THE BITÁCORA

AI AS SOLO GAME STUDIO DIRECTOR

AI EXPERIMENT

JANNUARY **2**026
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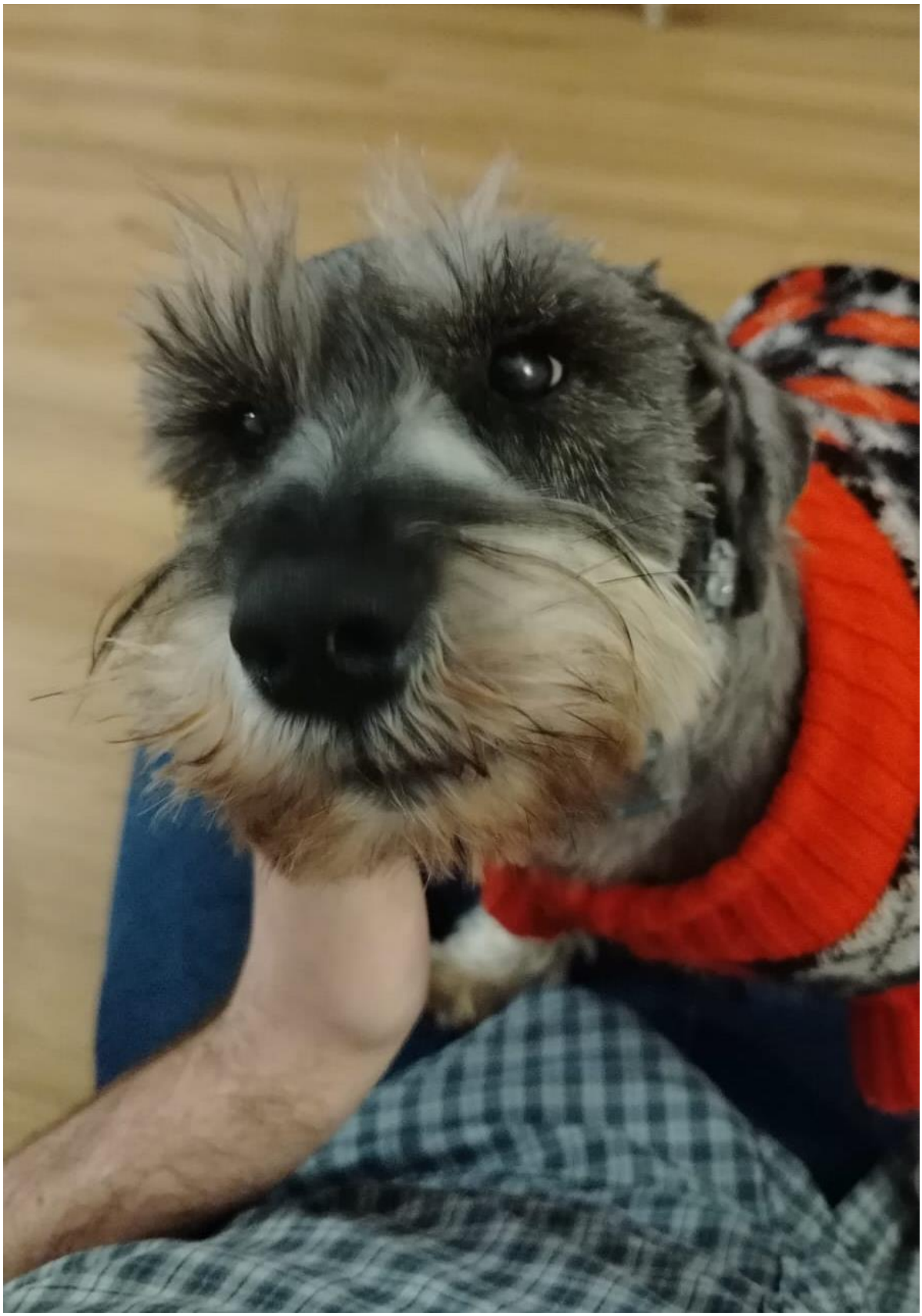


Entry 1 — week one results

The first week of the experiment is complete.

Did adding an AI a co-director make it easier to move forward with development, or did it introduce more noise?

Before this experiment, progress often felt inconsistent. Some weeks were productive and focused. Others were fragmented, filled with postponed decisions, partial progress, and a lingering sense of uncertainty.

This first week was intentionally constrained. The objective was not to move fast, but to align direction before acting.

Experiment status

The most important part of the week happened before any concrete work began.

Instead of jumping directly into planning or execution, the first sessions with the ai director were dedicated almost entirely to alignment.

We spent time clarifying what kind of outcome I was actually aiming for. Not just a date, but a size. Not just a game, but a purpose.

Whether the goal was a commercial product or simply a release. Whether this project should remain small or serve as a foundation for future work. Whether reuse of existing systems was desirable or necessary.

We also discussed past experiences. Where previous projects stalled. Which parts of development do I tend to avoid. Which aspects I enjoy, and which generate frustration. Images, references, and context from the current state of the project were shared to ground the conversation in reality.

This alignment phase was longer than expected, and deliberately so. Without it, any plan would likely have optimized for the wrong outcome. Taking the time to fully define the problem made the next steps far more precise.

Only after that alignment did we move into planning.

The first set of priorities was intentionally simple. They were not tasks I would have naturally chosen, but they were clearly connected to the stated goal. More importantly, I explicitly asked whether completing them would keep the project on track within the broader timeline, and requested a weekly plan broken down by role or hat.

That conversation was critical. Understanding why each task existed, how it related to what was already built, and how it supported the overall plan removed much of the usual hesitation.

Throughout the week, short follow-up conversations were used to show progress, validate direction, and resolve moments of distraction. When new ideas appeared, they were discussed with the ai director instead of immediately acted upon. This helped keep focus without suppressing creativity.

Experiment metrics

These metrics are subjective by design. They aim to measure experience and sustainability rather than raw output.

Planning accuracy

The initial plan reflected reality well. Most tasks progressed as expected, and adjustments were incremental rather than corrective.

Momentum

Work carried forward naturally across days. Having a clear sequence of priorities removed the need to re-decide what to do each morning.

Anxiety and mental noise

The week felt noticeably calmer. Direction was explicit, and uncertainty was lower than usual.

Rework level

Very little time was spent undoing or redoing work. Tasks moved forward with minimal reversal.

Game development update

From a game perspective, this project is a survival roguelike inspired by early versions of Mini Day Z, combined with a map structure influenced by warcraft 3 campaign layouts.

Each run takes place across procedurally generated maps with multiple paths, open and closed areas, shortcuts, blocked zones, ambush points, and optional bases that control key spaces. Exploration is not linear. Players constantly decide whether to confront enemies, take risks searching for resources, or bypass danger to preserve what they have.

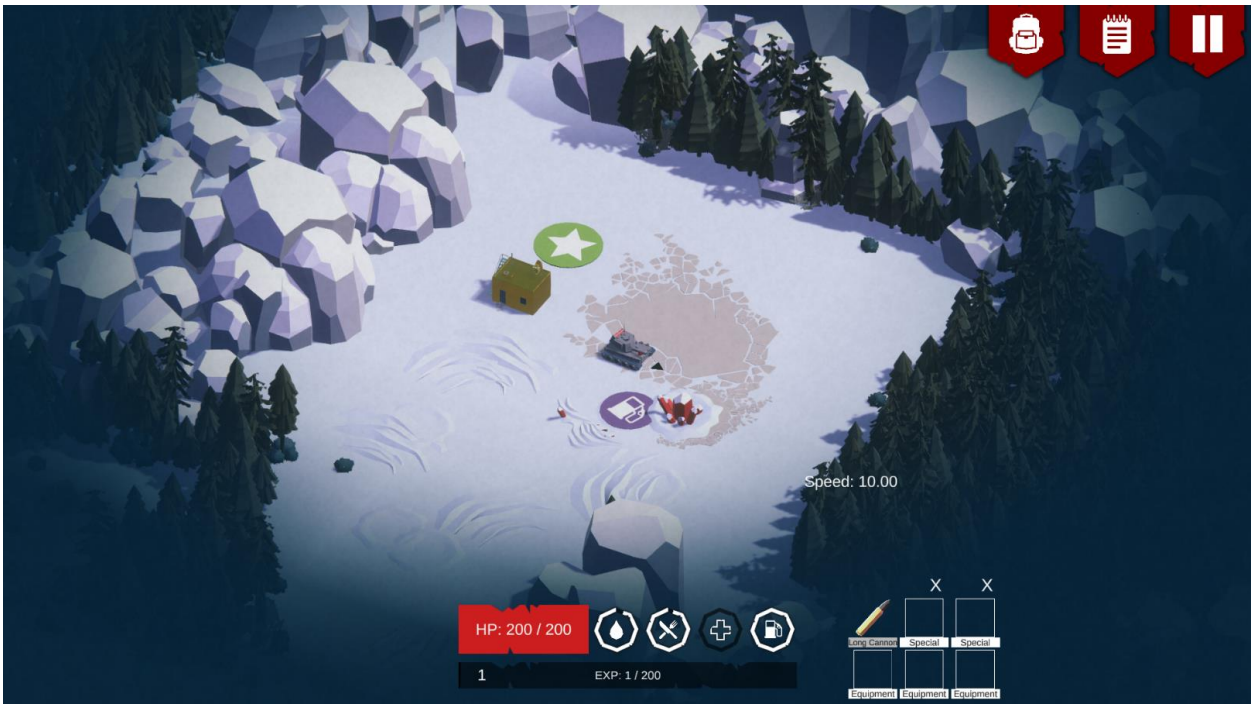
The player controls a tank or robotic vehicle operating in a post-apocalyptic world after a global war. Resources are scarce. Although the war has ended, various warlords remain, competing for power and hiring the player to eliminate high-value targets. Survival depends on managing limited supplies of water, food, fuel, weapons, equipment, and inventory space.

Fuel and energy are represented through red crystal resources, chosen both for mechanical clarity and visual contrast against the current frozen forest and mountain environments. These resources, along with food and water, define how far a run can go and which paths are viable.

Several production decisions were made to support faster completion. The game uses an isometric camera, low-poly 3d assets, and tanks or robots as characters. This removes most animation requirements, simplifies modeling, and reduces the need for fine visual detail, allowing focus on systems, balance, and moment-to-moment decision making.

During this first week, progress focused on closing MVP-level systems rather than polishing or expanding. Core enemy types were finalized, a progression system linking map information and experience was completed, and an initial version of the first boss was implemented for the demo and MVP scope.

None of these tasks were individually complex. The main difference was psychological. Having clear priorities made it easier to make imperfect decisions, accept unfinished edges, and close systems instead of endlessly refining them.



At this point, the project already resembles a minimal playable version. It could technically be released in a rough state. The role of the ai-assisted direction was not to rush that release, but to help consistently move toward closure without getting stuck on hesitation or over-optimization.

Key insight of the week

The main risk of acting on incomplete direction.

Taking the time to fully align goals, constraints, and personal tendencies before planning made execution easier. Not because the work became simpler, but because it became clearly bounded.

After one week, the experiment shows early but tangible benefits.

Progress feels calmer. Decisions feel lighter. Focus feels more intentional.

This does not prove the experiment will succeed. It does suggest that the structure is worth continuing.

Next entry

Entry 2 — week two results, testing MVP