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

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

During this playtesting session we got feedback from 3 different players who fitted one of each of the age ranges besides the 10-16 years old boundary. One player who was 17-21, one from 22-25 and one player who was 25 or above. Feedback from all these different age boundaries provide a better picture of what the game is like for a wider audience.

**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 players who tested our game were not big into the genre of horror but had a game of the genre that they were a big fan of when they played it, this game seemed to be Amnesia. The mechanics that they enjoyed that were similar to ours was the sanity mechanics and the use of puzzles in the game. The players who enjoyed amnesia commented on the many input methods which were used for interfacing with different in game objects such as pushing and pulling your mouse to open doors and making other motions with your mouse to interact differently with other objects in the game. Players also enjoyed the game physics that amnesia had to offer.

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

The main menu was said to be operational but different features of the main menu and other menus have still got to be implemented.

**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?**

Players said that certain UI elements did not really fit the tone or theme of the game, these objects included the design of the buttons, used font, the game health bar etc. It was explained that more diegetic features could be provided in the game for the UI such as giving the player a physical battery indicator on the torch, integrating a objective system in the game which uses a players phone or something similar and providing an image of the players legs. Having these features could help engage the player more by giving them a clear vision of who they are controlling, what type of game this is and the environment in where this is taking place so that they player can become more immersed throughout the entire gameplay.

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

Feedback for this question was very mixed but in general a negative attitude was given overall, players most commonly commented on the lighting issues as when the torch had run out of batteries the game becomes almost pitch black which causes the game to sometimes be unplayable, to fix this issue the game will need to be lighter but not light enough for the torch to be useless in terms of using for navigation.

Players also commented that tension is lost in the game by the use of general themes of different rooms, for instance some of the offices in the game were nearly empty and very generic, it was explained that these rooms should be changed to make them provide information on the storyline in terms of what happened it this facility and where the workers had fled to. Players said that larger amounts of environmental storytelling should be used to improve player engagement and player immersion while also adding tension to gameplay as more knowledge about the environment can be used to enable the player to build a picture in their mind of what they may expect during gameplay of what they may come across as they explore this facility.

The positive comments said that the game had a few features that provided tension such as the darkness and the SFX for footsteps and that when red lighting was used in gameplay it built up the atmosphere and added to the immersion.

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

For reasons explained above play testers said that the game was difficult to navigate mainly due to the lack of light during the game when the torch is off but also due to the lack of landmarks in the game. Players expressed that rooms seemed to provide a feeling of cut and paste and that the level seemed very symmetrical. It was expressed that a redesign maybe needed in terms of the number of similar rooms and providing different room landmarks which would add more detailed story as all rooms would not look the same.

From this feedback I feel like the game needs to be scaled down in terms of the number of rooms provided so the attention to the horror aspects of the game can be researched and carried out by the use of more important and meaningful game locations.

**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.?**

All of the play testers seemed to come across the issue of not getting far enough into the game to come across any of the puzzles that the game had to provide. This gives more evidence that the game should be smaller in size and the number of rooms that can be explored should be decreased, to enable the games pacing in becoming more suitable like similar games of the same genre.

**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?**

This question due to issues explained above could not be answered by play testers as they were not able to find many puzzles in the time they spent playing. When players found puzzles, they explained that they were difficult to understand in terms of what you are meant to do but when it was realized how to complete them, they were simple to finish.

To fix many of the issues having on screen visual aids for puzzles would help provide players the tools in how they can carry out each task. A way for testing if these aids work is by enabling the player to find these puzzles so, decreasing the number of rooms and the size of the level would benefit the playtesting phase a lot and even gameplay.

Other overall feedback and advice from play testers:

Ques would help players in understanding if a door is locked because of the lack of security clearance, the level of clearance or if the room is just inaccessible.

UI could be spawned earlier in the game to engage the player quicker in the horror aspects of the game play.

Improving the length of time batteries last for would enable the player not to constantly worry about the number of batteries they have.

A larger amount of sound effects needs to be added to the game as it is an essential component to games of the horror genre.

More UI labels for each of the health and stamina bars.

A different camera placement for when a puzzle is being done to tell the player what is being focused on.