The purpose of this demonstration is to provide a sample of programming that I have developed during my free time. The *Words* game is such a project and it is based on an idea that I have come up with myself. Maybe the easiest way to explain the idea behind it is to first talk about a childhood game that inspired me to come up with the idea for *Words*.

When I was little, I used to play a game named *the Cottage*. *The Cottage* was a kind of adventure game that was entirely text based. The player simply wrote commands at a command prompt to interact with the game, for example, *take the key*, *enter the room*, *take the ladder*, *eat the pill* etc. The game was somewhat flexible about grammar and spelling. take key would for example have a similar effect in the game as *take the key*.

What I found to be unsatisfactory about the game, *the cottage*, was that there were’t any clear boundaries for the scope of action in every situation in the game. The possible number of ways by which the player could interact with the game seemed almost infinite since the players was given complete freedom in choosing their expressions. As a result, many times the game wouldn’t understand the player’s intention. If you instead of taking the key wrote place the key on the table, the game wouldn’t understand what you meant.

My intention behind the *Words* idea was to create a similarly text based adventure game where the player would interact with the game using text messages. However, by restricting the way the player was able to interact with the game I was hoping to facilitate for the game engine to interpret messages and also give the player an idea about different lines of action in every situation. I also wanted to place constrictions on the text inputs from the player to make the game only accept grammatical text messages. Commands such as *take key* wouldn’t be accepted as a valid command.

My solution was to make it a kind of word combination game, which would allow the user to build commands by combining a list of available word. For example, in the case of the command “take the key”, the words *take*, *the* and *key* would be listed but not necessarily in that order. To make it easier for the player to pick out the right words, the available words would be categorized according to their word class, that is, *take* as verb, *the* as article and *key* as noun. The player would be able to see all words available for command building in every situation.

Hence, the game is situation based, and every situation is connected with a number of other situations through unique commands that the player builds by selecting words from the current word-list.

I will now show you a sequence of the game where we as a player moves around and acts in a very limited universe.

Hard Reset the game

The word list for every situation is available in the bottom pane. The words are placed in different categories according to their word class to be easier to find. There are for example 5 verbs available, namely *take*, *enter*, *start*, *talking* and *exit*. When tapping on a word, the word is added to the input field. The field can be cleared with the delete button. On the top bar there are different buttons. The backpack button displays all items the player currently has. The button with the box and circles displays all items that are available for collection in a particular situation. The middle button displays the current location. The door button displays a list of entires or other situations that can be entered from the current situation. The people button displays people that can be approached and engaged in conversation in every situation.

press middle button

We now get the message that we are in the hallway.

press item button

There is a red key available that can be collected.

We want to take it.

take the red key

We take the red key, so there is now a red key in our backpack.

press entries button

We now see that there are 3 entries, namely the living room, the office and top of the staircase. We are currently in the hallway.

exit the apartment

We get the message that someone called ‘Peter’ stops us from exiting the apartment, because we need to collect a bus card first.

press people button

When we look for people in the hallway we see that only ‘Peter’ is here.

It is possible to engage in conversation with Peter and other people in the game, but in this demo I will not be going into that part.

enter the office

Then we try to open the office door we see that a blue key is need for opening that door.

enter the living room

We are now in the living room.

press look for items button

We now see that there are no collectable items in the living room.

press the entries button

we see that there are two entries that are accessible from the living room, namely the hallway from which we entered and a store room.

enter the store room

It now turns out that a red key was needed for entering the store room and fortunately we already collected that key.

press look for items

There is a blue key here. That key was needed for entering the office from the hallway so we will take that and return to the hallway.

take the blue key

exit the storeroom

exit the living room

We are now back in the hallway.

press location button

When we press the location button it is confirmed that we are back in the hallway. Now we have got the blue key so we will be able to enter the office.

enter the office

We are now in the office. First we look for items.

press look for items

There is a bus card here, so we take the bus card.

take the bus card

Next we exit the office and try to exit the apartment once more.

exit the office

we are back in the hallway.

exit the apartment

Peter let’s us exit the apartment since we have the bus pass. We press the location button to find out where we are now.

press the location button

Obviously, we are now outside of Peter’s apartment at the top of a staircase. While it is possible to continue playing and do more exploring, the goal for this presentation is reached, namely to exit the apartment.

Finally, we check the backpack to see what items it now contains

press backpack button

it contains a red and a blue key and a bus card

Conclusion

Hopefully this short walkthough has been able to illustrate the basic idea behind the *Words* game. It is still only a prototype. I believe that I would be able to develop a complex game with the prototype as a starting point. Currently, game building takes place from within the game itself, so you basically enter the room from which you want to expand more, and then you can add new items, entries or people. Interaction with people was not covered in this walkthough but is important, since it makes it possible to add locatios such as shops in which the player would be able to interact with the shop assistant in a kind of conversation. The purpose of this demonstration was to demonstrate some programming that I have done in my spare time.