SEPR 2016-17 Scenario 2: Murder in the Ron Cooke Hub

A lock-in costume party is taking place in (a fictionalised) Ron Cooke Hub late one evening. The guests include the great and good from around Yorkshire and the rest of the world, including several of the world's most famous detectives. Suddenly, the night is filled with a scream! A body falls from the Lakehouse balcony. There is a crash outside! The guests rush out to see that the victim is …

You will build a murder mystery game set in the Ron Cooke Hub (you are allowed to take liberties with the actual design of the building for the purposes of entertainment). The unique selling point of this game is that it will provide *dynamic story telling* capability. That is, the mystery will be (in some way) different each time it is played: there will be a different victim, a different motive, a different murderer, and a different modus operandi. The game should be for one player (who plays a Great Detective), should provide a graphical user interface that shows the player moving through the Hub and interacting with other characters and objects, and may end when the player has successfully interrogated the murderer while having gathered sufficient *clues* to evidence their claim of guilt. Your game will ultimately have the following capabilities.

- A graphical user interface, which provides a map of the fictionalised Ron Cooke Hub. The map should divide the Hub into at least eight rooms of varying sizes and dimensions. It should be possible for the player to use the GUI to navigate their Great Detective through the Hub. It should also be possible to see other game characters, objects and furniture, interact with them in various ways (see below), and find and collect clues.
- It should be possible for the player to customise the personality of their Great Detective, e.g., in terms of the style of their behaviour. You might choose to model this on well known detectives from film and literature. You must not infringe or violate copyright (etc.) laws!
- There should be at least 10 characters in the game, excluding the player. Each character should have a distinctive personality. You should design these characters so that you can tell interesting stories: for example, a glamorous movie star, an Olympic athlete, an eccentric billionaire, a down-on-their-luck musician. Exactly and only one character will be the murderer in each game play. You should be creative in designing characters Please do take inspiration from fiction and real life, but please be kind and generous to any real people (it is good form to ask for permission to virtualise a real person in your game, and again, please be aware of legal issues involved). See the constraints below.
- When the player interacts with another character, at least three modes of interaction should be supported: **ignore** (you then do not interact with the character further, until a new clue has been found - see below); **question**; or **accuse.**
  - If the player questions the character, it should be possible for the player to choose a *style* for questioning; at least three styles - based on the customised

personality of the player - must be provided, e.g., aggressive, violent, friendly, cajoling. Characters should respond differently to each style of questioning. For example, the eccentric billionaire Ronald Thump may respond badly (by saying "Get Lost!") to aggressive questioning, but if the Great Detective questions them in a deferential way, they may offer useful information.

- The player may **accuse** a character of committing murder. The player must have gathered enough evidence to back up the accusation. If they haven't gathered enough evidence, or the accusation is false, the player cannot question that character again for the rest of the game.

- Each room should contain at least one *clue*; the player should have to search for clues. Clues can be very general (e.g., "a blonde hair") or very specific ("a hat with the initials RFP embossed inside the brim"). Some clues may be irrelevant. Each game should have exactly one *motive clue* which will in some way indicate the motive behind the murder. It should only be possible to find the motive clue after some work, e.g., a few interrogations, finding a few other clues. In all cases, clues should *make sense* given their location, the game context, and the story you're trying to tell and sell (for example, a clue consisting of a large squid found in the Hub cafe may not make sense in a murder mystery).

- A score or rating should be provided for each game play, based on how quickly the case is solved, how many missteps (e.g., failed accusations) took place, how many clues were found, etc.

- Gameplay should be dynamic, meaning that within the constraints defined above (i.e., number and personality of characters, number of clues, map/rooms) each gameplay should be in some way different, with a different murderer, motive, location and means!

Constraints

You are building a game that should be playable and enjoyable by your SEPR cohort. However, there are two stakeholders that you must also accommodate.

- The customer: one of your lecturers will play the role of a customer who is interested in eventually trying to market and sell your game. Ultimately the customer is the person you must convince of the validity of your assumptions and decisions. This stakeholder can be contacted as often as you need and at any time (but do not expect an instant reply!).

- The University of York Communications Office: who is interested in using your game for its own promotional activities, e.g., at Open Days, UCAS Days. Please note that you can only communicate with this stakeholder through the lecturers. Also, please keep this constraint in mind as you design the characters for your game!