

Dogfighter¹

Introduction/Description

Dogfighter is an arcade-style competitive 2D spaceship combat game in which players must defeat each other in functionally and aesthetically distinct ships and environments.

Players must align themselves with a faction, each of which confers a gameplay advantage and determines the color scheme of the player's ship.

Players must manage shield, armor, energy, and ability cooldown resources.

Every ship has a standard attack along with four special abilities.

There are two game modes: versus and story versus. In versus, the players select a ship, a faction, a map, and a number of rounds; then, they duel to the death. The player with the greatest number of wins at the end of the last round wins the game. If there is a tie, a tie-breaker sudden death match will be optionally held. Story-versus mode is the same as ordinary versus except that maps are grouped into narratively cohesive sequences with restricted faction options. Victory of the player will in story-versus be framed as victory of the player's faction in the story.

Background

The arcade battle system of The Ur-Quan Masters is one of the biggest influences for "Dogfighter". Escape Velocity Nova and League of Legends have influenced ship structure and diversity.

Key Features

Factions

There are 9 factions, which dictate the players' ships' power-ups and color schemes. Further, each map will have significance in the narrative of inter-faction conflict.

Lawful Good Shield boost	Neutral Good Ship takes less damage	Chaotic Good Armor regeneration
Lawful Neutral Armor boost	Neutral Neutral Ability cooldown reduction	Chaotic Neutral Speed boost
Lawful Evil Energy boost	Neutral Evil Turn rate increases	Chaotic Evil Damage output boost

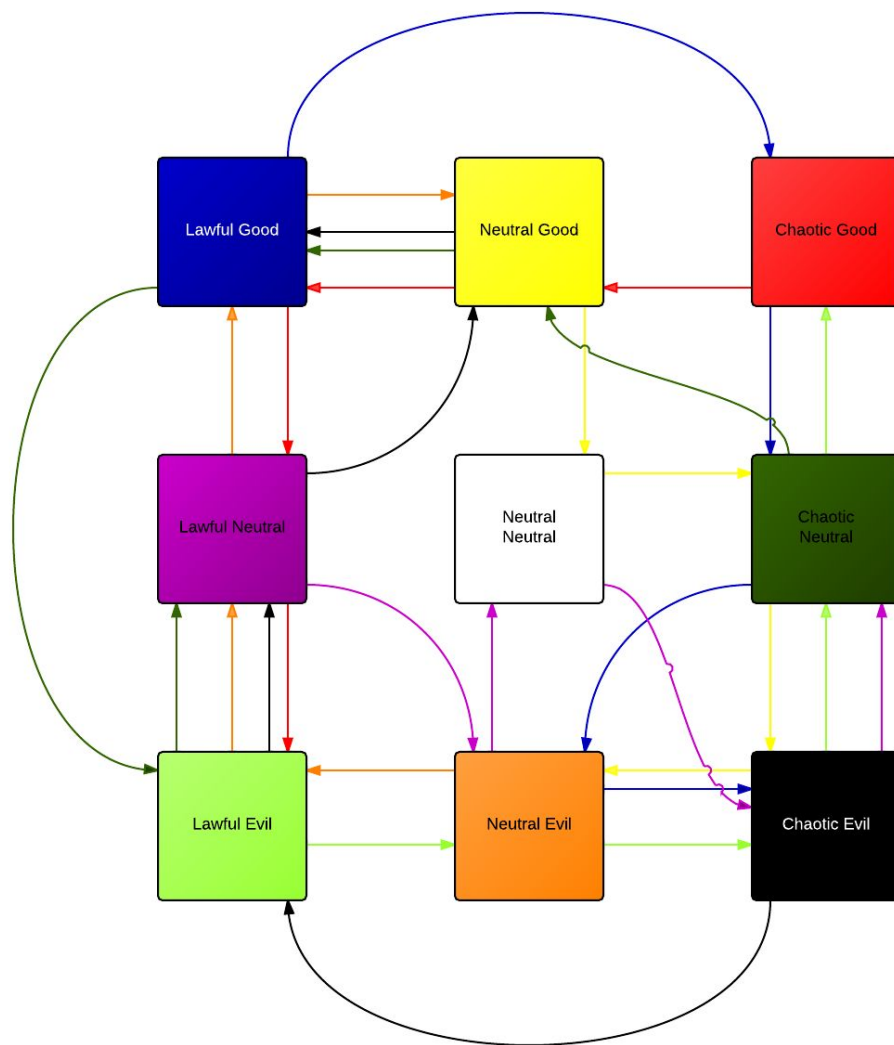
¹ Working title.

Game Modes

Versus

Each player can choose between 27 (?) ships. The players choose their ships, which faction they want (likely motivated by its unique power-up), and the map they will fight on. The game may then be started, ending with the destruction of one of the players' ships.

Story Versus



In story versus, the players designate one of themselves as the leader, who then selects a faction. That player's ultimate goal is to defeat his faction's ideological nemesis, but to do so, he

must first defeat 3 other factions of intermediate ideological difference (the progressions can be seen in the flowchart above). When the leading player defeats the nemesis, he wins; when he loses, the other player becomes the leader and, starting with the faction he used to beat the previously leading player, the process repeats itself until a player wins.

Practice

Ships

Throne

Primary weapon: Spinning golden discs, bounce up to 3 times off the enemy ship and asteroids

Secondary ability: Invulnerability (costs energy/second)

Aesthetic: Angelic

Beelzebub

Primary weapon: Flamethrower

Secondary ability: Open gravity well, attracting all objects toward it and hurting ships touching it

Aesthetic: Demonic

Fatty

Primary weapon: Several lasers firing outward in a cone shape

Secondary ability: Afterburn, temporarily increasing acceleration and max speed as well as damaging any ships immediately behind it

Aesthetic: Fat piece of shit

Storm

Primary weapon: Weakly homing, fairly slow-moving missiles. The goal here is for it to be feasible to hit a moving target without any ionization, but ionization will greatly increase likelihood of missile hits. Thus, a Storm player who is skilled with hitting ion shots will be much more successful than his less-skilled counterparts, but they should not be helpless either

Secondary ability: Ion cannon, functionally a shot that reduces enemy ship's turn rate and speed for a duration on hit

Aesthetic: Lightning

Dash

Primary weapon: Propels a shuriken-shaped mine out in front of the ship which will explode, dealing damage in a radius, if touched by any ship. If the mine doesn't touch anything after a moderate-length path, it becomes stationary and waits for contact. Dash can be damaged by his own mines.

Secondary ability: Teleport forward a couple ship lengths

Aesthetic: Ninja

Ghost

Primary weapon: Shield-absorbing beam weapon (can damage shields and hull, but only restores shields)

Secondary ability: Stealth (drains energy/second), renders Ghost mostly invisible (~10% opacity) and reduces damage taken for the duration

Aesthetic: Ghostly

Agent

Primary weapon: Sniper shot. Thin, fast-moving, very-long-range straight-line projectile. Slower refill rate than most primary weapons.

Secondary ability: Covers Agent with a smokescreen and replaces him with two new Agents, one located immediately to the right of the original Agent and one to the left. Each "Agent Clone" functions and responds to controls just like the original did; the player now controls two ships instead of one. For example, if the player orders a right turn, then both Agents turn right; if he hits the fire button, they both fire. When activated, there is a short (~half second) delay between the disappearance of the original Agent and the appearance of the two new ones; a skilled Agent player can use this to evade harm. Neither "Agent Clone" is the "real one"; they have identical characteristics and remain on the field until death. When one dies, the player continues playing with the remaining one. This ability may not be used again until one of the Agents has died; that is, it deactivates while two Agents are on the field. The two Agents inherit the vector of the original at the time they spawn, so if Agent was moving when he activated the ability, then the new ones will immediately fly out of the smokescreen as the original would have. The purpose of the smokescreen is only to visually obscure the cloning process; one Agent flies in and two fly out. This ability uses Agent's whole energy pool and he has no energy regeneration while two Agents are in play.

Aesthetic: Sleek, deceptive

Plague

Primary weapon: A regular projectile that deals extra damage while the target is poisoned.

Secondary ability: Plague fires a bio bomb that explodes with a medium-size radius upon contact with an object or after a short distance. Enemy ships hit by the blast radius become poisoned; that is, they take damage over 8 seconds (a small amount of damage each second). Subsequent applications of the poison simply refresh the duration (the DoT won't stack).

Aesthetic: Biohazard (yellow, black)

Ability brainstorm

- Spawned decoy of ship that mirrors the real ship's movements
- Seeking missiles of various thrust speeds and turn rates
- Non-seeking rockets
- Countermeasures
- Fighters
- Beam weapons
- Energy drain
- Radial blast

Environments

User Interface

In-Game UI

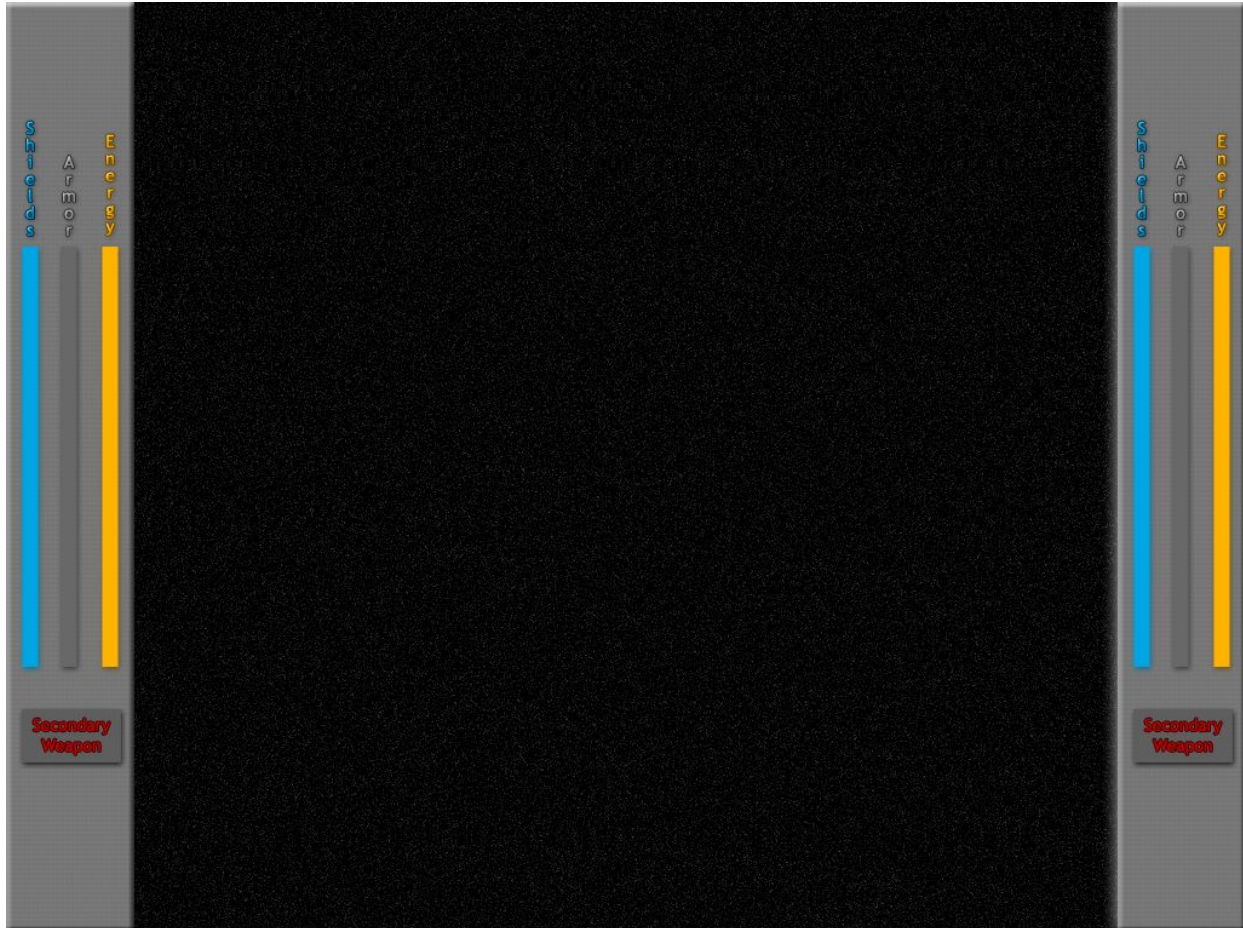
Proposal 1: Bottom-oriented (background)



Discussion

The bottom-oriented UI layout displays the players' shields, armor, energy, and selected secondary weapon at the bottom of the screen. This design, compared to the sides-oriented one, has the advantages of less wasted space and maintaining the semblance of the familiar widescreen aspect ratio.

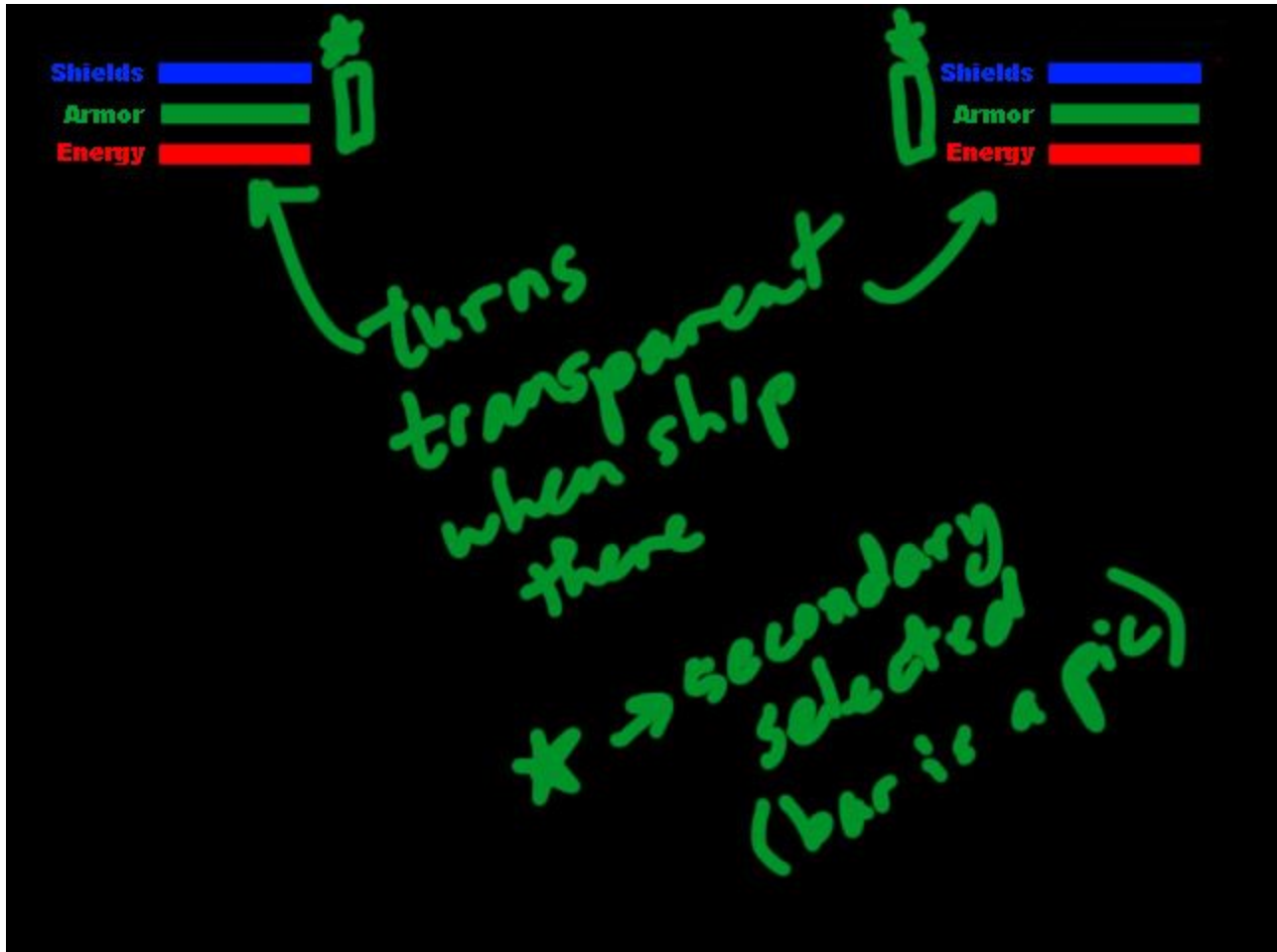
Proposal 2: Sides-oriented (background)



Discussion

The sides-oriented UI layout displays the players' shields, armor, energy, and selected secondary weapon on the sides of the screen -- that is, player 1's information is left-justified and player 2's information is right-justified. This design, compared to the bottom-oriented one, has the advantage of clearly visually separating the two players' displays, which avoids the confusion that may result from the bottom-oriented layout. However, this design has the disadvantage of difficult-to-read vertical text.

Proposal 3: Top-Oriented (no background)



To allow for maximum sight, I propose a non-bar system, in which the parameters are visible on both top edges of the screen. Transparency would allow for players to see even when underneath the UI, and next to the text would be an image of the secondary weapon selected.

Menu Progression

Title Screen
Menu Selection

>Online/Offline Option

>Story Versus

>>Who will lead?

>>>Player 1

>>>Player 2

>>Player 1/2 Choose Ship

>>>Designated Player Choose Faction

- >Versus
 - >>Player 1 & 2 Choose Ship
 - >>Player 1 & 2 Choose Faction
 - >>Begin Match

- >Options
 - >>Control Scheme
 - >>Video
 - >>>Brightness
 - >>>Resolution
 - >>Audio
 - >>>Mono/Stereo
 - >>>Volume
 - >>>>Sound Effects
 - >>>>Music (Also On/Off)

- >Quit Game
 - During Battle
 - >Pause
 - >>Resume
 - >>Return to Ship Select
 - >>Options^^
 - >>Quit Game

Genre

2D arcade multiplayer top-down space combat.

Experimental Features

A League of Legends-type Mastery system before a match starts.

An organic ships that bleeds.

Networking.

Mobile support (way in the future).