

Shock

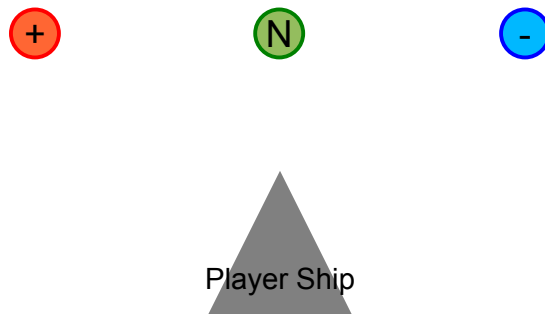
A shmup concept by Michael Daniels

Introduction

The idea behind Shock came to me while I was sitting in my physics of electricity and magnetism class.

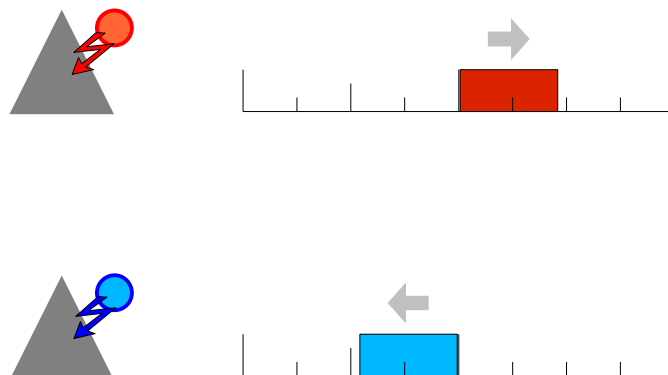
Basic Concept

All enemy bullets fired in the game have a “charge”. The charge of a bullet can be positive, neutral, or negative. The charge of a bullet will be indicated by the bullet's color. Every enemy (except possibly bosses) will have a color matching one of the three charge colors. The player can fire neutral shots directly forward.



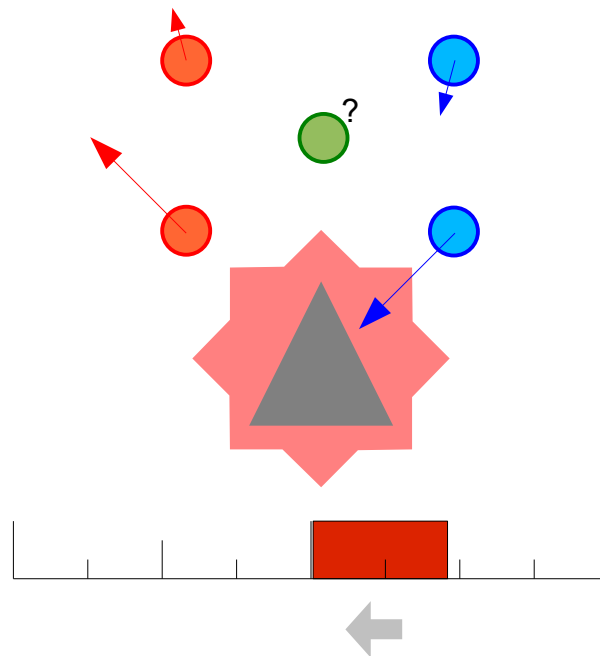
Grazing & Charging

When the player gets very close to a positive or negative bullet, the player will absorb some of its charge. The amount of charge that a player has stored is shown using a bar-style indicator. The center of the bar marks the “empty” point. As the player grazes bullets and absorbs their charge, the bar will grow to the left (showing an overall negative charge) or to the right (showing an overall positive charge). Grazing a positive bullet while the player's overall charge is negative, or a negative bullet while the player is positive, will move the bar closer to the zero point (the player loses charge).



Discharging

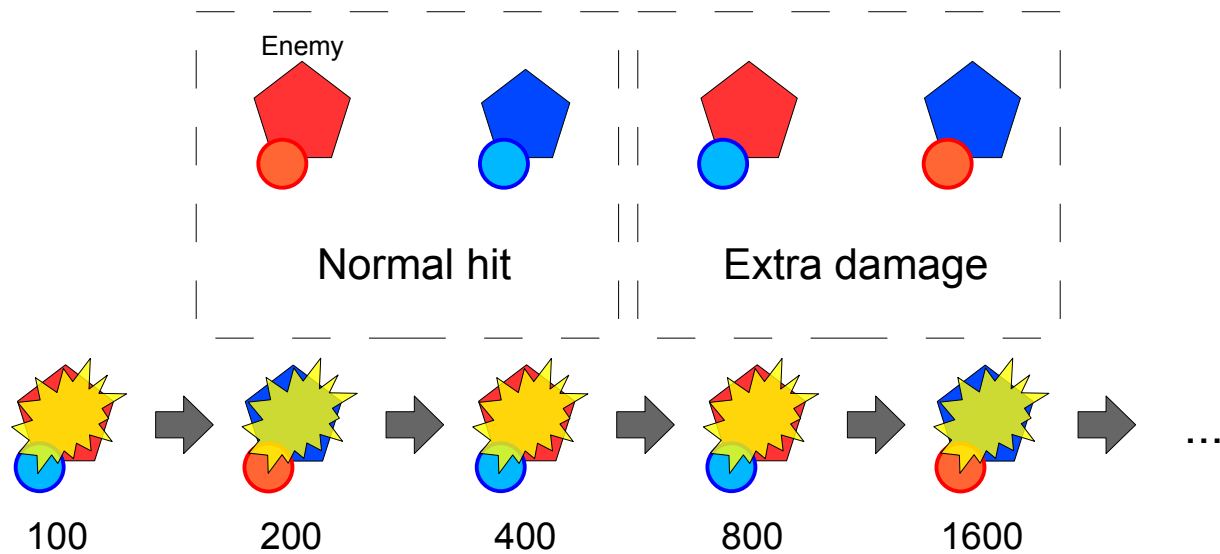
At any time, the player may press and hold a button on the controller to discharge. Discharging causes an electrostatic force to act on all bullets on the screen, altering their direction and speed. Bullets with a charge opposite to the player's charge will be pulled closer to the player, while bullets with the same charge will be pushed away. Neutral bullets will be unaffected. The player's charge gradually returns to neutral while the button is held. The button may be released to preserve remaining charge.



Counterattack

Bullets on screen may strike enemies, whether or not their movement was altered by the player. Bullets impacting enemies in this way will do small damage if the color of the bullet matches the enemy, and large damage if the colors are opposite. Neutral-colored enemies take little damage from either type of bullet.

If an enemy is destroyed by a bullet of opposite color, the player will receive a point bonus. If the next enemy destroyed is defeated in the same way, the point bonus is doubled. The first non-neutral enemy that is destroyed in some other way will be worth only its base point value, and the bonus amount will reset. Destroying a neutral enemy using any method grants the point bonus that the previous enemy was worth, and doesn't reset the chain.



Bombs

The bomb is a special attack that the player can use to save their ship or to set up a counterattack. Pressing a bomb button separate from the shot and discharge buttons triggers a shock wave from the player's ship which spreads outward over the play field and completely halts each bullet as it passes over them. The player can then discharge for better control over the path of the bullets.

The number of bombs that a player may carry, and the method of obtaining bombs, is undecided, although maximum stock is likely to be only one, and obtaining a bomb will likely be a result of good player performance rather than getting a power-up.

Bosses

Certain parts of boss ships will only be able to be damaged using the counterattack method. For example, the player may be able to destroy peripheral guns on the ship, but the core of the ship will only take damage from a certain type of bullet.

Another possibility is that the boss can be damaged by anything, but that opposite colors will deal more damage and count toward a larger bonus when the boss is defeated. For example, the game may keep track of the percentage of damage done using the counterattack and distribute this percentage of a point bonus to the player.

Miscellaneous Thoughts

The method of scoring does mean that to get a good score a player can't fire his main gun very much, except to destroy neutral enemies. Being able to destroy an enemy using counterattack before it goes out of view is probably going to be pretty difficult. The charge meter will

probably have to fill up pretty quickly in order for the game to be at all fair.

The side-effect of counterattack is that bullets of the opposite color are drawn closer. This will probably cause some unintended grazes which will reduce the remaining charge. This is a fun twist.

Stages are going to have to be very carefully choreographed.