Lethe’s Agars Island playtesting session results, feedback, and analysis

**Question 1 What is your age range?**

For our playtesting session we provided our form to 5 different people

4 out of the 5 people that play tested our game were 17 – 21 years of age which is also our target audience. The other play tester was 25+ to see if the game could appeal to older people that may like what our game has to offer.

**Question 2 Do you normally play games of similar genre or play games that use similar mechanics if so which game and your favourite “mechanical” gameplay feature about them?**

Most of the Individuals that play tested our game were not regular players of the horror genre but had played a few horror games in the past. These games included games from the resident evil and outlast franchises. The main features that made these games so great for these players were not so much the mechanics but the idea of an in-depth storyline and the atmosphere that was provided.

Some of the mechanics that were also liked by the play testers was the idea of solving puzzles to progress through gameplay especially with a strong narrative to guide them. These features also made the game great when the puzzles relate to the storyline as well as they provide a bigger sense of something is going to happen in the game as the players are more engaged.

**Question 3 Is the main menu operational and easy to navigate?**

During the playtest it was shown that the games main menu was not operational, meaning that bug fixing needed to be done and that during the next playtesting session a fully functioning main menu will be provided.

**Question 4 Is the UI suitable for the genre, and does it take away from the atmosphere or does it engage you more into gameplay?**

Overall feedback for UI was generally positive saying that the UI components were not cluttered, and functionality of the UI seemed to be all positive. Players said the inventory was easy to access and having few UI features like we have helps immerse players into the game.

There were also a few improvements suggested to increase the immersion of the game by changing parts of the UI, firstly it was said that we could change the sanity meter into a visual effect on screen rather than a sanity bar on the UI, another play tester said that the UI elements could be smaller to increase immersion such as a smaller crosshair, and the health and sanity meters.

Finally, an idea was provided by a play tester saying that that the inventory/objective screen could be on a piece of paper which could be rotted/torn could be used to tie in with the game’s atmosphere and overall game feeling.

**Question 5 Does the game provide a strong tension building atmosphere with the lighting and game sound effects?**

Feedback for this question was generally positive saying that the dark atmosphere of the game works well along side the game genre. This idea is even better with the idea of the flashlight.

Players also had some concerns about how the player finds batteries if the torch runs out as the game seems to go into complete darkness. The play testers advised that the ambient light should be brighter.

Play testers provided advice on sound design saying that more ambient sounds such as the wind blowing, door creaking and more natural sounds could be provided during gameplay to increase player engagement and improve the tension building atmosphere.

There was an issue found with the torch for when you get near to a wall in the game, this could be fixed by changing the light start from the eyepoint not from the characters arm.

**Question 6 Is the facility Easy to navigate through, if not how can this be improved?**

Feedback for this question was very in depth and very helpful from most of the play testers. The general feedback was generally negative in terms of the navigation of the facility as on the scale of 1 to 10, 1 being hard to navigate and 10 being easy to navigate most answers were on the lower end of the scale.

The Feedback that was provided pointed out that most rooms looked very similar and that not many different textures had been implemented causing the player not to understand where they are in the facility, in terms of which room from the environment details alone. Players also explained that the facility felt too big and that many areas of the facility needs to be more condensed and contain more obstacles that makes the player more engaged in gameplay and add more to the horror aspects of the game.

It was found that the stairs located on the bottom level of the facility near the secret testing room did not work as the player could not go up or down them.

The final important part of feedback provided from this question was that the corridors on the 2nd level of the facility felt very maze like which confused the player causing the level to be like one massive puzzle.

To improve on this, we will be changing the layout of the bottom level to make the level less maze like and to make the 2nd level have more features of a realistic building in terms of the structure of corridors.

**Question 7 Do the games pacing, in terms of getting to different rooms and completing different puzzles work or does it take too long to get to A to B.?**

Player feedback for this question was quite similar, players found that the games pacing is quite slow in terms of how fast the player walks, the difficulty in not knowing how to start in-game puzzles and that the lower floor was not as well designed and as straight forward as the main level.

Based on advice given by players it seems that they felt like the speed in which the character walks needed to be increased to improve the games pacing, to provide a basic tutorial for each puzzle so the player does not have any doubt in how they will need to start each puzzle and they wanted the bottom level to be more like the top level in terms of navigation and layout of rooms and corridors.

Another issue that was raised was the crosshair, saying that it was too big which decreased player experience as its more of a gun/weapon feature. So, it was suggested that just a simple dot would be better as a cross hair as it would not take the player out of the virtual world.

**Question 8 Are the in-game puzzles easy to navigate and complete? How can puzzles be improved so they can be more challenging/easy to complete?**

Lots of feedback that was provided on this question covered mostly the issue of not being able to find the puzzles as the levels were lacking navigation techniques in terms of telling the player where the puzzles and where each room is located. When players were able to find puzzles, they found that the puzzles were not too challenging but were difficult to start as there was little in terms of a tutorial.

The issue of not being able to go upstairs was also a massive impact on gameplay as the player can not access puzzles that are on a different level from where the player begins.

**More game feedback:**

It was found out that there was no way to quit the game unless the player presses CTRL ALT DELETE which takes player to the task manager.

The game is currently too big with nothing inside it, so for the next game version more objects and especially the AI features need to be implemented.