Reasoning with a Fever Dream

Design Document

Liech 2024 – Pirate Software Game Jam

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# Spoiler Warning

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Spoiler Warning

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

Introduction

# Game Summary Pitch

This Game is a Menu based Puzzle game leaning into wild logical leaps. There is a real Game, but the challenge is to configure it correctly so it is possible to play.

# Inspiration

#### Modern AAA Game Menus

Menus of “modern” games like Crysis, Bioshock and Cyberpunk are complicated intricate puzzles. Playing a AAA Game usually happens in 4 Steps, where each takes one Day:

* Download
* Watch Starting Cutscenes
* Configure the Game playable on my Potato
* Play the Game

This Game Focuses on Day 3.

The existence of Post-Modern Live Service Game Menus, that are solely designed to confuse people towards the Microtransaction Shop are also a thing, but an entirely different Fever dream that needs no parody.

#### 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 to play 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.

##### *Gamechanger*

Gameshow where the rules changing per episode and they are rarely explained completely. Often a simple game has more rules than explained.

Example: It starts as a simple quiz show with impossible hard questions. The contestants do not know that the correctness of the answer is solely based on a low heart frequency. In the second half the rule is explained, and the questions are accompanied with e.g. confronting a tarantula.

# 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.

It should be a short 10 Minute experience, where missing Knowledge is the only obstacle.

Puzzle Games that use obscure logic are hard to pull of 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 and do not care. In a finished & priced product this wouldn’t be an issue.

# Platform

The game is developed to be released on itch.io on a Web Browser.

Keyboard and Mouse are required.

# Development Software

* Godot
* Gimp - Art
* Audacity – Audio Recording
* LMMS – Audio Postprocessing

# Genre

* Puzzle
* Point & Click (Adventure)
* Singleplayer

# Target Audience

The idea of a puzzle idea, that hide its game mechanics 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.

Concept

## Gameplay overview

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

The tasks are not straightforward.

Examples:

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

# Theme Interpretation

Alchemy and Shadow

One association that sticked is “Reasoning with a Fever Dream”.

Alchemy is the way of figuring out what the rules of the world are. But it is never a totally new World with new Mechanics. To discover new ways, you have to actively unlearn the ways you were taught. This can be evoked by taking a concept a Player is familiar in (Main Menus) and applying a new layer of reasoning.

Shadow is used as Theme & Feeling for the Game. A place where you should not be, and things are slightly off. Not in a real Horror kind of way, but just in a way that it shakes you with fear that the thought “I should romance the Back Button” is an entirely reasonable one.

# Primary Mechanics

This game relies heavily on one offs like the “Missing V-Sync is real in the game. The player falls to death because it. Turning it on helps.”. Everything could be a mechanic, but the following ones are heavily used.

##### Changing Localization

The Menu behaves different for different cultures.

Examples:

* Buttons that are not willing to react in English can be dated in UwU
* In Cat Sign Language Buttons are not pressed but tossed down to the ground. Broken Buttons may change the meaning “Activate for 20€” becomes “Activate” and “for 20€

#### Snap

It is popular to allow the user to make Screenshots and save them later. To make this more accessible you can just use Strg C + Strg V. Somehow the Buttons inside the Pictures are still working and affect the current Menu.

Changing the Language where you should not be able to this way is a very important mechanism.

#### Start Game

The “Game” is the primary way for the player to understand what he is supposed to do. Leading through character creation, graphic glitches etc.

Assets

#### Theme Interpretation

The non meta game is designed to be very attractive to people with Character names like “\_xXShadowChadXx\_”. It will contain some “Dark Arts” Themes and is maybe a MMO.

The Soundtrack contain slow erratic and reverb heavy athmosphere. In different localizations this also changes. E.g. Cat Sign Language makes use of muffled cat noises and UwU is Camellia inspired hyper Garbage Trash.

Alchemy is not used for the Assets.

#### Design

Different “Localizations” require a lot of assets.

There is no skilled person in this 1 Person team to make them.

They will be extra low quality.

We aim for the following:

* 2 Minutes Gimp Drawings with Black Outlines
* Recorded Human Noises with LMMS Filters
* Erratic LMMS Soundscapes with too much Reverb to hide any kind of rhythmlessnes.

Development Plan

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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Plan | What happened |
| 17.07 💼 | Ideas | Ideas |
| 18.07 💼 | Detailed plan and Working Godot | GameScenePlan.txt |
| 19.07 💼 | Everything |  |
| 20.07 🏖️ | Everything |  |
| 21.07 🏖️ | Everything |  |
| 22.07 💼 | Everything |  |
| 23.07 💼 | Everything |  |
| 24.07 💼 | Everything |  |
| 25.07 💼 | Everything |  |
| 26.07 💼 | Polish |  |
| 27.07 ❌ | No Work |  |
| 28.07 🏖️ | Polish |  |
| 29.07 💼 | Polish |  |
| 30.07 💼 | Submit & Itch Side |  |
| 31.07 ❌ | No Work |  |