Game Jam Post Mortem

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Our self-decided theme for our game jam game was “experiment”. The game fits the theme well in a handful of ways, such as with the narrative, level design, and gameplay. For the narrative, our game fits the theme as the rat the player controls is a rat that has been experimented on by scientists. The rat must now escape from the lab where it has been experimented on. In terms of the level design, each room has a mini obstacle or puzzle wherein the player must use experimentation tactics to find buttons in each room to solve the level’s puzzle. Similarly, the level’s puzzle is reliant on the player pressing buttons and seeing what they do, experimenting, to determine what the answer is. Once the answer is found, all the doors will be open and the player can escape or advance to the next level if this was a larger game. Through these three aspects, our game fits well with the theme of “experiment”.

There were two main takeaways that our group learned from this game jam experience. Primarily, we learned the importance of being able to adapt to different challenges that came our way. For instance, busy schedules, code bugs, or changing milestones. We used Discord to easily change what we were doing or our goals for the game. That being said, however, we did have some inefficiently with making sure to properly divvy up tasks and track progress. The only time we did this was when we met in person during classes and when we had in class time to work. When we did do these meetings, however, we effectively made sure that we were aware of what we left to be done and who should do it. Moreover, although is a common problem, our team also made our game slightly too big at the start of brainstorming, but we ended up cutting a couple mechanics out of our game such as falling vials or a cheese boss enemy. In the end, it would have been nice to add more challenges to the rooms in the level to make getting to the buttons a little more interesting.

One of the big things we would change for next time would be to try to avoid getting too attached to making final art assets and instead greybox the level and make sure our mechanics got done first. We were able to include most of the mechanics we wanted, but not all. We would also want to ensure that we had a better action plan for tracking when tasks were due and any issues in code. We would have used HackNPlan or Asana to make a better plan of action and to track milestones better as well. On another note, we also would have preferred to practiced better communication with puzzle designs. There was some confusion with how the puzzle worked or was solved which was cleared up while in person. But, because it was initially explained over text, there was some confusion about how the puzzle worked. It would have been best to meet in person more to avoid this confusion.