**Game Concept Pitch: *The Pine Barrens***

Game Concept Development & Production

09/24/14

**Team Antique Christ**

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**Abstract**

*The Pine Barrens* is currently in development as a single-player point-and-click adventure game slated for release on the PC. Gameplay is derived from pixel-art precedents including the slew of genre staples created by LucasArts & Telltale, with added mechanics included for the sake of cohesion and innovation. The game’s art direction, then, is inspired by SNES and GBC-era screen resolution and color palettes. This aesthetic has been uniquely styled with horror tropes in mind—mostly as an attempt to imbue the game’s atmosphere with a sense of mystery and dread. To this extent, the art direction is meant to amplify and accentuate the intended narrative, which follows the plight of a man stranded amidst the fabled trees of the titular New Jersey forest. As a tale of ghosts, demons, smartphones, and cranberries, *The Pine Barrens* exists as the contemporary *Monkey Island* remix you never knew you needed.

**Audience**

This title will target a core demographic of casual and hardcore gamers aged 16-54. Essentially, the goal is to market to consumers interested in any of the myriad genres that *The Pine Barrens* touches upon, including horror, point-and-click, thriller, indie, adventure, retro, and narrative-driven games. Based upon research of Steam’s distribution platform, it seems likely that core players will have moderate to high levels of gaming experience, yet may not necessarily self-identify as “gamers” in the traditional sense. This demographic, then, is typically more open to alternative game experiences, and yet also more likely to evangelize titles they find to be remarkable.

On the complete other end of the spectrum, our goal is to simultaneously target aging fans of the point-and-click adventure genre—the type of players that may be interested in the juxtaposition of nostalgia and fresh content that our game affords. These players will likely have enjoyed zeitgeist PC staples including *Myst, Leisure Suit Larry, Grim Fandango,* and *Sam & Max.* Owing to the mild drought of these game types in past years, it’s our belief that *The Pine Barrens* will emerge in a relatively blue ocean market with only rare instances of competition.

**Precedents**

The *Monkey Island* series stands as one of our closest analogues in terms of the visual and mechanical themes that will be incorporated into the work. Not only do these games have a similar aesthetic and ludic environment, but they also follow a parallel narrative structure. To this extent, the only real modifications come as a result of our title’s innovative smartphone-based mechanics and dark-realist story concept.

Other precedents include, but are not limited to:

1. *Myst*
   1. Mechanics
   2. Atmosphere
2. *Sam & Max* Series
   1. Mechanics
   2. Art Direction
3. *Leisure Suit Larry* Series
   1. Mechanics
   2. Art Direction
4. *Machinarium*
   1. Mechanics
   2. Structure
5. Telltale’s *The Walking Dead* Series
   1. Mechanics
   2. Atmosphere
   3. Narrative
6. *Sword & Sworcery EP*
   1. Mechanics
   2. Art Direction
   3. Atmosphere
   4. Target Audience
7. *Lone Survivor*
   1. Art Direction
   2. Atmosphere
   3. Target Audience
8. *Broken Age*
   1. Mechanics
   2. Target Audience

**Innovation**

Our title’s main innovations revolve around the utilization of a modern setting—thereby imbuing the older and traditionally more rigid genre of point-and-click adventure games with a unique narrative and novel mechanics. In the past, these types of games would restrict player behavior to environmental interaction—essentially selecting from a few options in any given scene. *The Pine Barrens*, in contrast, provides an innovative GUI in the form of a contemporary smartphone. This device, while incorporating narrative function, will primarily be used as a way to differentiate gameplay through its various apps and utilities.

As an example of this, the protagonist utilizes a flashlight application on his phone in order to shed light on darker areas of the environment. In a similar vein, main characters will use SMS in order to communicate with the hero. Ultimately, our goal is to employ renewed context as a way to freshen up an aging genre. Our smartphone, then, stands at the center of that—a piece of contemporary technology that facilitates new possibilities within our chosen ludic environment.

**Production Plan**

*Deliverable Completion Dates*

* 09/30: High Level Design Document
* 10/02: First Scene Playable
* 10/09: Second Scene Playable
* 10/16: Third Scene Playable
* 10/23: Fourth Scene Playable, First Scenes Finalized
* 10/30: All Scenes Playable, Game Finalized

**Team Delegation**

*William Herbert*

1. Producer
2. Narrative Designer

*Michael-Vincent Espanol*

1. Lead Interface Designer
2. Illustrator

*Nolan Manning*

1. Art Director
2. Interface Designer

*William Manning*

1. Lead Programmer
2. GitHub Manager

*Stuart Ramgolam*

1. Programmer
2. Playtester
3. Mascot

**Deliverables**

A playable point-and-click adventure game complete with the following:

1. Five scenes (or rooms) worth of content
2. Three scripted endings
3. Zip file with all art assets & documentation
4. At least three full playthroughs for the purposes of debugging

**Tools**

*GitHub*

1. Communication
2. Management
3. File Storage

*Unity*

1. Programming
2. Debugging
3. Playtesting

*Photoshop*

1. Asset Creation
2. Interface Design
3. Animation & Sprites

*Facebook*

1. Communication
2. Management

**Risk Analysis**

Our team has pinpointed a few minor risks associated with the production of this game. For the artists, the main development hurdle seems to be the timely completion of necessary assets. Because our development schedule hinges upon scene-by-scene assembly and construction, it’s absolutely essential that programmers are not blocked from completing game areas due to missing visual assets. This is a very different issue than those faced by the programmers, who seem to be most worried about implementing two key features: the smartphone interface (very important mechanically) and the pixel doubling function (which helps us upscale to larger displays without antialiasing). Overall, the main concern seems to be that the game won’t be finished in time—a somewhat unsurprising mentality given how little experience the majority of our team has in game development.

**Sample Assets**

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