Game Design Document

(Midterm preliminary report)

Dead Man’s Maze

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# Game Description

## 1.1 Elevator Pitch

An atmospheric difficulty increasing horror first-person shooter in which the player must escape a maze by first finding the keys to the exit and then surviving the path to the exit.

## 1.2 Summary

The game consists of having the player inside a randomly generated maze with very limited lighting. The atmosphere will be set mainly through sound where the player will constantly hear moans, steps, and scratching sounds ‘coming from’ the monsters within, which the player must either avoid or take out.

The player will have limited ammunition for self-defense which can will only increase from randomly placed pickups within the maze or from the keys needed to be collected in order to exit the maze and complete the level.

The game has high playability since the mazes are randomly generated, hence making the game increasingly challenging.

## 1.3 Unique Selling Points (USPs)

* The mazes are randomly generated which means players will theoretically obtain endless variations of the experience.
* The horror atmosphere will be conveyed by having sound be the most predominant way for the player to immerse themselves.
* Customizable experience. The player will be able to select how they wish to experience the game. They can make it extremely easy, lengthy or nerve wracking, through selection of preset maze sizes, starting ammo amount and/or enemy difficulty (heath and speed).

# 2. Design

## 2.1 Key Mechanics

## 2.2 Characters and Settings

The game is set in the modern day. Earth is close to be decimated by a debilitating virus that has caused the infected to turn into zombie-like creatures. Dr. Alex Fleming, an army medical doctor is tasked with coming up with a cure, and he thinks he just needs one more ingredient, in order for the cure to be effective – the sweet-smelling herb Athelas.

The only problem, Athelas, is only known to be cultivated in one place in the world… a remote farm in the south of France, whose owner had the twisted idea of growing the lifesaving plant in the middle of a maze that he personally constructed, to keep it out of everyone’s reach.

Dr. Fleming and his team travelled to the farm, and cautiously began to enter the maze to retrieve the Athelas, when they realized the farm has been overran with zombies! It’s up to the play to help Dr. Fleming work his way through the maze, using the few weapons in his arsenal, and most importantly his wits, to survive and not only retrieve the Athelas, but make it out alive, and in time to save humanity!

# 3. Gameplay

## 3.1 Beginning the Game

The player is greeted by a dark screen with eerie music, where they have the options to play, read the instructions or customize various aspects of the game. It would be similar to the image below.

A close-up of a zombie hands

Description automatically generated

## 3.2 First 2-5 minutes

The player is placed at the entrance to the maze, a cut scene is displayed, explaining the lore and why the player is there. The player will have the option to continue the game with the default settings, or go to the ‘Main Menu’, where the game parameters can be changed to make the game more or less challenging.

From the initial scene, when the player selects ‘Continue’, the game begins. Initially the player has a flashlight that will flicker from time to time, giving the situation a sense of uncertainty and helplessness. Sound will be atmospheric, having muffled groans, scratching against walls, uneven footsteps and dragging across the floor, giving the player a sense that they are not alone in this maze.

The player will begin to move the character forwards, backwards and sideways, using the WASD or arrow keys on the keyboard and moving the camera using the mouse. Upon encountering the enemy or zombie, the player may choose to turn around, and find an alternate route or fight.

During the game, the player will have a certain amount of health which can be quantified like the ‘Call of Duty’, where the bloodier/redder the screen became as the health of the player declined.

The player will walk or run around, shooting or escaping from the enemies in tight corridors (help generate the common fear of claustrophobia) and will search for keys or items required to open the exit. The player may be able to find the exit but without the keys, they would not be able to win the game or complete the level.

The player will get a very dim sound prompt when they are within close proximity of a key and it would intensify or diminish, the closer they get. This ‘hot/cold’ mechanic can help relieve some of the frustrations a player may feel, thus making the game appealing to a broader audience while still retaining an unsettling feeling.

# 4.0 Visual Audio

## 4.1 Art Style