



Arcane Ascent GDD:

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Overview:

You are a young apprentice ascending an ancient arcane tower, the "Spire of Trials," to prove your worth and earn the title of Archmage. Each floor is a magical trial testing your mastery of movement: bunnyhopping, surfing, strafe climbing, and other skill-based mechanics. Along the way, temporary magical runes grant you new abilities per floor that must be mastered quickly and relinquished after.

You are in training and are about to take your final test. The tutorial introduces the player to the movement mechanics and has an archmage (voiced by a woman) teaching you the basics. Around the middle of the tutorial you get your first rune (Runes give you access to new abilities and you get one at the end of each level, though for the tutorial you get it half way through). This is the time rune. The time rune allows players to create checkpoints so they don't lose their place on the map if they miss a jump.

Then the player goes into the tower to face the trials. It's basically a series of kz maps that add new abilities on each level. There are abilities like wall running, gliding, dashing, etc. You get an ability at the end of each level and that new ability becomes the main staple of the next level. Though the previous unlocked abilities also are used in those next levels too.

The 6th level will be after the player has completed the official test. Something goes wrong (don't really have a full story idea yet for this) and the tower breaks or a new floor manifests and it's somehow dangerous or world ending or something to that effect. Basically it's like a void area and the player has to fix whatever is wrong (no actual gameplay for fixing it, it's still just a kz map basically, but with all the abilities and a bit harder than the tutorial and first 5 levels). Once the player makes it to the end of that level there will be some button or book or something. Maybe a book that the player touches and that stops the time and triggers a cutscene where they use some spell in the book to stop whatever is happening and save the day. Then, an ending similar to portal 2 happens where they open the door and walk outside and then roll credits.

Setting/Genre:

The game is a first person platformer that revolves around the movement from source games (i.e. bunnyhopping, strafing, and surfing)

Gameplay:

Primary Loop:

Bunny hopping, surfing, air strafing, wall running, dashing, etc. You gain a new ability after each level. There will be around 6 levels each taking roughly 10 minutes. The

player starts with basic movement (i.e. Bunny hopping, surfing, air strafing) and gains the ability to wall run, dash, glide, etc. in each new level. This way the player is given time to learn each new skill, rather than having to do all of them at once. The final level will require that the player have mastery over all the skills to complete it.

Secondary Loop:

The secondary loop is the completion of each level. The players will need to complete levels to progress in the game.

Tertiary Loop:

The tertiary loop is the time trials. I plan to either make a few separate levels specifically for speedrunning and leaderboards, but the main game may also be something players speed run and that would act as a tertiary loop.

Abilities/Runes:

The game will feature runes that you get after each level. The tutorial starts with the basic surfing, bunnyhopping and air strafing mechanics. This teaches the player the basics. After the tutorial is complete, the player receives the time rune.

Time Rune: This is essentially just a checkpoint system. The player, when on the ground, can make a marker in that “place in time” and if they fall they will be teleported to that spot, instead of starting from the beginning. If they are midair they can also just go back to the checkpoint if they know they aren't going to make the jump.

Wind Rune: The player, after completing the first level, will get access to the wind rune and the ability to glide for a short period of time. Some jumps may be too long to reach with air strafing and will require that the player hold space bar (or some other button) to glide safely to the next platform (think Jett from Valorant).

Earth Rune: The player will get the earth rune after completing the previous level. This gives the player access to the next floor and to the wall running ability.

Water Rune (Still deciding on this one): Grants the player the ability to bounce off of surfaces. Not sure how useful this one would be or unique level elements that would make this feel good. It feels like just a slightly different form of wall running that is suited to vertical spaces. Also, first person perspective could make this slightly jarring. I will have to prototype and test this one.

Fire Rune (still deciding on this one): Grants the player the ability Combustion Burst (WIP name). The player basically gets launched up in the direction they are looking. This could be useful if any levels feature moving platforms. Instead of waiting for the platform to come back to the player so they can jump on it normally, the player would have the option to use this ability to launch themselves into the air slightly and strafe to the platform even if it's slightly farther away. I like this idea but would need to prototype it first to see whether it feels as good as I am envisioning.

Void Rune: This is the last rune. Players get this after completing the tower before beginning the final level which adds to the difficulty and requires a mastery of all previous abilities. The Void Rune gives the player the ability to phase through objects. It's sort of a dash that works as a way to phase through a wall. This could provide the player with unique speedrun skip opportunities.

Ultimately, each of the abilities will hopefully build on the last. I want them all to make sense for the type of movement and lead to smooth, fast gameplay. By the end, the player should be able to chain these together and come up with unique ways of beating the last level and any of the time trials that will get added.

Targeted Platforms:

The main platform is steam. The game will most likely be pc only.

Monetization Model:

The game will be a one time purchase. I am looking to charge \$4.99 in the United States. That is subject to change though. Prices for other countries will vary depending on the norm.
Project Scope:

Influences:

The game's mechanics take heavy influence from Half Life and Counter Strike. While many may be quick to say the game is taking heavy influence from Titanfall 2, I only recently learned of the mechanics in that game and have had the idea for this game since before that. I used to spend a lot of hours in surf and kz maps in Counter Strike: Global Offensive and that is heavily influencing the design of this game.

Elevator Pitch:

The game is a first person platformer that uses the source style movement of bopping, surfing, and air strafing in order to progress. The game will also feature additional mechanics like wall running and dashing to add to the complexity and feel of the movement. The goal is to complete all the levels as well as work towards completing them within a set time limit/speed run them if the player wants to challenge themselves.

Art Direction:

The art will be pbr stylized materials and low to mid poly assets.

Art References:







Assets Needed:

Materials:

1. Ground Dirt Material
2. Ground Rocky Path Material
3. Grass Material
4. Tower Interior Walls Material (each slightly different for each floor and rune type, like, wet floors for water rune level)

5. Tower Interior Floors Material (each slightly different for each floor and rune type, like, wet floors for water rune level)
6. Particle material shaders for embers, sparkles, dust motes, wind swirls, water droplets
7. More later on...

Models:

1. Foliage (rocks, trees, plants like glowing mushrooms, vines, etc, grass)
2. Wand model
3. Player model
4. Book shelves
5. Portals for each level
6. Runes for each new ability (wind rune for dashing, earth rune for wall running, etc.)
7. Tables
8. Scrolls
9. Floating Candles
10. Floating magical book NPC
11. Tutorial Archmage NPC
12. Likely more later on...

VFX:

1. Ability activation effects on wand and player (flames, dust clouds, embers, sparkles, wind trails, water droplets, void shimmer)
2. Movement trail effects (glide trails, wall run dust, bounce impact ripples, fire burst flames, void phasing distortions)
3. Environmental ambient VFX: floating motes, drifting leaves, heat distortion waves, flickering torchlight, magical glow pulses
4. Particle effects for checkpoint markers (glowing runes on the floor that pulse when player uses their Time Rune checkpoint system)
5. Likely more later on...

Sound FX:

1. Walking sound
2. Elemental ambience for each level (smoldering sound for fire, dripping or rushing water for water level, etc.)
3. Sounds for when you use each rune to unlock new level (ground shaking sound and portal opening)
4. Sound for each ability so the wand effects feel good
5. Likely more later on...

UI:

1. UI feedback FX for rune pickups, ability cooldowns, successful movement (e.g., a sparkle or burst when wall run starts)
2. Speedrun timer built into the time trial versions instead of uses an external speedrun UI
3. Rune Icons to show the player which ones they have collected and if any have cooldowns it will show which ones are on cooldown
4. Dialogue UI for floating book and archmage (speech bubbles or text boxes with stylized borders)
5. Likely more later on...

Voice Acting:

1. Floating magical book voice lines — quirky, dry humor, clever and encouraging like Stephen Merchant or Wheatley from Portal 2
2. Tutorial Archmage voice lines — wise, playful mentor tone
3. Likely more later on...

Scripts:

1. Movement scripts for surfing, bunnyhopping, and air strafing - DONE
2. Ability scripts for wallrunning, dashing, gliding, bouncing, etc.
3. Checkpoint system for the Time Rune
4. Ability management system (possibly state machine)
5. Environmental interaction scripts (moving platforms, level transitions, etc.)
6. UI scripts
7. NPC scripts
8. Likely more later on...