Secure, Contain, Protect: Secret Laboratory is a very recent game, which is not very popular not due to its publish date, but rather because of its specific, underground, indie content. It hasn’t been too long since I’ve been playing it, but it very quickly became my favourite due to its concept. I found it very randomly: I was browsing Youtube and suddenly, I came across a video of a funny gameplay moment, which I then didn’t understand – and hence my urge to find out what it was all about!

SCP: SL, as the game is called for short, revolves entirely around an online community called SCP, which is basically a wiki – a webpage containing multiple original horror stories, all carefully crafted and blended into individual entries, each marked with the tag “SCP”. An “SCP” can be anything that behaves anomaly and it to humans can be anything from beneficial, like SCP-999, a blob which makes you feel better when you hug it, to things, concepts - so dangerous, that they threaten not only human existence, but the entire universe’s, like SCP-682, a god-like sentient reptile.

What all of these stories have in common is the setting: the main lore involves the private, secret company called the SCP Foundation – which is funded by the governments and aims to find such anomalies in the world and jail them in heavily guarded containment areas called “sites”. Whenever there’s an anomaly happening, the special agents of SCP are deployed. The Foundation’s main goal is to prevent the public from knowing about SCP’s existence so as to not cause mass hysteria. The “sites” consist of chambers, each for an individual SCP depending on what kind of containment procedures the entity needs.

The beauty of this community lies in the originality of each anomalous story. For example, an infinite IKEA with no apparent exit which becomes hostile at night, and the workers start chasing you shouting that their worktime is over. Or, a bright red lake in Canada which serves as a portal to another dimension, out of which multiple creepy, hostile, out-of-this-world beings emerge. A container of pills that heal all your diseases magically. Or a creature that tries to kill everyone talking about it using verbal communication, sensing who’s saying those words and being able to detect their location telepathically.

There has been a lot of games of SCP, and many Garry’s mods were also created. However, this specific game based on Unity (Secret Laboratory), is the most engaging of them all. It’s a multiplayer, non-competitive, strategy, role-play, first-person shooter, labyrinth game.

Each round is not connected to the others. At the beginning of every new round, a new world is generated; that is, a new site where SCPs are contained. This generation is random and different every round. When the round begins, a security breach has just happened at the facility, and you spawn as either of the few roles: D-class, hardcore prisoners who were taken out of jail to serve as lab rats for experiments with SCPs and just aim to escape, Scientist – the people who conduct those experiments and also want to escape, Security guards – who work for the Foundation, or one of the playable SCPs currently included in the game who just enjoy their amazing superpowers and have to kill every human being currently alive there.

Since the facility outlay is different each game, it’s a labyrinth that the human character players need to go through. Also, the site has a few levels, some of them are more heavily guarded for more dangerous SCPs, and the checkpoints between the map levels are done only with authorization, which D-class and Scientists do not have. They spawn at the deepest level and have to go through all facility levels to the escape point, facing multiple dangers both from the guards and the anomalous entities themselves.

The playable SCPs currently include a plague doctor who instakills players near him and turns them into playable zombies, a plaster sculpture which goes at insane speeds if he’s not in your sight, the “shy guy” – an ultra-anxious humanoid who goes through a nightmare-inducing killing spree if someone looks at his face (great combos are made with the plaster sculpture due to the avoid-sight/ensure-sight mechanic), a self-created AI which gained control over the camera and door locking, a male humanoid with a rotting body who manipulates the dimensions of reality, and a horrifying four-legged creature with red spikes which uses sound for coordination.

What makes the game so unique? Well, you can play both as one of the innocents or one of the bad guys – and it’s equally fun, actually! Apart from this, it’s a 3D orientation puzzle, something rather rare. But not only that, the solutions to these puzzles depend on other players as well, both your allies and enemies. For example, you just found a keycard (authorization card) as a D-class, so now you can progress to the next level of the facility! OOPS….. another D-class just stole it and ran away towards the exit… :))))

Also, depending on the server, you can roleplay ingame depending on your role (people can use the lore in the official webpage as a basis). There’s also guns in the game, adding some decent, smooth shooting. There’s just one way to communicate: voice chat. There is no text chat, no profiles, no rankings, making the game feel extremely realistic, which increases the spooky factor greatly.

All in all, it’s great fun to play both with peers and random people, and I often find telling myself “oh, well.. just one more round!!”.