

Feasibility Demo

Gantt Chart:

Honours Project



Risk Analysis:

Risk:	Likelihood:	Consequence:
Illness	2	1
Lack of knowledge	2	1
Adviser leaves	1	2
Hardware failure	2	2
Lack of participants	2	5
Improper architecture design	2	5
Uni PC's don't run	2	1
Failure of external libraries	2	4
Unexpected family events	2	4
Bad project management	1	4

Risk Likelihood:	Score:
Low	1
Medium	2
High	3

Risk Consequence:	Score:
Very Low	1
Low	2
Medium	3
Very High	5
Very High	5

Risk:	Mitigation:
Illness	Stay on track with the project by following the gantt chart which has time set aside for catching up.
Lack of knowledge	Do continuous research for the project and set time in the gantt chart for this.
Adviser leaves	The university will supply another adviser.
Hardware failure	Keep project backed up with source control, so that the project can always be accessed on any computer.
Lack of participants	Have my adviser send out a university wide email to get applicants, ask students on my course to participate.
Improper architecture design	Do a lot of research and testing.
University PC's don't run	Have the projects testing be carried over the internet for the demo to be accessed on the participants personal devices.
Failure of external libraries	Try not to rely on any unstable external libraries for the project.
Unexpected family events	Stay on track with the project by following the gantt chart which has time set aside for catching up.
Bad project management	Put a lot of effort into the projects gantt chart and stick to it.

Research Question + New title, aim and objectives:

Research Question:

What emotional model is suitable for a shooter game and how can it change NPC behaviour and actions?

Sub Question:

How can this improve player and designer experience?

Title:

Developing an AI emotional model for NPCs in a combat scenario.

Aim:

The aim is to develop a prototype framework for designers to help configure emotion into NPC architecture through an AI model, to enhance the gameplay experience for players.

Objectives:

- Review current AI emotional models.
- Select appropriate emotions for the emotional model to convey.
- Design the emotional NPC model and implement it into the game demo.
- Create a framework for designers to access and utilise the emotional model to create more believable NPCs.
- Build an effective game demo for demonstrating the AI developed.
- Obtain unbiased analytics when testing an NPC against the emotionally aware one.
- Determine the effectiveness of the emotionally aware NPCs on user experience.

Annotated Bibliography:

Title: What makes virtual agents believable?

Reference:

Bogdanovych, A., Trescak, T. and Simoff, S., 2016. What makes virtual agents believable?. Connection Science, 28(1), pp.83-108.

Annotation:

This paper's goal is to create more realistic NPCs through the use of AI to simulate the life of Australian Aboriginals. They start by creating their own framework to improve believability. The author proposes that increasing an NPCs perceived believability is more practical than their intelligence. The paper analyses the concept of believability and previous definitions to create their own.

This is relevant to the project, as its goal is to improve the believability of enemies in a combat setting. They have also tested their model similar to what is planned for the project, by having the testers interact with the NPCs simulated in Unity. From this, the project can learn from the author's limitations to create a better testing environment.

This paper is helpful for planning NPC behaviours, as it defines the key features needed for a believable NPC. Below is a chart demonstrating how these features can be used to add characteristics to the project NPCs.

Feature:	Implementation:
Personality	Can be set by a designer, and will affect how the NPC approaches combat and moves.
Emotion	Will be shown through NPC interactions with player affecting their facial expression, movement and stats.
Self-Motivation	Can be shown through the selfishness of NPC's have a hot-headed personality that shoots regardless of their surroundings and could hit a bomb, or a timid personality that runs away from the battle, abandoning their teammates.
Change	Probably can't be shown with my NPCs as they are not meant to live long.
Social Relationships	Could have the bigger NPCs defend the smaller ones.
Consistency of expression	Has set archetypes that make sense.
Illusion of life	Makes NPC movement look realistic to what a player would do.

The author concluded that each feature was rigorously tested to perform as planned only in one scenario, meaning that the feature might not be viable/recognisable in other scenarios. Features will be tested in multiple scenarios to work around this in the project.

The author also said that the features were hard to isolate and test, Unity prefabs will be used in the project with editable features accessible from the inspector window. This allows for rapid prototyping as specific features can be turned off and quickly changed to create any scenario that needs testing.

The paper discusses that the appearance of the game and NPCs significantly contributed towards the believability perception of virtual agents. It can be presumed that this is because the graphics of the paper's simulation aims for realism. Due to this, the author inadvertently made the sense of believability worse for the player as the testers will then compare one to one the NPC's appearance to that of real life, which is beyond comparison. To hopefully negate this in the project, the art style of the game will not aim for realism so that the NPCs can't be directly compared to humans.

Title: Behavior tree design of intelligent behaviour of non-player character (NPC) based on Unity3D

Reference:

Zhu, X., 2019. Behavior tree design of intelligent behavior of non-player character (NPC) based on Unity3D. Journal of Intelligent & Fuzzy Systems, 37(5), pp.6071-6079.

Annotation:

The paper documents the planning and execution of an AI model for NPCs to be used in a 3D game for Unity. The model uses a behaviour tree as its framework, implementing the Q learning algorithm.

Q learning is a reinforcement learning algorithm that allows the NPC to perform the correct action in an uncertain environment. It does this by creating a table of possible rewards for actions, when the NPC performs a new action the reward value is saved into the table so that the next action to perform can be more accurately decided by choosing the action with the highest reward.

The author states that the behaviour tree is an evolved version of the hierarchal state machine. When designing an intelligent NPC, the smarter the designer wants the NPC to be the more nodes the model will need to be able to execute. Gradually the finite state machine will become difficult to understand and maintain due to the explosive growth of scale. The project's AI model technique is undecided, from this paper it is clear that a behaviour tree would be the most suitable choice as the project's NPCs need to be diverse and contain a lot of possible actions to take.

This paper is helpful as it dives deeper into behaviour tree logic. Explaining the different nodes that can be used within one such as Composite, behaviour, combination, selector, sequence and parallel nodes.

Node:	Description:
Composite	Determines the direction of logic, and can have multiple child nodes.
Behaviour	Contains several execution states: success, fail, and running. Used to check the condition of a branch.
Selector	Chooses one of its children to run.
Sequence	Runs all child nodes in order. The current child node returns the “finished” state before executing the next node.
Parallel	Executes child nodes concurrently.

The author focussed on performance in the project wanting the application to not be hardware intensive and talked about the effect of the application on the CPU. The project is not concerned about the

performance of the application, however, it should still be able to run on the university computers without causing delay.

Title: Explainable AI for Designers: A Human-Centered Perspective on Mixed-Initiative Co-Creation

Reference:

Zhu, J., Liapis, A., Risi, S., Bidarra, R. and Youngblood, G.M., 2018, August. Explainable AI for designers: A human-centered perspective on mixed-initiative co-creation. In 2018 IEEE Conference on Computational Intelligence and Games (CIG) (pp. 1-8). IEEE.

Annotation:

This paper aims to make artificial intelligence more understandable to designers so that they can co-create AI uses in games. The paper states that explaining AI techniques to those, not in the field of study hasn't been the focus of research, and instead is towards the development of new techniques. However, due to this creating more and more of a divide between designer and programmer, it is becoming harder to communicate ideas across roles. If designers were explained the mechanisms of AI and its limitations this gap would fade allowing for more appropriate model planning.

This paper is relevant to the project's research, as it involves creating an AI framework with the purpose of designers using it to implement emotional NPCs into a game with ease and being able to edit that NPC's characteristics effectively.

It lists the different approaches which should be taken to explain AI techniques to designers. For example, a white box technique, for example, a simple decision tree, doesn't need much explanation for designers due to its intuitive nature.

However, if a decision tree was used to control an NPCs behaviour system the complexity increases, meaning black box methods will need to be introduced to explain the mechanisms of the model. The goal of the game designer is to work with these NPCs and predict their behaviour when placed in the level so that the player's experience can be pre-determined. The paper suggests "providing a full list of scenarios that will lead to a particular action" so that the designer can more easily predict the NPC's behaviour, increasing the designer's trust and enjoyment of using the system.

The author acknowledges that explaining AI systems to designers is difficult, in spite of that to progress the development of games in particular NPCs it is a field that needs to be concentrated on so that NPC interaction can be further fleshed out to increase perceived believability.

Title: Behavior Based Artificial Intelligence in a Village Environment

Reference:

Lindstam, T. and Svensson, A., 2017. Behavior Based Artificial Intelligence in a Village Environment.

Annotation:

This paper focuses on creating an AI system to control NPCs for an open-world game similar to The Sims, to make the NPCs feel more lifelike and realistic, this is to counteract the use of lacklustre AI in open-world games that limit the NPCs to simple movement patterns

The system will use behaviour trees and smart objects. To make the NPCs more realistic, they will implement need-driven behaviour, smart terrain and a planner. The villagers will be able to plan their day in advance instead of simply walking back and forth. Each villager has a set of actions and needs that need to be fulfilled throughout the day. The order of these will be determined by each individual NPC based on which action is more beneficial to them at that time. Smart terrain is a technique where logic and data are stored inside objects scattered throughout the world. Such objects are called smart objects.

The software will be tested to evaluate the overall experience of realism in the environment. The testers are exposed to two versions of the application. One with the agents controlled by a human player and the other being controlled by the behaviour-based AI.

The players will answer a questionnaire, the questions are different based on which test the player does. The questionnaire is based on the Likert scale, which is a 5-mark scale. There are also open write-in questions so that users can voice their opinions. By also using write-in questions, they hope to receive private opinions that could provide them with further insight into the advantages and disadvantages of the application.

1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Neutral
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

The Likert scale provides ease of use and has room for a neutral answer. They are good for gathering quick, understandable data on a larger scale. This can be used in graphs and tables to easily show your findings. Although due to the nature of the straightforward questions it doesn't allow for private opinions. The author addresses a potential issue with "social desirability bias" which is when users give answers to make themselves look better to not disappoint the examiner, to get around this they gave distance between the examiner and tester when they were filling out the questionnaire. This is relevant to the project as it will have a similar testing environment to that of this paper, consequently the project will aim to have a mix of multiple-choice and open questions. So that data-represented graphs can be made as well as the collection of comments on how the emotional NPCs can be improved.

The report states that AI systems have about 10-35% of CPU power reserved for their processes in games, when testing the project's artefact this figure will be the aim so that it can be viable for use in other games. The author concludes that the system they created can be implemented but the development time is not

justified for the result. The project aims to work around this issue by saving the NPC behaviour system into a prefab so that it can be reused and adapted from project to project.

Title: Trained Behavior Trees: Programming by Demonstration to Support AI Game Designers

Reference:

Sagredo-Olivenza, I., Gómez-Martín, P.P., Gómez-Martín, M.A. and González-Calero, P.A., 2017. Trained behavior trees: Programming by demonstration to support ai game designers. *IEEE Transactions on Games*, 11(1), pp.5-14.

Annotation:

This paper concentrates on the creation of behaviours for NPCs, specifically by allowing game designers to control an NPC and record their actions so that it can be developed into a behaviour usable in a behaviour tree. These are described as trained behaviour trees (TBT). Typically game designers describe how an NPC should behave, AI programmers will then develop that description into the NPCs behaviour by using perception systems, behaviour representation, pathfinding and decision-making algorithms.

The author notes available tools to support the creation of behaviour trees in the asset store, these include NodeCanvas and Behaviour Bricks (BB). The author chooses to use BB in their program which includes useful features such as parameterized reusable subtrees and late binding of tasks. The former allows the user to split the behaviour tree into branches that can be called from any node in the tree, similar to how functions behave. They use this to partition the programmer's low-level trees from the designer's high-level work.

Late binding of tasks means the behaviour of a node can be unspecified until runtime. So that the node can be assigned based on NPC characteristics, the node can include a reference to one other like pointers. For example, in terms of the project, the base NPC can have an attack enemy task which is defined as late binding. Then two different enemies can be instantiated one with the HotHead archetype and the other with Wimp. The attack enemy task for the hothead can reference a behaviour that makes the NPC run up to the player and attack. Whereas the wimp's attack enemies' specific behaviour can be to find cover and attack from a distance.

The author will use these features to support the collaboration between designers and programmers, by having programmers build low-level behaviours that are reusable such as target selection and pathfinding. High-level behaviours will be created by designers, describing the general behaviour of the NPC. The high-level behaviours will use the low-level ones to achieve this.

The paper's experiment was to have designers first play the game demo created to test the TBT which is a 3D tower defence game. They would then instruct the NPCs on what to do during the game, after the playtest the game's system would turn these instructions into a behaviour tree. The designer would then play the game again but the NPC would act under the newly trained behaviour tree. At the end of the

playtest the designers filled out a survey, the results of this survey indicated that the majority of participants preferred the TBT system over a standard behaviour tree editor.

The author concludes that the main drawback of the study is that the goal was to help inform designers on how to create behaviour trees by having them produce one while playing the game demo. However, the methods used to create the TBT are closer to black box techniques that don't explain to the designer the model learned by the system. The project avoids this issue as the goal is not to teach but to assist designers in creating emotional NPCs with interesting behaviours.

Testing:

Designer Test:

The testers will be supplied with a unity project and instruction sheet, and they will be tasked with creating a level for the game with the emotional NPCs. After they have finished they will answer the questionnaire below, this will give insight into the designer's opinion of the emotional NPCs and how they can be improved.

Designer Survey:

Emotional NPC Designer Test

1. Do you have much experience with Unity?

- ☐ Very Experienced, use regularly
- ☐ Some experience, have used before
- ☐ No experience

2. Did you enjoy working with the project?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. Did you find the NPC confusing?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

4. Did you find the NPC frustrating to use?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

5. Did you enjoy using the NPC tools provided?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Why do you think this?

6. If any what features would you like implemented into the NPC's to help the designing process?

7. If anything what would you change or add to the NPCs to make them more believable?

Player Test:

The testers will play 2 versions of the game demo, one with the NPCs using the emotional NPC framework developed and the other with basic NPC logic found in most games. After they have finished playing they will answer the questionnaire below, this will give insight into the believability of the emotional NPCs and how they can be improved.

Player Survey:**Emotional NPCs Player Test**

1. Do you have much experience with top-down shooter games?

- ☐ Very Experienced, play regularly
- ☐ Some experience, play occasionally
- ☐ No experience

2. Did you play longer than expected?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. Did you lose track of time while playing?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither Disagree nor Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. Which demo did you prefer playing?

- ☐ Demo A
- ☐ Demo B

5. Which demo did you think had the emotional NPCs?

- ☐ Demo A
- ☐ Demo B

6. Did you find the emotional NPCs more believable than the ones in the other demo?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

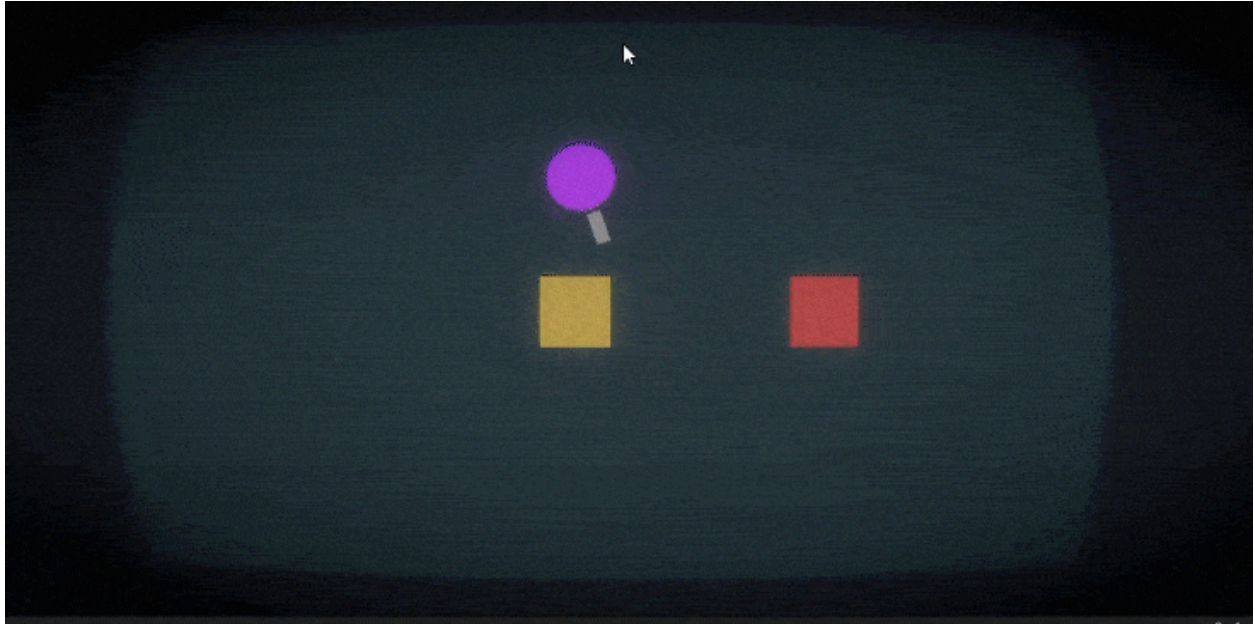
Why do you think this?

7. If anything what would you change or add to the NPCs to make them more believable?

8. If any, what other emotions would you like the NPC to portray?

Game Demo:

<https://youtu.be/7IlzuGLGNhw>



The game currently contains a player that can move, aim using the mouse and shoot using left click. The player also has a dash ability that accelerates the player forward towards the mouse direction by pressing space. The player can currently shoot 3 bullets which bounce off objects. The amount of bullets the player has can easily be altered using the player's inspector window. These bullets can ricochet back into the player causing damage. The player can take 3 hits before dying. There is a crate in the middle of the level that bullets can bounce off. The level also has an enemy which chases the player when it is in range. The enemy will die if it gets hit 3 times. The enemy will be developed continuously during the project.

Enemy Dash:

```
private IEnumerator Dash()
{
    canDash = false;
    isDashing = true;

    playerBody.AddForce(aimDirection * dashingPower, ForceMode2D.Impulse);

    tr.emitting = true;
    yield return new WaitForSeconds(dashingTime);
    tr.emitting = false;

    playerBody.velocity = Vector3.zero;
    playerBody.angularVelocity = 0f;

    isDashing = false;
    yield return new WaitForSeconds(dashingCooldown);
    canDash = true;
}
```

Player Movement:

```
aimDirection = mousePosition - playerBody.position;
```

```
//takes the key being pressed * player speed * delta time(to make the movement smooth)
Vector2 delta = inputMovement * velocity * Time.deltaTime;
Vector2 newPosition = playerBody.position + delta;
playerBody.MovePosition(newPosition);

aimDirection = mousePosition - playerBody.position;
float aimAngle = Mathf.Atan2(aimDirection.y, aimDirection.x) * Mathf.Rad2Deg - 90.0f;
playerBody.rotation = aimAngle;
```

NPC Movement:

```
void Update()
{
    if(health <= 0)
    {
        Destroy(gameObject);
    }

    isInChaseRange = Physics2D.OverlapCircle(transform.position, checkRadius, whatIsPlayer);
    isInAttackRange = Physics2D.OverlapCircle(transform.position, attackRadius, whatIsPlayer);

    direction = target.position - transform.position;
    float angle = Mathf.Atan2(direction.y, direction.x) * Mathf.Rad2Deg;
    direction.Normalize();
    movement = direction;
}
```

```
private void FixedUpdate()
{
    if(isInChaseRange && !isInAttackRange)
    {
        MoveCharacter(movement);
    }
    if(isInAttackRange)
    {
        rb.velocity = Vector2.zero;
    }
}
```

```
private void MoveCharacter(Vector2 direction)
{
    rb.MovePosition((Vector2)transform.position + (direction * speed * Time.deltaTime));
}
```

```

1 reference
IEnumerator Hit()
{
    SpriteRend.color = Color.white;
    Time.timeScale = 0;
    yield return new WaitForSecondsRealtime(0.08f);
    Time.timeScale = 1;
    SpriteRend.color = originalColor;
    health--;
}

```

Weapon:

```

public void Fire()
{
    GameObject bullet = Instantiate(bulletPrefab, firePoint.position, firePoint.rotation);
    bullet.GetComponent<Rigidbody2D>().AddForce(firePoint.up * fireForce, ForceMode2D.Impulse);
    //bullet.GetComponent<Rigidbody2D>().drag = 20;
    gunAnimator.SetTrigger("Shoot");
}

1 reference
IEnumerator FireWait()
{
    Camera Cam = Camera.main;

    reloaded = false;
    for (int i = 0; i < bulletNum; i++)
    {
        Fire();
        Cam.GetComponent<ScreenShake>().ShakeCam(0.08f, 0.08f);
        yield return new WaitForSeconds(0.05f);
    }
    yield return new WaitForSeconds(reloadTime);
    reloaded = true;
}

```

Bullet:

```

private void OnCollisionEnter2D(Collision2D collision)
{
    if (collision.gameObject.tag != "Bullet")
    {
        //Destroy(gameObject);
        var speed = lastVelocity.magnitude;
        var direction = Vector3.Reflect(lastVelocity.normalized, collision.contacts[0].normal);

        rb.velocity = direction * Mathf.Max(speed, 0.0f);
        rb.drag += 0.2f;

        counter++;

        if (counter >= 3)
        {
            Destroy(gameObject);
            counter = 0;
        }
    }
}

```