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MEDP 285
Final Project Proposal
Mushroom's Paradise

Abstract

A mushroom ventures into the forest of a once beloved home. For some reason, the forest appears to be abandoned- no traces of a community seem to remain. Discover the truth of the mushroom as it reflects on its past, its origin, and what brings it back to this forgotten forest.

The Question

What is a community?

I think many people have similar expectations of what it means to be a part of a community. There's definitely a sense of unity and belonging that people would generally hope to have. Not all communities are exactly welcoming however, whether it be the strict guidelines that govern their actions or a toxic culture that leads to unhealthy relationships and/or ends up "spoiling" the community for others. This question is inspired by common notions that appear in our everyday lives from our family and friends, to surrounding areas such as neighborhoods and cities, and even communities within social media or a digital world. It is also inspired by some dystopian approaches to how our society is approaching from historical events to fictional stories.

Mushroom's Paradise is an interactive project meant to explore what it means to be a part of a community through different extremes. While the mushroom visits the abandoned forest, we learn from the mushroom's perspective what it means to be part of a community that has extreme practices. Players unravel the story of the mushroom and its homeland by exploring the remains of the forest and the different worlds it leads to through an exploration of a 3D world and interacting with objects that guide them to the next part of the story.

Goals

The **main goals** for the interactive project include:
- 3 worlds (or "Scenes") that the mushroom travels in a chronological order
- A third-person player controller for the mushroom
- Addition of music in each of the worlds to add to their ambiance
- A short video to be presented within the second world
- A dialogue between a mushroom and a yet-to-be-discovered NPC.
- Newly created 3D model in Blender meant to be used repeatedly for "statues."
- Choices that the player can choose which will decide the final outcome.

The **stretch goals** are:
- A fourth world (that concludes the game)
- A cutscene that plays at the end
- A main menu screen
  - Play button
  - Story button (description of what the game is, controls)
- Additional 3D models created in Blender to fit closer to the mushroom's intended aesthetic.

Concept

Below are some concept descriptions and art.

Characters

3D model of mushroom in Blender

Our playable character throughout the whole interactive experience.

Additional characters include:
- Mushroom NPCs that the player can interact with to learn more about the world
- An overarching "enemy" in a sense (the leader of the mushroom community)
- Stone statues

Video and Audio

Sketches of the video to be featured

These are meant to be played in the second world when the player enters a house to represent a flashback or the internal thoughts of the mushroom.

Some of the audio is melodic (such as music box audio) while some are more environmentally-based such as rustling grass, creaking wooden planks, and dripping water.

Concept Art

Each of these are presented in the order the player will venture in. The concepts are created in Procreate or Paint Tool SAI. The first world is already built out below:

The game is intended to be played as a web accessible format (WebGL build) and accessed through itch.io

Tech stack

The project will primarily be built in Unity3D with assets being created in either Blender or publicly available in asset stores such as Unity's store or Sketchfab.

Some assets that were sourced elsewhere are listed below:

- Low Poly Wind
  - Includes animation shaders for various nature items (tree, grass, plants) to sway as if they were being blown by the wind.
 - Example:

- Low Poly Nature
  - Utilized for specific assets (dead trees)
- Medieval Town Exteriors
  - Includes many town-like buildings and tools from lamps to carts.
- Tutorials from YouTube videos for specific particle effects
  - How to Make Fireflies in Unity
  - EPIC GLOW IN UNITY 2020.2

Additional assets are going to be included to feature the items presented in the second and third worlds.

Flow
This is a layout of the intended gameplay. Designed with Figma.
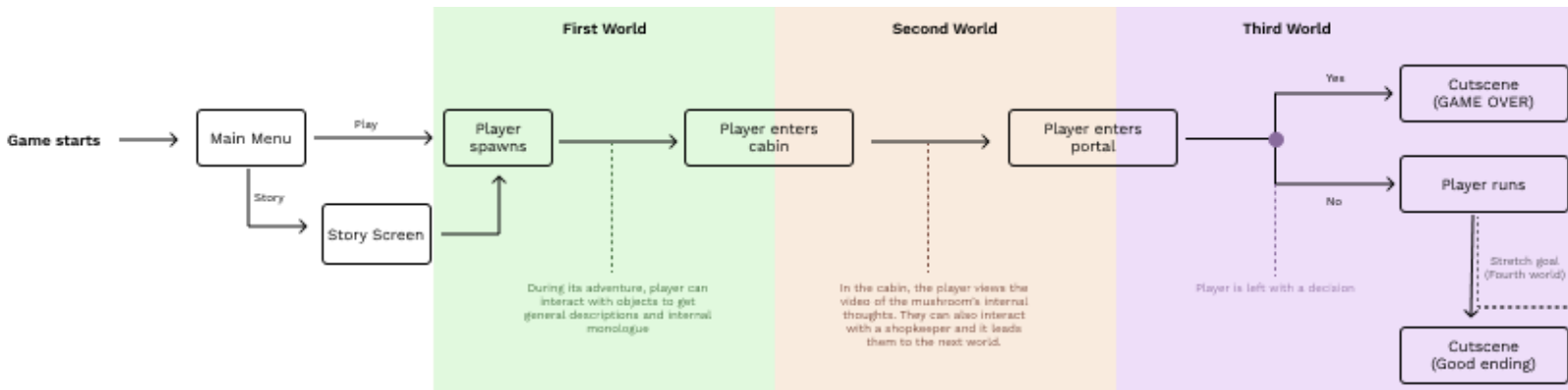
The player is meant to explore the world through this specific narrative. There isn't a firm decision on whether or not the player can travel in between worlds that don't meet the story's intended timeline, but option may be available for certain worlds that don't seem to alter the story.

Controls
Featured controls include:
- WASD - Movement
- Mouse - Camera movement and clickable interaction
- (TBD) Spacebar - Jumping

Distribution

As mentioned earlier, the interactive project will be playable on itch.io as a web-browser based game.

There is currently no intention to freely distribute the game or its original assets as I intend on keeping it as a fun project to reflect back on my growth in XR Development. As such, key branding and icons aren't essential but an icon may be included for a more polished appearance.

Challenges

There are many anticipated challenges in the development of the project, hence the separation of main goals and stretch goals. Some of these include:

- The level of detail each world
  - I imagine my devices will not be able to handle too many items in the world. I hope to eventually utilize some of the school's available computers to develop some worlds if needed.
- Creating dialogue
  - This hasn't been featured in our previous learnings but since it's mainly text and clicking to move onto the next chat, I don't think it'll be a difficult challenge.
- Player choices
  - This hasn't been featured in our previous learnings but I intend on using YouTube tutorials to flesh out the story.
- 3D modeling
  - Blender has been a fun but challenging tool to use. I hope that by creating more models in Blender I become more confident in the software and can create more of a personal touch in the 3D world.
- Third person player controller
  - As mentioned in the last class, there were some differences in how Blender and Unity interpreted the different axes (hence my inability to include a proper controller for the mushroom character.) I am still trying to further understand this problem and hope to resolve it by demo time.