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Un-essay Reflection

Choice of Project

My choice of project for this unessay assignment was to create a virtual reality (VR) museum with a voice-guided tour that walks the player through the human evolutionary history. This idea came about because I worked on a VR escape room for UNMC as my Senior Design project this year, and I figured it could be neat to do a small personal project. There’s also the fact that I am somewhat of a techy person, so I wanted to do something techy for this project, rather than just write a paper. Of course, this medium came with its own challenged, namely procurement of 3D models and assets without spending ludicrous amounts of money, but most those challenges were surmounted, as will be discussed later.

How my project materialized once I started working on it was pretty simple. First, I looked for what fossil and other primate related 3D models I could scrounge up on the internet, so I knew what I could include in the museum. Once I had a rough list of those, I drafted up notes and script that I later recorded and put into the game. The game itself was created in Unity, a free game engine that I have used previously. The game works by spawning the player outside of a museum, which they can then travel through its nine rooms. In each room, a voiceover plays that introduces the player to the topic discussed within, and each room has two plaques with text on them that discuss various relevant information, as well as at least two pedestals with rotating 3D models to improve the visual aspect of the exhibit. The exhibits start at the first ancestral primates, the Plesiadapiformes, and end on modern Homo sapiens. Once the players make a full circuit of the museum, they end the game back outside, where Homo sapiens is discussed. There is also a secret hidden exhibit that goes over some honorable mentions, such as Homo florensiensis, which did not make the cut for the main museum.

Overall, I am reasonably satisfied with how my project turned out. I’ll put a rubric breakdown on the next page, but overall, the game does what it was meant to. I was also able to design a decently realistic looking virtual environment as well in the relatively short number of manhours I put into designing it, thanks to the Unity Probuilder tools and other premade assets I got from the Unity Asset Store. As far as the content is concerned, I’m also pretty satisfied with how it turned out. Obviously, I couldn’t put every little detail about every little species or genus that we discussed in class, but I feel like I got the main points across reasonably well. I’d say my biggest pain point on this project was that I did not manage to create a 360-degree video version of the museum in time, therefore the only way to experience it is through a VR headset such as an Oculus Quest. However, I’ll still be creating a visual walkthrough of the game for easy grading. I will also be posting the .APK file in GitHub, on the very slim chance that you, the grader, or someone you know, have an Oculus Quest that you can try the game on.

This is the Github repository where you can view my finished product, including the video walkthrough:

https://github.com/Mtn-View/Anthropology-Unessay

# The Rubric

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| Grade | Delivery | Content | Quality |
| **4**-Excellent | Viewable on multiple platforms, including up to 3D / 360 video, PC VR, and Oculus Quest. Clear video walkthrough of the experience. | Effectively explains the content it sets out to and is visually interesting as well as informative. | The experience’s audio and visual elements show a significant level of polish. Audio quality is clear and easy to understand. |
| **3**-Good | Experience not finished or unpolished on some platforms. Video walkthrough is unclear in areas or unpolished. | Content contains some errors or minor exclusions. Overall, the experience is still informative and interesting. | Experience lacks polish in some areas, or the visual style of the exhibit is lacking some. Audio quality is mostly clear and easy to understand. |
| **2**-Satisfactory | Experience is delivered in an unfinished state. Not easily viewable by end users. Game breaking bugs. Video walkthrough at least exists. | Content lacks significantly in information, notable omissions, or contains significant errors. | Visual style is unoffensive, if not uninspired or boring. Audio is understandable, but of poor or inconsistent quality. |
| **1-**Needs Improvement | Deliverables very incomplete. Experience is unplayable or ungradable. No video walkthrough. | Little, if all, can be learned from viewing the virtual exhibit. | Very poor visual presentation. Very poor audio quality, often not understandable. |

Delivery: I did not manage to create a 360 video out of the experience, which would have made it the most accessible it could be while still being something resembling VR. Though it’s still playable on PC VR and on Oculus Quest mobile VR, so most platforms were reached.

Content: The museum covers the significant points in human evolution, without getting too complicated, so it should be approachable for most people, regardless of knowledge.

Quality: Quality is good. Due to using premade assets, the game resembles a real, though small, museum in visual appearance. Such a visual style would not have been feasible to achieve without doing so. The visuals also enhance the user experience by guiding them down the hallways, and showing various visual aids throughout the exhibits.