

Project: Abyss

Astralwater Interactive
Concept Document



"WILL YOU CAPTURE THE DEPTHS, OR WILL *IT* CAPTURE YOU?"

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Introduction

A Short Summary of Project: Abyss

With a partner, take a dive into an underground world on an adventure to discover a world that has been under our feet for all this time. With a tech company at your back, bring your special diving equipment and push it to the limits as you discover all kinds of new life. Get lowered deeper into the bodies of water in a shark cage, controlled by your partner, and accompanied by your trusty DiveBot to take pictures of the extraordinary world, add them to your journal for safekeeping and to collect money for your efforts. Be careful as you do not know anything that is down here; it might not all be friendly, so be prepared for anything.

Genre

Project: Abyss will focus on cooperative play and be largely a first-person game with some third-person gameplay components. There will be many opportunities for exploration in the game, as well as a horror element brought on by aggressive fish lurking in the depths of “Hollow Earth”.

Target Platform

The main focus will be for a release on Windows PC, though there is a possibility of future plans bringing it to consoles, if time permits.

Target Audience

The game is targeted towards the age group of 13+. This is due to certain aspects of the game being inappropriate for younger audiences, such as the horror element to the game.

Premise & Story

A Short Overview Of Project Abyss

“Project: Abyss” offers a captivating cooperative underwater adventure, casting players as two intrepid researchers contracted by a major tech conglomerate to explore a newly unveiled layer of our planet deep beneath the ocean’s floor, Hollow Earth. However, within the corporate hierarchy, you find yourselves deemed expendable assets, sent to simply collect data for the major corporation in this extremely dangerous environment.

This groundbreaking discovery unveils a realm previously concealed from human exploration, brimming with unprecedented flora, fauna, and never-before-seen aquatic species. Your mission is to capture the enigmatic beauty of this subterranean world through photography, document your findings meticulously, and gather samples that unveil the secrets of this unknown new layer without becoming food for the abyss. As you delve deeper into the heart of Hollow Earth, you’ll uncover traces of an ancient, intelligent civilization that has left behind mysterious clues about its existence.

Yet, amidst the wonders of this underwater world, the shadow of corporate indifference looms over you. You must navigate difficult choices involving the preservation of the established ecosystem's natural order or disturbing what lurks deep below for corporate greed.

Gameplay Features

Core Gameplay Mechanics

In the following section, we'll delve into the various mechanics accessible to players as they progress through the game.

Boat Navigation

One player takes on the role of navigating the boat to specific mission destinations, while the other player will guide them towards their chosen mission location.

Shark Cage / Diving

One player opts to be the “diver,” descending into the depths in a shark cage controlled by their partner, the “boat operator.” Effective communication between the diver and boat operator is crucial for a successful expedition.

Photography

The primary objective for the diver is to capture images of new marine life and fauna, documenting their findings in a personal journal as they progress through the game. This encourages thorough exploration and provides players with a sense of achievement and progression.

PC Terminal / Missions

A PC terminal is available on the boat for either player's use. The terminal offers access to a map of the area, the research journal, cameras that can be viewed and rotated, control of the DiveBot, and a list of available missions. These missions encompass various goals, such as photographing new aquatic life to unlock new areas later in the game.

Cave Systems

Divers will frequently encounter uncharted cave systems to explore, providing them with opportunities to explore unique and carefully curated instanced experiences. These caves will often have a specific theme, often concluding in taking a picture of a specific fish/fauna the player was sent there to get.

The DiveBot

The DiveBot accompanies the diver and functions as a camera for the boat operator. When inside of cave instances, the player on the boat will take possession of the DiveBot, exploring hard to reach areas that the original diver would otherwise be unable to reach.

Unique Selling Points

Why Our Game Will Succeed

Underwater Photography

Project Abyss introduces an engaging photography mechanic that competes with Phasmophobia's appeal of using cameras in a horror environment, but within a distinctive underwater locale. Players will be tasked with capturing breathtaking aquatic imagery.

Stress Management

Players must efficiently manage their stress levels, facing additional challenges when stress becomes too overwhelming, such as increased enemy attack radius, hallucinations, and camera malfunctions. This adds some key risk to the player's experience, while not being as restricting as hunger & water that some games utilize.

The DiveBot

Divers are accompanied by an adorable robotic companion in the depths, which can be controlled by the player on the surface when able to. This cooperative aspect enhances the game's unique underwater cooperative charm and teamwork focused gameplay.

Competitive Analysis

Our Competition

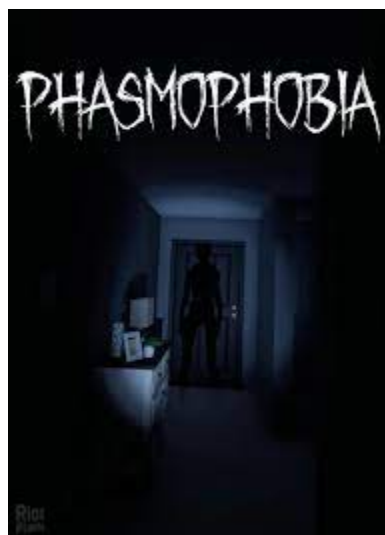
Our main competitors are Subnautica from Unknown Worlds Entertainment and Phasmophobia from Kinetic Games. Project Abyss bridges the gap in scale giving players the room to explore without overwhelming them.



Subnautica - 87 Metacritic

Unique underwater Survival-Exploration game based on gathering resources and blueprints to expand the players abilities.

- Rather than collecting resources and crafting new equipment, our players will upgrade their gear by purchasing it with in-game currency earned by completing missions
- Players work together to explore the depths while the competition is a single player experience
- Subnautica was released in 2014, with its sequel releasing in 2021. Even it's sequel not having multiplayer, there's a strong need for a co-op underwater horror experience in the market.



Phasmophobia - 16/20 jeuxvideo.com

Trendsetting horror investigation game that incorporates speech recognition. Players gather information and attempt to deduce the type of ghost haunting the level.

- Co-op gameplay in our game is split into distinct roles where the competition has all members completing the same objectives
- Gameplay in the competition is more linear, where in our game areas can be returned to after upgrading to further explore
- Competitors Game focuses on shock and jump scares while our game uses environmental horror

Possible Risks

And planned solutions

Potential Risks	Solutions
We have an inexperienced team, which can lead to potential teamwork issues, coding problems, and merge conflicts using programs like Github.	With careful planning, the P.I.T.S system, and a focus on open communication, we can encourage a positive and productive work environment.
Time constraints become a big problem in development, especially in a large scope like the proposed project.	With preparations made by creating UML diagrams, game design documents, and an art bible, we can ensure that proper scope and expectation management is applied to our development.
Underwater focussed development can lead to many physics, camera, and visual challenges for artists and programmers, as compared to a land-based game.	Extensive research will be done regarding underwater physics and games with similar gameplay styles to guarantee fluid gameplay without the feeling of clunky underwater mechanics.
Having vast amounts of fish AI consistently surrounding the player can lead to issues regarding performance, and general programming difficulty.	A large amount of programmer development time will be dedicated to iterating on and improving the performance of our complex fish AI systems.

Development Team

The Astral Water Interactive Team

“Project Abyss” is being developed by a team of 14 people of many different skill sets.

Lead Roles

Austin Morris: Build Engineer

Alexander McTernan: Communications Contact

Maxime Paradis: Programmer Contact

Rob Power: Artist Contact

Programmers:	Artists
Austin Morris	Rob Power
Alexander McTernan	Aaron McAfee
Maxime Paradis	Connor McCooeye
Tyler Brost	Scott McIntyre
Jarod Beach	Dante Frazzoni
Renz Leo Nicolas Dela Cruz	Liam Desrosiers
	Adam Propp
	Yousef Ibrihim

Credits

The Call of Cthulhu, ömer tunç, Digital, 2017