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CS 1010 – Intro to Interactive Entertainment

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### **Module 1 - TIO: Review an Interactive Movie Experience**

For this activity, I first reviewed *Five Minutes*. This was a short film of a father holding a gun to his head testing his memory as the primary symptom before turning into a zombie. The film features a series of quick-time events (QTEs) that result in a pass or fail to continue the story. If the QTE is failed, the protagonist dies and you are shown 1 of 3 available clips depending on your progress throughout the story.

I felt that while the QTEs were added a fun way to engage as a viewer, I didn't find the tasks difficult enough to feel a sense of accomplishment. Overall, the story was entertaining, but I didn't feel that I had any real control over what was happening. Also, after purposefully failing the QTEs to experiment with this film, I felt the illusion of choice further diminish from this story. I think this could have benefited from having multiple branches instead of a simple pass or fail. Although, I recognize that this would have created substantially more work for the developers. One final note that I appreciated from the game was the level of sass from the failed QTEs. The game would tell you to go play something easier and would ultimately lock the harder difficulty if failing repeatedly.

In my second interactive movie experience, I viewed *A Heist with Markiplier*, a comedy film starring Markiplier about an attempted escape after stealing an artifact from a museum. This film is composed of small clips where at the end of each clip you will have 2 decisions that will branch the story respectively. On my first viewing, I choose to escape the museum with 'guns blazing', attempted to fly a helicopter, ended up in a prison where I was witness to a musical number, a boxing video game

reenacted, and a 3D audio experience. This play-through lasted approximately 27 minutes and resulted in ending 12 of 31. I was incredibly impressed by the amount of material this film offers. Altogether, there is approximately 90 minutes of run time between the different choices available and more than a dozen actors (other YouTube personalities) who participated in this.

This felt much more in the fashion of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, but in video form. This was a family friendly comedy with a high production value, and I'm glad to have experienced it. The only real downside to engaging with this media is that YouTube will play ads in between videos, unless you have a subscription or an ad blocker enabled.

While both *Five Minutes* and *A Heist with Markiplier* contained well produced storytelling, I felt the later was much more engaging as the decisions made by the viewer had a direct influence on how the story unfolded, as opposed to a simple pass/fail. To the credit of *Five Minutes*, there were loose skill-based mechanics that I feel could have made the game much more immersive. Specifically the gun fire, where the viewer had to click on the appropriate targets. If there had been more of that intertwined with multiple outcomes, I would likely have chosen *Five Minutes* as my favorite between the two interactive movie experiences.