Experimental Game Design- Project 1 PowerPoint Questions

**What is the game?**

[INSERT NAME OF GAME] is a point-and-click game exploring how bias in the media not only disseminates skewed or incorrect information, but also affects how the masses learn about and react to their world.

**What is the main focus?**

We see how, in our current world, there are those who do not wish to be educated. In the United States, education is readily available and resources for self-education are almost as equally available, so what stands in the way? Why wouldn’t people want to be educated when they have the tools?

Education, especially self-education, takes a great amount of time and effort. The modern US citizen lives in a world where they believe in the myth that there is not enough time for self-improvement. Therefore, they are solely educated on the bits of clickbait and news headlines that they scroll through on a daily basis. What then becomes the problem is that main sources of news (such as CNN and FOX) present heavily skewed information, leaning politically in one direction or another. Now, the average citizen believes in what snippets they read, and will refuse input from other sources of news, whether or not that source presents unbiased facts. The citizen, in his own mind, is therefore educated, but believes so falsely, as they are only educated with one side of a multifaceted problem.

The news holds so much power in educating the masses, as it is so readily accessible and designed for a quick understanding of the entire story. If we were able to remove bias from it, people would be more educated on facts as opposed to opinions, whether they consciously seek to educate themselves or not. [INSERT NAME OF GAME] focusses on the bias in the media and where it originates, as well as how it affects the population that reads the news that players approve for circulation.

**Why create this game? Why would someone want to play it?**

[INSERT NAME OF GAME] intends to direct players’ attentions to the bias in media, and how no one is immune to it. In much the same way that news supplies bias in a veiled way, this game provides facts in a veiled way. It assesses the bias that players approve, as well as the fact-based stories that pass through their hands, and collects that information without player knowledge, only to present it to them after the game has ended. Unaware of their own bias, players will hopefully understand by the end of the game how bias in media affects the masses’ understanding of the world, without being blatant about it during gameplay.

People would want to play [INSET NAME OF GAME] because they would initially understand it as a game like *Adventure Capitalist*, where fictional money fuels gameplay. The rush of income, even virtual income, intrigues players, but they will soon understand that income and authenticity often do not walk hand-in-hand.

**What is experimental about your game?**

While [INSERT NAME OF GAME] has a definitive goal (in the creators’ minds) of what players should be able to take from it, it is never expressly stated in the game. It displays income, as well as the level of bias that players allowed through the newspaper, but players must glean their own meaning from it. Without objectives or much but graphs and headlines, players become the master of this news company and are encouraged to make it their own, and will only be fully aware of the repercussions as the closing screen ends the game.

**Immediate and Long-Term Projected Socio-Cultural Project Impacts**

In terms of the immediate effects of [INSERT NAME OF GAME], the creators would like it to spark discussion in the class about the efficacy of eliminating bias in the media and how it might be accomplished in a way that would not limit the freedoms that people of the press have. It should also bring to question how else the world could go about educating those who “don’t want to be educated”. In the long-term sense, [INSERT NAME OF GAME] should awaken a plethora of players to not only the bias in the media, but the bias in themselves, which is inherent in human nature. While [INSERT NAME OF GAME] does not seek to completely eliminate bias, it prompts a closer look at where bias may or may not be appropriate, and asserts that, in the relaying of vital information, bias should not even take part.

**Predecessor or Previous Games/Distinctive Factors in this Genre**

The immediate inspiration for this game came from George Orwell’s novel *1984*, where the main character, Winston, works for the Ministry of Truth. A branch of government dedicated to censoring history (specifically old news articles) to fit the false version of history that the government distributes. Other games, such as the opening scenes of Compulsion Games’ *We Happy Few*, and Lucas Pope’s *Republia Times* offer features that essentially simulate the work of Winston in *1984*. These games, however, intentionally have players press bias through the media. Players help to disseminate propaganda, and that is the main goal of the game

[INSERT NAME OF GAME], however, gives players no objective, and lets them build their bias on their own. They choose their political leanings (if any), and the facts of their news editing appears as a result. One could say that this game is a tool for evaluating not only bias in the media, but bias in the players, as opposed to a tool to parody political propaganda as it is in this game’s predecessors.

**Target Audience?**

[INSERT NAME OF GAME] is intended for adults interested in low-stakes gaming. This game would appeal to crowds who enjoy slow and meditative gameplay intermingled with gradual world building and multiple results for each choice. They do not necessarily have to be interested in changing the media for the better, but those that are may find this game much more interesting.

**What is the ethical space of the game?**

**Where does the game take place?**

The player takes the role as an editor of a city called Suspica, a place inhabited by bird people and highly influenced in design by the American 1950s and 1960s. This is a fictional space, with an ambiguous time period. The players, however, can only discover the world by means of the headlines they read, as the only setting immediately accessible to them is their office space.

**What do the players do?**

As the editor of the local newspaper, the players are tasked each day to choose one of two headlines that are put before them for circulation. The only measurable outcome visible to them during gameplay is the amount of money that the newspaper made that day, due entirely to their choice in headline. They repeatedly choose a week’s worth of headlines until the end, where they will be shown the amount of factual and biased headlines that they allowed into circulation.

**How many characters are there, if any?**

In [INSERT NAME OF GAME], the only true character is the player character, which has neither a name nor a face. The player will not meet anyone else in their office. However, [INSERT NAME OF GAME] frames the two political parties of Suspica as something like characters. Through gameplay and the news articles that players read, it quickly becomes apparent that both the Peacocks and the Swans (the two main political parties in question) hold a great amount of power over the masses, and also have conflicting views on how this world should be. They convey these views through various ways, as stated in the news, and their main power comes from their power in the media.

**List of technical information and methodologies: any necessary hardware, software, SDKs and APIs**

-Photoshop

-Illustrator

-Unity

**Sources:**

https://compulsiongames.com/en/10/we-happy-few

http://www.gamesforchange.org/game/the-republia-times/

George Orwell’s *1984*