

THE BRINK

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

The Brink is a 3D, top down, narrative choice game set in the far future. Players will take on the role of the Captain of an outer system patrol vessel, tasked with keeping order in the isolated and lawless star systems. Players will have to cajole, threaten, and mediate their way through countless events, acting as the sole judge, jury and executioner of the central governments will.

Story

OVERVIEW

Captaining the CSV *Reproach*, the player must patrol the outer systems. As the only presence of the central systems and their governance the player is responsible for enforcing order, suppressing pirates, rendering aid to those in need and dealing with any situation that comes their way, all while investigating the apparent rising rebellion in the region. Trying to do what is right, the player will find, will be much harder than they realise.

STORY PROGRESSION

The *Brink* will feature three systems, the player will patrol each of the three distinct systems and will encounter several contained and connected events within them that will challenge the player to make a choice. Through these choices the player will decide how they, the Captain of the patrol vessel, deal with each of the situations. The consequences that come of the choices will make themselves known to the player in various ways that may reward or punish the player. It is also through these events, choices, and consequences that the story will progress and be presented to the player.

CHARACTERS

The *Brink* will feature many minor characters that will feature in the events in each system, but they do not have a large focus and will feature only minor characterisation due to their low importance. There will still be a small set of major characters too:

The Captain:

This is the player character; they will not have much existing characterisation but will instead be shaped throughout the course of the game by the player's choices.

Commander Flynn:

The Captain's second in command; Commander Flynn is a strait-laced, naval prodigy. One of the youngest commanders in the entire navy, Commander Flynn believes immutably in the laws and ideals of the central government.

Lieutenant Ashton:

One of the bridge officers aboard the *Reproach*; Lieutenant Ashton volunteered for rim patrol duty, eager to help protect those who need it most. Lieutenant Ashton grew up in the outer systems and understands their plights more than most.

Warrick Quinn:

Leader of the fledgling rebellion insurgency; Warrick Quinn is an idealist with a dangerously charming and persuasive personality. He believes without a doubt that the only way for life to improve in the rim systems is if they become independent from the central government. While not a violent man he is willing to do whatever it takes to help the rim.

Gameplay

CORE MECHANICS

The player will be able to guide the ship around the system as if controlling it via a screen on the bridge. When exploring they will come across events that will present them with a small description of the situation via text and then the player will be able to select choices to handle the situation, the way they think best.

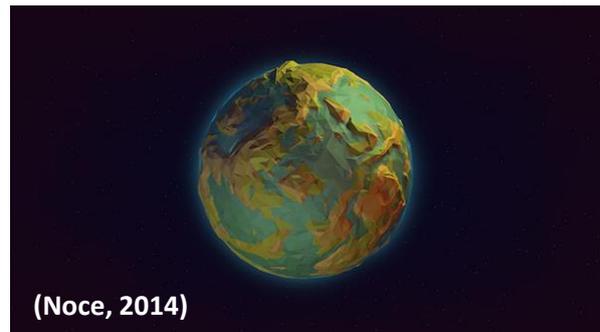
RESOURCES & REPUTATION

They player will have some very limited resources to make use of. A multi-role transport shuttle and a squadron of light attack fighters. Several of the events that come up will have a solution involving these vessels, but there is a significant chance they may be damaged and rendered unusable, so they will need to decide whether the current situation is the best time to use them or whether to save them for later. Unbeknownst to the player the game will also keep track of how certain characters think of the actions the player has taken, allowing for potential consequences in the narrative.

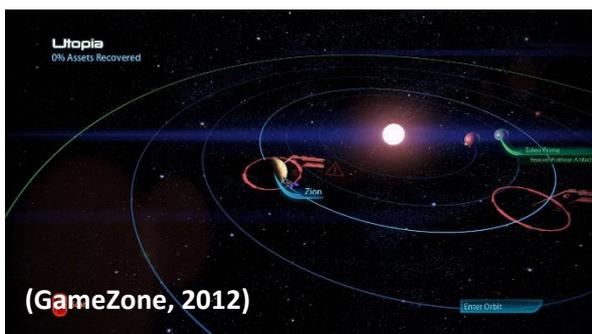
Aesthetics

ART STYLE

The Brink will feature a low poly art style that will provide striking contrast with the game's serious narrative. It will also make the world have a memorable and stylistic look that will suit the idea that the world as represented in the game is only a representation, as if the game was scaled correctly to the real world, the planets and spaces between them would be unfathomably huge.



FEEL



The game will convey the isolated nature of space, being mostly dark and featuring few points of light. Working with the stylised low poly assets however, there will also be lots of colour to make the world vibrant and add character to the environment that will be interesting to the player.

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Controls

Left Mouse Button.....Select
Right Mouse Button.....Ship Movement + Navigation
Space.....Interact

Escape.....Open Menu

UI Design

The UI for The Brink will be very simple and clean to fit in with the sci-fi aesthetic, the elements will be both non-diegetic and spatial. The clean simplistic style will not only suit the style of the game but will also make it more accessible to a wider range of people. The UI will use subtle colours like whites, greys and black with clean and simple font and shapes with clean edges, this will make the UI both immersive, appealing to look at and user friendly.

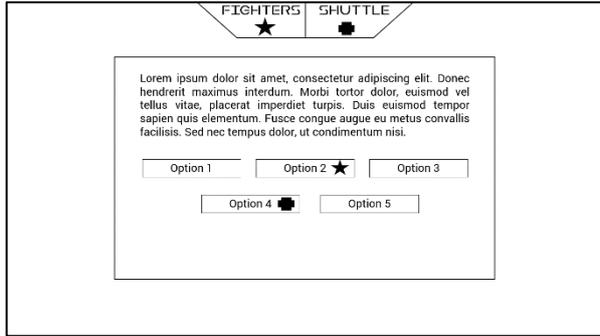
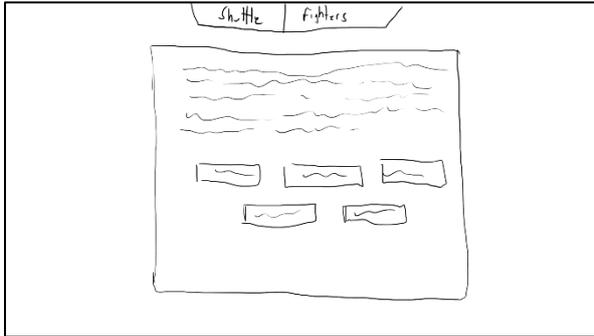
MENU



The Menus are the first thing someone sees when loading the game and so it will clearly show off the games setting. The UI itself will also be clean and minimal to fit the style set for the UI with the game scene in the background making the menu aesthetically pleasing.



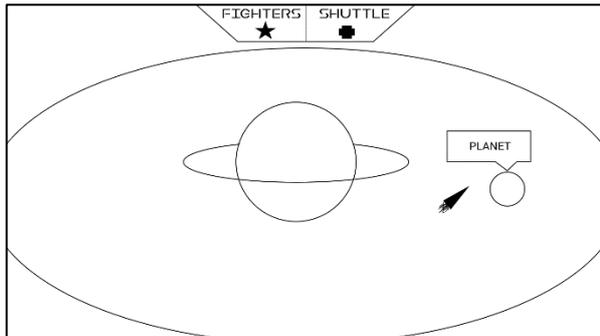
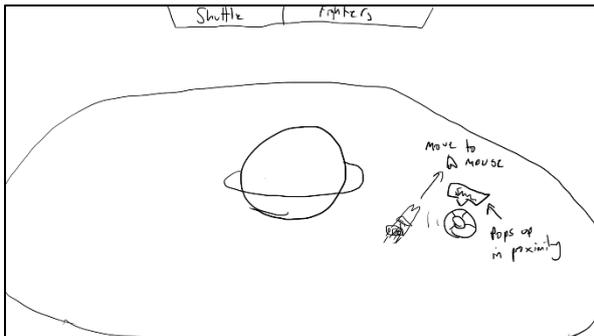
EVENT INTERFACE



The UI for the events in the game will be what the player sees the most, and so they will be clean and easy to navigate while still using interesting shapes to make them nice to view and interact with.



GAME UI



The main game UI will be mostly in world space and spatial as this makes it very intuitive while also fitting the setting. As with the rest of the UI it will be clean and simple, this UI will immerse the player and will not take them out of the experience or be distracting.



NARRATIVE DESIGN

Choices

The Brink will be used to investigate how different types of consequence affect the player. As such the game will feature different types of consequence to allow this investigation and examination. The types of consequence that will be employed are as follows:

Immediate Consequence:

These choices immediately enact consequences on the player. As soon as the choice is made the ramifications of that choice is presented to the player.

Delayed Consequence:

The opposite of immediate consequence. These choices do not make the player aware of the consequences of their actions will later in the game and narrative. The consequence may be hinted at and could be predicted by the player, but the ramifications are not immediate.

Gameplay (Tactical) Consequence:

These choices have consequences related to gameplay, the consequences are usually presented upfront and the player may receive a gameplay boost or detriment depending on their choice. This effect on the gameplay makes it a tactical choice for the player, making the game potentially easier or potentially harder depending on the choice.

Narrative (Emotional) Consequence:

These choices have consequences related to the game's story and its narrative. It does not affect gameplay and as such is a purely emotional choice for the player.

No Consequence:

Exactly as it sounds, these choices create an illusion of choice. There is no consequence, but if used correctly can still be potentially very meaningful to the player.

Narrative Flow

SYSTEM ONE

The **Solari system** is a gateway into the rim systems and as such is a hub of commerce. The most civilised of the three systems in the game. The system consists of **Brink station**, one of the last beacons of civilisation before entering the deep rim. There is also the **pleasure planet Laux** and favourite holiday destination of the wealthy and finally the **jump point** into the rim.

Events:

BRINK STATION

The player will encounter a dangerously ill-maintained civilian vessel approaching the stations and must decide how to neutralise the threat to the crew of the vessel and all the civilians on the station that may be caught in the unfortunate explosion.

- Immediate Consequence
- Tactical Consequence
- Emotional Consequence

The deck rumbles under your feet as the Reproach decelerates on its approach to Brink Station. The stations landing control radios the bridge.

“CSV Reproach, do you require docking services?”

You walk over to the comm officer’s station to give your reply.

- “This is the Captain of the CSV Reproach. We are on patrol. We will just be performing spot checks on incoming ships. No docking required.”
- “No docking required. We are on patrol; please ensure you do not impede our operations.”

A few hours into endlessly looking at the scanning station over the Navigation officer’s shoulder the sensors flag an unassuming small cargo vessel to be carry restricted toxic materials. The officer on station informs you that the toxic cargo is leaking, unbeknownst to the aging ships own sensors and is in extreme danger of causing a drive reactor meltdown.

“Sir, we need to destroy that ship before it causes any damage.” Insists Commander Flynn.

“We can’t fire on civilian target! We need to evacuate the crew.” Lieutenant Ashton counters.

- Notify Brink Station, this is their problem.
- Launch the shuttle, evacuate the crew. [shuttle - damaged]
- Lock weapons. Fire on the ship before it causes unnecessary damage.

If the station is notified

You watch out of the bridge windows as the small cargo vessel approaches a secluded docking port as the station instructed. As the clamps engage space is lit up in bright light as the ship explodes, tearing a hole in the station where the docking port once was. All civilians aboard the ship are vaporised and two dock hands on the station were also caught in the explosion. The bridge falls silent around you.

Evacuate crew

The Reproach’s shuttle craft is scrambled and races toward the civilian ship as the Comm Officer informs the ship on the situation. As the shuttle begins its deceleration space is lit up in bright light as the ship explodes. All civilians aboard are lost, and the shuttle is badly damaged.

Destroy the ship

A deep hum fills the ship as the Reproach engages its weapons. With one swift volley the civilian craft is blown apart, all civilians aboard are certainly all dead, but the alternative would have surely been worse, wouldn’t it?

LAUX

The player is contacted by the general of law enforcement on the planet who needs assistance capturing a fugitive, not all is as it seems, and the player must decide how best to act in the face of uncertainty.

- Delayed Consequence
 - Tactical Consequence
-

As you make your way past the pleasure planet Laux, a famous holiday destination for the rich and powerful, you are surprised as you receive a message from the surface. The message is from Laux's General of Law Enforcement, he explains that a guest of the planet's most distinguished gala, Admiral Lenn, has been murdered. The General informs you that before the killer escaped on their ship, they were able to record the drive signature of the vessel and asks if you can use the Reproaches powerful scanning systems to sweep the planet's surface for signs of the ship, as the orbital sensors have not detected it leaving the planet.

"Admiral Lenn is a hero, whoever did this needs to be brought to justice." Commander Flynn comments.

- "Fire up the sensors, let's find this criminal."
- "This better not be a waste of time, General."

After an hour of orbiting the planet and scanning its surface you pick up a trace of killers drive signature, it appears they are hiding out in one of Laux's unaltered, lifeless climate zones. The sensors also pick up something else, however, it appears that the ship matches the profile of diplomatic vessel, yet its transponder is not transmitting a diplomatic code, its communication systems also appear destroyed. You contact the General and inform him of your findings to which he responds that the killer stole the ship and must have broken the transponder somehow, he then insists you fire on the ship immediately, bringing the criminal to justice.

- Send the shuttle with a security team to bring the criminal aboard. [shuttle]
- Launch fighters to escort the ship up to the Reproach. [fighters - damaged]
- Fire on the ship.

If the shuttle is used

Your security team quickly returns with the unconscious body of a man who matches no records in your system. Much to the general's chagrin you decide to keep the criminal aboard in the medical bay and promise that you will return the criminal to the general's custody once they have awoken.

If the fighters are used

As your fighters and the ship, they escort break atmosphere a shot from Laux's orbital defence systems cuts clean to the criminal's ship, puncturing the drive reactor and destroying it completely. As furious as you are at the general you know there is little you can do as both your jurisdictions lay far from one another, you simply express your grievance sharply and continue.

If ship is fired on

The Reproach locks its weapons and fires onto the planet, the criminal's ship is destroyed in short order, the Admirals death has been avenged and justice has been served.

SYSTEM TWO

The **Hyden system** consists of a mining claim owned by **Black Sky Industrial**. The entire system is littered with valuable asteroids, a tempting target for pirates. This system consists of the **Black Sky mining station** and the huge system-wide asteroid field as well as the **jump points** the Solari system and to the pirate-controlled Desai system.

Events:

BLACK SKY STATION

The player comes across the main mining station in the system and as they pass, they come across an ancient lifeboat with workers from the station on begging for safe harbour. Simultaneously the station warden comms and immediately insists on having the lazy workers, all bearing the marks of abuse, be given back for immediate execution. Will the player aid the interests of Black Sky as they should, or will they help the civilians?

- Emotional Consequence
 - Immediate Consequence
-

The Hyden system is under the control of Black Sky Industrial, a company in excellent favour with the central government for its donations to the construction of ships just like the Reproach so that the outer systems may be kept in order and peace.

As you pass the primary station of the system, scanning for potential pirate activity, you pick up a small life boat attempting to hide in the radar shadow of an asteroid.

“Could be a pirate bomb-boat.” Commander Flynn suggests.

You order the Reproach to approach the life pod, as you get in range and full scan reveals life signs on board. After quickly getting the life boat aboard you quickly learn that the life signs inside are workers from Black Sky Station, they beg for safe harbour, all bearing the marks of abuse and malnutrition.

Before you can give the workers an answer you are informed that you have been contacted by the overseer of the station, he thanks you for your service to the Black Star and is expecting you to have the workers back into his rightful custody for disciplinary action.

“Sir, these workers have been mistreated. We can't hand them back over; we should arrest the Overseer immediately.” Lieutenant Ashton insists.

“These workers are indebted to Black Sky; they knew the labour they were signing on for to pay off what they owe. Black Sky is a staunch ally of the Central Government, it is clear what path we should take.” Commander Flynn counters.

- Hand over the workers.
- Arrest the Overseer.

If workers are handed over.

The workers must be dragged screaming, kicking, and pleading by ship security when the Reproach docks with Black Sky Station. The Overseer is incredibly pleased to have the workers back, saying that they will make a good example to any other believing they are exempt from paying off debt, he also ensures that he will speak of your services to his superiors, commenting that he can see a promotion heading your way.

If Overseer is arrested.

You order the Reproach to dock with Black Sky Station and you send your security forces aboard to arrest the Overseer. You have him dragged onto the Reproach and thrown in the brig, he protests the entire time, ensuring you that this is the end of your career. Commander Flynn informs you that he will be making a formal condemnation of your actions.

PRISON SHIP RIOT

The player comes across a prison ship dead in the water. It becomes clear that there is a riot underway, the player catches snippets of a message that states that one side, unclear which is held up in the drive room and pleads the Reproach to fire on the ships aft. Will the player risk killing the guards, leave the event to play out or destroy the whole ship to be sure?

- No Consequence

You think your patrol of the Hyden system is coming to an end you watch out of the bridge, surveying as the Reproach glides past the asteroids, until you hear the alert of a distress beacon being detected. Quickly homing in on the signal you find a prisoner transport ship dead in the water, you can be up on some disjointed chatter coming from the ships comm.

“[undiscernible] penned in [undiscernible] they’re held up in [undiscernible] engineering room [undiscernible] fire on [undiscernible] ships aft [undiscernible] overrun.”

“Is that transmission from the prisoners or the guards? Try and reach them again, Lieutenant” Lieutenant Ashton orders the comm officer, who is unable to raise the ship again.

“Sir, that ship is carrying murderers, thieves and insurgents. We should destroy it completely; we can’t risk anyone escaping.” Commander Flynn insists.

Everyone in the Reproach’s bridge falls silent and turns to face you, waiting for your decision.

- Destroy the ship completely. We cannot risk it.
- Fire on the ships aft. Hopefully, it was the guard’s transmission.
- Do nothing.

If the ship was destroyed

You watch as the prison ship is torn apart by the Reproach’s weapons. The safety of the people must come first.

If fired on ships aft

Using the Reproach's precision railgun, the aft of the prison ship is targeted and then destroyed. You attempt to contact the ship again with no success, attempting to scan for life forms yields no results because of the ships scan shielding. Ordering men aboard would be too risky, you order the Reproach to move on, hoping you were right.

If nothing was done

You order the Reproach to move on, letting the situation play out, wishing the guards victory. When only bad choices remain, it is better not to choose at all... right?

PIRATE RAID

The player comes across a pirate raid on a small mining out post, the player can aid with soldiers (shuttle) or fighters to engage at close precise range, if they still have the ships available. Otherwise, they will have to engage with the Reproach dangerously, risking crew and ship, or bombard the whole site.

- Tactical Consequence
 - Immediate Consequence
-

As you move through the system your scanners detect ship weapon discharges. Further investigation quickly reveals that a pirate raiding band is now attacking one of the many small mining outposts littering the systems asteroids. You order the Reproach to battle stations and move to engage the enemy.

When you arrive at the scene you see that the pirates have had time to repair, they have landed all craft and are now on foot in the outpost, possibly with civilian hostages. You must quickly decide how to act, you cannot leave pirate activity alone.

- Land security forces in the shuttle. [shuttle – damaged]
- Use the fighters to perform precision strikes. [fighters]
- Bombard the entire outpost. The pirates must be brought to justice.

If the shuttle is used

You rapidly land security forces at the outpost. The pirates are no match for elite navy marines and while there are still numerous casualties the station is secured, and pirates dealt with, though the shuttle did get badly damaged in the combat.

If the fighters are used

You launch the fighters and they expertly target the landed pirate craft. Once they realise, they are stranded they quickly surrender, and you have them all thrown into the brig.

If the outpost is bombarded

With only one option you order the whole outpost to be wiped off the face of the asteroid. The whole bridge crew is silent as they carry out your orders, the bright light of explosions fill the room as you assure yourself you had no choice.

SYSTEM THREE

The **Desai system** is a truly dangerous place, effectively in pirate control. The system consists of the **barren planet Eras** and its moon that has one **impoverished colony** on it and a supposedly **abandoned security station** and then finally the **jump points** to the Hyden and Solari systems.

Events:

ERAS

The player comes across a colony on Eras that is suffering from a deadly disease outbreak, if the player managed to save the stranger from Laux then they will be able to save the dying colonists without a worry. They may otherwise have to decide between sacrificing crew, leaving them to die or ending it all here and now.

- Delayed Consequence
 - Emotional Consequence
-

Your first step on your patrol of the Desai system is the colony on Eras, possibly the only friendly destination in the entire system. However, as you reach orbit you receive a message from the surface informing you that a deadly disease has broken out in the colony and they are asking for any help you can give them.

If criminal was rescued from Laux

Before you can make any decision the Reproach's Medical Officer comms the bridge and informs you that the criminal you rescued from Laux has awoken. A brisk interrogation reveals that he is a member of an insurgency group based in the system, he was tasked with breaking into the advanced medical facilities on Laux to research and synthesize a cure for the colony on Eras, a cure he is still in possession of, a cure that would never have been given willingly to those who need it.

If criminal was rescued from Laux

- Use the cure and release the insurgent.
- Use the cure and imprison the insurgent.

If criminal was not rescued from Laux

- Set you medical staff to work, even if it may be dangerous.
- Officially quarantine the colony and leave, you cannot help them.

If cure was used

With the insurgent dealt with and the cure in hand in conjunction with the medical facilities on the Reproach you can rapidly produce and distribute the cure to the colony, saving a great many from a painful end.

If medical staff used

It takes many days of work on the part of the Reproach's medical staff and there are three casualties in the pursuit of a cure which is never found. The best that could be managed was a drug that would reduce the suffering before death. You are forced to place the colony under quarantine and leave.

If colony quarantined

Unwilling to risk members of your medical team you immediately place the colony under quarantine. The central government will send out a disease control ship at the first opportunity, that may still however be months of death for the residents of the colony.

SECURITY POST DEA

The player comes across the long-abandoned Security Post Dea and dependant on reputation either Ashton or Flynn will present the player with a decoded message asking for parlay, will the player accept honourably or plot? They will be offered to join the rebellion; will they accept or refuse? And if the players choice is not in line with their previous the crew will coup. Spicy stuff.

- Emotional Consequence
- Immediate Consequence

Ashton Favourable

"Sir." Lieutenant Ashton approaches you alone on the bridge. **"We have received a comm from someone identifying themselves as Warrick Quinn, claiming to lead the insurgency group known to operate in this system. He wants a meeting."**

This meeting could be a great opportunity.

Flynn Favourable

"Sir." Commander Flynn approaches you alone on the bridge. **"We have received a comm from someone identifying themselves as Warrick Quinn, claiming to lead the insurgency group known to operate in this system. He wants a meeting. This a great opportunity, sir. We could wipe this insurgence of the face of the galaxy."**

- Go to the meeting.
- Go to the meeting, with marines waiting in ambush.

The coordinates for the meeting are at the long-abandoned Security Post Dea. You scan the area as you approach but find no ships and the station scan shielding prevents you from getting any information from on the inside.

You make your way inside the station with Commander Flynn, Lieutenant Ashton, and a small team of marines where you find Warrick Quinn and his entourage waiting in the stations command and control room.

- "What do you want?"
- "Very bold of you to call the navy to your exact location."

“I called you here because I am aware of the cruelty you have witness out here in the outer systems. You have had to execute the ill will of the central government. You have seen their biases that cost human life and I believe you are a normal human being; I believe you can see right from wrong.”

Quinn follows up by motioning to a monitor on which you can see the sensor readout of the Reproach.

“You are in a unique position of power. Power you can put to good use. Join us in our insurrection, fight for an independent outer ring, a free and fair outer rim. Will you, Captain, join us?” Quinn asks.

Commander Flynn speaks loudly, intending Quinn to heat him. **“Sir, we should put these insurgents down. They are anarchists, countless would die gaining and maintaining a free outer rim. This has been tried before, it never works, only the central government can keep the galaxy in order. These people are terrorists.”**

Lieutenant Ashton remain silent, clear confliction on her face.

- Join the insurgents
- Decline
- Spring the ambush. [if in place]

If ambush and Flynn favourable

You signal to the marines that are waiting in ambush, they fiercely leap into action round up the members of the insurgency who are taken back aboard the Reproach and thrown into the brig. There is an air of pride as you finish your month-long patrol having captured the leader of a notorious insurgency group, though the finale is somewhat soured by Lieutenant Ashton’s resignation.

If ambush and Ashton favourable

You signal to the marines that are waiting in ambush, they fiercely leap into action round up the members of the insurgency who are taken back aboard the Reproach, but before they reach the brig the crew rebels, tackling the security marines and freeing Quinn and his allies. The ship is lost in short order as almost all the crew mutinies. You and Commander Flynn are herded into the shuttle where Lieutenant Ashton expresses her apologies, saying you had betrayed yourself and she had to act. The Reproach sails away, leaving you stranded.

If join and Flynn favourable

“I will join you” You answer. You can feel the outrage from Commander Flynn, who immediately pulls his pistol and aims at you while he signals the Reproach. As Flynn finishes his message Lieutenant Ashton draws and fires at Flynn, putting him down. The damage is done however, the crew mutinies against you. The ship is lost in short order as almost all the crew mutinies. You and Lieutenant Ashton are abandoned as you watch on the radar scopes the Reproach sail away, leaving you without the very thing Quinn wanted you for in the first place.

If join and Ashton favourable

“I will join you” You answer. You can feel the outrage from Commander Flynn, who immediately pulls his pistol and aims at you while he signals the Reproach. As Flynn finishes his message Lieutenant Ashton draws and fires at Flynn, putting him down. Flynn does manage to get a few of his loyalist crew members to attempt mutiny against you but they are swiftly restrained by the overwhelming number of crew that supports your decision. You promote Lieutenant Ashton to Commander and welcome Warrick Quinn aboard the Reproach, ready to make a change. Hopefully, it is a good change.

If decline and Flynn favourable

"I will not join you" You answer. Quinn lets you go back aboard the Reproach. There is an air of uncertainty as you finish your month-long patrol. You think you could have done more to stop Warrick Quinn, and the end is soured even further by Lieutenant Ashton's resignation.

If decline and Ashton favourable

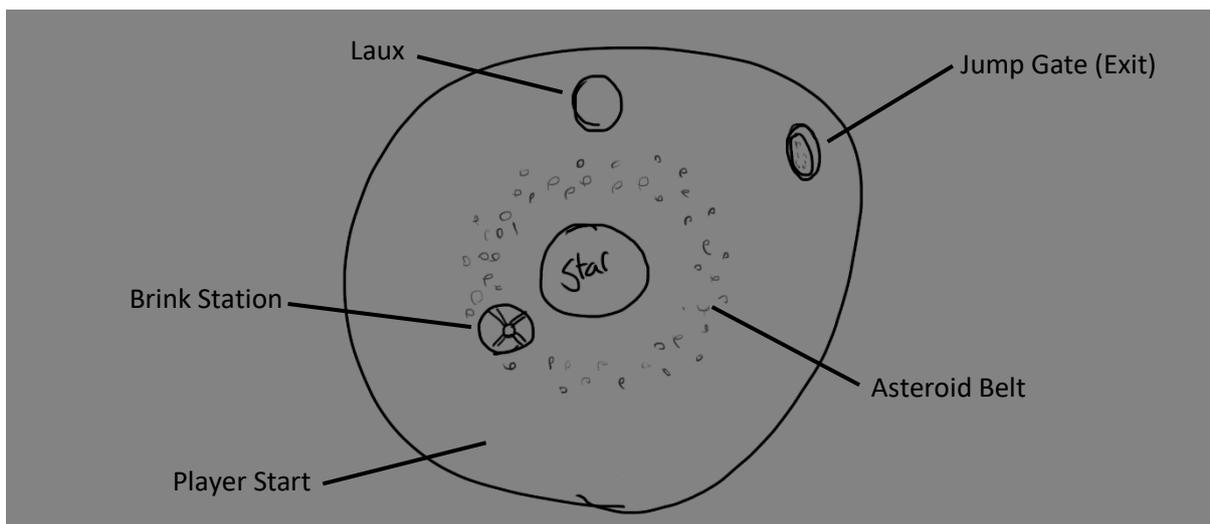
"I will not join you" You answer. You can feel the outrage from Lieutenant Ashton, who slowly pulls her pistol and aims at you while she signals the Reproach. As Ashton finishes her message Commander Flynn draws to fires at Ashton, but Quinn is faster and drops Flynn before he can kill Ashton. The crew mutinies with Ashton against you. The ship is lost in short order as almost all the crew mutinies. You are left at the mercy of Warrick Quinn who now not only possesses the Reproach, but one of your most effective officers.

LEVEL DESIGN

Concept

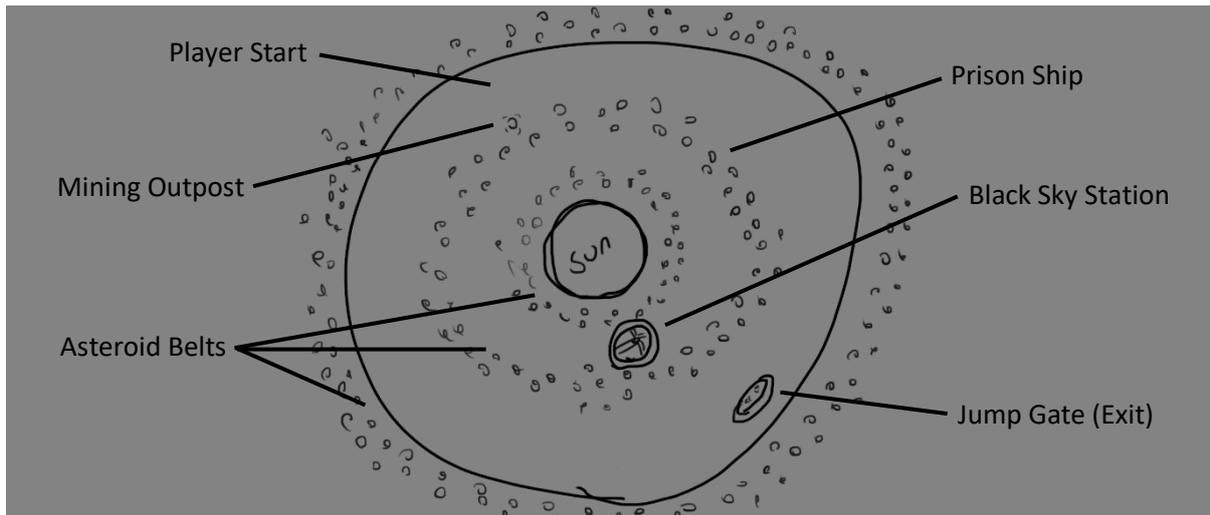
The Brink's main gameplay focus is on the narrative events that will be presented to player in a UI interface and player will interact with the events also through that interface. The levels of the game, the three systems are there purely as a setting for the player to move around in, to explore in and to help them immerse themselves. The levels need only be compelling to look at and explore, the exit will be gated until the player has completed all other events in the system and so the player has free reign on where to go first, though the levels will be presented so that there is an implied order.

SOLARI SYSTEM



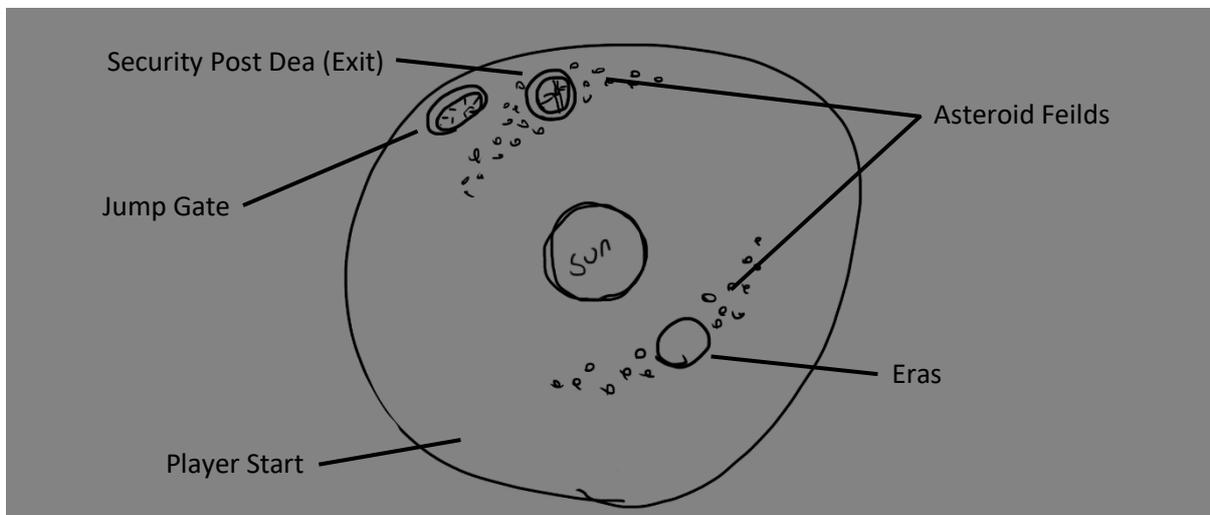
The player starts very near Brink station as this is intended as the first event for the player to do. The direction the player must go to the station is left; this is guiding the player into keeping left after the station event so that they naturally encounter Laux before they encounter the Jump Gate.

HYDEN SYSTEM



The player starts right by the mining outpost pirate raid event as it takes place on a non-descript asteroid and thus would be hard to find if not presented in this obvious manner. The Jump Gate is again on the far side of the system to where the player starts so that it is naturally the last area the player comes across.

DESAI SYSTEM



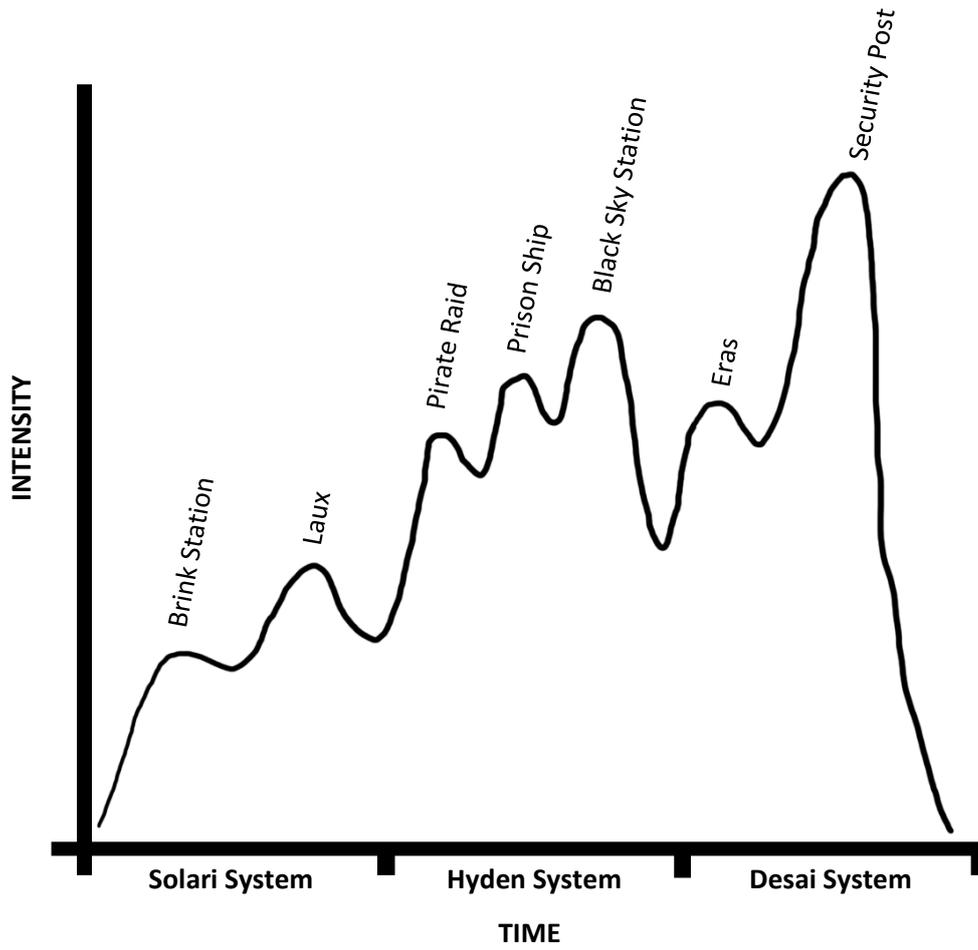
The asteroids leading off from Eras near the player will naturally lead them from the starting position to the Eras event so that they naturally come across the end security post event last.

Pacing

Estimated time to complete: 10 – 15 minutes

- **System One: Solari System – 3–5minutes**
The player comes across a dangerously maintained civilian ship and a killer in hiding.
- **System Two: Hyden System – 3–5minutes**
The player comes across some abused runaway workers, a pirate raid, and a prison riot.
- **System Three: Desai System – 3–5minutes**
The player arrives at a colony with a disease outbreak and encounters insurgents.

PACING GRAPH



Art Pass

