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## A Day in the Life of Sam & Max: A Point & Click Adventure Game

### **Abstract**

Point and click adventure games have existed since the dawn of console gaming. Whether it's from franchises that have transcended time like Monkey Island or classics like Grim Fandango, the genre never ceases to amuse audiences and will be around for many years to come. While there certainly aren't as many as there were back in the day, these types of games are still some of my favorites and that is why I would like to emulate them for my seminar project. I would like to create my own point and click adventure in the same style as the Sam & Max or Monkey Island games. Essentially the player traverses a world of locations and talks to a host of colorful characters in order to solve puzzles that will progress the story. The player will collect items that will be useful to them later but they'll have to use their critical thinking skills in order to know where. To be more specific, I wish to create a small outing for Steve Purcell's characters, Sam & Max. I will gain insight from such cites as "An overview of genre history" (Adventure Gamers) to help me broaden my horizon in how the final product will appear. Style and character are, in my opinion, the keystone to making a successful one of these games. That is why mine will be humorous and charming, in order to help players feel more at home and comfortable.

## Introduction

Before we discuss my game, let's first dive into more detail about the genre itself. The point and click adventure game is a type of puzzle solving story oriented quest that has players thinking of creative ways to solve their problems as well as observation skills to notice what to collect and where to use it. One of the leading companies in making games of this type was one known as *LucasArts*, of course founded by the well known George Lucas. They were one of gaming's most iconic game companies that helped define the genre as we know it today. Some of their games are still available today and being remastered, such as *Sam & Max: Hit the Road*, *Grim Fandango*, *Day of the Tentacle*, etc. Each one charming and very humorous. It was sadly bought and shut down by Disney in 2013, leaving a big hole in the hearts of fans everywhere (Acuna). However, they were not the only ones creating those types of games. Several studios have ownership of iconic titles like *Broken Age*, *The Longest Journey*, and so on.

It is not a requirement to make these games humorous as it is entirely up to the developers. Several of the old *LucasArts* employees founded *TellTale Games* which specialized in point and click adventures both funny and dramatic. For example, a game that I consider to be their magnum opus is *The Wolf Among Us*, a game adaptation of the *Fables* comics. This was a murder mystery set Fabletown, a town that harbors both ordinary humans and fairytale characters. It was dramatic, exciting, well written and left a huge impact despite having no sequels like the *Walking Dead* games. This genre is very broad and has the breathing room to be whatever the creator wishes it to be. Even *TellTale* went bankrupt and was forced to shut down and as many people don't know, they were revived and have re-announced some formerly cancelled games such as *The Wolf Among Us Season 2*. All in all this genre is very sacred to the

gaming community and to me and I hope I can do it justice by honoring it as well as one of my favorite franchises, Sam & Max.

## Development

In order to begin the development process, I first had to create all the initial elements that would be implemented into the game. Starting off with the script, which was surprisingly difficult. I had to come up with a central goal in the game along with all the little steps and puzzles in order to achieve it. I spent a week on this ordeal, devising characters, locations, writing all the dialogue options, etc. This was also coupled by gathering all the images necessary for the game to function. What one must remember before playing is I am not an artist, therefore I just gathered images online and edited them to fit my needs.

After I had the foundation laid out, I needed to put the pieces together and find out how the player would traverse the world and interact with people and objects. Essentially the general roadmap for the game was formed. This process was followed by me designing the GUI and laying out each dialogue option and event that would arise from each item. Some of the dialogue is either a direct quote from other Sam & Max games or an original joke written by yours truly. Keep in mind, in total this sums up to 235 textboxes that I had to create and then convert into bitmaps so you better appreciate the humor in this game.

Here is the schedule for the development process:

February 8 - February 12	Script writing/ puzzle design 3 hrs/day
February 15 - February 19	Map out world and environment 3hrs/day
February 22 - February 26	GUI Design 3 hrs/day
March 1 - March 5	GUI Design 3 hrs/day
March 8 - March 12	Coding software 3 hrs/day
March 15 - March 19	Coding software 3 hrs/day

March 22 - March 26	Coding software 3 hrs/day
March 29 - April 2	Coding software 3 hrs/day
April 5 - April 9	Coding software 3 hrs/day
April 12 - April 13	Final touches/Completion

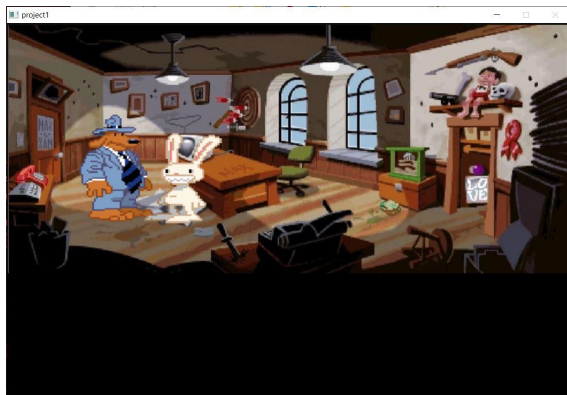
The rest of the time on this schedule was dedicated to the coding process of the game which I will now describe in more detail.

## Game Design

Similar to any point & click adventure game, in my game you have to traverse a map of interesting locations and talk to a host of humorous characters to get to your objective. Over the course of this essay I will break down just how each room was created as well as describe what must be done to traverse the game. Think of this as a developer diary/walkthrough

### Office

The first location in the game would be their office, the actual first location in every Sam & Max game (excluding *Devil's Playhouse*). So what one does is move the cursor to whatever object is interactable in the room. I achieved this by saying that whenever the mouse is clicked within a certain x or y range on the screen an event will occur. The empty black section at the bottom of the screen is your inventory, where items you collect are stored for later usage.



In the beginning of the game all that can be done is first enjoying the opening set of dialogue boxes to set the story in motion. You receive a call from the commissioner saying that a robbery has occurred at the museum. You continue through the dialogue boxes by clicking the little next option at the bottom right (only appears in game as it was coded separately). The bitmap keeps changing to different text boxes every time you hit “Next->”.



One of the interactable items in the room is your phone. Selecting it will prompt this screen.



By employing the same methods I had used earlier, you can select buttons on the phone to make calls, use the center button to enter the number. The “Go Back” button is if you wish to return to the office screen. At the beginning of the game, this is useless, but by selecting it you know it is a mechanic in the game and will be useful later. There is a variable set currently to zero and later in the game it will change to one to allow a function to be accessible. Several items are like this, where you collect them without knowing their use yet till you progress further. Some items you

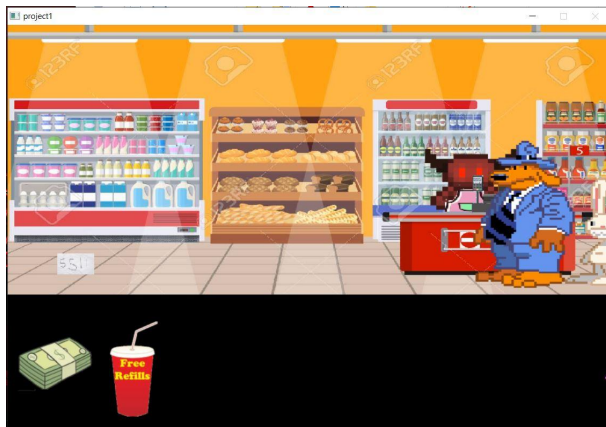
find early on may not even be useful till the end of the game. When you select the door option in the room, you will be shown options to go to or “Nevermind” to stay. So far, you only have two options: “Outside” and “Museum”. The “stretchblit()” function controlling the background has the main bmp variable as \*area. Whenever you change a new location, \*area will equal a new value, as will the value of “scr” which is controlling all the functions in the specific locations by encasing them in if statements.

### Outside



Outside the store, you are greeted with the exterior of Doom Mart. If you select the trash can, you will open it and two items appear inside: a Drinkey’s cup and wad of cash. I used if statements where if certain events were activated new pictures would replace old ones. Interact with the items to add them to your inventory. A separate chunk of code specifically for inventory items makes it so when you activate an item’s variable, it will now appear in your lower inventory and when selected will replace the cursor. When added it is no longer in the area to get.

## Doom Mart



Upon entering the store, you may notice a few out of place items. For example the note on the floor. Interact with this item to store it in your inventory for later. Some items may not be so obvious to find, for example you might notice a muffin display on the shelves. If you select it, you will get a muffin in your inventory. Now you clearly notice the demon behind the counter, interact with him to talk to him. Now is your first experience with the dialogue tree.



You have a few dialogue options to select and explore in order to gain information. Keep in mind that some options may unlock other things in the game such as other dialogue options with different characters and even locations to go to. Through talking to Zeldron, you learn there is a new item in stock. If you select the wad of cash, the cursor will now become it, in this state select Zeldron to further the story as he will greet you with the new item, however the cash is no

longer in your inventory. You can try different combinations of combining items with objects to see if they work. You can even attempt to combine them with other inventory items.

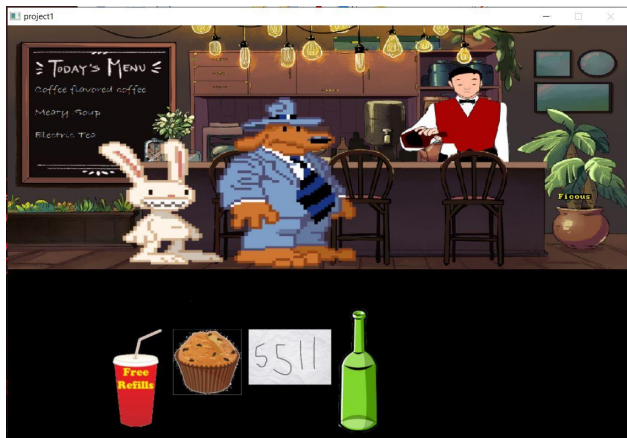
### Museum



Now that you have reached the museum, you can talk to two characters: Janice the tour guide and Murray the skull. If you talk to Murray, he will reveal the thief was Jimmy Two Teeth, an acquaintance of yours. Learning this unlocks new dialogue options with other characters to learn more information by changing a variable once set to zero to one. For this particular piece of info, go back to Doom Mart and ask Zeldron, he will reveal the next location. When the “locations” variable value continues to climb, more areas will be available. Also keep in mind that at the end of the game when you have retrieved the jewel, return here and put it on the pedestal to complete the game.

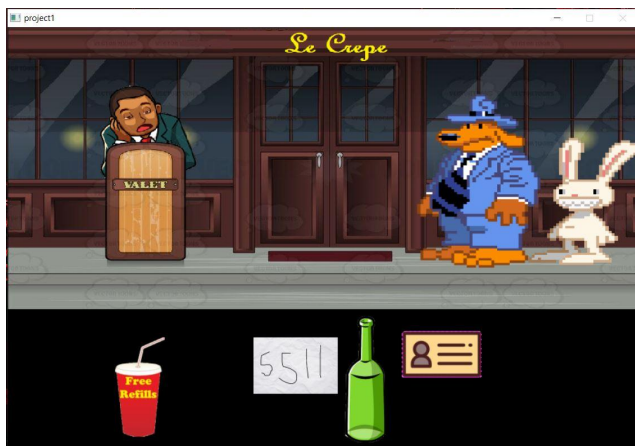


## Drinkey's



Now that you've reached the bar, Drinkey's, you need to interact with Chuck the bartender. Right now he has only one dialogue option, to ask if knows Jimmy or Jeff. This will unlock the location of the restaurant. Later you need to get a reservation card from him and a new dialogue option will be unlocked to ask him for it. He says he will only give it to you if you get him something to eat. Select the muffin from your inventory and give it to him. The muffin is no longer in your inventory but the reservation card is.

## Le Crepe (outside)



After initially unlocking this area, you may notice you cannot interact with the door. That is because it is unavailable until you complete some puzzles. The initial one present is getting a

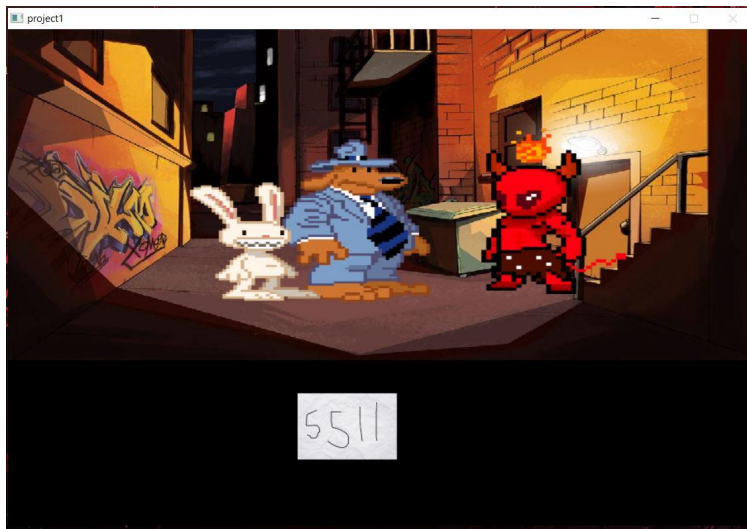
reservation card, which you learn from talking to Dave. This conversation unlocks a dialogue option for Chuck at the diner. Once you get the card, select it and hand it to him. You can now enter the restaurant.

### Le Crepe (inside)



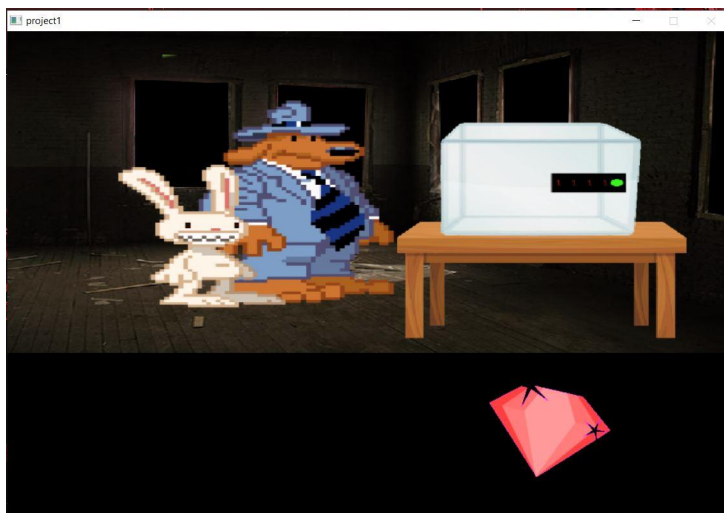
You've finally found Jimmy two teeth, you of course first interact with him to question him on the location of the jewel. He obviously will refuse to cooperate, however he will let slip that he's thirsty as he ordered a drink and has not received it. This is where your critical thinking skills come into play. You may remember that the cup you currently have in your inventory was from Drinke's, a place you know Jimmy enjoys. However, the cup is empty. What do you do now? You still have a bottle of vodka that operates as a truth serum. Combine the cup with the vodka. The bottle will disappear because you poured it into the cup. Give the cup to Jimmy and he will unwillingly tell you where the alley the jewel is being kept in is.

## Alley

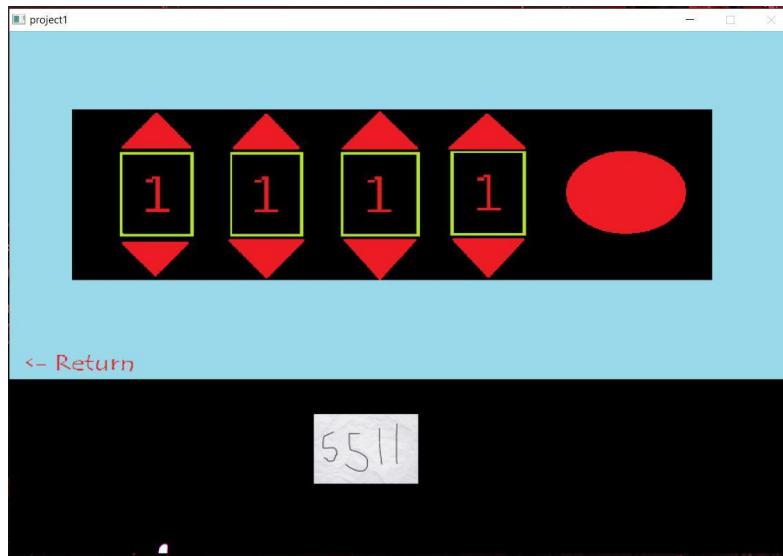


You have arrived at the Alley way the Jewel is in but Jeff is blocking the door to the storage room. Interact with him and he will of course refuse to allow you into the room. He will however give you his phone number. You may remember that the phone in your office shows a screen to make calls if you interact with it. Type in his number and select the call button. You will convince him to let you in and when you return to this location he is gone and you can now enter the room.

## Storage Room



You have reached the storage room, the last location in the game. Here you will notice a case with the jewel in it but it is inaccessible. You can select the keypad to input the code to open it. The code is on the note you found earlier in the game. Use it on the keypad to change it to the correct code sequence. Then hit the “try” button. The case is now open and you have claimed the jewel. As stated earlier, return the museum and place it on the pedestal to complete the game.



## Conclusion

The genre of point and click games is one whose popularity has wavered back and forth. When they first began, they were everywhere, many companies were trying their hands at making their own to see how it would play out. Some were successful, some were not, but whatever happened we can all agree that is a genre like no other that has stood the test of time in terms of memorability, likability and playability. While not nearly as much are being made today, it is still a well known staple of gaming that I don't see fading anytime soon. I highly recommend lesser known titles such as *A Journey Down*, *Thimbleweed Park*, and *A Vampyre Story*. They will make you laugh, think and even care in creative ways you can't get anywhere else. I guarantee it.

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