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CMPM 148 - Interactive Stories
Final Project - Write Up

With Love, The Universe

Experience Goal

For this project, I wanted to immerse the user into multiple worlds. I wanted the player to feel as if they are really working on an important mission. I believe with a romantic partner, the player will feel more immersed and realize the seriousness of this interactive experience, which will overall produce high levels of interactivity.

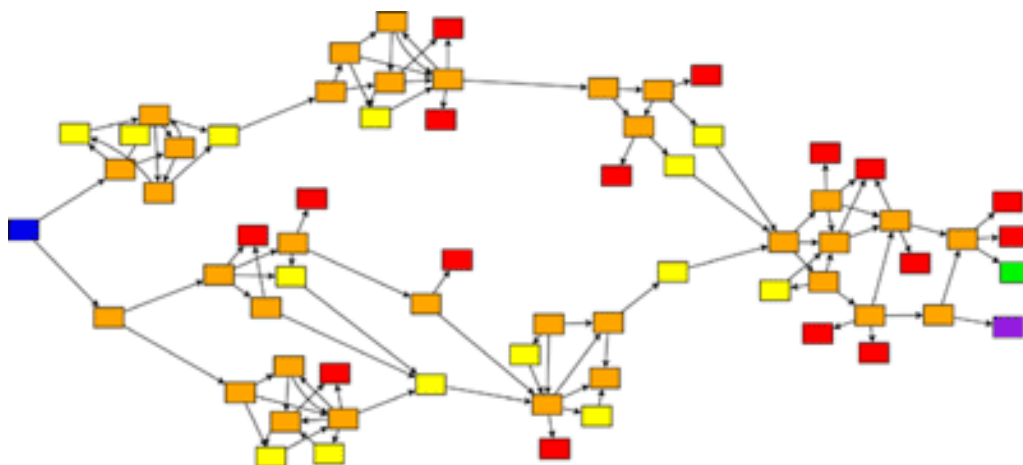
I decided for this project to be centered around a multi-verse theme narrative and the player's goal is to get their wife back to safety after a tragic accident at their research labs. The player feels devastated and must maintain focus in trying to look for her. The player will experience emotions of happiness, sadness, excitement, horror, levels of thrill, and some lighthearted moments.

Narrative Stance and Rationale

The story is based on multiple realities and as such I decided to take the narrativity into multiple dimensions of narrativity as well. As such, this story tends to go to second person, first person, and then to third person where necessary. I believe this gives the player a sense of how a bazaar effect when traveling through multiple universes might appear. I also give no name to the main character and gender so that the player can feel even more immersed in the narrative. This is a story about you and your romantic partner.

Story Structure

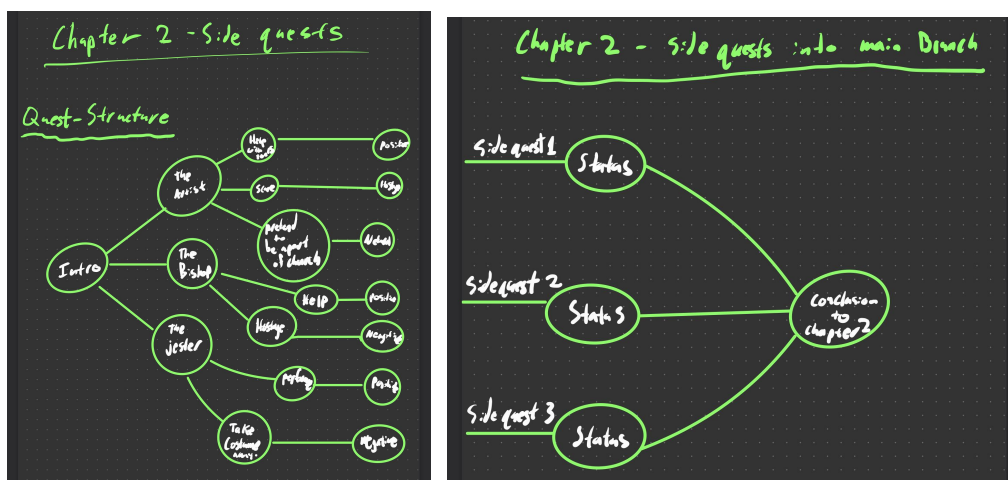
For this project, I decided to go with the Quest Structure. As I wanted the player to make use of the world and the space given. They will visit interesting locations and will meet interesting characters.



I believe going with this structure will let me explore multiple types of content and add more depth to this interactive story. An inspiration for the type of structure I was going for was the Witcher 3. In the Witcher, the stories were told in sequence and each quest had an effect at the end level. This let's players build their own story no matter what path they take. Each playthrough is different every single time.

Key Ink Variables / State Tracking

With the help of global variables, I was able to keep track of positive and negative states. The player will either go through a negative branching story or go through a positive one depending on their choices throughout the narrative.



By the graphs shown above, you can see how chapter 2 was set-up. Each main event has a positive or negative state and depending on how the player interacts with those quests that's how it will affect the ending of the game. This is another callback to The Witcher; depending on the player's choices with Ciri, the player can get a neutral, good, or bad ending. For this type of

game, I wanted the player to make sure they make their choices wisely. Exploring more of the world will reward the player with additional items and more dialogue options.

Ink affordances: Text/Code

I used weaves, global variables for the positive and negative states, boolean logic, a simplified inventory system for better pacing, subdivided Knots for efficient structuring, variable texts, direct choices, and sticky choices.

```

1  # Python script
2  # What time is it?
3  -> what_time_is_it
4
5  # What time is it
6
7  # You tell the alarm and notice it's 8:00AM.
8  There's someone next to you fast asleep. It's the love of your life, your wife.
9  She notices that you hit the alarm and turns her way to you.
10 -> wife_wakeup_first_conversation
11
12 # wife_wakeup_first_conversation
13
14 Good morning baby, how'd you sleep?
15
16 * I slept okay, how about you?
17
18 After I had day I went up next to you, it's an amazing feeling. I've never felt so safe and loved in my life... so yeah pretty great haha.
19
20 Amelia: want me to make you some breakfast? -> kitchen
21
22 * I had some strange dream
23
24 What? You want me to dream?
25
26 Well, we were in some mysterious planet and an explosion happened and you were there...
27
28 What do you mean??
29
30 In a confused state you respond, well what about you? Don't you care for your own little mood?
31
32 After well, if it came down to a situation like that and we had no other options, I would want you to live instead of me. That's how much you mean to me.
33 Oh Amelia...
34
35 Amelia: want me to make you some breakfast? -> kitchen
36
37 * I feel refreshed, you want to head over to the Lab?
38
39 Sure, let's get dressed. -> The_Lab
40
41 # Kitchen
42
43 # Lab
44
45 Use coffee Flask - False
46
47 [That would be nice, but before you leave... ]
48
49 I feel exactly the same way, You're the love of my life, my best friend, and I never want to lose you. I love you, Amelia.
50
51 Little Amelia gets worried, you get ready by taking a shower and get dressed... -> kitchen_half
52
53 * I am sorry, I'm just going to get a pastry and some coffee, but before I leave...
54
55 I feel exactly the same way, You're the love of my life, my best friend, and I never want to lose you. I love you, Amelia.
56
57 Amelia I love you. I'll wait you at the Lab.
58
59 ** [ You pull on your own clothes and go to the kitchen to get the pastry and to pour some coffee into your coffee flask.]
60 -> coffee Flask = True
61 // coffee Flask
62 -> The_Lab
63
64 # Kitchen_half
65 // Coffee Flask

```

I believe I used plenty of ink affordances for this type project. I know I could have made things more complicated, but I kept it clean and organized. An example of this was the inventory system of the game. Instead of designing something intricate, I decided to rely on boolean logic with global variables. This increased the pacing of the story considerably. I believe pacing in an interactive game is important, especially when the game is based solely on dialogue.

Discourse example / Demonstration

```

324 - Let's move on.
325 VAR ai_name = " "
326 We should probably give you a name...
327
328 * [Joi]
329 ~ ai_name = "Joi"
330 * [Li]
331 ~ ai_name = "Li"
332 * [Marston]
333 ~ ai_name = "Marston"
334
335 - Yeah, {ai_name} sounds good.
336
337 {ai_name}: I've changed my name parameters to "{ai_name}."
338 {ai_name}: I've detected a strong energy source near the chapel from here.
339
340 {ai_name}: Would you like to proceed to head there first?
341
342 - Yeah sure let's go check it out, but first let me get into something more suited to these times.
343
344 * You spot some extra farm clothes near the horses. You put them on and head to the Chapel.
345 -> Scope_the_area
346
347 = Scope_the_area
348

```

Here we see the AI character I programmed into my interactive game. The AI helps the player in their journey and provides tools that the player can interact with.

I believe adding an AI character to the story helps bring some form of companionship to the player when the world feels massive thanks to the multiverse narrative setting. Over the course of the journey, the player will experience times that they don't know anything about the timeline setting they are in. That's where your AI companion will come in with any relevant information, ideas, or probabilities. An inspiration I got for this character was from the film *Interstellar*. The astronauts had an AI named, "TARS" that helped them get across a heavy gravity planet, and brought probabilities to the astronauts with any challenging task. Similarity, that's how I designed this project's AI to be.

Something Cool

Not only did I do a solo project but I learned some Italian too! When traversing one of the worlds I had to create a translation model so that the player can speak to the civilians. One of the locations I visited was Italy, so I had to translate direct dialogue from the NPC to the player, so the timeline can feel more authentic and more immersive to the player for that particular time period.

The challenge here was the fact that I had to translate every single Italian phrase used in the chapter 2 section of the game. I found it to be rewarding after replaying that section as it really does make the player feel like they were in Italy. In any interactive game, as a designer, it's one's job to make the world feel alive for the player. I did research on Italy during the 15th century and made sure aesthetics felt the time period well. I believe adding realism to a fictional setting makes the player feel a whole lot more immersed into the game.

In the end, I believe that I designed a fun, interesting, and immersive interactive story experience. A game where the player feels immersed in almost every aspect of the game. I feel that this game checks all the boxes narrative and provides a unique story experience to the player.

(Continued.)

Resources

Here are the resources I used to complete this project:

- 1) The Ink documentation
<https://github.com/inkle/ink/blob/master/Documentation/WritingWithInk.md>
- 2) Google Translate <https://translate.google.com/>
- 3) Jon Ingold - Sparkling Dialogue: A Masterclass
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRfNtvFVRo>
- 4) Inspirations: The Witcher 3, The Marvel Multiverse Saga, Interstellar, Inception, Blade Runner 2049.
- 5) The History website <https://www.history.com/topics/renaissance/renaissance>