



The Historical Problem Space diagram covers many aspects of playful engagement with the past, and will be useful in organising and establishing the various elements of gameplay to be included in the final product.

Moving from top to bottom, the “Personalized Encounters” Game would include the following elements:

Genre Conventions

Top-Down RPG // VR (When technology allows. See Gameworld for info.)

Roleplaying would be the main genre convention, as the player would take on the role of a character in the past.

Simulation would be a major focus as the goal of the entire experience is to recreate an event with minor twists.

Single/Multiplayer. Though the other players may distract from the immersion in some cases, people tend to have more fun together. As a game, fun is still the #1 priority if a player comes to play with company.

Gameworld

The gameworld would be limited to the scope of the event. For example, if the simulation is to have a day at the Roman Bazaar with the goal of finding and bartering for a specific item, the player would not leave the Bazaar. Space will be modelled as appropriately as possible to archeological findings in the region. Ideally, the experience can be made into several distinct levels covering different historical events. Thus, there is no one setting. In terms of art direction, a classic 2D RPG would be sufficient. Alternatively, a VR experience would work better if the image generation becomes advanced enough to create 3D models. (Right now, it seems best at creating 2D stills to be used as character portraits.)

Player Agent

The player is given a role to play in the event, usually someone walking in from outside the experience to match the player's likely familiarity with the scenario. Visiting a bazaar, going to the first film ever released, or preparing to move to the new world are all examples of historical and safe experiences that can be used to educate the participating players.

Gameworld Elements - Other Agents

The most interesting component of the would-be game is the use of other agents. To make the simulation more immersive, the use of real people the player is familiar with would be designed in the style of the times through image-generation AI. The player would need to consent to providing the game the images with which to work with and define their relationship to that player as to not create awkward scenarios. This is also part of the appeal to create more mundane scenarios, as preparing to go to the new world with one's family, or viewing the first movie ever with one's friends are more interesting experiences than doing so with pre generated NPCs. In the case of the Bazaar, perhaps the most important characters for collecting the required item are used with the likeness of the player's submitted relations as well. These agents will never look exactly like the real person, but rather feature a conversion such as the ones seen below. (Featuring my friend Calvin, who agreed to be converted for this project.)



Choices/Strategies/Behaviours

The experience is not entirely linear, as there are many ways to experience these events in the past. The simulation will be somewhat of a *Sandbox*, in which the player can interact with elements in any order and to differing results. Though the simulation will never allow the player to be violent or do things uncharacteristic of the time, perhaps they might be able to complete some bonus objectives that involve additional exploration.

Designated Goals

No matter the event, the player has a certain amount of goals to accomplish that works with the isolated experience. They will need to interact with characters in the world, the most important of which will appear using the faces of their submitted relations. The goal is to draw on these bonds to create a personal connection to the past.

Because the goal of the game is bound to the scenario, the specifics will change each time but generally be linked to points gained by participating in the simulated world.

As an example:

Visiting the first movie ever made with a friend, get 30 points before seeing the film itself. (Points can be gained buying snacks with the friend, talking with other visitors and hearing their thoughts, gaining additional historical context through newspapers, etc.)

Gameworld Elements - Obstacles

There will not be much in the way of obstacles in the game, beyond 'inconveniences' that require the player to do additional things and thus learn additional historical context. For example, the currency they have is not used in Rome and thus they must exchange it somewhere and learn how that was done at the time.

Gameworld Elements - Resources

These depend on the scenario, but will likely be currency and an inventory of sorts if they acquire items. This is relatively basic, but workable for our purposes.