

My work has always revolved around some sort of technical challenge, such as learning how to use a new tool, or attempting to implement a new algorithm. While this has led to many projects I'm proud of, there has been none that mean something to me. No project has an idea at its core such that the project takes on something greater than the tech behind it. I think my project Station 17 is the first project of mine to overcome this.

My project, Station 17, is a multiplayer game disguised as a single-player adventure game. It follows the story of an engineer on a space station, who finds himself stranded after disaster strikes the station. The hidden multiplayer aspect is that the game is actually an endless loop, where the current player will unknowingly decide the fate of the previous player.

How does this idea work? During the journey to find help, the engineer comes across a stranger in a bloody uniform. The player has the ability to question the stranger and then is given the choice to kill or spare them. Afterwards, the engineer ends up falling victim to a chain of events that ends up in him returning to the same spot, wearing the same bloody uniform as the previous stranger, and being confronted by a different individual. The multiplayer nature of the game is then revealed, as the player is then confronted with the same series of questions they had asked the other stranger previously, before fading out and revealing the truth: that the player had decided the fate of the previous player, and that the next player will decide their fate.

This game was heavily inspired by the 2017 title *Moirai*. *Moirai* played almost exactly the same as Station 17, but with a fantasy theme as opposed to the sci-fi theme Station 17 has. *Moirai* was subjected to a series of cyberattacks after its launch, which led it to shut down only a couple months after release. I've always felt that *Moirai* was one of the most unique games ever made, which is why it was a shame that it had such a short life-span. In this sense, I wanted Station 17 to be more of a celebration of *Moirai* rather than an original, standalone project. This is why I think Station 17 symbolizes something greater than the tech behind it. My vision was that playing Station 17 would recapture the experience of playing *Moirai* for the first time.

So what exactly does that mean? First, it's important to establish the illusion that this is a single-player adventure. I helped establish that illusion by placing pre-rendered 3D graphics into Twine, so that it feels like you're moving through a real environment, which makes the project seem more like a simple video-game, and less like the abstract digital stories that we've covered in class. I wrote about how I achieved this in the following blog post:

makingdigitalstories2.wordpress.com/2023/12/18/navigating-3d-environments-in-twine/

Secondly, it's important that once the illusion is broken, the audience is left in shock. The initial confrontation with the stranger (previous player) should be downplayed in importance. In Station 17, this is done by giving the player the objective of disabling "the artifact" so that the player can re-establish communications and call for help. Players won't think much of their encounter with the stranger, which makes it surprising when the true nature of that confrontation is revealed.

Station 17 is a celebration of what I consider to be one of the most interesting games ever made. My use of pre-rendered 3D graphics as well as the narrative design helps establish the

illusion that it's a simple adventure game, making it incredibly shocking to the audience once the multiplayer nature of the game is revealed.