

**Vincent:** A genius, kind scientist from the '80s who did research in artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Creator of Neon City. Originally created NC with the intent to see if uploading human consciousness to a computer was possible in order to create an alternative to death. His daughter was terminally ill, which motivated him externally to complete Neon City before she died so he could upload her consciousness to it. In order to get funding, fast, he needed to demonstrate the value of his innovation to investors. He built simple humanoid artificial intelligence to roam the empty cities he created within the world, so as to better demonstrate his vision. He even built a semi-intelligent robot assistant, who he had trouble naming. He was quickly granted funding in exchange for ownership rights by GreenShield Health Incorporated. Although Vincent made good progress, he kept needing more and more funding, so eventually, the corporation cut its losses and scrapped the project. They still retained the rights to Neon City and owned all of the equipment Vincent used to develop it. Desperate to save his daughter, Vincent stole millions of dollars worth of equipment and technology and built a laboratory in his basement where he could continue his efforts. Then, out of nowhere, a complication occurred with his daughter's illness, giving her weeks, if not days, to live. Although the technology to upload human consciousness to Neon City seemed to be functional, it had not yet been tested—still, Vincent had no other options. On the day that his daughter was supposed to die, he instead uploaded her consciousness to Neon City. Vincent got his daughter's consciousness into the program, but her memories disappeared, and something strange happened to the AI...

**AI Citizens:** Originally nothing more than humanoid code meant for aesthetic purposes, the AI became something more when Vincent uploaded his daughter to their world. The storage space and computing power of Vincent's 1980s supercomputers weren't enough to contain all of his daughter's data. Her memories washed through the AI's code. After experiencing humanity through her memories, the millions of AI citizens gained individuality, emotions, and their own consciousness. They refer to the day they received this spark of humanity as 'The Awakening,' and are very grateful to Vincent and his daughter for giving them life. As a side effect of being quasi-human, though, the citizens found themselves having wants, and needs. Unfortunately for them, they had nowhere to live. Vincent saw what happened and tried rebuilding the cities, but he didn't know anything about city planning or building design, and he died before he could finish. The residents grew increasingly unhappy. The AI were new to consciousness and didn't understand how to deal with their newfound negative emotions. They started to slowly started to lose their spark, becoming ghosts of their former code that roamed the empty wasteland where Neon City once stood, disappearing from the code entirely after a long enough period of time. Although the AI stayed eternally young, Vincent knew he wouldn't live much longer, so he tasked his robot assistant with running Neon City secretly through a small backchannel within [health company's] servers, hoping that one day, somebody would find his life's work and save the AI within it.

**V1-0-L3T:** Vincent's robot assistant, tasked with keeping Neon City alive for its next architect. She is quirky and helpful, she likes to have fun, and she is filled with a deep sense of longing for emotion. She teaches the player how to build and updates them on the AI's feelings. Is fond of Vincent. She is jealous of the AI citizens for having human consciousness, but feels a sense of responsibility towards them and the mission Vincent gave her. The player discovers that she

seems to have spotty memories of the outside world, somehow. It is revealed that she is what remains of Violet's consciousness, and if the player performs well in the game, she is given the opportunity to live her own life in Neon City.

### **Setup**

It is the current day and age. A large healthcare corporation just filed for bankruptcy. You turn on your headset and find a cool game called Neon City on the Oculus store uploaded by people who went data mining through old [big health company] projects. A very old bootup process happens, and you're placed in a wireframe, vaporwave-esque environment. There is a commercial (funded by a large health corporation) introducing Neon City as a virtual metropolis, a safe haven for those whose physical bodies fail them. The narrator names themselves: Dr. Vincent. A grand virtual metropolis is shown. Then, the commercial stops, and the player is in front of the very virtual metropolis they just saw, only—the buildings are destroyed and dilapidated. Entire lots are empty. They are given a small-scale model of this city that they can manipulate to modify the actual city. You, the discoverer of this hidden world, are tasked with building the city to save its AI residents from losing what makes them human.

### *Iteration 2*

#### **Key Differences:**

The citizens are not AI—they are real people

Vincent is a benevolent millionaire genius who invented Neon City with his terminally ill wife. Vincent and wife tried testing consciousness upload with volunteers first, then brought it to the public for people with terminal illnesses to upload. Millions of people uploaded successfully, and the city was there for them, but there were more people than Vincent and his wife could make cities for.

Wife refused to upload herself until everyone else was taken care of, ended up dying before getting the chance

In denial, Vincent tried to upload her anyways. The system couldn't figure out how to bring a dead person into Neon City. It didn't work. Vincent couldn't bear to continue the work without his dear wife, so he gave up on the project (or became so sad that he fell ill) and left the citizens to fend for themselves.

#### **Key Conflict:**

Overpopulation

Bad building causes citizens to lose their spark

Solution:

Happy citizens get their spark back

Citizens with sparks can share it with others

More Ghost Citizens will be attracted to the happy ones, populating the city

### *Iteration 3*

#### **Key Differences:**

Backstory focuses more on the Cold War

Robot assistant still self-aware, still somehow has memories of the outside world—in this version, though, Vincent created a copy of his own consciousness rather than a family member's

Vincent is a government scientist researching realistic war simulation and strategizing through the use of machine learning. In the process, he accidentally invented true artificial intelligence--the soldiers he created in the simulation became self aware! (Still have needs, wants, etc. just like in the previous iteration)

Because Vincent originally built a war simulation, there are millions of soldiers who became self-aware. This leads to mass overpopulation.

Destruction in city is a result of malicious Russian code aimed at subverting US technology.

Entire program shut down and frozen to stop code from killing AI's

When discovered and opened on Oculus, the program unfroze--now it's up to the player to make new cities for relocation--otherwise, the AI's face losing their spark/deleting themselves out of unhappiness

#### **Antagonist**

Malicious virus designed to destroy any code it touches. It does not discern friend from foe, or AI from building—it just destroys. It can be isolated, but first we need to relocate the AI, and to do that, we need to create cities for them to live in.

Alternatively, the virus was already isolated, and the AI were left without a place to live, leading to them losing their spark and slowly disappearing.