

# Punderstorm

## **Artist vision and purpose**

Wordplay is a form of creative expression that allows one to experience text and speech in a playful and witty manner. Punderstorm can serve any individual from the following personas: pun enthusiasts, individuals who resent wordplay, or individuals who are curious about puns but don't consider themselves witty. For our enthusiasts, Punderstorm is an opportunity to flex their wordplay muscles by sifting through pun quizzes and quickly selecting the right options. For the "pun resenterers," the game can shine light on the playful implementation of puns in an interactive, unconventional format. Finally, for those new to wordplay, Punderstorm can serve as a "crash course," training them to identify puns from plain text, which can hopefully inspire them to adopt the practice of wordplay in their day to day conversations thereafter. Sharing puns spontaneously in my interactions with family, friends, colleagues and classmates has helped me bring a smile to others' faces, break the ice in awkward situations, and develop slogans for team projects from grade school to college. If even a fraction of players develop an astuteness for wordplay and adopt it in their life, my vision as an artist will be met.

## **The story**

Punderstorm is an interactive game that prompts the player to make puns in order to escape an unfavorable situation. In short, the player is in a rush on their way to an important meeting, until a group of adversaries traps the player until presented with a list of five puns. To generate the list, the player is given guidance and hints that fit within the narrative of the story, with multiple opportunities to quit along the way. Further context will border with spoiling some of the surprises that make Punderstorm fun(derstorm) - start playing to learn more!

## **Method and process of creation**

The story was developed incrementally: I started with the general idea of requiring a user to come up with puns to escape an unfavorable situation, and the specific characters and challenges were developed “on the go” rather than in a pre-planned fashion. The process very much reflected the nature of puns: developed spontaneously through association, rather than premeditated and rehearsed. On a technical level, Punderstorm was generated using Twine, an open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories. Many of Twine’s features are no-code, including laying out text on a webpage and linking one page to another. In creating Punderstorm, I incorporated such features along with functionality and design that required code, as well. Using variables, conditional logic, images, CSS and JavaScript, I added features including countdowns, multiple choice quizzes, and clickable images to enhance the user experience and add interactivity and urgency to certain parts of the game. Some of this code was developed with the support of Twine’s documentation along with information found on discussion boards Twine Forum and Reddit. Compared to many modern programming languages and tools, online support for Twine is fairly limited, which made debugging quite difficult. I was specifically unable to present links that populate a web-page after a predetermined number of seconds, so I developed a low-quality workaround that may pose an unpolished user experience, but the game serves its purpose nonetheless.