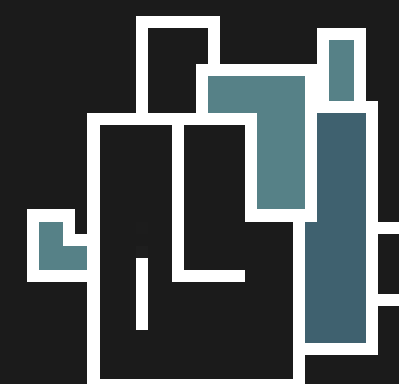# IT CHOOSES

FINAL PROJECT - CART263

A SILENT PROGRAM

TO BE READ BEFORE TRYING PROGRAM

There will be no explicit instructions for the User to follow; it is up to them to solve the ""puzzles"".
The program ended up being completely silent, for reasons explained below, so expect...silence XD - except for the webpages, the pre-visioned SFX seemed to fit them well enough.

I didn't remember in time to ask how to safely change names/locations of GitHub folders, so this is indeed the prototype file, with the prototype link...oops.

TO BE READ AFTER TRYING PROGRAM

INSPIRATION

The topics covered in this semester - partly in the cart263 class but mostly cart210 - focused on a technical, social, contextual, and ethical understanding of technology - AI, notably.
The lessons deeply intrigued me and inspired this project, quite obviously leaning towards science fiction rather than realistic settings.
People teaching machines, blinded by the prospect of discovery, heedless of potential consequences.
And a computer-human distinction that is perceived as increasingly blurry and slippery; as fascinating as it is condemning.

This program experiments with the perspective of an ignorant machine that still requires to be taught its basic principles - understanding language (coding and alike), perceiving and analyzing itself, its environment, remembering those principles to apply them and better itself.
Yet, the sci-fi(ish) take includes a far more human achievement; the power of will, the possibility of choice.
Hence, the User's actual choice (to remain in the fifth room rather than remain in the main one) will break the hierarchy between programmers and machine.
As a side note, this quiet battle is mainly explored in the Chasing Levels, in which the so-called 'obstacles' should suggest the idea of keys of a keyboard being pressed. Coupled with the lines of number (aka coding XD), the visual effects try to suggest the notion of 'someone' "on the other side of the screen" typing away, trying to stop and re-program the User, a progressively "defective" machine.

CODE

Some quick notes on the program:

- The Typewriter effect and the game.Data/local storage mechanics were programmed by...you. This paper is not talking to you XD

- I had designed some SFXs but they really proved distracting and cheap compared to the overall atmosphere of the project, so I chose to keep the program quiet - except for the web pages, in which the only SFX was left to create a connection of sorts with the main program (more explicitly "techy").

- I was scared to even try to change the project folder's name or location, so it is essentially the same as the prototype. All web pages have been coded separately and subsequentially included in the main program. All respective commits history can be found in the individual folders (eg: Project02_Body) within the Project02 folder.

CONCEPT

The project naturally explores the idea crafted in the Proposal - the User finding themselves in a "facility-like" environment, without much context, nor information.
Although a presence is constantly communicating with the User, the latter cannot initially understand.

The map lets the User explore varied rooms, some of which contain a button, which will direct the User to one of the four web pages.

The User's goal is to achieve the -incorrectly defined- "senses" to understand and win the program.
There are five "senses" in total:

Body (here appears blatantly appalling why "senses" is an incorrect term to define the achievements) - the User gains the embodiment of their environment, its physical reality. In other words, they gain a body (a sort of attempted pixelated/minimalistic mechanical heart) and are now restricted to the Rooms' walls. The webpage for this achievement tries to represent the same principles. The User must consider the sliding walls (their physicality) to get to the statue's parts. More apparently, the User has to assemble an actual body. To be precise, Canova's *Venere Italica* (the artist is cited on the page, but in binary code).

Vision - User gains the clarity of their environment - colors, walls, etc. The related web page challenges the User to awaken the eye central to the screen and to keep it open. To do so, they must grab its attention by "playing" some digital beeps (aka spelling the word 'playing' via keyboard).
Why would an eye hear sounds? That is indeed a good question.

Memory - User finally gains the ability to remember the "facility"'s map, therefore can now direct themselves in a specific room without challenging the randomness of fate (thus no more 'empty rooms'). The related webpage puts into practice the User's memory by challenging them to re-type a temporary string of random characters. In addition, some non-relevant strings will eventually appear (characterized by greyish color instead of white); User will have to remember which strings were previously there, which ones are new, etc, etc.

Language - User can now understand what *they are* saying.
I am very aware that machines are not exactly trained with emojis, yet the general outline is to offer data (visual and not) to teach the computer. Here the User must guess the meaning sealed in common emojis (I may have had a bit of fun with those) to learn...English, I guess. Yes, a fool-proof teaching method indeed.
As a minor side-note, I hope the riddles are easy enough, if not...*cough cough* console *cough cough*

Will/ Will power - this achievement is not as obvious as the others, for it doesn't have a web page nor chasing level associated. It is the point at which the machine/User has gained everything necessary to make a choice, to defy orders, and choose their ending (hmm at least philosophically speaking).
The User has become too "human", too understanding, and thus is labeled "defective" and repeatedly ordered to return to the Main Room to be re-programmed. But if User *chooses* not to go, to remain in that fifth room for as long as they wish, then they will eventually win over their freedom, and quite literally "exit" the screen, breaking the chain (indeed, it does sound silly).
While all previous achievements are explicitly indicated in their respective pages (eg: 'it sees', 'it feels' etc), this last one actually names the entire project - *It Chooses* (an attempt at a circular narration of sorts).

The infamous Blade Runner's quote ends the program. A simple yet fitting ending, I think.