem to look.

The switches could perhaps do with being a different colour, as they are quite hard to notice sometimes, in amidst the other orange tiles.

When you move the camera around to a different angle, the sides of the ledges tend to disappear, but this probably can't be helped.

The water looks fine, apart from the lack of a splash when the character jumps into it. The lava is quite hard to distinguish until you see the fireballs coming out of it.

The baddies which are in at the moment have quite a nice style, but they could do with being more detailed and more colourful.

## **Player:**

When the character needs to jump up on a small block, she / he always does the somersault onto it. This kind of jump seems a bit unnecessary for that small height. Why doesn't she just jump straight up, grab onto the ledge and pull herself up?!?

The character also seems to always land just on the edge of the block when she / he does their somersault. This can get annoying to watch.

After the character gets injured by something, it might help if she is invincible for a few seconds; especially on the middle of level 1 where you have to avoid the boulders which are trundling towards you.

Some of the jumps that you have to make are very vague and rather hard to judge, due to the fact that you can't see the outline of the block clearly; i.e. when you're hanging off the roof and you have to jump to another block, behind you.

Also, in the demo, sometimes the character seems to be standing too far away from a block, to make the jump up onto it look possible.

There's various points in the game, where the character "limps" up the slope, and tries to jump up on a vertical block.

She / he usually appears halfway up the block, and misses out the actual animation in between. Looks shoddy.

The animation also get slightly confused when the character's hanging from the roof, and he has to turn around to jump up onto another block.

The punch and kick moves are quite nice, but more variation is needed, considering the amount of keys that can be used on the pad.

## **Gameplay:**

The current control method is very frustrating, hindered even more just now by having to use the grey keys on the pad for movement. The controls feel like they could be a bit more responsive.

A lot of the puzzles are rather vague at the moment, and it perhaps too easy to fall off some ledges, ending up near the beginning again.

Also, at the moment, a lot of the puzzles can be bypassed, just by climbing around them.

The part in the game where you have to use the Gun, to fire the balls to hit the switch, is quite an original idea; perhaps more bonus / sub games could be incorporated in the levels, to break up the monotony of just climbing.

The baddies that are in the game at the moment, seem a bit too vicious, especially when they all gang up on you, and they take about 5 kicks to kill.

The game has potential with it's "Knightlore" type idea on the U64, but the clumsy animation and the rough-looking graphics will need to be smoothed out a great deal.