Feedback from Bakery Escape prototype

My first testing session is to test how players move around my scene, ensuring the layout of the room feels accurate and easy to maneuver around. I've spent time working on my models, so want to confirm that they suit the style of my game and mesh together well to create a cohesive theme.

Q1: Do all the elements fit together, visually?

Everyone answered that the assets fit together either 'perfectly' or 'well', so I'm confident most of my assets fit together well. I'll keep this in mind when making future assets to ensure they still follow the theme.

Q2: If you thought something was off visually, can you pinpoint what it was? (eg colouring, scale, detail etc)

- The door feels too small, and the lock too low down. The ovens and units also feel a little too low, I feel like they should be waist level.
- nice consistent theme so far, pastel palette works well
- Not sure why there are books behind the counter, this could be a selection of food, or cooking stuff. If it is core to the puzzle - keep it there as it does encourage interaction.
- The bowl. The faces of the normals inside the bowl need to be flipped. The lighting feels a bit off

I got some good feedback on which elements need to be changed. The first thing is altering the height of the player so they're lower down in the scene; this will also help with interacting with things lower down in the world. The colour scheme was well received, so I'll maintain this as I continue with development. Because the bookcase is such a detailed asset, I think it would make more sense to be more involved with the puzzle; it draws the users attention and encourages interaction. This might be where I hide scraps of paper to form the recipe in later puzzles. I also need to make some basic changes to the bowl model, as there are back faces which are clipped out in Unity.

Q3: How does the environment feel to walk around/be in? Select all that apply

(answered ordered from most to least common)
1. Natural
2. Immersive
3. Realistic
4. Claustrophobic

Generally people enjoyed the layout of the environment, but a few people said it felt claustrophobic, which confirms a suspicion I had. I will test this again with a shorter character perspective, and may play around with raising the ceiling and spreading out assets to help make the environment feel less cluttered. Ideally, the dining area should feel relaxed and spacey, and the kitchen should be more cluttered, as players should experience more tension in the kitchen as they visit it later in the game.

Q4: Are they any other key elements of a bakery that I haven't included in my environment which would help develop the world and make it feel more complete?

- More assets lying around e.g. dough mixer, flour (maybe spilled on the unit?), fridge/freezer, cupcakes in the display case out front? Something to look at through the windows e.g. a highstreet!
- Sound theme - does this compliment or contrast the visual appeal - ie master chef spot effects/intensity or cartoonesque voices/splooshie mix/prep sounds etc...
- Breaddd... Like piles and piles of bread
- Maybe some actual cakes lying around....

The environment models suggested to help develop the world match my planning quite well, but some such as fridge and a scene through the window I hadn't considered and will add to my plan.

Q5: Do you like the feedback comment system? (words appear at the bottom of the screen to capture the characters thoughts and feelings as they interact)(on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is the best)

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9 responses
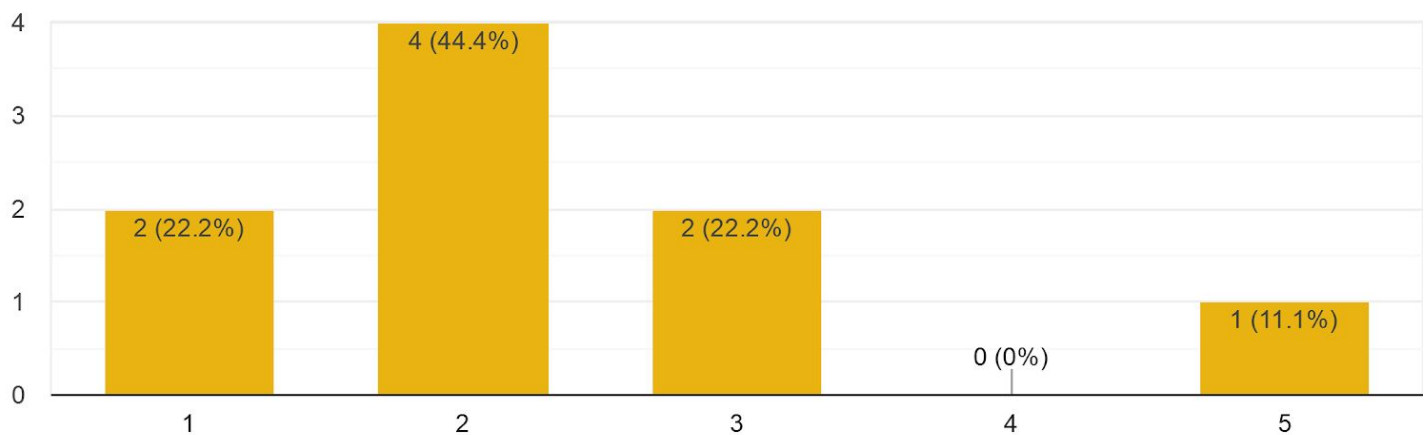
People were generally quite torn on the feedback system, with the overall view being that it's 'just okay'. This indicates that I need to invest some time into redesigning my feedback system to make it a more intuitive and integrated experience. I can break this down further by looking at the next question.

Q6: Why do you think the comment system is good/bad? How could it be improved to enhance user experience?

- It's good! As a MAP feature, you should add an accessibility option that changes the font of the text. Curvy stylised writing is hard to read for a lot of people.
- its great, good way to convey hints to the player about what they need to do
- personally I'd prefer it to be the player characters 'inner' voice/thoughts as voice samples, text on screen is too easy and breaks immersion...
- Maybe if you read them out? like they're thoughts you're having

This gave me some good insight into what I need to change about the feedback system. Having an audio version was suggested by multiple people, and will help keep the player immersed as they don't have to look down and read a bunch of text. Another issue was that the font choice was too hard to read, so even if I keep the subtitles for clarity alongside the audio, I'll need to pick a more accessible font so it can be easily read. However, the basic concept for giving the user's thought to give hints about the characters thought process and next clues was well received, so I'll ensure this is kept pretty similar in later versions.

Q7 : Do you think the colour scheme suits a bakery environment, enhances the cosy feeling of the room?

Do you think the colour scheme suits a bakery environment, enhances the cosy feeling of the room?

9 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

11.1%
22.2%
66.7%
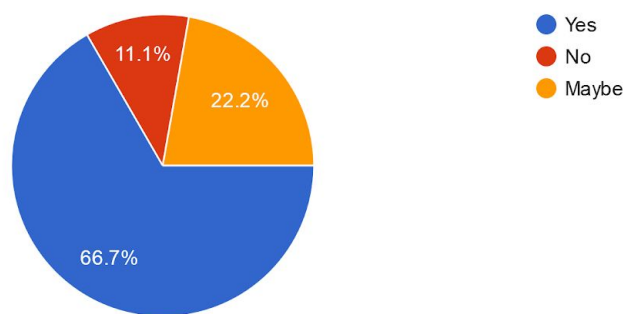
The general opinion on my current colour scheme was positive, but it needs some refinement to get everyone on board and get a perfect mix.

Q8: If not, how should the colours be changed to better enhance the experience (eg warmer, cooler, more limited, more realistic, more cartoony)

- (I answered yes, but I just wanted to say I think the colour scheme is one of the best elements!)
- make the walls and floor a warmer color rather than the harsh gray.
- it creates a chilled environment, assuming there is no time pressure and its more explore/solve fine - if there is some need to 'escape' there probably needs to be some other elements to drive the player etc
- little warmer, a cake shop/bakery should feel warm and welcoming
- I would love to help but im colourblind

The general consensus was that to build up a more relaxed-looking bakery scene, I need to tweak some elements of the room, especially walls and floors, to make them warmer and more appealing. I think that as the game goes on and tension increases, the colour palette should be influenced to exaggerate this; for example, the lighting might change from warm yellow to harsher blue to make it feel more intimidating and sterile during the later puzzles to encourage the feeling of time pressure and uncertainty.