Major Project – Anthony Woodward

# VR Horror Project

Project Proposal

## Introduction.

Horror games are all about immersion. If you want to scare a player, that player has to be totally engrossed in the content that the game is providing them. Without immersion, horror games simply stop being scary. Virtual Reality headsets, such as the Oculus Quest, are immersive technology platforms that allow the player to exist in a virtual reality. 6 degrees of movement, foviated rendering and hand interaction are some of the main features that make Virtual Reality headsets, and Virtual Reality media, more immersive and engaging compared to traditional mediums such as game consoles and computers. This is the foundation for the VR Horror game that I am proposing.

The VR Horror game I am proposing seeks to answer how the use of a spatialised soundtrack along with a Virtual Reality system of rendering and interaction impact the horror video game genre and engagement within a horror game?

## Aims and Objectives.

The two main aims of this negotiated project are:

* To create a highly engaging VR Experience that immerses the player using high-quality visuals and immersive spatialised audio.
* To create a true horror experience that uses the engagement of the player to increase the subjective scariness of the game.

## Cultural and Critical Context

When exploring existing works, it is important to consider VR, non-VR, horror, and non-horror examples, as technologies, frameworks, ideas and flaws from these transdisciplinary works can influence the design of my own VR Horror Game.

For instance, the Outer Wilds had an amazing soundtrack composed by Andrew Prahlow (REFERENCE HERE) which differed from most conventional video game soundtracks. Each musician from the main soundtrack was represented by characters in the solar system called Travelers. At the end of the 22 minute gameplay loop, the solar system is destroyed and reset. The entirety of the soundtrack can be heard at once if you play the game as intended, or you can explore and find each musician/traveller independently and listen to their section. Despite not being a VR or a Horror game, the Outer Wilds uses 3D spatial audio to tell a story through its soundtrack, a feature that engrossed me into the gameplay and help build an emotional connection between myself and the game world.

Another example of existing work is Five Nights at Freddy’s VR: Help Wanted. This is a VR adaptation of the hugely successful non-VR horror series. FNAF (Five Nights at Freddy’s) is an interesting horror title, where the entire gameplay consists of the player operating the controls in a security office. Whilst doing your job however, the animatronics from the Freddy Fazbears Pizzaria sneak through the building trying to get to the player, with the player checking cameras, hallways and listening for sounds to try and protect themselves. This game is a perfect example of how audio alone can be used to involve and scare players inside and outside of the VR medium, with simple noises like breathing and footsteps being used separately from the genuine threat to increase the panic levels of the player.

Ignoring audio and horror for a moment, its useful to look at other successful VR games such as No Man’s Sky. No Man’s sky is a great inspiration due to the work the development team did to ensure that the game is inclusive. The games options has settings for rendering the player model BLAH BLAH BLAH MORE RESEARCH

Its also worth taking my own works into consideration. I have extensive knowledge of the Unity 3D platform creating games such as Teki, Plasma Invaders, the VR game Void, and the VR art experience Unlikely Things. This experience gives me confidence when creating a VR Horror Game, as everything required to make a streamlined VR game such as locomotion and interaction is now common knowledge to me. My experience with audio is next to nothing, along with my experience in creating a story driven experience. These are the factors of the development that will be the highest risk, as there is still a lot for me to learn during development. This is my reasoning for attacking this project with Harri Bettsworth being the Composer and Sound Director for the project, as well as being a co-designer for the entire game. This allows me to focus entirely on the technical aspects of audio integration, where Harri can focus on the sound design itself.

## Design and Development

### Story

### Game Rules

### Technical details

## Audio

## Research Methodologies

## Risk Management

### Team management