



DESIGN DOCUMENT

By Team Missing Semicolon for the 2025 Pirate Software Game Jam

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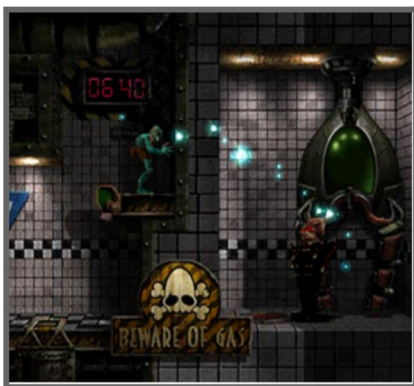
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Introduction



Game Summary Pitch

Hijack is a stealth-based puzzle game about hijacking hosts to access or manipulate parts of the environment in order to navigate to the goal.



Inspiration

Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

Abe's Oddysee is one of the main inspirations for the game in gameplay and style. Oddworld involves playing as a funny critter named Abe who escapes captivity using powers of possession. The possession mechanic is largely the inspiration for the game, and the puzzle aspect of using possessed enemies to perform other actions.

Half-Life 1

In terms of aesthetics and tone, a lot of inspiration comes from Half-Life 1, primarily in the high tech, industrial aesthetic, like you know there are dozens of top secret experiments going on in the institute on a daily basis, and in tone taken part from the casual and silly nature of NPC's in the world, with Scientists who are overly nerdy for their own good and complain when you harass them, or guards being too busy talking about the wife at home to notice a travesty going on in the next room.



Player Experience

Player will move through 5 levels from basement containment up to the main lobby through a series of elevators. In order to progress, the player character will have to hijack specific guards, unlock doors, and pass an “Act Normal” mini game, where other guards will ask questions to verify that the hijacked guard is human. They will need to use stealth and understand the guards’ movements in order to jump them in the right moment, and progress before their hijack meter runs out.

Platform

Itch.io in browser

Development Software

- Unity 6
- Aseprite for graphics and UI
- Embergen
- Bitwig
- Abelton Live
- Audition
- Visual Studio Code
- Trello
- Github

Genre

Stealth, humor, singleplayer

Target Audience

Game is intended for audience range from 13-18 years old who favor internet flashgame style games and stealth based gameplay.

Concept

Gameplay overview



The player controls Goober, a small critter grown in a tube by Inven-Gen, with the ability to jump onto peoples' heads and take over their minds. While in control, they're able to use all of the abilities of the hijacked person to open locked doors with a keycard, run down walls, and trick their way past other guards. However, Goober can only control a person for so long, and will eventually run out and fall off, leaving the guard dazed for a few seconds. Using this ability, and the environment, the player must navigate through the level and into the next elevator, that leads up to the next level.



Theme Interpretation (You are the Weapon)

Our Interpretation - The player pilots other creatures and uses them to gain access to new abilities and allow them to reach their goal.

Rather than a weapon used to incapacitate enemies, Goober functions as a weapon to gain additional abilities he does not have on his own in order to help him escape captivity. Only once Goober hijacks a guard do they become a weapon capable of ramming down walls and assisting them in making it through the level and further toward escape.

Primary Mechanics

Mechanic	Animated Mockup (Art not necessarily final)
<p><u>Hijack</u></p> <p>When an enemy has it's back turned, the player can jump onto the back of the enemy to control them and perform actions.</p>	
<p><u>Hijack Meter</u></p> <p>As the player hijacks an enemy, they will be limited by time via a meter that slowly ticks down as time goes on. Certain actions cause it to go down.</p>	
<p><u>Charge</u></p> <p>While the player is piloting, the player can make the hijacked run at full speed and crash into people and objects. The player can dizzy other enemies this way or destroy fragile walls. Uses a significant amount of the hijack meter.</p>	
<p><u>Dizzy</u></p> <p>While the player is piloting, they can crash into people and make them dizzy, rendering them immobile for a period of time.</p>	

Mechanic	Animated Mockup (Art not necessarily final)
<p><u>Unlock Doors</u></p> <p>While the player is piloting an enemy with a colored key card, they will be allowed to enter through any door of the same color as the keycard.</p>	
<p><u>Alert</u></p> <p>If the player is within a certain distance of an enemy's FOV, it will alert the enemy and they will chase the player. If the player does something that makes a lot of noise such as breaking a wall, it will draw enemy attention</p>	
<p><u>Act Normal</u></p> <p>If the enemy is alerted via noise or if they are suspicious, they may approach you to talk. Choose a dialogue option that seems most normal in order to bypass the guard without alerting. Failing the check allows the player one more try before the guard is alerted.</p>	

Design Philosophy

Mechanical Design

Hijacking

The player can hijack standard guards by approaching them from behind and pressing “E”. This will allow the player to walk more freely until they do something suspicious that attracts the attention of other guards, such as ramming into walls or other guards. This triggers an “Act Natural” mini game.

Act Natural

If detected, the player will have to answer a series of questions to convince other guards that they are human. This is a conversation with three prompts. Successfully answering the questions will let the player return to searching for the exit. Answering incorrectly will result in recapture / game over.

Charge

While hijacking a guard, the player can hold Space to charge at walls and other guards at high speed, either from standing still or while walking. Cracked walls will crumble and reveal different parts of the level, and running into other guards will briefly stun them and keep them from detecting Goober. However, both of these actions will alert the other guards in the level and make them come investigate. Being caught will result in an “Act Natural” mini game.

Art

Theme Interpretation

Hijack uses a broad color pallet to fit the different designs for each of the five levels. This includes:

- Level 1 Containment: Dark, grungy purples and rusty grays
- Level 2 Laboratory: Bright whites littered with testing materials
- Level 3 Security: Dark and brutalistic with weapons racks and surveillance monitors
- Level 4 Office: Monotone and bland colors with papers and banker boxes for office employees
- Level 5 Lobby: Rich wood tones and sunny windows as Goober gets closer to escape

Design

Hijack utilizes a 2.5D artistic approach, using 2D sprites in a 3D modeled space. This allows interesting visual diversity, a defined style, and plenty of places that allow Goober to hide within the level.

Audio

Music

To add to the overall pace and atmosphere of the game, the music is slower and more subdued so that the player can focus on their actions while still being engaged. The beat of the music is steady and the tune uses 8-bit sounds and synths to compliment the pixel art aesthetic.

Sound Effects

To add a comedic effect to the game, comedic effects are used when someone is dizzy via a twinkling or duck noise, or running into a wall causing an anti-climactic thud. Some sounds maintain electronic sounds to notify the player of

dizzying, or alerting an enemy. Sounds mimicking a radio, or general blips and merps to indicate frustration.

Game Experience

UI

Consistent on screen UI includes “E to Hijack”, “P to Pause”, and “Left Shift to Sprint”. While hijacking a guard, the hijack meter will slowly deplete to show how much time is left. During the “Act Natural” mini game, an Awkward Meter will show how awkward the conversation is, indicating how suspicious the other guard is of the player.

Controls

Keyboard

Arrow keys / WASD

Left shift, E key, P Key, Space

Gamepad

Dpad

Development Timeline

MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT

#	Assignment	Type	Status	Finish By	Notes
1	Design Document	Other	Finished	1/18/25	
2	Create player and wall assets	Art	Finished	1/18/25	
3	Main menu theme	Audio	Finished	1/19/25	
4	UI / Main menu	Coding	Finished	1/20/25	Button UI, screen transition, title screen
5	Level theme	Audio	Finished	1/22/25	More subdued, slow and steady so the player can think.
6	Simple player movement	Coding	Finished	1/20/25	Moving and jumping around the player character
7	Complex player movement	Coding	Finished	1/23/25	Moving and performing actions as hijacked guard
8	Player interactions with environment	Coding	finished	1/25/25	Breaking walls with hijacked enemies, opening doors with keycards, etc.
9	Player detection for enemies, alert and recapture	Coding	finished	1/25/25	
10	Special effects	Art	finished	1/26/25	
11	Player animation	Art	finished	1/25/25	Idle blinks, movement polish
12	Sound effects	Audio	finished	1/25/25	Player movement, UI

#	Assignment	Type	Status	Finish By	Notes
					interaction
13	Pause menu	Coding	finished	1/22/25	Access to the main menu or resetting the level
14	Player hijacks enemy by jumping on them from behind	Coding	finished	1/24/25	
15	Player uses enemy to affect environment	Other	finished	1/25/25	Damage walls and dizzy other enemies
16	Player uses enemy keycard to pass through door	Other	finished	1/24/25	Keycard system, hijack red card guard to get through the red door, ect.
17	Design level 1-3	Other	finished	1/27/25	
18	Design level 4-5	other	finished	1/29/25	
19	SUBMIT	Other	finished	1/31/25	Create Itch Page and upload

BEYOND (if ahead of schedule / extra time)

Extra levels	Other	Not started	
Settings Menu	Coding	Finished	Volume slider, fullscreen toggle