Homelessness Simulator Description Summary

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Project Overview

The homelessness simulation is a project designed to recreate the experience of homelessness as accurately as possible. The goal of the simulation would be for the user to survive as long as possible while being presented with hazards that are based on interviews conducted with people who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness.

Purpose

The simulation is intended to assist the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless—a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping eradicate homelessness in Chicago by helping those in need—with succeeding in their mission. While the simulation is meant to appeal to the emotions of those who have misconceptions about homelessness, the considerations that must be made are that the topic of homelessness is serious and should not be taken lightly in regards to how it is portrayed within the simulation.

Scope of the Work

Currently, there are very few interactive options available about homelessness. The context of the work will involve combining real locations within Chicago with stories compiled through interviews from those experiencing homelessness, all rendered into an interactive environment.

Scope of the Product

As a simulator replicating a problem with several different aspects contributing to how difficult it is to survive, the simulation should adhere to those aspects and their randomness as closely as possible. It would include dynamic weather conditions and time of day, unpredictable situations such as health issues and police activity, and the difficult choices that real people had to make while living on the streets.

Stakeholders

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless is the main client for the homelessness simulation, as they are the main contributors to the creation of the project. Hands-on users will consist of other organizations that are dedicated to ending homelessness that may benefit from the use of the simulation at their respective locations. Other hands-on users will be the non-homeless population who will have access to use the simulation from the client, and the homeless individuals who have provided their first-hand accounts and experiences and actually test out the simulation in order to make it as accurate as possible.

Mandated Constraints

The mandated constraints for the development of this project is that the simulation should be able to run on Windows 10+ since that is most widely accessible, and have low system requirements so that it does not require a super computer in order to run. It would also have to be created on a game engine such as Unity or Unreal Engine. Due to the detailed nature of the simulation, there would be a budget constraint of $250,000 on behalf of the CCH.

Naming Conventions and Definitions

Due to the nature of the development project, some terms need to be clearly defined in order to avoid confusion or misinterpretation while reading the report. The intended use of specific terms is clearly defined and the reader is told what is not meant by certain terms. Specific notation is given as to what specification is used for the provided diagrams, in that the document is to follow the UML 2.0 guidelines as defined by the Object Management Group.

Relevant Facts and Assumptions

Assumptions that were made during the brainstorming session was that the user should be able to use a computer, has no prior experience with simulation games, and does not have a guaranteed knowledge of hardware configuration. These assumptions were made so that the client would not have to concern themselves with these details as they will be handled by the team developing the simulation.