

Iliterate

Design Document

Liech 2024 – Pirate Software Game Jam 07.24

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Spoiler Warning

This Game is intended as a Puzzle Game that leans heavily on Knowledge and Reasoning. Reading this document before playing will spoil the “fun”!

Otherwise: If you're stuck or impatient, you can find the course of the game here

1 Introduction

Game Summary

This is a menu based puzzle game leaning into surreal logic. There is a real Game, but the challenge is to configure everything correctly so it is possible to play and win.

Inspiration

Modern AAA Game Menus

Menus of “modern” games like Crysis, Bioshock and Cyberpunk2077 or Assasins Creed are complicated intricate puzzles.

Although the puzzles are badly designed. No one tells you what V-Sync is or how to get a better frame rate.



Pony Island

Pony Island subverts Player expectations towards Game & Menu Mechanics. Leaning heavy towards glitching and fixing bugs with “programming”.

The main way you are guided through the game is by hindering you from playing the normal game.



Point and Click Adventures

Edna & Harvey: The Breakout, Monkey Island

Wild logical leaps that only make sense if you immerse yourself into the world.

Animal Well

Animal Well consists of obscure puzzles and gives the player the time to figure out how it works instead of guiding them. I like this core philosophy a lot. I like it when games trust you.

Normally this kind of philosophy requires a great amount of testing to ensure not only totally twisted minds can find a solution.

Player Experience

In a classical Game Menu, that has seemingly nonsensical restrictions the player is required to navigate and find ways to do things on pages that are usually not allowed there. The player “wanders” around, learns new things he can use and finds obstacles for things he will discover or has already discovered.

It should be a short 15 Minute experience, where missing Knowledge is the only obstacle.

Puzzle Games that use obscure logic and not just one core mechanic are hard to pull off and it is unlikely that this succeeds. They are easily overlooked because of the expectation of Game Jam Jank Bugs. The reasoning “The Developer made an unfinished product” is far easier than wide mental leaps. I can do nothing about that, but I can make it feel polished enough to earn some trust.

Platform

The game is developed to be released on itch.io on a Web Browser. Also a Windows download will be added.

Keyboard and Mouse are required.

Development Software

- Godot
- Gimp - Art

- Audacity – Audio Recording
- LMMS – Audio Post Processing

Genre

- Puzzle / “Menu”troid-Brainia
- Point & Click (Adventure)
- Singleplayer

Target Audience

The idea of a puzzle that hides its game mechanics and does not center around a central mechanic is an obscure one. It might be hard to grasp for a casual audience. Understanding the subversion of a Main Menu requires the player to have a profound amount of Gaming Literacy.

The game is aimed at lovers of the obscure.

2 Concept

Gameplay overview

The player navigates through a Game Main Menu and does mundane preparation things to be able to play “the game”. Changing the language, setting Key bindings, tweaking Graphic Options for a fluid experience.

Examples:

- The game starts in a foreign language.
- Bad V-Sync has real Gameplay consequences and make you Character fall to death

Theme Interpretation

Theme	Interpretation
Shadow	The realm of dreams and nightmares

Alchemy

Figuring out the rules of an unknown world

My Interpretation is reasoning with dream logic. The Theme is “translated” to:

“Escaping the Fever dream”

The Dream is an amalgamation of “your” day and “your” past. Your fictional day consists of the following activities:

- Trying to play World Of Warcraft 3, but ultimately failing to do so
- Playing a cute Dating Sim
- Your cat had a lot of zoomies

These are condensed in the experience of trying to run a AAA Game. Tweaking Graphics, fighting Terms & Services etc.

Mechanics

Game Options

The Primary Mechanic is the Options Menu. Many common game things can be changed, but the consequences may be slightly off.

Language

There are four different localizations that are like parallel worlds with different Mechanics.

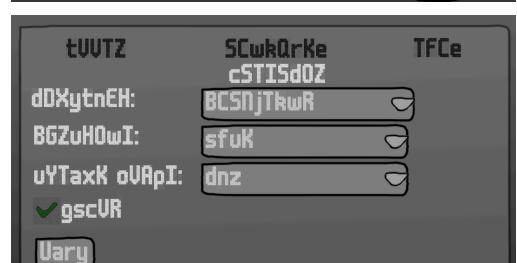
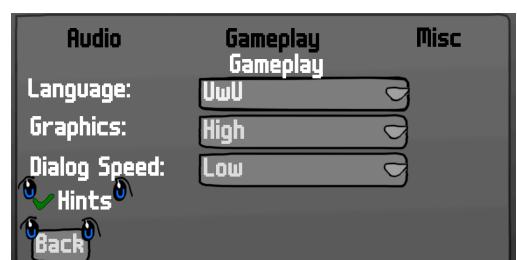
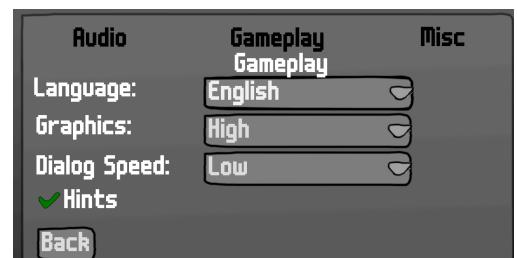
English:

The default way Guis behave. A calm dream soundtrack is played.

UwU:

You can talk to Buttons as in Visual-Novels. The Buttons act like they are in a highschool.

Cat Sign Language:



A Sign Language Instructor at the bottom left “explains” everything you hover on to. Also the main way cats communicate is by throwing objects on the ground. So Buttons fall off when you click them. Some break and may not function as intended.

Gibberish:

This is the language the Player starts in. It is unreadable and represents fear and nightmare. The “Shadow”-Realm.

Other Options

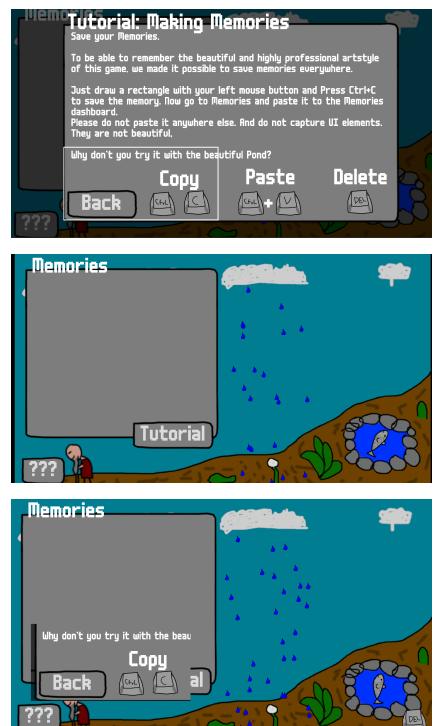
Most other Options switch on/off Obstacles. And the player must find out the right switch position at the right time.

Making Memories

You can draw a rectangle anywhere, press Strg+C and Strg+V to paste the Content of that rectangle anywhere. This allows you sequence breaking.

The internal architecture only asks about the text of the pressed button. So if you press “Back” in a Scene the scene is asked what to do with a “Back”. This way you can carry over Buttons to situations where you don’t have that Button.

Also you can quickly change Game Options without being in the Options Menu.



Assets

Theme Interpretation

A Feverdream can constantly change between a good dream and a nightmare. Noise heavy shaders are nightmares and colorful child drawings represent good dreams.

Design

This is primarily decided by the one “Child Drawing” Art style I am capable of.

Due to no skills in Audio & Music the Music Assets will be used and the Sounds created by voice recording.

For the nightmare aspects, a menacing dark ambience soundtrack is used. For the rest cozy childish melodies. Each language has its own music.

Development Plan

Never really used Godot before. You can't plan with learning speed, so I don't.

: Day Job Limits my Game Jam Time

: Nothing but socializing limits my Game Jam Time

Date	Plan	What happened
17.07 	Ideas	Ideas
18.07 	Detailed plan and Working Godot	Plan everything, Painting some Assets
19.07 	Everything	Painting Assets, Trigger Warning Scene, more Planning
20.07 	Everything	Scene Management; Memories; Ubiscene
21.07 	Everything	Cat Sign Language; Physic <-> Memory interaction
22.07 	Everything	Refactor; Breakables; Dialog System
23.07 	Everything	Dialogs
24.07 	Everything	Dialogs
25.07 	Everything	Actual Game
26.07 	Polish	Actual Game

27.07	No Work	Missing Dialogs; Presentation & Submission; Polish; Music
28.07	Polish	Sound Effects; Polish
29.07	Polish	Solution
30.07	Submit & Itch Side	Solution
31.07	No Work	

Solution

This solution serves two purposes:

- A solution to the game
- learn a bit about the design decisions

Game starts in the language “Gibberish”. Nothing is readable. The player should use their expectation of game menus to find the options menu and set the language to something readable.

Step1: Press the only Button available.



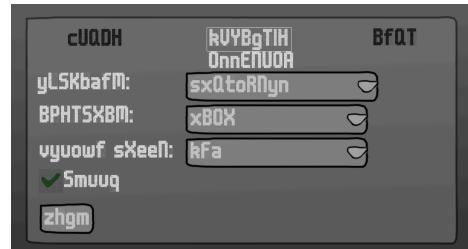
The Options menu is usually located at the lower half of the main menu. If made a wrong choice left bottom a (indecipherable) back button brings the player back and he can try again.

Step2: Press the second last Button (IdJtmC0 in this Screenshot)



The Option menu is recognizable by many different options. The language selection is usually found in a combo box. There is no possible way to tell which of the three, but puzzle fairness suggests first.

Step3: Change the first combobox to the first setting



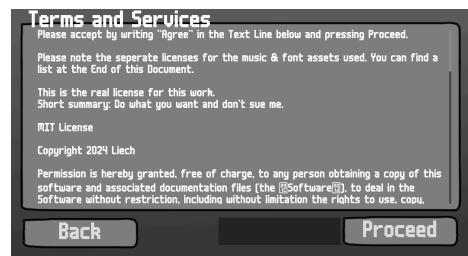
The Player could arbitrarily choose “UwU”, “Cat Sign Language” or “English”. This is a vantage point where the player should see what is possible and what “areas” could be explored.
The main motivation of course is to play the actual game to find out how to win.

Step3: Press Back and then Start Game



A “Terms and Services” page appears. This page caters two things:

- Stop the Player entering the game while in gibberish language
- Mock AAA games that just won't let you play
- the first plan it was planned that two additional scenes are after that.
 - One “Change your brightness until you don't see the fish” scene, where the fish refuses to be dark and mocks you.
 - One Character Editor where you have to choose a cool edgelord name (xXShadoowXx). But the edgelord game theme was dropped.



Step4: Write Agree in the center bottom LineEdit

The actual game starts, but it looks unplayable. The FPS Counter shows wild negative numbers. But at a rate that shows the actual FPS are much higher. This is a situation that has happened to virtually every pc player. The solution is of course to lower the graphics setting.

Step5: Observe the FPS is negative. It is not the real fps.

Step6: Lower the Graphics in the Options to “Low”



The Graphic Setting “Potato” changes all Buttons to Potatos. It has no further effect.



Step7: Go back to the Game and observe V-Sync is displacing you



Another problem players often face are more abstruse graphic options like V-Sync. Normally a monitor <-> frame buffer synchronization issue causes the screen to split in a fast repeating vertical movement. In this game it is real and can replace you. To fix it games allow switching on V-Sync, which sometimes causes performance issues.

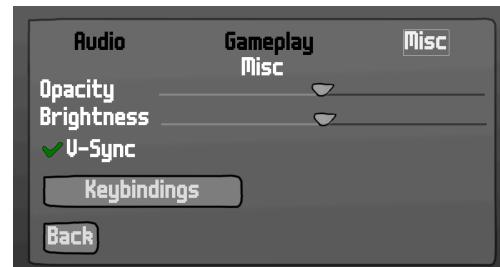
Step8: Set V-Sync in Misc menu on



You can now walk with A and D left and right. Going right a how to jump hint appears. You have to press the “None” key. This indicates bad keymapping and happens all the time when people make weak console ports. Luckily this game offers a keybindings menu.

Step9: Observe the “Press ‘None’ to jump tutorial.

Step10: Go to Keybindings in Misc



Step11: Observe “the door is locked”



The message is quite strange and indicates that there must be some other way. The “club” door might guide you to the “UwU” language setting, which sets you into a japesque highschool and the misc section is referred by some buttons as “Club rooms”

Step12: Change language to uwu

The Option Dialog speed is of course the speed in which the dialog tries to run away. Just a silly joke.

Step13: Change Dialog Speed to Off to be able to use the dialog



This is an opportunity to explore a little bit. The visual-novel dialogs are all a bit silly and shallow, but hopefully it provides a little bit of atmosphere. First time writing this stuff.

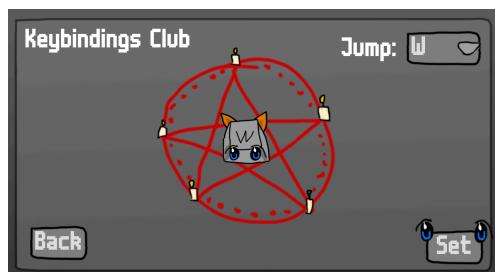
Step14: Go to keybindings and set any key for jump



The keybinding club in the keybinding room is of course binding keys to the mortal plane of existence. Keys are just demon buttons. But the nice thing is, that you as the user can break the fourth wall and show the summoned demon that you are his master.

Step15: the key wants you to proof that you are the user playing this

Step16: Press the physical key you chosen at least 3 times to prove it



Now that the key is set you can go back to the game and finally jump. The next thing is a Sign stating "Go Right" in the way. This is referencing those video games that have a hard time letting you puzzle(Tomb Raider, God of War). But ok. Its just the next silly blockade you can overcome with checking of a button. Now that the "mechanic" is overused some new puzzles are necessary.

Step17: Go back to the game and realize that there is a hint in the way

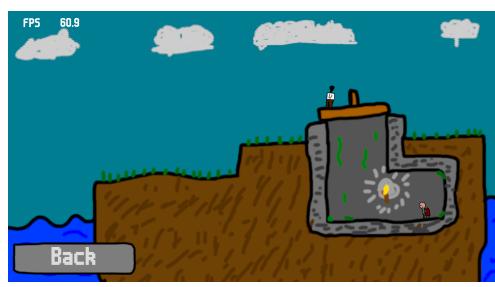
Step18: Disable Hints



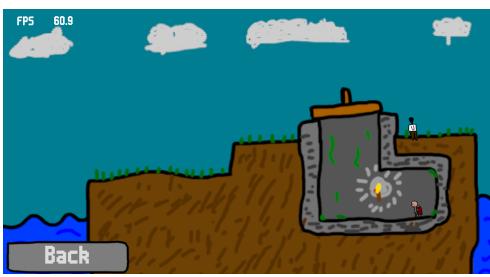
Now there is no way inside the well, where an old man stands. Earlier we learned the V-Sync is able to teleport the character. This can be used to get inside.

Either you can only stay for a short amount of time in the game with V-Sync off or you take the V-Sync button with you with the memory feature (not used yet)

Step19: Observe there is a well you want to enter but you can't



Step20: Stand right to the well and use VSync to glitch into the well



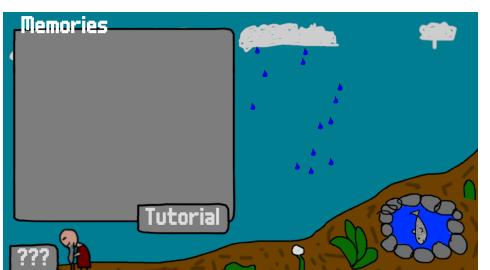
The old man offers you a Mac Guffin object, but he has forgotten to provide you with your possible answers. Usually one self decides what are possible answer options, but game logic is different. Often your desired lines are not implemented.

Step21: The Old Man wants you to say yes, but there is no button for it



This is, without the right knowledge a dead end. You should explore different parts of “the world”. Eventually you will land in the memories section, which servers as a tutorial for the needed skill. This part is not necessary to win, but introduces

Step22: Go to main menu/memories and learn how to make memories



To make sure you learn how to use the memory mechanic the back button is locked. Like in good old metroid prime when you get something new, you have to use it to get out.

Step23: Observe the back button is missing



Drag a Rectangle like you would mark an area in windows explorer. Then press Ctrl+C to copy it. With Ctrl+V you can add as many copies as you like.

Step24: open the tutorial screen



Step28: Press the back Button when you are not in any menu



Now you learned to make a memory. This can be used to get a yes button for the old man.

Step29: go to Start Game, press back

Step30: make a memory of the Yes Button.



Step31: talk to the old man

Step32: In the old man dialog paste your yes memory and press yes



	
	
Step33: go to the “Roll Credits and Win Motor”. It requires the Button “Start”	
Step34: Change Language to Cat Sign Language	
Step35: Go to main menu Step36: toss down the Start Game Button. It breaks down to Start and Game Step37: Make a Memory of the start button	

Step38: talk to the motor again
Step39: Paste the start button memory
Step40: press start



Step41: You finished the game

