Where To?

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Executive Summary

Where To? is a 2D memory and exploration based game playable on PC.
Set in a fictional Old West world where you are the train's ticket checker the game presents itself as a more lighthearted game despite it's setting. Where To? genre fills a rarely seen one in the current video game market using memory as it's main gameplay mechanic. The focus is to immerse the player in the world by performing his job and through interaction with the characters while simultaneously feeling the franticness of the Old West as he patrols the train.

Game Overview

Game Idea:

Where To? is a very casual yet challenging experience, where the player strives for being the best train inspector the country has ever seen. He has to have the sharpest memory in the West if he wants to punch all the tickets and kick out the evildoers who won't obey the law, while trying to achieve the best possible score along the trip.

Game Experience:

Our game stands out for its easy-to-learn and casual gameplay, where the player quickly learns the mechanics and the objectives, so that he can almost instantly jump into it. The player will mainly feel stressed or anxious playing the game, as they are responsible for making sure everything is in order and accounted for, which turns little mistakes into heavy punishments (since the gameplay isn't very demanding mechanically wise, but memory wise). However, we offer the possibility for the player to engage in a more relaxing and calm experience, since the player may choose to explore the country and the many interesting places it has, giving less importance to the score.

The World and Plot

Where to? sets place in a Old West world and as the game is in 2D, the elements that represent this theme such as the passenger and players clothes or the saloon doors in the train make the game feel more lighthearted instead of the opposite usual tense environment given to this theme.
There is a simple plot in *Where to?* that will serve to guide the player has the game progresses although it isn't supposed to be a main focus although **it isn't yet defined in this prototype**. This main storyline will be told through quests and objectives that the player would have at any given time. These would mostly include get to destination X, with the player moving through the map by completing levels.

The world map will also be subdivided in regions, with each region having it's own look and feel. A stage is affected by the region it takes place in, providing variations to the core gameplay. This was also not explored in the prototype as it wasnt the main focus.

Design Goals:

- A mechanically simple game so anyone can pick up.
- Expansive and intricate world displayed through dialogue and interaction.
- Have the player control the chaos that is the train's carriage.

Core Gameplay

The game starts with a map showing possible routes you can pick from what you have explored along your journey, this works as the lever picker. Each route will have a color when you over above it, this color symbolizes the difficulty of the track so you can choose more than one way to reach a desired point.
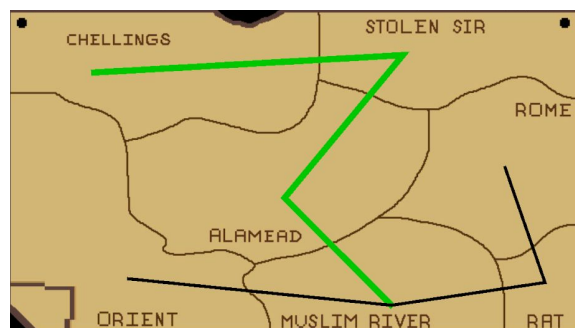
After choosing your level you will start your shift. As a train officer you must keep track of all the passengers on a train. You can do this by walking up to each one and performing an *inspect ticket* action. The ticket will only contain the destination of the passenger, for that is the only information the player has to memorize relative to each passenger (aside from the characteristics of the actual passenger). The passenger is then free to move around the train making your life harder. **Not only do you have to check the tickets as well as mercilessly throw out of the train passengers (*cheaters*) who should have already left, this is easily achieved by performing the *inspect ticket* action again. To help you out there is a route progress bar showing the order of the stations and where you are.**
The players score for every ticket checked and every *cheater* thrown out, but are very penalized for every double-checked passenger.
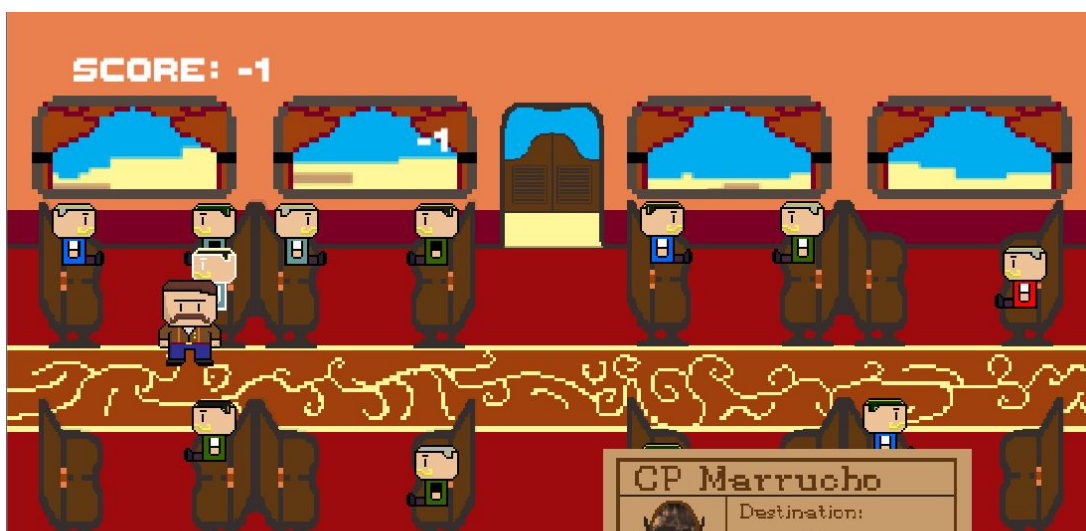
Competition:

- Papers Please: Served as an inspiration for this game as it serves for a proof of concept that monotonous tasks can be engaging when made challenging and meaningful. Despite this, it is quite different in a lot of ways like aesthetic, theme, goals, etc. The main similarities come from the fact that the core gameplay stays the same throughout the entire game.
- Overcooked: Also a management game, although not exactly memory based. In both games you have to keep track of multiple dynamic parts that make the experience chaotic and engaging. The core gameplay is mostly unchanging throughout the game, much like Where To, and attains replayability through slight variations from level to level. It is also a very light hearted game targeting a casual audience.

Unique Selling Points:

- *Where to?* is memory driven game. This is a unique twist within the genre of simulation games that gives an original challenge to the player.
- The lighthearted approach to the usually grim and bloody Wild West theme, as well as the fact that the Western style is not common in this genre.
- The Overworld provides a *Choose Your Own Difficulty* functionality to the game, as opposed to the usual linear difficulty progression of a puzzle game.

Highlights:

- The sense of urgency keeps the player engaged throughout the game experience by giving feedback on the player's mistakes and making their consequences clear.
- The game's slow pace gives a player time to interact with the world at their own rhythm. The core gameplay does not require extensive mechanical skill, minimizing the errors the player is prone to make.

Production Details

  Where to? is made up by 4 junior programmers, where 2 of them also play the role of pixel artists, and assuming there won't be any additions to said team, we plan to work on the development of the game for 5 months.

  The team already made a prototype with two levels to demonstrate a feel of the game.

As a 2D pixel art game our objective will not be center on the art itself although it will be the initial focus to have every single sprite needed created. At the same time we will develop a simple plot for the game. This process will be accompanied with sound effects production.

Our major focus, however, will be on constructing a clean and effective interface for the game, and refine our previously built level generator to ensure different and well designed levels in a faster way. The team will also insert a quest system in the levels which with the short time of development given we haven't had a chance until this point.

The plan is to finish with about three weeks of advance, and this last weeks will be for refining the levels balance and bug testing.

	Start	1 mês	2 mês	3 mês	4 mês	5 mês
Pixel Art	———					
Programming		Interface development	Refine level generator	Level creation with quests	Debug	
Music/Sound	——					
Story	——					