

**Development diary**  
**The Groovy Gentleman**

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## What should it feel like

Mobile

Fun and  
delightful

Simple

Meaningful

Minimal

Social

## Ideas

A game that guides you to meet other people in the real world

A musical platformer that incorporates rhythmic tapping

A game that represents boredom (a platformer where you can only click one button)

A game incorporating elements of two games

Point-and-click adventure game with QTEs for each interaction

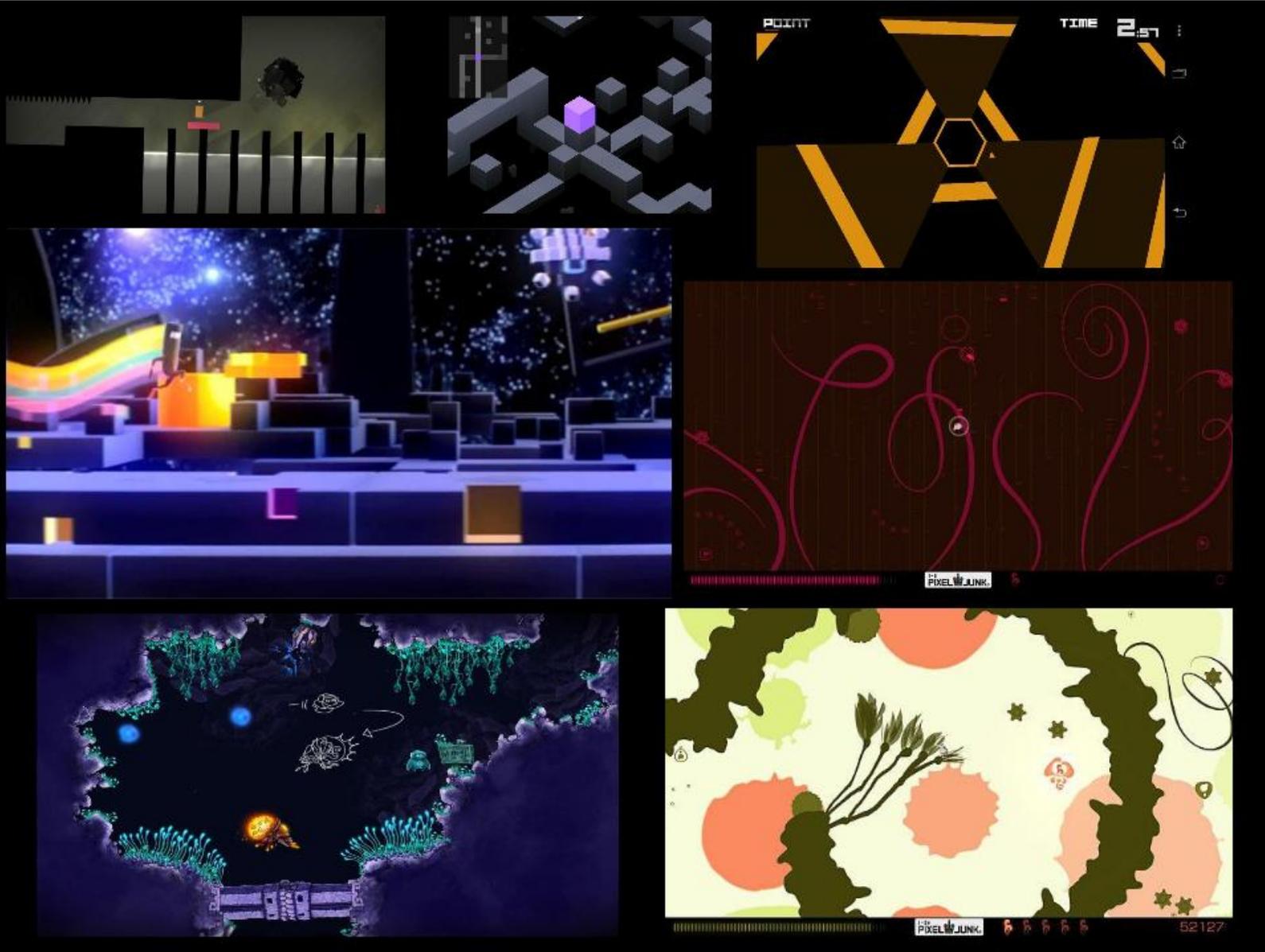
A side-scroller where you defeat your opponents by beating them in tic-tac-toe

A space invaders-esque game in which you stop moving each time you want to shoot

The initial ideas that came to my mind were mainly concepts that were odd, or something that mixes two completely different game elements. Then I began thinking about a game that flows naturally instead of a gimmicky idea. Something that plays and makes player “feel” the gameplay instead of struggling to understand it, while maintaining a minimal approach...

This is how The Groovy Gentleman was born.

## Mood Board



Games that are included in the mood board:

- Beat Buddy;
- Pixel Junk Eden;
- Bit Trip Runner 2;
- Super Hexagon;
- Thomas Was Alone;
- EDGE;

## Basic game concept

### The Groovy Gentleman - a sound-based scrolling platformer

- Jump by pressing either of three buttons (triangle, square, circle);
- Collect as many shapes as possible by tapping the appropriate shape when next to the object;
- Different shapes correspond to different musical effects;
- Shield yourself when some foe is attacking you at a specific spot;
- EVERYTHING is timed to the beats ;
- Featuring Electro Swing and a bunch of other musical genres

### Camera changes from horizontal perspective to vertical when you touch specific areas:

- During this mode you bounce left and right by tapping specific shapes according to what is projected on the walls;
- Areas that switch the camera must be activated by pressing the appropriate shape or you get squished;
- Foes are not present in this mode;

### Boss battles:

- At the end of each level the action changes to a free-roaming mode in a wide area on the entire screen where you can tap to glide;
- The more points you've accumulated the faster you are;
- Glide through the air via an analogue stick on the screen;
- Defeat bosses by:
  1. Gliding around and picking up shapes.
  2. Deflecting shapes the boss throws at you.
  3. Destroying objects around the boss that are labeled with different shapes.
  4. Learn bosses timings and attack them during vulnerable states

## Speed and difficulty

This is a very important thing to consider. When it comes to games that are classified as "runners" people usually think about difficulty and speed. But the problem is that The Groovy Gentleman is meant to be more casual, so how are we going to make it both challenging and not borderline crazy?

First of all, we need to think about platform positioning. Are there going to be lots of small ones, or ones that require very specific jump timings? Most probably not, because we want the game to feel natural and flow continuously without a lot of interruption. So that means that we shouldn't necessarily have platforms in their traditional form, but rather create the ground in such a way that it goes up and down continuously via the use of occasional platforms, with occasional drops. Think Rayman Legends level design, but with a bit of a different positioning geared towards runners.

As far as speed goes, it definitely needs to be tied to the beats per minute of the audio track that is playing, reflecting in both background and object scrolling. The average BPM should be around 100, with later parts of the game reaching about 130 at maximum (only during some parts of the level).

## Tapping vs. swiping

I feel like this is a very important aspect to think about when you make a mobile game. Both tapping and swiping have advantages and disadvantages, but some games work better with one compared to the other. One thing I have to mention is that here I'm talking solely in terms of controlling a character and issuing movements for sidescrollers and platformers.

1. Tapping: this method can be considered to be more used in mobile games, being clearer and a bit safer. The problem here is that often the screen is filled with buttons that obstruct the player's field of view, especially when it comes to first-person shooters (a genre that still simply fails to deliver on mobile devices). Usually we are talking about analogue sticks on the screen or buttons for two to three actions you need to perform. More and more games nowadays tend to ditch the whole idea of having something on the screen, instead creating areas of the playing area that correspond to certain actions, such as having the bottom left part of the screen for movement and the right side for attacking. The previous method is more oriented towards first-person and top-down shooters, while another way to do things is to create a zone on the bottom part of the screen for movement and other actions, used in sidescrollers. But I think we can say that tapping is more precise. Wind-up Knight is a good example of a game that uses only tapping for a more responsive control scheme, when it could've clearly gone with some swiping for jumps.

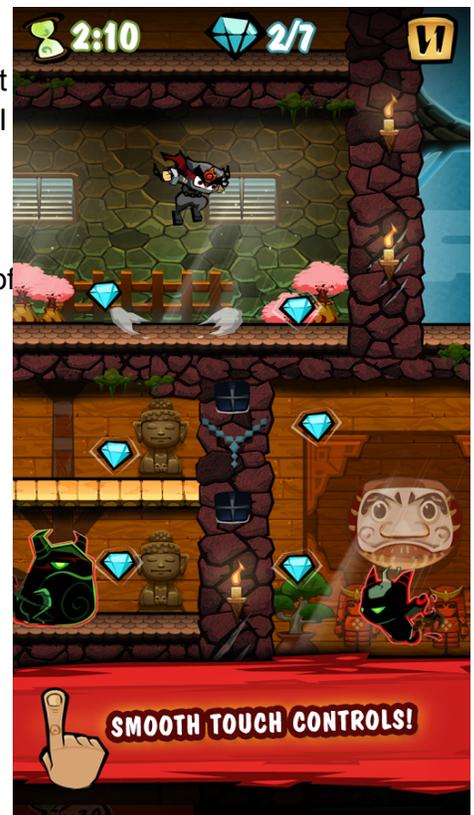
## Music

It needs to be fun to listen to, something that makes players tap their feet and swing their heads. With this in mind, Electro Swing seems as the obvious choice of genre for The Groovy Gentleman.



2. Swiping: this method is very physical and snappy. It may be just me, but when I swipe in a game and it actually works as intended I feel more involvement compared to pressing a button. Most games that use only swiping as a way of controlling the character are more casually oriented, good examples being Temple Run or Fruit Ninja. Simply flicking your finger to one side of the screen works there. Other games use swiping as a means of mixing it in as a way to initiate certain actions. In the end of the day, the most popular use of swiping in games has to do with things cutting something, and we've seen plenty of games using this mechanic.

An interesting game that uses simplistic controls is "Release the Ninja". It doesn't have any kind of sticks or buttons on the screen, but instead requires you to swipe left or right to control the



character's movement, in addition to swiping up and down to jump or descend. I have to say it's an interesting way to tackle swiping, although very unresponsive and a bit sluggish, unless you are VERY fast.

### What is the better choice for sidescrollers like The Groovy Gentleman?

Clearly, we have to talk about sidescrolling games (or in our case not just side). For The Groovy Gentleman, swapping simply won't work if we want to achieve a sense of rhythm. Although it can be used easily for jumping, tapping is kind of required since we want everything to be in rhythm according to the music in the background. More so, the game is centered around touching the correct shape, and although we can technically associate parts of the screen for a certain shape that would become too complicated.

But then again, we can use swiping for other functions in the game. What if the defend yourself button can be substituted entirely by swiping the screen to get rid of the monsters? Or, we can use it in boss fights in some way, maybe swipe the screen furiously in order to get rid of some slows they throw at you? Quite frankly, those are quite good ideas.

## **Super Hexagon - a bit of research and how we can tie in some aspects into The Groovy Gentleman**

Let me start by saying that this game is very hard. It's visually confusing because of the speed and the constant shapes that are moving, requiring incredibly fast reactions and a very good perception of space. Yet, I think this game can give quite a lot of interesting ideas to The Groovy Gentleman.

It's funny how we can take elements, or ideas, from something that hard and put it into a game that goes for something completely different - being easy, clear, even a bit relaxing. Imagine taking Super Hexagon and turning it into something everyone can jump into. Wouldn't that be great? Hey, even adding the musical and rhythmical aspect would tie in wonderfully. With that in mind, let's see what aspects of Super Hexagon are "useable".

First off, it's minimal. All you see is shapes moving around the screen, and the only thing you do in this game is pressing two buttons. Of course, this compensates with the overall difficulty, but that doesn't mean we can't use those aspects for our game. The simpler the controls, the more natural a game is, and that's just what we're going for.

On the other hand, everything on the screen bounces in rhythm to the beats of the music. This automatically makes the whole experience more vivid, simulates an upbeat character to a game that uses just simple, boring shapes. It even ties in nicely with the whole rhythmic thing we're going for!

Finally, the colours. In Super Hexagon they change constantly, even if it has to do with the difficulty going up. Again, it's a nice touch that can add character to an atmosphere consisting mostly of basic shapes. Having different levels with different colours seems a reasonable thing to put in our game, adding a bit of thematic to each of them. Maybe each zone can have a specific colour palette attached to it?

## **Bit Trip Runner 2 - an overall look**

This is one of the biggest influences behind The Groovy Gentleman. It may be even said that this game has been in fact an inspiration for most modern runners, both for PC and mobile.

The major component to the game that is unique is in fact its rhythmical aspect. Thanks to some astounding level design the whole game feels very natural to play. Jumping and falling down platforms is tied to the music in an unnoticeable way at first, but after a few minutes it makes platforming more enjoyable and extremely fluid. In a way, players are forced to play the game based on its rhythm thanks to the way everything is positioned.

Another big factor that needs to be mentioned when it comes to the audio of Bit Trip Runner 2 is the sound when you pick up objects. The fact that it's all in tune with the background ambience and forms a music track is brilliant, adding a lot of musicality and charm to the game. Imagine the game without this aspect, or if picking up objects resulted in the same monotonous tune. Wouldn't that be a bit boring? Instead, each object you need to collect has a sound that is programmed so you create a continuously generated track, somewhat unique to each level.

And the visuals of Bit Trip Runner 2 add immensely to the aforementioned design ideas. Everything is bright, beautiful and most of all - fun. This may actually be one of the game's only flaws - it's too beautiful. In runners players should not get distracted easily, but in this game it's easy to just realise you're staring at the background or at objects in the levels, either laughing or being in awe. The palette is colourful and bright, adding to the happy feeling of the game, in addition to quirky looking NPCs at checkpoints that cheer you up when you run past them. The overall feel - optimistic.

In fact, the optimism and happiness of Bit Trip Runner 2 are the two most important things that I want The Groovy Gentleman to inherit. And in order to recreate this feeling, visual aspects and audio cues need to be spot-on.

One interesting aspect about Bit Trip Runner 2 is that it's 2.5D, which adds a bit of depth to the gameplay. It's a good choice if making a game for the PC or consoles, but it's a bit of a risky move when it comes to mobile gaming. Making a demanding mobile game has some disadvantages, mainly performance related, while 2D games can look just as good. Of course, this comes from a perspective of someone that is designing a game such as the groovy gentleman.

## Target audience - research and (mostly) thoughts

Age: 25-44

Region: Global

Gender: Both

Ethnicity: Multiple

### 1. What would a postcore audience want from a game?

First off, we need to think about what classifies a person as a “postcore gamer”. [As described by Denki](#), postcore gamers are those that don't have a lot of spare time but have been hardcore gamers in their past. They appreciate and love the gaming culture but instead look for an easy, fresh experience that is fast to pick up but has some depth to it. With that being said, I think that in order to appeal to this group one may need to come up with a game concept that has to do with some sort of classic old-school vibe presented in a fresh, new way. Not having time but still interested in the industry, postcore gamers want something unique and accessible. 10000000 is a great example of a game that focuses on a new experience by mixing two very distinct game types. Another idea would be to create a game that simply requires you to do some physical activity (like tapping) in a specific way, meshing gameplay with simple physical involvement that can only be achieved via a touch screen. A rhythmical game would make sense in that case, as long as it's easy to play and does not require any kind of extreme visual perception or hand-eye coordination.

### 2. What happens when this audience is particularly style-conscious?

This would mean the game must have a distinct art style to it, which of course should go well with the overall theme. Distinct art styles can include 8bit graphics or a more soft/blurred out style, beautifully hand-drawn vibrant graphics or heavily stylized dark/matte colours. Each of those choices are viable. For the project I am working on, a clear, colourful and vibrant graphics style would be the best choice, making the game strikingly simplistic and pleasing to the eye.

### 3. Will age affect the game?

Yes. Chances are not all people in the age group of 25-44 will be willing to play a physically challenging game or something that can be considered particularly hard to play. The game needs to be simple, yet engaging. It has to be able to grab the player in the very beginning with intuitive controls and a clever way of progression into more complex mechanics that would follow later on in the game.

## Best ways (hopefully) to market the game

### 1. Youtube

Although [this](#) may be a bit of an old article, it provides solid evidence to the fact that creating promotional video content on YouTube is one of the best way to market a game nowadays. Providing trailers that are actually themed to the game and convey its overall feel is crucial and should net some fans.

Wildstar is a very good example of a game that generated a lot of hype because of its humorous trailers.

### 2. HumbleBundle mobile

Although providing only Android games at the moment, it's worth keeping an eye at the HumbleBundle weekly sales in case they decide to include iOS games as well.

### 3. Press interaction

This one is vital. More specifically, we should reach out to the press and offer early builds of our game, and of course send out review copies when the release date comes. If we get some press outlets to cover our game or just mention it in an article, that's a win.

Emailing such sources about whatever exciting things we want to announce is a good way of gaining their attention and getting into their mailing lists for future correspondence. Although this is a mobile game and you don't see a lot of coverage on games like that before their release, there's no harm done in trying to organize interviews with companies such as IGN. Interviews can also be done with youtube personalities that cover Android games, or even some that don't.

Speaking of marketing...

## Top-hats and monocles sell games

Well, I guess we have to talk in-app purchased when we're dealing with mobile games...

Although most mobile games that have microtransactions are repetitive, or have parts that are intentionally designed to be ridiculously hard (mostly involving grinding to beat if you don't want to pay to win), there are a lot of examples that include paid elements just because of the very idea. The very fact that companies keep doing that simply means that it's worth it, people ARE buying things. Well, there is always a different side of things. More specifically, there are lots of people that are aware of the fact that mobile games' microtransactions are mostly either a waste of time, or a hidden requirement for an otherwise "free" game.

So why not cater to that audience instead? In the end of the day, we are making a game for a mature audience.

The decision is simple: The Groovy Gentleman will have only one thing that would be buyable with real money - a top-hat and monocle set! The price - ridiculously high, something like 20\$. It may seem a bit ridiculous, but the game isn't really one that would benefit of a real money market that much, so putting just this can serve as a nice joke if delivered in the right way.

Another possibility is to have the set itself as a reward in the end of the game, and whoever bought it before would receive a reward, although that may be a bit unrealistic...