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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Aim

The aim of our game is to help students cope with the stresses of university life by raising awareness of them. This is done by having the player balance three different meters, each representing a different area of academic life – studying, working and socialising.

## 1.2 Platform

The game will be developed for Windows PC standalone, and uses Unity 3D with C# and Javascript.

## 1.3 Target Audience

Our game's target audience is university students, aged between 17-26, who have a basic literacy in gaming. The content of the game – in particular university life – would be best suited to this demographic, as it reflects topics and issues that are encountered by the demographic on a daily basis.

After creating and distributing an online poll aimed at current and former university students, it was found that 78% of respondents used videogames to relieve stress. The types of games they played were varied but balanced, with 7 preferring games that were relaxing, 13 preferring games that took their mind off of their problems, 10 enjoying games that energised them to tackle their problems, and 8 preferring games involving other characters dealing with their own problems. With this in mind, the group moved towards designing a game that focused on exhilaration and excitement, without necessarily providing a calming or soothing effect.

The survey also showed that a majority (52%) of people who responded did not play games more when they were stressed, or less when they were stressed. As a result, the group decided that a game only aimed at calming the player would have little life outside of times when students felt stressed, i.e., before coursework deadlines and before exams.

Lastly, the survey showed that many respondents felt they and other students were ill-prepared for the stresses of university life. To that end, the group decided to gear the game towards raising awareness of how hectic and stressful university life can be, as opposed to dealing with it after the fact.

We have deliberately chosen not to aim the game towards specific sexes/genders, ethnic groups or other demographics, but we accept that due to the game's theme (university life), its constituent members (visibly able, predominantly white, living in the West), and the scope of the project itself (a 12-week intensive university project), the game will be necessarily biased towards white able-bodied individuals with some financial stability.

# 2 Game Mechanics

## 2.1 Gameplay

The game’s main mechanic is based on the traditional rock/paper/scissors. The player has to collect icons that represent actions that appear on the screen throughout the level. There are three types of action icons **WORK**, **STUDY** and **SOCIALISE**. By collecting these action icons the player fills up three status bars **MONEY**, **KNOWLEDGE** and **SOCIAL SKILLS**, respectively. However all of the status bars are related to one another. When the player collects the **WORK** icon the **MONEY** status bar will increase but the **KNOWLEDGE** status bar will decrease. When the player collects a **STUDY** icon the **KNOWLEDGE** status bar will increase but the **SOCIAL SKILLS** bar will decrease. When the player picks up a **SOCIALISE** icon the **SOCIAL SKILLS** status bar will increase but the **MONEY** status bar will decrease. If the player does not collect any icons, after a certain time all of the gauges will begin to decrease steadily. There are two variations of each action: there are normal action icons and there are bonus action icons that give double the amount of **MONEY/KNOWLEDGE/SOCIAL SKILLS**.

There is a stress meter within the game which gauges the players stress level depending on how well they are doing through the level. At the beginning of the level the stress meter is at zero. If any of the player’s status bars drops below 10% the stress level will begin to increase steadily until the status bar is over 10% again.

The game is unending but is split into sections of time. Each of these sections will represent one month in the calendar. At the end of a month there will be an **EVENT**. These events will test the levels of the status bars. The player must pass a certain threshold on a specific status bar or they will ‘gain’ stress. The amount of stress ‘gained’ will be a corresponding to amount missing in the status bar to pass the threshold. For example if the player is coming across a **SOCIAL EVENT** the player must have above 70% of their **SCOCIAL SKILLS** meter filled to gain no stress. However if the player only has 60% of their stress meter filled they will gain an extra 10% stress to their stress meter.

As the player passes through an event the game will go in to slow motion and the player will see if the passed the threshold. If they pass the threshold they will get a ‘congratulations’ message on the screen and they will continue on with the game. If the player does not pass the threshold they will be shown how far under the threshold they are and the percentage that they are under the threshold will be added to their stress meter.

## 2.2 Player Controls

### 2.2.1 PC

The controls for the PC game only involve the left button. The player collects action iconss by clicking on them as they appear.

### 2.2.2 Android/Touchscreen

The controls of android involve the player using their finger as the same function as the left click of a mouse.

## 2.3 Graphical User Interface (GUI)

When the player starts the game there will be the team logo followed by a ‘start’ screen. This screen will have the name of the game and artwork from the game on it and a ‘START’ button on the screen.

When the player presses start they will be taken to the main menu. On the main menu there are three buttons: ‘PLAY’ ‘OPTIONS’ ‘QUIT’. Between all of these menus there will be transitions through various artwork throughout the game.

The in-game graphical user interface will consist of **FOUR** status bars: Money, Social skills, knowledge and stress. The money, social skills and knowledge status bars will be placed just above the centre of the screen. The stress status bar will be placed about these three in an arc shape.

# 3 Game Elements

## 3.1 Characters

The player will have the option to choose from two playable characters within the game: One male, one female. The choice between these characters is cosmetic. This was chosen as not to create a bias towards either gender. There are no other characters within the game.

## 3.2 Environment

There are three environments within the game. A ‘work’ environment, a ‘study’ environment and a ‘social’ environment. The environments within the game are also part of the GUI. They are key in telling the player what event they are leading up to. For example if the player is leading up to a study event they will be going through a study environment. The environments will change as the events change.

## 3.3 Objects

The only objects in the game are the action icons that player can collect. There are two versions on each action icon. There will be a normal type of action that will regularly appear. The second type of action icon gives the player double the amount either money/knowledge/social skills. The bonus action icons will be larger and will have a gold lining with golden particle effect surrounding the action.

# 4 Story/Theme

The game's story and plot are not explicitly stated; rather, they act as metaphors for the player's academic life. The game follows a protagonist who represents the player. The player is running down a continuous path that represents the academic year passing by – they continually move towards significant events in their academic life, such as exams, parties, and workdays.

The player must continually balance three meters, each of which operate as a metaphor for balancing the activities they pursue during their academic life – these meters also influence a fourth meter, which is the stress meter – a literal representation of the stress experienced when balancing different activities.

# 5 Game Progression

The game is unlimitedly continuous and only ends when the players stress meter reaches 100. As the player goes through the game the icons will appear incrementally faster and the status bars will start to reduce in value at a faster rate making the game more difficult for the player to sustain the high levels needed to pass the thresholds of the events.

# 6 System Menus

## 6.1 Main Menu

The main menu will appear after the initial splash screen with the game name and logo. In the main menu there will be three buttons the player can select:

* **PLAY**
* **OPTIONS**
* **QUIT**

When the player selects the play button they are launched directly in to the game. When the player hits the pause menu they are sent to another menu through a transition. The quit button exits the game and closes the application.

## 6.2 Options Menu

### 6.2.1 PC

In the options menu there will two options for the game. The player will be able to edit the audio in the game. There will be two sliders, one that alters the music in the game and one that alters the sound effects in the game. There will be a back button on the bottom right hand corner of the screen. When the player presses back they will

### 6.2.2 Android

In the android version of the game to reduce the menu navigation and space required there will be two icons in the top right hand corner of the main menu that will allow the player to mute either the music, sound effects or both.

## 6.3 In-Game Pause Menu

While the player is playing the game they can press the ESCAPE button or left-click on the pause button on the top right hand corner of the GUI. When the player pauses the game will be paused and the pause menu will transition will in to the centre of the screen.

### 6.3.1 PC

The pc version of the game will have four buttons on the screen:

* **RESUME**
* **RESTART**
* **OPTIONS**
* **MAIN MENU**

The ‘RESUME’ button will resume the game and the place the player pause the game. The ‘RESTART’ button will allow the player to restart the game without having to go back to the main menu. The ‘OPTIONS’ button will take the player to an identical version of the options menu but will not cover the entire screen. This menu will cover the same area and the pause menu does. The ‘MAIN MENU’ button will return the player to the main menu.

### 6.3.2 ANDROID

The android version of the pause menu will not have the options menu. Instead, like the main menu the icons to mute the music and sound effects will be in the top right hand corner. The rest of the menu will work exactly as the PC version does.

## 6.3 Menu Interaction

