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### Abstract

What would it be like to take a trip to space and land in a whimsical fantasy world, with adorable beings greeting you as you explore. The nature of the planet is blooming and you begin to explore. Turns out all the residents of this land are very friendly!

Celestial Wilds is my interactive 3D world, where the user gets to experience what it would be like to land in a friendly, whimsical world through the perspective of an astronaut. It's meant to be fantastical and inspired by science fiction with no concerns of any threats, and encourages a feeling of awe and wonder. It'll begin with a scene of the rocket gently landing on the new planet, and guiding the user into the mindset that this is an unknown place, where they are provided with the ability to roam. Many people in the past have explored this concept and created these sort of open world games, where the player has free control of where to go and choose what to interact with. Examples include open sandbox games like [Minecraft](#), and [Subnautica](#) which have created this sort of feeling for their players. You are placed in an open world, without much direction or instruction and are free to roam and explore as you wish. The game [Journey](#) is also an experience where the user feels this sort of awe and wonder when you initially join the game. Even Nintendo's [Zelda: Breath of the Wild](#), although it gives more

directions, gives the user limited information when you begin the game. You hear this voice calling out to you and you have no clue where you are, why you're there, or who the voice is. Some of these games explore the idea of what it would be like to try to survive this new land and engage with hostile NPCs that try to attack you and where you have limited resources. But although these games can be fun, a game like Journey which does not include any hostility, a traditional inventory, or any survival mechanics, creates a more calm experience and focuses more on the actual story. This is more of the mood I strive to create with Celestial Wilds. [Outer Wilds](#) is another game that mixes this sci-fi with lots of natural elements, which I found inspiring to this project.

In Celestial Wilds the user is put directly in the new world and is encouraged to walk around and find out about what and who is around. The opening scene will help the user understand that they are an astronaut who just landed on this mysterious new planet. They will wonder to themselves "Where am I?" and "What is there to see?". The ultimate goal is to make the audience feel that way from the beginning. The user lands in a forest filled with cherry blossoms and wondrous visual aesthetics like flower petals falling and the wind shaking the trees, leaving them enchanted. This is all viewed from a third person view of the astronaut model, behind them. I chose this because I wanted it to be clear who the user was playing as. Especially, since it helps the user pick up on context without explicitly telling that to them. The textures and materials used are all meant to look like nature. I specifically use low poly materials, to keep the same aesthetic style throughout the experience. I wanted to keep it cute and fun, and strive away from realistic ones. Even the NPCs are round, small, and lowpoly. Adding a river to my environment brings more elemental elements like water to diversify the assets. The music is dainty and calm to match the flowers and the friendly creature's the user finds along the

way. I find that a lot of the games that I previously mentioned, have music that brings so much emotion into the experience, so I was inspired to select music that also emphasizes peace and curiosity. The addition of soft pink fog makes it all the more mystical and ensures that the user doesn't view everything all at once.

As they continue along the path, the user learns more about the people that reside on this newly explored planet by approaching them, and engaging in dialogue with them. This dialogue will be more linear rather than branching and will be the main form of interaction. The little residents will be animated with the pack that they came with and provide information about their world and greetings, in addition to the ability to walk around. They will all have different personalities to make it less monotonous and fun. These interactions will help the environment become more lively. It will create a type of environmental storytelling that all these other games provide as inspiration. I hope to center it around this curiosity. I hope to also add sound as part of the interactivity, by adding soft footstep sound effects when the user walks around.

My intended audience for my project is anyone who wants to seek and experience a more peaceful digital environment. It is a way to wind down and just take the world in as it is. A lot of games can be fast paced or goal oriented and everyday life can be overwhelming. This sort of environment can get your mind off of stressors and just keep your mind in the present as you explore. It's a place, merely to exist, and could even serve as mindfulness. It is also sci-fi and fantasy lovers, who love to slip away into these types of worlds specifically. Essentially, its a digital rest spot both in a literal and metaphorical sense.

If I had more time, I would've loved to add different areas that the user could walk to and add more elements that add environmental storytelling, such as the ability to find objects and continue to explain the land and its people. Unfortunately I had to restrict the character to a

single path and made sure there were colliders so the user wouldn't go off too far and get lost.

But expanding it would've been a fun addition. Building Celestial Wilds has gotten me excited about exploring other types of worlds like this and I hope that it inspires people to do the same and engage with content like this.