COVID GROCERY RUN ϟ

Design Document

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Logline

COVID Grocery Run follows an individual in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic trying to get their groceries. This person must follow the recommended safety guidelines, including wearing a mask and following appropriate social distancing requirements or risk the consequences.

Genre & Themes

This game falls under the Action/Adventure RPG genre. Users will have real-time control over their character as they navigate the obstacles in a grocery store. Unlike many RPGs, there will be no combat abilities. Instead, users will continuously be on the defensive.

The central themes of *COVID Grocery Run* are science and education. Players who have no previous knowledge on the safety guidelines from Health Canada should have a basic understanding of some of these tips by the end of the game.

Features

Features
Intractable items (sanitation stations, masks)
Multiple levels of increasing difficulty
Challenging maps which need skill and focus to maps

Gameplay Example

You need to get bananas but the produce section is currently very crowded. To enter this section, you need to find the non-medical mask because it will not be possible to maintain a 2m distance from others upon entering this section. Even with the mask, it's important that you avoid others as much as possible while getting your bananas.

Mockups

Home Screen

The home screen of *COVID Grocery Run*. In addition to starting the game, users will be able to navigate directly to the credits.

Gameplay

A gameplay mockup built using Game Maker 2. The main character (red shirt) will enter by one door, collect the food items and then exit the other door. Users will be required to be continuously alert to avoid other individuals as they move around the store. Masks (not pictured) will offer additional protection and sanitation stations (not pictured) will allow users to recuperate lost health.

Art Style

COVID Grocery Run will use have a retro RPG look by making use of pixel art. These images will be sourced from popular art such as itch.io and OpenGameArt.Org

Why is it fun?

COVID Grocery Run aims to educate while entertaining at the same time. The game will offer unique yet difficult challenges to players. Time, in addition to score, will be

used to rank players to provide a competitive environment.

Pillars of Design

Name	Description
Easy to learn	Players should be able to understand the objective and mechanics of the game with little to no text.
Promotes public health guidelines	Guidelines from Public Health Canada should be used when determining what actions should and should not receive consequences.
Challenging	The game should require attention and skill complete.
Aesthetically pleasing	The home screen and grocery store, the transitions, and the characters should be aesthetically pleasing.

Characters

There will only be one distinct character for this game, the individual on a mission to find all of their groceries. There will be numerous other people walking throughout the store; however, these people will be "strangers" and must simply be avoided. Due to the limitations of the selected character pack and time constraints, only two sprite sets will be used (selected at random for each "stranger") to populate the entire grocery store.

The main character sprite set obtained from itch.io. In addition to this three-frame set, three others (one for each direction) will be used for animating the movement. Two other character sprite sets will be used to animate the "strangers" in the grocery store.
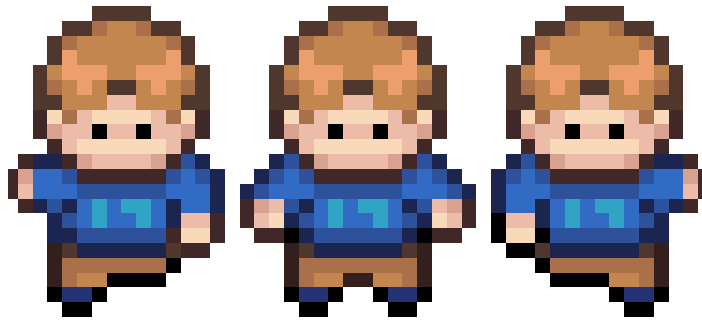
The first "stranger" sprite set obtained from itch.io.

The second "stranger" sprite set obtained from itch.io.

Story & Setting

The premise of the story is that a young man has been asked by his mom to pick items from the grocery store during the COVID-19 pandemic. Time permitting, a small introduction sequence will be shown to set background information. The gameplay will take place within a grocery store full with other people.
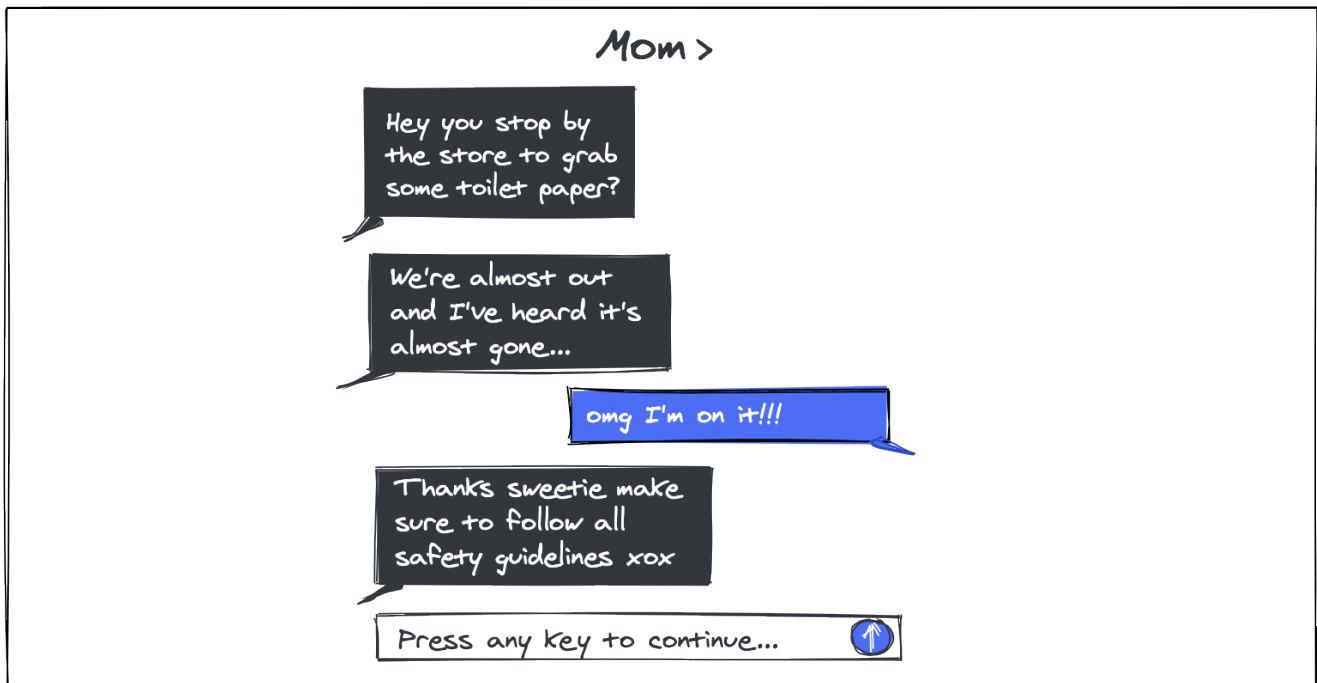
The intro sequence mockup up using excalidraw.com. Time permitting, this will be added to better introduce the premise of the game.

Core Mechanics

The core mechanic of the game will movement. Players will use WASD keys (or the arrow keys) to navigate throughout the grocery store to collect their groceries while carefully avoiding other individuals. Players will have a health bar that decreases every time they come near another individual. Intractable items will allow players to reduce the damage caused by other individuals and to recover some of their lost health.

Interactive Elements

Masks

In some levels, players will be able to pick and wear a mask to reduce the magnitude of inflicted damage by half. These masks will sometimes be out of the way; however, they may still be an essential aspect to completing the level.
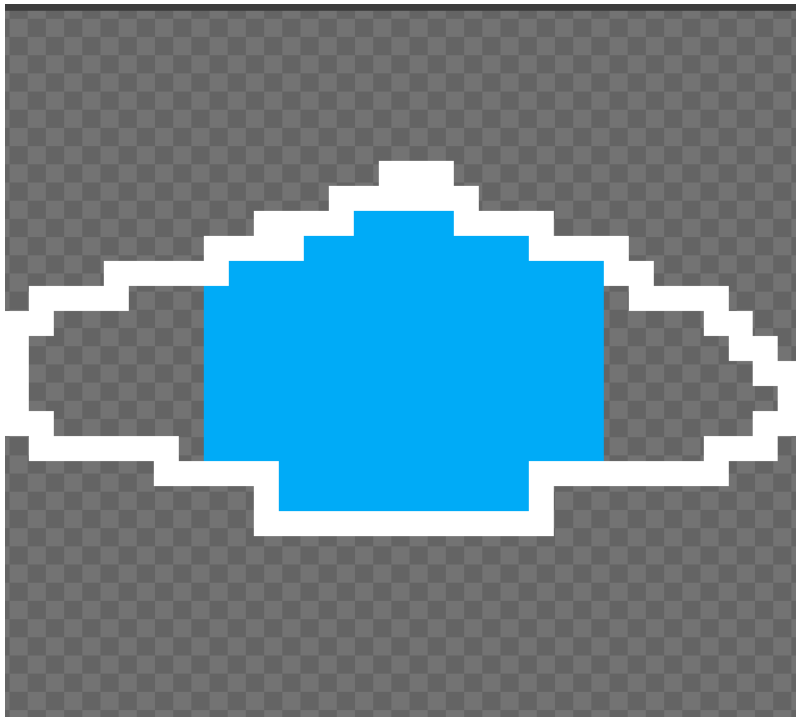
> A poorly drawn sprite of the mask that will be located within some levels of the game. A player will be able to pick this up to reduce the damage inflicted by others.

Sanitization Stations

Sanitization stations will be located at key locations to help players heal throughout levels. These stations may be placed in the middle of stores to give players respite in a difficult level.
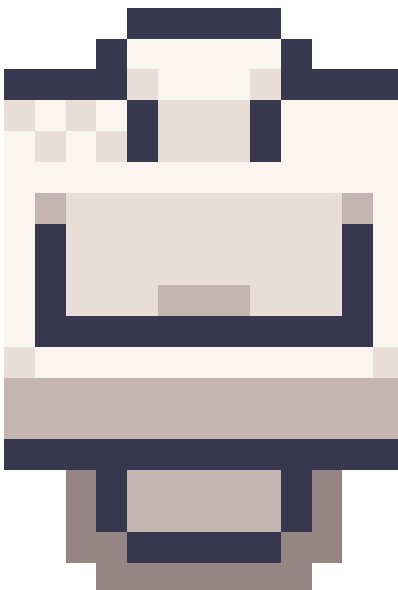
Movement of Strangers

The algorithm that determines the movement of others in the grocery store (strangers) is the key aspect of this game challenging and fun. The placement and movement of strangers will need to be carefully coordinated to ensure levels are challenging but properly progress in difficulty. To make things simple, players will move in a predefined pattern with varying levels of breaks. For example, in a grid of 32 x 32 blocks, one stranger may be programmed to move from position (4, 5) to (4, 9), wait for one second, and then move back to (4, 5) before breaking again for another second and repeating. Another stranger may be programmed to move between three different positions.
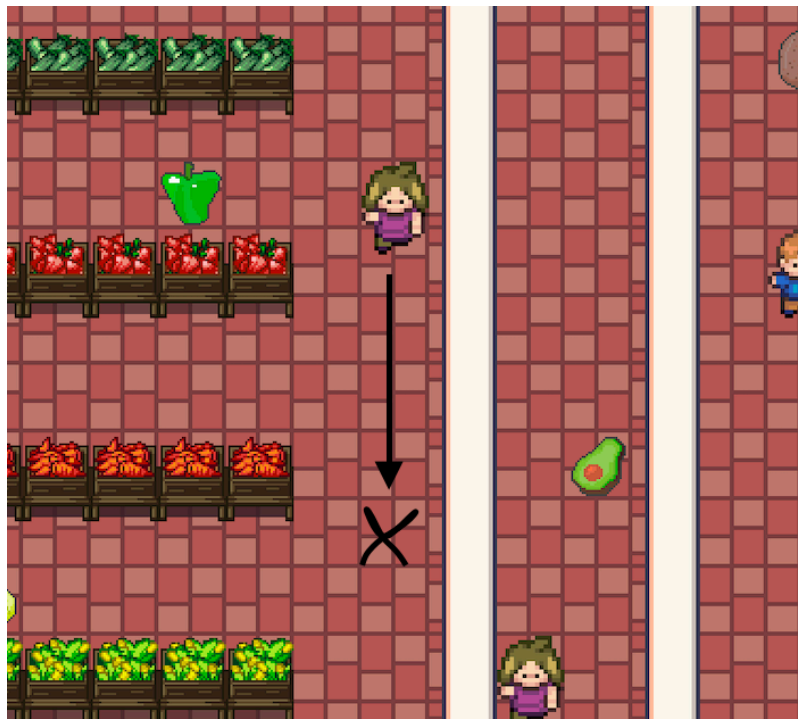
Strangers will be preprogrammed to follow defined routes at a specific speed and at a specific interval.

Audio Style

The audio style will follow the art style and attempt to use "8-bit" sounds as much as possible. The background music of the gameplay will be very generic music. For example, Sounds For The Supermarket was a jingle created specifically for grocery

stores in 1975.

Development Tools

`Game Maker 2` will be used for game development. Playing to my strengths, `HTML` and `CSS` will be used to create items such as buttons, modals, text bubbles, etc. This document itself was created using web technologies! Additionally, `FL Studio`, a software that I am extremely familiar with, will be used for audio editing.

How the game will be received?

This game attempts to focus on the safety aspects of COVID-19 and avoid wording that makes it seem that users become "injected" when they lose. Instead, users lose when they don't follow safety guidelines. COVID-19 is still a very real problem, especially in certain countries/regions, and many people are still suffering loss due to this virus. Due to this focus on safety and the challenging aspects of the game, I believe that there should be a positive reception.

Conclusion

COVID Grocery Run will be an action packed game that'll make you wish you never had to get groceries again. While playing, you will simultaneously learn about about important guidelines directly from Public Health Canada. Unique game mechanics coupled with a classically designed Action/Adventure RPG will make this fun for all ages!

References

https://www.cleanpng.com/png-grocery-store-organic-food-supermarket-computer-ic-964321/download-png.html https://www.pngbarn.com/png-image-cskvb