

## “Spirit Animal” Character and Ability System

2/24/2008 Version 1.0:

1. Wrote sections: Overview, Core Features, Characters, Abilities, Attributes, Other Actions and Characteristics, Resources and Limiters, and Summoning.
2. Created Table of Contents.
3. Wrote Nominative data for Arrow, Abilities, and Attributes tables.

3/4/2008 Version 1.5:

1. Wrote sections: Verbs and Controls.
2. Added resource costs Arrow and Abilities tables.
3. Changed nominative data to more quantitative data in Arrows, Abilities, and Attributes tables.

3/16/2008 Version 2.0:

1. [Changed “Characters” section to “Characters Summary”.](#)
2. [Added a quantitative scale to Abilities.](#)
3. Refined [Arrows](#) and [Abilities](#) data tables.
4. [Added a quantitative scale to Attributes.](#)
5. [Defined the snake’s “stealthy” characteristic.](#)
6. [Refined “All Animals” unsummon action.](#)
7. [Further detailed Summoning section.](#)
8. Defined Hawk’s [Jump](#) and [Move](#) verbs.
9. [Further detailed Toggle Spirit verb.](#)

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### Overview

This system provides a unique twist on the first-person shooter genre by allowing the player to shift control from the primary play character to one of four other sub-characters. The four sub-characters have distinctly different abilities and attributes that are required to progress through multiple scenarios. Puzzles require the use of one or more of these “character switches” in order to be solved.

### Core Features

1. The player can switch characters on command.
2. There are 4 sub-characters and 1 primary character.
3. The player is time-limited in the use of each character.
4. Each sub-character and the primary character have distinctly different abilities and attributes.
5. Each sub-character’s abilities and attributes are scenario specific and/or useful.
6. There are 4 attributes: Speed, Jumping, Strength, and Health.

Characters Summary

- **Human (Primary Character)**
  - **Attributes:** The primary character has median attributes (normal speed, normal strength, normal jumping, and normal health).
  - **Abilities:** The primary character has two abilities: Fire weapon and Summon Spirit.
  - **Other Actions:** The primary character can move, toggle arrows, toggle spirit, and jump.
- **Fox (Sub-Character)**
  - **Attributes:** The fox is the fastest character, is smaller in size, and can jump farther and higher than the human, at the cost of the lowest strength and health.
  - **Abilities:** The fox has two abilities: dash and disappear.
  - **Other Actions:** The fox can move, jump, and switch back to human control.
- **Hawk (Sub-Character)**
  - **Attributes:** The hawk moves faster than the human but slower than the fox, cannot jump, and has strength and health higher than the fox but lower than the human.
  - **Abilities:** The hawk has three abilities: fly, swoop attack, and farsight (zoom in).
  - **Other Actions:** The hawk can move, fly, and switch back to human control.
- **Snake (Sub-Character)**
  - **Attributes:** The snake moves the same speed on the ground as the hawk does flying, cannot jump, has strength higher than the fox and hawk but health slightly lower than the hawk.
  - **Abilities:** The snake has three abilities: bite, constrict, and blind.
  - **Other Actions:** The snake can move, climb, and switch back to human control.
- **Bear (Sub-Character)**
  - **Attributes:** The bear has the most health and strength, but is slower than the human and cannot jump as far as a human.
  - **Abilities:** The bear has two abilities: push and charge.
  - **Other Actions:** The bear can move, jump, attack, and switch back to human control.

Abilities

Human

**Fire Weapon:** The human character carries a bow and arrow which can be fired at the enemy. There are normal arrows, and a subset of arrows that correspond to each animal spirit. In order to use a specific subset of arrows, the corresponding character must have been obtained.

Arrow effects and Animal Spirit Abilities are dependent on 3 properties:

**Rate of Fire:** How quickly arrows can be fired. **Normal Rate of Fire is 1 arrow per 600 milliseconds.**

**Damage:** How much damage an arrow does to the enemy. **Normal Damage is 25.**

**Field of View:** How far zoomed in the player’s view is from eye position. **Normal field of view is right at the player’s eye position.**

Character	Arrow Type	Effect	Spirit Energy Cost (out of 100)
Human	Normal	Normal Rate of Fire, Normal Damage, Normal Reload	None
Fox	Rapid	Rate of Fire x 3	2 per arrow
Hawk	Hawkeye	Camera Zoom on Aim 1000 game units forward from normal FoV, Damage x 3, Rate of Fire / 2	20 per arrow
Snake	Poison	Damage over Time x 0.25 for 10 seconds, Rate of Fire / 3	30 per arrow
Bear	Burst	Spread Shot: fires 5 arrows at once in 30° arc, 25% chance to knock enemy down	10 per arrow

**Summon Spirit:** The player uses this ability to summon an animal spirit. Taking this action switches the player’s control to whichever animal has been summoned.

**Animal Spirits**

Character	Ability	Description	Effect	Spirit Energy Cost (out of 100)
Fox	Dash	The player runs forward at increased speed for a short burst.	Speed x 2, 5 seconds, straight line	3 per second
	Disappear	The player becomes invisible for a short amount of time to escape enemies.	Unseen by enemy, 10 seconds	5 per second
Hawk	Fly	The player can take flight, soaring above foes and crossing impassable gaps.	Fly	2 per second
	Swoop Attack	The player uses the hawk’s sharp talons to attack from above.	Damage x 1.5	10
	Farsight	The player sees farther into the distance and through walls.	FoV 1000 game units forward, Walls transparent	2 per second
Snake	Bite	The player uses the snake’s venomous fangs to stealthily attack one foe.	Damage x 0.5, Damage over time x 0.25, 10 seconds, Does not alert enemies	15
	Constrict	The player wraps around one enemy, dealing damage over time and immobilizing the foe.	Damage over time X 0.5, immobilize enemy, alerts enemies	4 per second
	Blind	The player shoots a stream of venom from its mouth into the eyes of one foe, blinding him.	Blind enemy, 20 seconds, alerts enemies	15
Bear	Push	The player uses the bear’s incredible strength to push immovable objects.	move large objects	4 per second
	Charge	The player throws the bear’s body at enemies or weakened walls.	Damage x 3, Break walls, 2 second recovery delay	20

Attributes

There are 4 attributes that differ among each character in this system: Speed, Jumping, Strength, and Health.

**Speed:** How fast the character moves in the game world, without the use of abilities. **Normal speed is 128 game units per second.**

**Jumping:** How far/high the character can jump in the game world, without the use of abilities. **Normal jump height is 128 game units. Normal jump distance is 192 game units.**

**Strength:** The character’s ability to move objects in the game world. **Normal strength is 12.**

**Health:** The amount of damage a character can take without being killed. **Normal health is 100 points.**

Character	Speed	Jumping	Strength	Health
Human	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Fox	Speed x 3	Jump x 2	Strength / 3	Health / 3
Hawk	Speed x 2 (flying), Speed / 3 (walking)	Cannot Jump (fly)	Strength / 2	Health / 1.5
Snake	Speed x 2, stealthy	Cannot Jump	Strength / 1.5	Health / 2
Bear	Speed / 1.5	Jump / 2	Strength x 3	Health x 3

All above attributes are calculated based upon the human’s normal attributes (i.e. the fox is 3 times faster than the Human).

*Other Actions and Characteristics*

**Human**

**Toggle Arrow:** The human character can switch between arrow types on command.

**Toggle Spirit:** The human character can switch between which spirit will be summoned when the summon ability is used.

**Fox**

**Small Size:** The fox is smaller than most of the other animals, and thus can fit into smaller spaces.

**Hawk**

**Fly:** The hawk’s jump ability is replaced by flying (same button).

**Snake**

**Climb:** The snake’s jump ability is replaced by climbing (same button).

**Stealthy:** The snake moves silently and will not be seen by the enemy unless taking an action that alerts them

**Bear**

**Attack:** The bear can do a simple attack with his claws that deals moderate damage.

**All Animals**

**Switch back to Human Control/“Unsummon”:** This action “unsummons” whichever animal is currently active, removing it from the game world, and returns the player’s control to the human character. This action does not require any spirit energy.

**Toggle Ability:** All of the animal spirits can switch which ability will be used when the “ability” command is used.

### Resources and Limiters

There are three primary resources in this system: Health, Spirit Energy, and Arrows. Each resource is lost and gained differently.

**Health:** A number that determines the amount of damage you have taken. **Normal health is 100 points.**

*Lost by:* Taking damage from enemy attack, falling from unreasonable heights, Traps, etc.

*Gained by:* Health packs found throughout the game world.

**Spirit Energy:** This is the resource required to summon spirits. It is expended by using spirit animals and their abilities. **Based on a scale of 100 points being the maximum.**

*Lost by:* drained while controlling summoned spirits, using abilities of summoned spirits, using specialized arrows.

*Gained by:* Slow regeneration.

**Arrows:** This is the resource that allows the human character to use its weapon. **Maximum inventory of arrows is 50.**

*Lost by:* Firing Arrows.

*Gained by:* Ammo pickups in game world.

### Summoning

When the player summons an animal spirit, the new player object is created and then control is switched from human to the new object.

- While summoning, there is a 5 second delay while the summoning takes place.
- If attacked while summoning, the action is cancelled and the player takes a 25 point spirit energy penalty.

*Summoning:*

1. Player chooses/toggles which character to summon.
2. Player uses “summon” ability.
3. 5 second delay while summoning
4. New player object is created.
5. Control is switched from human character to the new character.

While controlling a spirit animal character, the human character still exists, but remains immobile and vulnerable in the spot where it was left until the player switches back to the human character.

*Unsummoning:*

1. Player uses the unsummon ability while controlling a spirit animal character OR the player's Spirit Energy resources depletes to zero OR the spirit animal character is killed.
  2. Spirit animal player object is destroyed.
  3. 5 second delay while the player “recovers” from summoning.
  4. Control is set back to the human character.
- If the human character is killed at any time, whether the player be in control of it or a spirit animal, it counts as death.
  - Should the human character be attacked while the player is in a summoned form, the player will be warned by an onscreen indicator with the humans health bar, but the summoned spirit will not suffer any damage.
  - If a spirit animal dies, the player's control is simply set back to the human character, and the player must wait until its spirit energy meter returns to 100% to summon again.

**Verbs and Controls**

**Jump:** The primary character and sub-characters will be able to use the jump command using the same button, but some sub-characters take a different action when it is used.

- Main Character: A simple, medium, human jump
- Fox: Jumps much higher than a human (see attributes section)
- Hawk: While on the ground, sends the player into “fly” mode. While flying, pressing the jump button repeatedly cause the hawk to flaps its wings, increasing altitude. Releasing the jump button allows the hawk to soar, losing 5 units of altitude per 128 units forward. Holding the jump button causes the hawk to fall to the ground.
- Snake: Cannot jump. The jump button will make the snake lunge forward a short distance.
- Bear: a short jump forward that has a 10% chance to knock over enemies in the player's path. If unsuccessful, the player is thrown back a short distance.

**Move:** All characters move using the same button, but some move faster than others (see attributes section). The special case is the hawk, which always moves in a forward motion while flying and can only be controlled using left/right movement. See “Jump” verb for information about increasing/decreasing altitude.

**Toggle Spirit:** This button is only usable by the main control character and toggles through the summon-able spirits. Pressing the toggle spirit button loops forward through the list of summon-able spirits. When the summon action is taken, whichever spirit has been toggled to will be the one that is summoned.

**Summon/Unsummon:** If the primary character is currently in use, this button summons the selected summon spirit. If a sub-character is in control it will be unsummoned, giving control back to the main control character.

**Toggle Arrow/Ability:** This button will toggle through the current character's abilities. If the primary character is in use it will toggle through the list of arrows, with sub-characters it will toggle abilities.

**Shoot/use ability:** This button activates the active ability of whichever character is being used. For the primary character, it shoots whichever arrow-type the player has selected using the “toggle arrow” command. For all sub-characters, it uses/activates whichever ability the player has selected using the “toggle ability” command (see Other Actions and Characteristics for a description).

The abilities of each character are as follows (see Abilities section for details):

#### **Human**

- Normal arrow: hold down shoot to “draw” arrow, release to shoot
- Rapid arrow: while shoot button is held down
- Hawkeye arrow: hold down to zoom, release to shoot and “unzoom”
- Poison arrow: operates like Normal arrow.
- Burst arrow: operates like Normal arrow.

#### **Fox**

- Dash: press once to start dashing, press again to cancel.
- Disappear: press once to disappear, press again to cancel if the 10 second duration has not been reached (see abilities section).
- No ability selected/attack: press once to attack.

#### **Hawk**

- Swoop Attack: Single press to dive and attack.
- Farsight: Hold down button to activate, release to cancel.
- No ability selected: no action taken.

#### **Snake**

- Bite: Single press to attack.
- Constrict: Press and hold to activate, release to cancel.
- Blind: Single press to attack.
- No ability selected/attack: press once to attack.

#### **Bear**

- Push: Press and hold near objects to push them.
- Charge: Press and hold to charge forward, release to cancel.
- No ability selected/attack: press once to attack.