Cubular

Units are Resources.

Introduction

Cubular is a minimalist RTS. It is a very typical RTS in many ways: Units are controlled with the mouse, resources can be obtained by these units, and from these resources buildings and units are produced to attack an enemy base.

At that point, it stops being formulaic in many ways:

- **Units are Resources.**
  The basic 3 Unit kinds, Warrior, Collector and Builder, are also the basic Resources: Every building and composite unit are constructed from smaller units.

- **Context-Based Hierarchical Radial Menus**
  In game, no classical window-and-button based UI is present. All UI is realized with radial menus.

- **Abstract Setting**
  Most RTS-Games have a Setting putting the player in the role of a Commander of an Army or Civilization. Cubular is abstract in nature, allowing for Mechanics that would seem ridiculous in a naturalistic context.

Mechanics

I assume the reader to be acquainted with basic RTS Mechanics such as Selection, Unit movement, Building placement and Unit production and will mostly explain mechanisms particular to this game.

Each of the atomic units has a clear function:

- Warriors are able to fight. they are the only atomic unit that can attack enemy units.

- Collectors can acquire resources from resource pools or collect free floating units.

- Builders can erect Buildings which can produce composite Units and Upgrades.

The Builder can assemble units that are stored as resources into buildings. For example, the main building "Hub" is assembled from 2 of each kind.
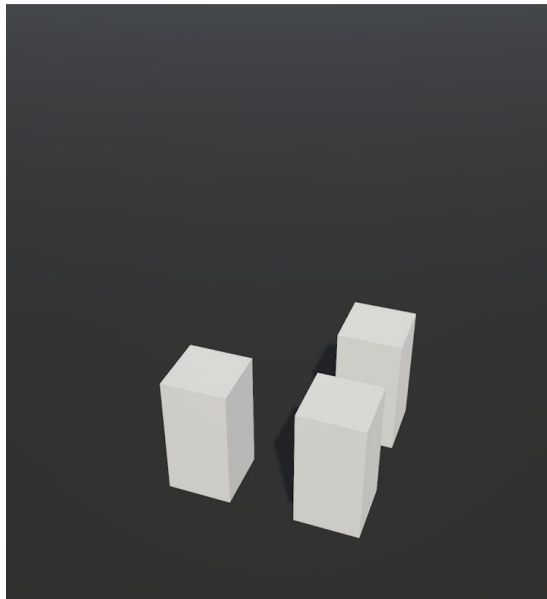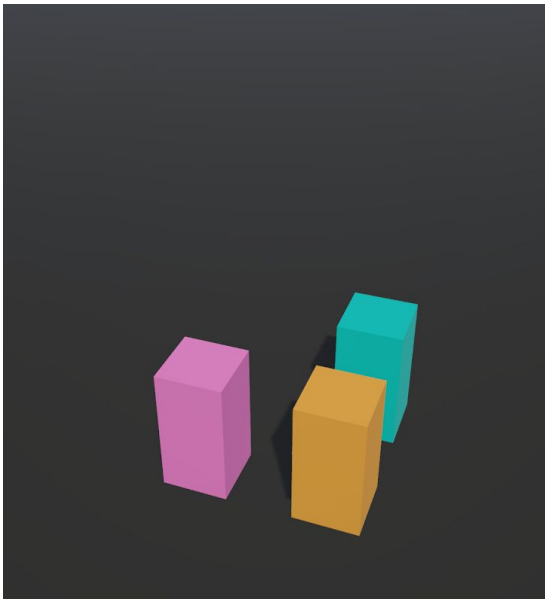

Resources (Units), stored in the Hub, then are transported by the builder to the site of the new building one after the other to finish the building.

The Collector, when assigned to a Resource Pool or a singular Resource, will bring the Resource to the Hub. Once stored in the Hub, the Resource can be used for Production or released as a Unit.

GUI

The Contextual Menu appears on holding down the right mouse button and applies to all selected Units. It only shows options available to selected Units: Actions corresponding to the three main Functions of Units, and a general Menu for all Units.

Each Sub-menu is divided into four directions, The first one to the four main menus, all deeper menus three or less options and one direction to go back.
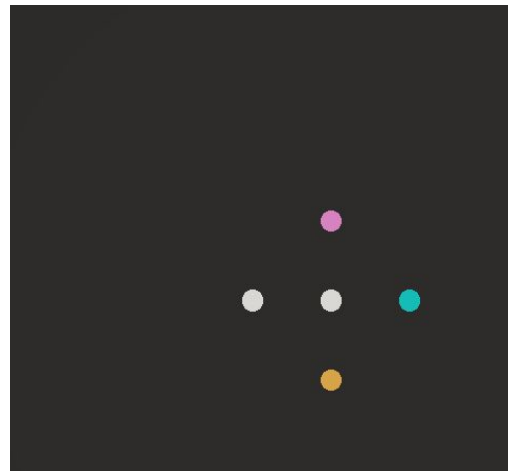
The reason for the fixed number of four directions is that players will more easily be able to remember gestures. The cardinal directions of left, right, top and bottom make for good compensation of inaccuracy, allowing for players to execute actions quickly, based more on muscle memory than on reading option texts.
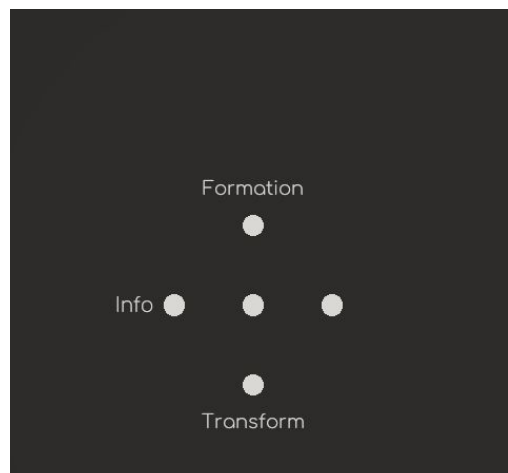
On hovering over an option, only the node the player is coming from remains, and the options of the new under-menu emerge. On releasing the mouse button hovering over a final function executes the chosen command to all Units it concerns.
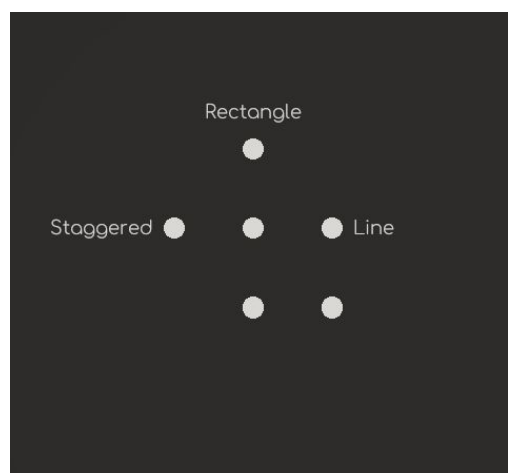
Target Group

The target group of this game is on one hand Players well acquainted with RTS games that want a fresh mechanic and have grown tired of the classic UI, on the other hand players reluctant of RTS games because of their perceived complexity who will find this much more accessible.

Because of this, Players are not restricted to a particular gender or age, but small children younger than ten years old might not understand every aspect and not have as much fun.

In general, the aesthetic will please Indie Game players more than AAA-Fans.

Market

The game is, as most RTS are, designed to be played on PC (Mac, Linux). Indie Game distributors such as Steam (in case of a sale) or Itch.io (in case of a free release) seem most appropriate.

The new interface might lend itself to a port for mobile devices. More innovation in the interface would be necessary, and performance issues are evident because of the high cost of pathfinding.