

UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

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TASK: Exam game reflection

DUE DATE: 25 June 2021

GROUP: 5

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work to pretend that i is one's own.
2. I have used author date convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to and quotation in this essay from the work or works of other people has been acknowledged through citation and reference.
3. This essay is my own.
4. I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own.
5. I have done the word processing and formatting of this assignment myself, I understand that the correct formatting is part of the mark for this assignment and that it is therefore wrong for another person to do it for me.

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Date: 06/23/2021

Unsigned submissions will not be marked.

Introduction

With complete freedom over what we were allowed to conceptualise as a group, my group, Group 5, created the concept of Hell Crimes – A 2D point and click mystery solving game, set in Hell. This essay will critically evaluate the intentions laid out at the start, the entire process of making the prototype, and a reflection and retrospect of the whole development.

My aim is to challenge my writing abilities by making the narrative of the game the most focal point. The dialogue and descriptions, as well as puzzle design, will take centre stage, with the mechanics acting as utilities to enforce and emphasize the detailed storyline.

Intention

1) Initial Project Plan and presentation

The group wished to have an engaging and vast game world, with more than just text on a screen, but attractive and intriguing art assets and character designs. The narrative would play the heaviest role in engaging the player, with a limited amount of mechanics. The initial project plan had a production total time of 27 days, allowing for far more features to be implemented. This would greatly differ from the time span given for this exam production. Plans for elements such as animations, audio enhancements and more nuanced mechanics were laid out and scheduled appropriately, as the assignment did not need us to produce a prototype.

2) Feedback from live presentation

After my group pitched our initial game concept on 3 June, we received helpful feedback that would aid us in the design process. Much of it was pointers and warnings to remember while creating the prototype. Planning was highlighted as very important, and the lecturers emphasized that managing asset creation, set design, puzzle planning and overall story and narrative should consistently be monitored. They suggested making a list of interactable items, and that every item should have a purpose that serves in aiding the player to figure out the puzzles or flesh out the narrative, or both. Features such as the camera movement, click timer and combination systems were warned of being quite complex and possibly unnecessary.

3) Overscoped elements

It was suggested to remove the tutorial in order to put as much detail into the actual proposed level. Since the premise of point and click games is to merely click and read things in the scene, a tutorial would feel rather barren as there wouldn't be much to teach the player. Removing the camera movement would also save time, as many point and click games do not have this feature

and instead opt to clutter the single frame to increase the challenge. In a personal consultation, I was told that the click limiting mechanic could also be removed as it would require many iterations and multiple different playtesters.

Process

1) Revising the project plan

The feedback was able to point us in the right direction to assure we could get a working prototype out in time. Appendix A shows all the additions and removals from the task breakdown, as well as the rest of the project plan. I decided to cut down on unnecessary mechanics to prioritize narrative development, as I personally struggle more with coding and thus would spend far more time battling with it.

I also chose to not restrict the player through a click limit, as I would prefer to allow natural engagement with the world and environment, instead of worrying about how much information one could consume before running out of clicks. The camera movement was removed and replaced by an interactable inventory, which the player could engage with and learn more about their items. This would enforce the interactable narrative as well as giving extra guidance.

Since the level concept art in our presentation was drawn by me, I planned to use this as my final concept. This meant that due to the chaotic and cluttered nature of it, UI and inventory features would have to be very minimal and communicate effectively. This led to me cutting out the combination of items feature, to focus on each item in the room having a purpose instead of worrying about their subsequent usage if picked up.

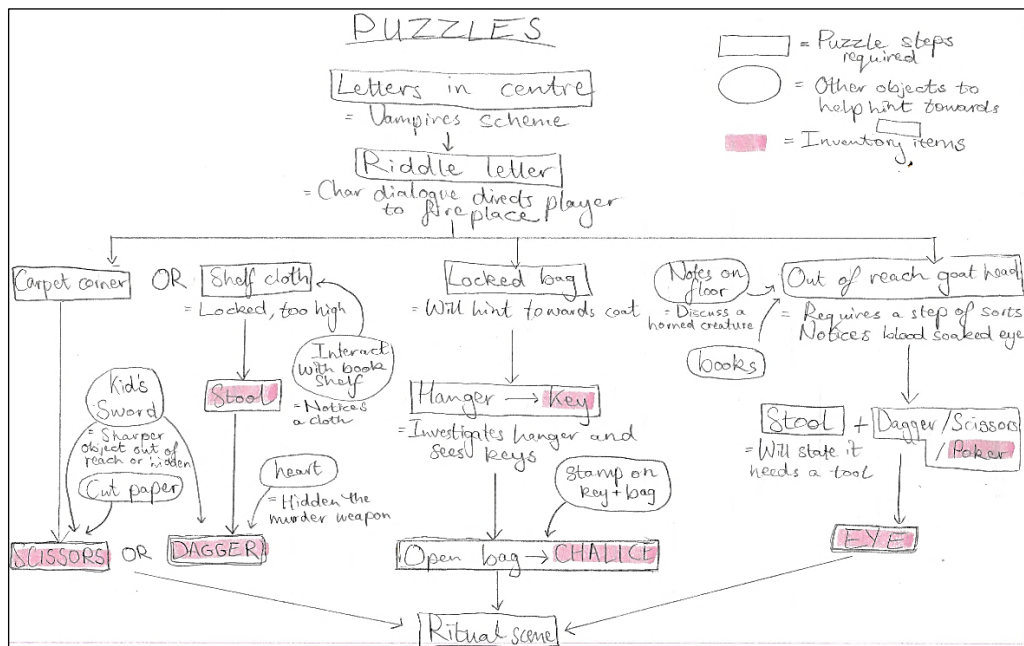
2) Art Assets

The decision to do all the art first before having a concrete and finalised narrative and puzzle plan caused an inconvenience during the following planning as all the fixed art elements caused them to need to be integrated. There were not that many of these items, however, and elements can still be removed and repositioned, but in hindsight having a clear layout of what each item's purpose and utility was would have saved irritations that would occur later.

The art style was chosen to be solid linework and no colour, as it felt like the designs communicated effectively enough, and the colouring process would take a significant amount of time. Colour design also could fundamentally change the way a player reads the scene. The black and white aesthetic also harkened back to our presentation's Noir theme and references, which played out nicely when designing Dick Angel's character design.

3) Puzzle diagram

I created this flowchart to show the order of puzzle events and their outcomes. This aided me greatly in visualising dialogue and seeing how the if statements would have to work in coding. The diagram aids in narrative flow and seeing how many elements hint and help the player.



It also aptly shows all the interactable items, almost listed as a checklist here, which I also used to make sure I did not miss any. This diagram does show that there is a linear progression from letters to riddle and then all the other items, but this was not the case in the final product, as players are actually able to click any item before either of those. I made it so that the introduction dialogue heavily encouraged the player to go to the letters first, as well as a glowing box highlighting them. After reading them, the riddle is also given a fainter glow.

4) Narrative design

The initial project plan had a good foundation to work upon when constructing my narrative. With my understanding of how I was planning to code the dialogue and item interactions, I got to making a script for all the interactions available, and this led to the creation of Appendix B. This process took the longest to complete, with constant iterating of the sentences as I wished to really communicate the arrogant and crude traits of Dick into the mundane observations of the environment, as well as including world-building.

Fitting a narrative storyline into the point and click format can be seen as cramming a vast alternate reality into a small container, that being the point and click genre. This restriction posed a significant challenge to my writing skills. The way I aimed to achieve this constant engagement was by injecting humor into a lot of Dick's observations. I made his lines dry and witty, short and to-the-point, while using catchy 1900s New Yorker slang. I did research into lines from Jack Sparrow and interpretations of Sherlock Holmes to shape him. An example of this is the interaction with the singed painting where I attempted to make him come across as apathetic and self-indulging. *"They burnt a hole right through her left eye and parts of her face. It smells like... Luckies? Hey, that's my favourite ciggies! I could really go for a drag right now... Oh, sorry. That was insensitive of me... Smoking kills. kids."* (Appendix B). In the playtesting this was noticed, as Alexis Byrd states that she did not like Dick as a character

because "...I have a personal prejudice against smoking and he made a joke about it", (Appendix C) showing the impact of the writing on player opinions.

Furthermore, I also aimed to bring character to the lifestyle of the vampires, once again through expositional pieces of dialogue. A line about the dagger such as "*Wow, this baddie is still wet with blood. Looks like there are lick marks on the blade as well, fuckin vampires, I tell you...*" (Appendix B) contains humour while also building an image of the vampires within the player. The bookshelf allowed for the player to better understand the dynamic between the two factions, while also giving a hint towards the goat eye; enabling this interaction to mean more than an 'exposition dump' to the player. The letters and riddle use Victorian or Shakespearean style language, with the set design also attempting to mirror elements of this time period.

5) Playtesting

For a game heavily reliant on player engagement to fully grasp its core content, playtesting was an invaluable process in making sure that this occurred. Appendix C contains results from 8 varying individuals. The main questions posed were to gather if the narrative was effective at engaging players, how they handled Dick's personality, and the language usage in hints and the riddles. With around two playtesters per iteration, I was able to identify any common patterns, and update the game before handing it to a new batch of playtesters. It was difficult to do iterative playtesting as once a player had played the game, they knew the answers and thus replaying it was not as interesting. I had to find new playtesters for each new iteration. This iteration process greatly helped in ensuring that my game was improving throughout the development process, and can be seen as from iteration 1 to 2 where I added "Dick: " as clarification in the NPC interactions, as suggested by playtesters #3 and #4. This did remove the dialogue confusion for the future playtesters. The results will be discussed further in the reflection section.

Reflection

1) Playtesting results

The narrative efforts seemed to be appreciated by all playtesters, as everyone seemed to feel engaged in the story. It was interesting to see how most people disliked Dick, but this did not come as a surprise. I created him to be dislikeable at the start, and if production of Hell Crimes continues, I aim to make him develop into a type of anti-hero, like Jack Sparrow. The duration of the game for players vastly fluctuated between 4 to 20 minutes. This could be due to reading abilities as well as puzzle-solving skills, but this discovery taught me that similar games will also have varying durations due to personal influences. No game-breaking issues occurred in any playthrough which was a relief, and player's descriptions of the game showed many similarities, meaning that a cohesive reading of the narrative was achieved. The mode of the game rating was an 8, showing good player enjoyment.

2) Problems encountered

The initial problem faced was the lack of a developed narrative before starting the art. I have never worked on such a narrative heavy game before, so this was a personal learning curve for me and has taught me to fully prepare the narrative before other elements.

The coding for Hell Crimes was tedious and required a lot of Booleans and string lists. I decided to pursue making a dynamic typing dialogue function that could be used for every item to show it's corresponding dialogue, by reading inputs. This most definitely saved me time in hardcoding everything but prevented me from achieving more specialised dialogue situations. For example, I wished to have the text box move its arrow whenever the corresponding character was talking, but because all the other item dialogues did not do this, the dynamic coroutine would not allow for this specialised situation. I could have made a specific function for the introduction to fix this, but this was not a glaring issue to players, and after I added "Dick: " to the text, players' confusion disappeared. Another issue with the dynamic coroutine was that adding a skip button would be difficult, for me personally. Almost half of the playtesters suggested a skip feature, but since these results were received very close to the due date, I did not have time to implement it.

3) Suggestions and future iterations

The suggestion question in the playtesting questionnaire was very valuable in progressively iterating the prototype. Initially, playtesting with my step-brother showed me that I was not being clear enough about where the player was situated and who Gillian was. This was of great help as I was caught up in the narrative and forgot to introduce the player properly to the world and level location – leading to me adding a splash screen locating the player and who Gillian was. Aside from the reoccurring "skip" button, players suggested a ritual item tracker, a more attention-grabbing inventory, music, a more cohesive ending screen, better timed dialogue and item interactions and a dragging feature for items that were required in unlocking a puzzle such as they key for the bag. I would consider a lot of these features to be secondary and tertiary elements, and through the answers of the other questions, it can be deduced that as a prototype it achieved all the basic features effectively to the players. This is not to say that these suggestions went unnoticed, but complex secondary and tertiary features were too complicated to start implementing at the time of the playtesting.

4) Reflecting on practises:

The beginning stage of establishing the concept with my group was a very effective way of creating a solid foundation to build upon. With research conducted into other point and click games, as well as narrative and artistic pieces that interested us, it definitely put us on the right path before starting production. During production, the documentation of the script really helped in easy customisation of lines. Playtesting within iteration brackets revealed information that was needing change within that specific version and allowed for steady improvement

between each iteration. It was also beneficial to an extent to code the dialogue as a dynamic coroutine, but it did hinder certain elements as discussed.

Conclusion

The aim to create a narrative heavy, but still engaging prototype can be seen as achieved due to playtesting results. I was sufficiently challenged in my writing abilities, but throughout its development I was constantly learning new ways of designing my puzzles and conveying hints and clues to certain degrees of clarity. Working with coding that was brand new to me was again a great learning curve, but taught me the importance of dynamic functions and how useful capturing inputs can be. Overall, Hell Crimes reflected the revised project plan sufficiently enough, and the final product was satisfactory as a prototype, but still has potential of improvements and further development into a far deeper engagement with the game world.

Appendix A

Project Plan REVISED – Group 5

KEY:

~~Word~~ : Features that were discarded since the initial project plan

Word : Added content in this revised project plan

1. Project Introduction:

“Hell Crimes” is a point and click mystery solver that will contain crime scenes for the detective angel, Dick Angel (The player) to solve. Using the Unity 2D engine, this PC game will aim to achieve a narrative rich experience with multiple complex puzzles, requiring a player inventory ~~and combining of items~~. This game will not be mechanically intensive and instead focus on the interactive narrative to keep the player engaged, with mature content and a target audience of 16+. We will be creating this game through an iterative process. The primary goal of this project is to achieve a working prototype of the game that displays the narrative and mechanics effectively.

2. Narrative:

Dick Angel - an angel detective sent to investigate a recent surge in crime rates within Hell. He lived in New York and having been a detective for the majority of his life, until he was killed by a gang leader. Dick ended up in heaven and was tasked to solve petty and minor arguments but he got bored of the petty arguments and decided to head to hell to solve some real crimes.

Tutorial:

~~Teach controls—office setting. Gives a narrative backstory to the protagonist, and a rundown of the upcoming crime scene story. Atmospheric and narrative heavy.~~

Crime scene:

A witch child has gone missing due to a feud between the vampire household and the witches. The player must find a way to figure out how the vampires made the child disappear by enacting a vampiric ritual. Clues around the scenes will give hints on who the suspect is - The player must choose the criminal from a group of suspects at the end of the level to solve the mystery.

3. Feature Lists:

Story/Level Design

- Construct a world, writing dialogue scripts and exposition. Need to establish the narrative, the protagonist and the non-playable characters to the player. Laying out the hints for an interactive and challenging crime scene mystery

- ~~A tutorial level narrative and~~ crime scene level narrative
- Designing the mystery aspect and pacing of events
- Design a world for the characters to inhabit within, with its own cohesive narrative
- Implementing the narrative into the game mechanic systems

Gameplay Mechanics

- Point and Click mechanics:
 - The player will use either a mouse or trackpad to find and click on objects in a scene to solve the crime scene
 - ~~Click Timer - A timer will limit the player from spam clicking the screen in a short amount of time, resulting in a time penalty~~
 - Item Collection System - This is the act of obtaining items through the point and click mechanic within the scene which the player can perform actions with later ~~such as combining items~~
 - Player Inventory - The player can collect and store items from the scene into their inventory, **as well as being able to read information from their items.**
 - ~~Combining Item System - The player can combine items from their inventory to create new items to solve certain puzzle elements~~
- ~~Camera Movement~~
 - ~~Allows for the player to slightly pan left and right, up and down with use of the arrow keys or WASD keys~~
- Multiple scenes for things such as inspecting ~~a desk drawer~~ **a painting**
- NPC Dialogue/canvas Features
 - The player will interact with ~~different NPCs~~ **an NPC** through dialogue and other forms of interaction while solving the mystery

Interface

- UI (User-interface)
 - The main scene will take up the majority of the screen space while any text that needs to be communicated to the player will be placed in a textbox that takes up the bottom of the screen.
 - The item inventory interface
 - ~~Menus and scene transitions/level selection~~

Art

- Creating and developing character designs, assets and backgrounds
- ~~Animation~~
 - ~~Item/ background Animations~~
- ~~Sprite Swapping such as a thinking pose to a speaking pose~~

Sound

- ~~Sound effects (opening drawer, using a key. etc)~~
- ~~Music~~
- ~~Voice acting for dialogue/important characters~~

4. Task Breakdown:

<u>PRIMARY</u>	<u>SECONDARY</u>
Player inventory	Combining items system
Camera Movement	Click management
Item collection system	Menus
Crime Scene Narrative	Inventory carry over
User Interface	Multiple Scenes
Background Design	Tutorial Level Narrative
Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design	Tutorial Level and Puzzle Design
Protagonist Characterisation	NPC Characterisation
NPC Dialogue/Interaction	Tutorial Art Assets
Item Design + Sprites	Exposition letter instead of a tutorial
Character Design + Sprites	using canvases for inspecting specific areas
Narrative Implementation	Typing effect
Item popup canvas	

5. Task Segmentation and Allocation/Dependencies:

Hell Crimes is a solo-designed project, thus all tasks will be allocated to the single designer of the game. The table below outlines different task dependencies in the project.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Dependencies</u>
Player inventory	Item collection system
Camera Movement	Background Design, Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design
Item collection system	Crime Scene Narrative
Crime Scene Narrative	N/A
User Interface	N/A
Background Design	Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design, Crime Scene Narrative

<u>Task (Continued)</u>	<u>Dependencies</u>
Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design	Crime Scene Narrative
NPC Dialogue/Interaction	NPC Characterisation, Crime Scene Narrative
Protagonist Characterisation	Crime Scene Narrative
Item Design + sprites	Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design
Character Design + Sprites	Crime Scene Narrative
Narrative Implementation	Narrative development and Gameplay mechanics
Combining items system	Item collection system, Crime Scene Level and Puzzle Design, Player inventory
Click timer	Item collection
Menus	User Interface, Multiple scenes
Inventory carry over	Player inventory
Multiple Scenes	Crime Scene Narrative, Puzzle and level Design
Tutorial Level Narrative	Crime Scene Narrative
Tutorial Level and Puzzle Design	Tutorial narrative
NPC Characterisation	Crime Scene Narrative, Puzzle and level Design
Tutorial art assets	Tutorial Level Narrative, Puzzle and level Design

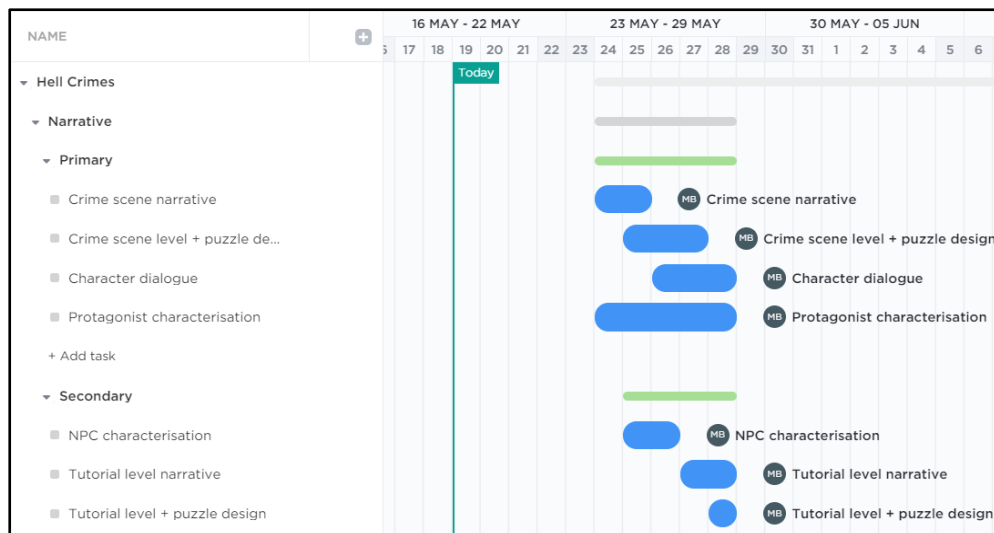
6. Scheduling/Timeline:

The narrative and game mechanics lend themselves to being quite co-dependent, and as such it has been chosen to work on the narrative in tandem with the mechanics. The dependencies illustrate the connections between these two categories and we have taken that into account when setting their dates. Placeholder assets can be used while iterating the mechanics, and once finished, the assets will add context to the narrative and mechanics.

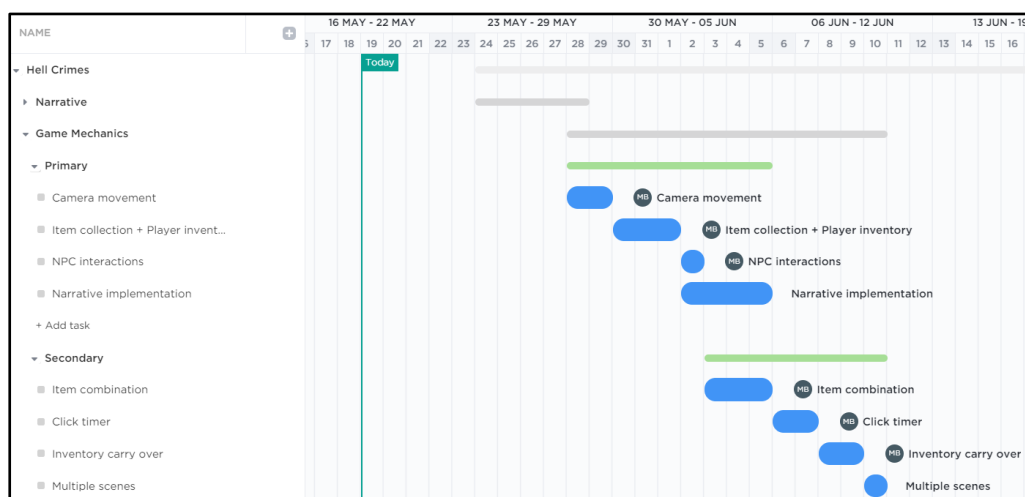
The tertiary features from the feature list were not given dates and not included in the gantt charts as they are not crucial to portraying any primary features, and would rather improve the overall final product. These features implementation can be considered only if the designer has achieved all other features before the deadline.

All tasks have been categorised under 3 categories: gameplay mechanics, narrative and communication design. The gantt charts below break down the timeline of task completion:

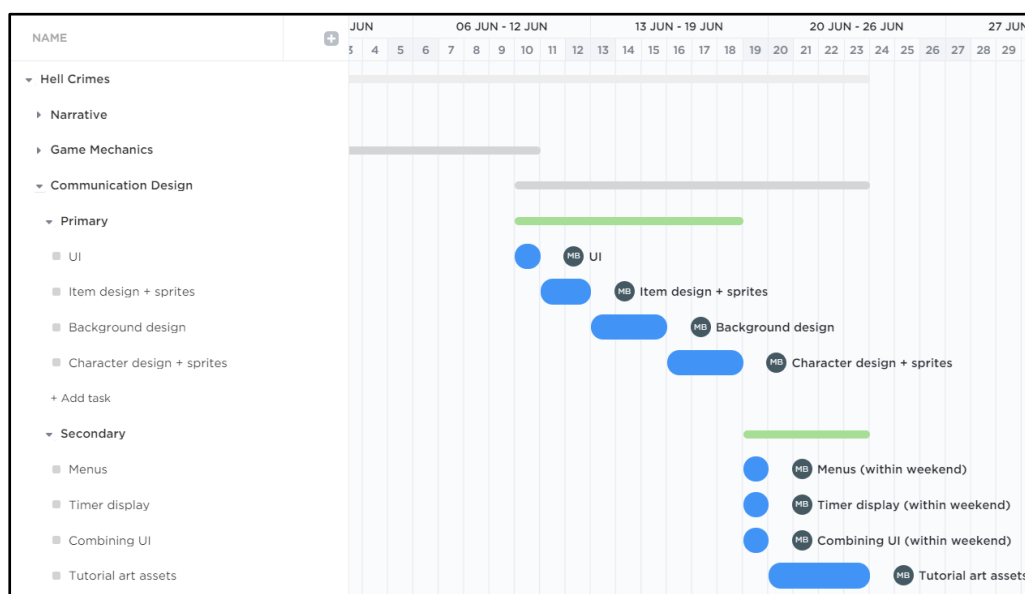
Narrative Gantt Chart:



Gameplay Mechanics Gantt Chart:



Communication Design Gantt Chart:



Gantt Chart ClickUp Link: <https://sharing.clickup.com/g/h/38exv-137/36c54b0bfb01ab8>

All tasks relating to removed features allowed for more available time to focus on more pressing features that needed to be polished and corrected.

7. Process & Milestones:

The key milestones in this project are the completion of the game mechanics, narrative and communication aspects of the project. These key aspects must be developed by the scheduled date but can be iterated upon as the project will be designed using an iterative process.

Project Start Date: 24th May 2021

Major Milestones:

<u>Aspect</u>	<u>Dates:</u>
<u>Narrative</u>	24th May 2021 - 29th May 2021
<u>Game Mechanics</u>	28th May 2021 - 11th June 2021
<u>Communication Design</u>	9th June 2021 - 23rd June 2021

Project End Date: 25th June 2021

Project Total Time: 27 Days

8. Risks:

<u>Low-level Risks</u>	Attending an important event such as holidays or weddings
<u>Medium-level Risks</u>	Power outages/Internet Issues/Other Technical Problems Over scoping and Time Pressure Mismanagement of scheduling tasks and time management Bottlenecking
<u>High-level Risks</u>	Contracting Corona Virus or any other serious illness The loss of a friend or loved one

Appendix B

SCRIPT OF HELL CRIMES

Case file

CASE #001

MISSING PERSONS CASE FILE

VICTIM: SNARLTHORN, EVELYN

INVESTIGATOR: ANGEL, DICK

LAST SEEN: Near the lava creek bordering Snarlthorn swamps and Violet Manor

Dear Detective Dick Angel,

I have received a very important request to enforce a justice system within the realm of Hell. As the omnipresent ruler that I am, I was obligated to agree.

For millennia, the Vampire Royal Family, Vilonette, has clashed with the Snarlthorn Witch's Coven within Hell. Recently a young witch has vanished. The Witches have

placed the blame upon the Vilonettes, with both sides threatening war. A neutral third-party is needed to solve this, and who better to solve this mystery than you.

I'm counting on you,

Intro

Gillian: Why hello, my dear boy. I hear it's been a long journey from Heaven for you. Thank you for-

Dick: Yes, yes, it's an honour to meet you and all that hogwash. The name's Dick Angel.

Gillian: Well, Dick, as you know my daughter Evelyn has gone missing. We suspect the Vampiric vanishing ritual was enacted here.

Gillian: Not much is known about this ritual. I've heard that re-enacting the steps can resummon the victim, However.

Dick: I see that in their hurry to flee the scene, they have left some vital clues and tools around here. Heh, amateurs.

Gillian: I suggest examining those letters over on the centre coffee table first.

Letters

It's a stack of envelopes, practically screaming to be investigated; how kind of them. Hmm... Ah this one looks ominous, it says:

"The peasant routinely goes to the lava creek for herbal gatherings every Wednesday, alone – what an imbecile..."

She is of great use to us, no matter her poverty. She'll weaken the Coven's defences and reveal vital inside information to us...

Using your bat form and the growth vial, you can fly across to seize her and carry her back to the ritual chamber...

Do not forget the three items required to imprison her in the vanishing realm. Refer to the crystallum orbis for guidance.

Good Luck young Prince, From Count Vilonette."

What a pretentious lot. I suppose this crystallum orbis could aid me before I start looking for the three ritual items.

Riddle

This must be the crystali-thingamajig. There's candles and cards here and... oh and what's this?

"Humble servants should do naught but showeth dedication by spilling thine own blood into only but the most silver of vessels..."

"With the blessing o' our rul'r, his eyes wilt beest within us! rejoiceth f'r the divine blessing of our god's almighty pow'rs!"

Hey uh, what the fuck? Get outta here with that cryptic humbug.

I guess it does hint at the three items required for the ritual though. Let's get exploring.

Outro

Oh wow, I got so caught up in the thrill of the chase that I didn't realise that I had collected all the needed items.

Gillian: I'm just glad you cracked the case. Let's go resummon my darling Evelyn, come with me.

Poker

This fire poker looks pretty nifty, ey? Not very sharp though, doubt it would hurt anybody, sadly. Let me nab it in case I need it.

Stool

I swear I'm not short, okay? Buuut this stool looks like it could give me a decent boost to reach those high places at the back.

Carpet

They really bolted outta here, even left this boujee Persian rug in a mess. What a shame, they probably nicked it anyways.

Wait a second, what's this?

Scissors

Aye, well looky here, barber's scissors! Nice and sharp. I wonder if heart pie was on the menu today?

They'll be useful to draw blood for the ritual.

LockedBag

Looks pretty spiffy, like a business suitcase maybe? It makes a rattling sound when I shake it but it's locked...

Where would a businessman keep his keys?

Hanger

Lemme check this jacket over for any valuables... Some blood vials, a ruby pendant... breath mints?

Let's check the hat... Oh what's this back here?

Keys

Aha, smart guy huh? This is a pretty small key, they have an interesting symbol on them... I feel like I've seen that somewhere around here.

OpenBag

These keys look like they'll fit this lock, even have the matching symbols and all.

Well, well, look what we have in here! This must be the royal chalice. My paygrade could only dream of affording that. Lucky bastards...

Locked goat

Look at that bug-eyed freak up there. Ugh, it's giving me the creeps.

It might be worth me gawking at closer, but I can't seem to reach it... I need a step of sorts.

Stool Goat

I can use the stool to reach the goat head. Now we're cooking with gas alright!
It seems this goat's left eye has been freshly probed. It almost looks real? Yugh.
There's blood stains around the socket, maybe I need a tool to help me jam it out?

Eye

Reaching up with the stool, I can artfully scoop out the left eyeball with my tool.
This is probably what the riddle meant by "his eyes wilt beest within us"
Wait, does this mean I... need to eat this?! Oh God... To be honest I've gobbled worse while sloshed.

Locked Cloth

Hey, look up there! I see a grimy rag up there, it looks like it's hiding something.
If only I could reach it...

Stool cloth

I wonder what's under this cloth, let me climb up with my ladder and-

Dagger

Wow, this baddie is still wet with blood. Looks like there are lick marks on the blade as well, fuckin vampires, I tell you...
This is a perfect tool to draw blood with. Just remind me to wipe that scummy vampire blood off before I use it.

Hints

Notes

These papers look pretty beaten up, but here's an interesting one that's still slightly intact.
Show drawing on screen

Sword

Looks like a mangy wooden kid's sword. I see they're training them young; I respect that. It does seem to have blood stains on it however.
There's probably more dangerous weapons around here that could be more useful.

Cut papers

Some snipped up papers. My aging eyes can't read that blab, but this does imply that there's a scissor somewhere around here.

Books

Ooh I recognise some of these classics! "A Study In Scarlet" and "The Hound of The Baskervilles". These blood suckers have good taste.

This one looks interesting; "The Ancient History of The Hellish Feud" Lemme have a quick peep.

"...The Vilonettes and Snarlthorns' feud upon earth still wages on.

Centuries of ancestors have died fighting for their faction, with eternal hatred burning in their hearts...

The belief systems of the families vastly differ, with the Witches being lead their current Queen Occultist, Gillian Snarlthorn, and the Vilonettes praising their bestial god the-"

The page is torn from here onwards. Typical.

Cabinet

What a wide variety of giggle juice! Here's where they hide all the good shit! I can see something shiny on the lower shelf...

A crown? Why would they hide something like that down there? The cabinet's locked, it looks like the lock is jammed.

Painting

Hey, this is our gal. What have they done to her?

Show painting on screen

They burnt a hole right through her left eye and parts of her face. It smells like... Luckies? Hey, that's my favourite ciggies! I could really go for a drag right now...

Oh, sorry. That was insensitive of me... Smoking kills. Kids.

Heart

What a right mess they've made here. Pretty lousy dissecting if I do say so myself. And the bloods seeped into the wood as well, how grand.

The murder weapon has got to be somewhere here, the meat lump is too fresh for it not to be.

Inventory dialogue

Chalice Inv

This is the chalice for the ritual. You rate I could sell it after we're done here?

Eye Inv

Ew, this goopy fleshsack is sloshing all around in my bag. It can be eaten in the ritual, I'll have to use a sharp tool to cut it up though.

Stool Inv

A nice height booster so I can reach for the top of those back cabinets and such.

Dagger Inv

These undead freaks really are wealthy. There's a flashy ruby at the centre of it. I can use this to draw blood for the ritual.

Poker Inv

Not sharp enough to draw blood, but could be used to unwedge something.

Scissors Inv

These barber scissors have been freshly sharpened. A perfect instrument to draw blood with.

Key Inv

A delicate key with a scribbled zigzag symbol on it. I better look closely around to see if there's anything else with this on it.

File Inv

It's the case file for this crime scene.

Appendix C

Playtesting Questionnaires

ITERATION 0 – During production

Asked under different questions and before the prototype was complete:

1. Rate prototype out of 10; 2. Is it fun; 3. Why is it fun/ not fun; 4. How long is the prototype; 5. Describe it to someone who hasn't played it before

#1 - Chris Bussey: Stepbrother

- 1) 4/10, Needs more character development. Establish the class of the witch and the detective.
- 2) Has the possibility to have a deep bond with the detective to bring out his personality traits. One can connect to or support him in his actions or attitudes.
- 3) There is a lot of opportunity with this concept.
- 4) I was a bit confused on one's goals and location, which lead to misunderstandings. The player can feel lost with what to explore if no clear direction is given. The lack of guidance and clarity can lead to the player giving up out of frustration.
- 5) There is many options as to where the game can go in. The main character can not only solve a mystery, he can unlock an unknown world that can do worldly puzzles. I feel there can be a lot to achieve in a multi-level puzzle world.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Did the game run correctly? Were there any glaring issues? If yes, what were they?
- 2) Did you feel engaged with the narrative? Why or why not?
- 3) Did you like or dislike Dick? Why?
- 4) How long did the game take you to finish?
- 5) Did the riddle make sense to you? Did it aid you at all in solving the mystery?
- 6) Describe the game to someone who hasn't played it before.
- 7) Do you have any suggestions to improve the game?
- 8) Rate the game out of 10

ITERATION 1 – Complete prototype

→ Fixed spamming dialogue

→ All items are interactable

→ Added popup canvases for painting and notes, and a splash screen locating the player

→ Ending dialogue overwrites the final found item dialogue – Notified playtesters of this

#2 – Gigi Bussey: Mother

- 1) Yes, it needs to have a tally / indicator of how many items need to be found
- 2) Yes very much so, it was intriguing to find out what to do next
- 3) Disliked him – he came across as arrogant and had no time to help
- 4) About 20mins
- 5) The riddle did make sense, but had to re-read it to aid me with solving the mystery
- 6) It's a mystery / solving game, aiding a detective to collect clues to find the missing girl
- 7) The clue vocab becomes repetitive, a skip button would work, if you wanted to move on to another clue. The inventory column needs to draw attention to the fact that the items themselves have added clues.
8. Out of 10 – 7

#3 - Jodi Chapson: Game design peer

- 1) No glaring issues, just some timings that could be improved.
- 2) Pretty engaged, you got a good amount of world building going on and I REALLY like all the details you have added in. Really gives the entire situation quite a bit of depth. Though the confusion about whether Dick was talking or not, did break my immersion a slight bit.
- 3) From a personal perspective, I do not really like Dick xD but as a character, you have written him quite well - all his lines and dialogue seem to fit into the general personality and persona he has got going. Also i was wondering why he was called Dick Angel -- and then i realized, ooohhh heaven, wings --- he is a literal angel boy. It is very cute.
- 4) I did not time exactly, but probably about 5 minutes?
- 5) For the most part yes. So well done - also some nice fancy word usage, i liked that.
- 6) You are a heavenly detective by the name of Dick Angel. There is an issue in hell - where a witch has gone missing. You are called to the site to figure out what happened. You can click on things to interact with various objects in the room, and make use of intel to find your way through the puzzles.
- 7) It is not always clear to see when Dick is talking. The others all have their names in the dialogue, and while i understand dick is the protagonist, it is not clearly communicated that he is speaking. Example, there is no audio, so we dont hear his voices - and hence must rely on visual clues. And there are none. The only visual clue is the LACK of name at the beginning of the dialogue, which may not always suffice. The yellow highlight on the crystallum orbis appears significantly earlier, while Dick is reading the letters. Perhaps have it can appear when he actually mentions the importance of interacting with in in the dialogue. the reread riddle button appears before we have even technically finished reading the riddle the first time - perhaps just delay the button by like.. one or two dialogue boxes.
- 8) 75/100 - just some polishing needed on the communication design side of things and that is all, well done!

#4 - Juliette Love: Game Design Peer

- 1) Yes it ran correctly and there were no glaring issues.
- 2) Yes, the story was interesting and I enjoyed Dick Angels' character.
- 3) Yes I did. I found that the level itself easy, but a lot of the fun of interacting with objects in the game came from his sarcastic and arrogant dialogue.
- 4) Around 3-4 minutes. (Playtester aided in editing riddle and thus knew the answers to it)
- 5) Yes it did make sense enough to aid in solving the mystery.
- 6) A supernatural mystery game where the player clicks on objects in a crime scene to find specific items needed to summon a witch who has been kidnapped.
- 7) The beginning dialogue feels a bit confusing as the dialogue box makes the player feel like Gillian's text is coming from Dick, even though you have Gillian's name there. Then when Dick is speaking straight after her it feels like she is still speaking. This is because she is the character who speaks first and the precedent is set that this speech bubble design belongs to her and not Dick. I would recommend angling the tail of the speech bubble towards Gillian for her lines. In addition to this you could make her speech bubble grey while his is white to further help the player. Another small change you could make if you have time is to make it so that the player can click through text faster, as if I accidentally click an object again it felt mildly annoying having to wait for the text to appear. It would also feel more natural if the player could click on the speech bubble to progress through the dialogue instead of the small "next" button, however this is just a small suggestion.
- 8) 7

ITERATION 2

- Included "Dick:" in intro dialogue and outro dialogue
- added Dick's sprite to item dialogues for clarity
- Fixed the final item and outro dialogue issue

#5 – Alexis Byrd: Internet friend/gamer

- 1) Yes, it ran correctly! I didn't notice any issues
- 2) Yes—I thought it had good worldbuilding already. The characters are enigmatic and the war between vampires and witches is intriguing
- 3) I disliked him because I have a personal prejudice against smoking and he made a joke about it
- 4) Maybe 8-10 minutes

- 5) I was very confused about the third item but I definitely understand that I needed the chalice and a blade for drawing blood
- 6) You have to investigate a kidnapping case for supernatural beings at war, and all you have on your side is your observational skills
- 7) Some music could be cool!
- 8) 8 so far

#6 - Jonah Alter: Boyfriend/IT student

- 1) Cloth over knife did not disappear the first time I clicked it (but correct dialog played)
- 2) Pretty engaging. A bit confusing to grasp the whole context
- 3) He seems like he is aptly named hehe
- 4) About 5/10 mins
- 5) The only part the riddle helped with was the eye. The other two items were hidden so the riddle didn't help in finding them. I understood that I needed to find a chalice, but didn't know that the dagger was a part of the riddle. The riddle should give clues on where to find them, it felt like it didn't give any hints.
- 6) A puzzle-like point and click where you have to solve a mystery
- 7) Would like a "cancel" or "skip" button on dialog for if you click an item you've already
- 8) 7/10

#7 – Jack Rathbone: Game Design Peer

- 1) Aside from the ending thing which you resolved, no bugs on my side
- 2) Yes, its written quite straightforward and introduced well, but has nice humour and doesn't outstay its welcome
- 3) You know I love dick :wink: But he's a decent character, his archetype is straight forward, classic and gets the job done
- 4) Probably 10+ mins
- 5) I think the riddle was at first very hard to get but soon made sense once I started finding relevant items, the dialogue helped make the connections easier, but not too handholdy
- 6) You are a detective in hell solving a mystery by looking at a scene, finding various items in order to get to others that are blocked off until you get the required items
- 7) just the ending, already addressed. Otherwise its a pretty whole package and would be upset by much more being introduced
- 8) 8/10 m8

ITERATION 3:

→ Added an end screen debriefing

#8 - Grace Alter: University friend

- 1) Yes! Everything ran smoothly and the animations and illustrations were lovely.
- 2) I was - the vagueness of the riddle made me want to solve the case.
- 3) I liked how developed his character was. He was fun in his cynicism and snootiness.
- 4) About 10-15 minutes.
- 5) At first, not so much but it helped me get an idea for what to click on and after, I got the gist of the rest of the game. So it definitely helped, and then rereading it helped after.
- 6) You play as Dick Angel - an old detective who's been asked to help a woman solve a case on her daughter. It's suspected that she was taken as part of a witch ceremony and killed by vampires. You go around the room finding clues and answering riddles to piece together what has happened to her.
- 7) Perhaps introducing a feature to drag the collected items to where they need to go.
- 8) 8/10