**Plot ideas – Little Go Nowhere**

**Anything marked in red = points to think about and discuss**

**Starting point**

You find yourself on the outskirts of a big, dark forest. The sky above is grey, everything around you is mechanized, now visibly broken down. The forest is empty and abandoned.

You are alone apart from your trusty super computer. He will help you navigate this harsh environment by decoding messages, providing information and assisting with other program-related issues. In this cyber based world, there will be many such instances. (Note: the computer is a combination of a sort of inventory and a secondary character).

**A little background about your world**

You arrived at the forest after receiving an encrypted (encrypted? Not sure this is necessary?... might add some events through the need to "decode" the message? Or too much?)message from a mysterious figure. He is the inventor and creator of the cyber city, known simply as Maverick (The Czech word 'samorost' means maverick, by the way  ). An enigmatic character, he was presumed dead for years after vanishing from the public eye.  
I like the idea of being secretly contacted by this Maverick guy. Do we need to explain why we are there and why we received the message? Maybe we can keep an air of mystery if we don’t give away too much detail at the start of the game.

I agree that keeping most of the details about the true meaning of the quest can help give a mysterious air to the start of the game.

I don’t think we should be telling all the background up front. The beginning should be something along the lines of: you arrive at the forest after receiving a secret encrypted note from a mysterious figure known as Maverick, in order to find him you will need to encrypt the other 2 thirds of the message. (without even explaining who he is. People will understand as they play. If for instance we show the cyber trees as belonging to the Maverick Corp (as you wrote below) the players will slowly put the puzzle together).

We can also scatter various items along the way that explain more about Maverick's secret past and whereabouts today, for instance:

* a journal
* a top-secret file of the cyber-state project being terminated
* a letter he wrote to someone close to him
* a message he sent another character like yourself who failed the same mission
* manuals for operating the machines in the city
* more ideas for objects that explain the backstory?

Maverick was once the CEO and head developer of the worldwide software company that got commissioned to create the world's first fully cyber operated state, where computers and robots control all aspects of life autonomously. This state is complete with metropolitans, forests, fields, industrial areas. However, the project fell due to internal conflicts in the firm and was shut down. Now, the cyber state stands derelict and unused, it has been that way for almost 20 years. After the collapse of the cyber state project, Maverick went into hiding and was never seen in person since.

(Note: There is also another possible plotline of a sort of cyber apocalypse, that can explain the empty city and the unused technology. But I personally dislike this line. There are a little too many "apocalyptic games" out there. I think so too.)

**Missions in the game**

You must first decode the message from Maverick in order to know where you are heading. The first part of the message, which you have already figured out, explains that Maverick is in hiding somewhere in the depths of the forest. You will have to gradually decode the rest of the message to find his specific whereabouts (what kind of clues in the game might help us understand the code?)

Until you get to your destination, you will also need to survive alone in the wild. You will need to complete several tasks:

You will need to find food to eat. Since the forest is completely computer-dependent, you will need to code the cyber trees to get them to grow you some food (sandwiches, anyone?) name for the cyber tree? Should logging into them have at first a long evil-corporate-style message (with trademark symbols and legal notices). Something like this:

Welcome to the Maverick Inc. Cyber-Tree Multi-Threaded Evolutionary-Compliant Consumable-Gathering-Simulated Terminal Device. Or Tree-Terminal for short.  
…  
We would like to inform you that the tree-terminal has been tested on thousand of human test subject with very few problems. If you do notice any of the following symptoms: …

This is a splendid Idea!

You will need to keep warm in the cold nights. Using an infra red heat sensors (that can be found in your computer) you will need to find spots where the machines still emit heat to build your sanctuary. (Not sure if this is necessary at all?) I like it

**What other things are necessary for survival? Find at least 3 more**

During the game, you will also need to pass the many security barriers that are active in the forest. It may seem abandoned, but it is highly protected. These security devices were planted by Maverick to prevent unwanted intruders.

As the game progresses, you discover (How?) that Maverick has contacted others too and asked them to go and find him – but so far none have made it. (Perhaps: you will meet one of them?)

Towards the end of the game –

You will learn that Maverick no longer exists as human. He has uploaded his self completed with memory, personality and genetic traits, into the system of the state that he himself created. He is now a software based entity (Check out Whole **brain** emulation (WBE), or "mind upload" theory to get a better sense of what I had in mind). In order to contact him, you will need to fully immerse yourself in the state's network and give up your tangible\physical existence – whivh poses the choice –

Will you agree to do this or refuse?

(This can open a rather surreal phase of the game, don't you think?)

If you choose to agree with Maverick's condition, you will find out that he hasn't made things easy for you. You will still need to pass several 'tests' to prove yourself worthy.

**We still need to consider – what does he actually want to contact the character for? Is he trying to pass on a secret? Create a new kind of society? Something else?**

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1) After reading the txt file ideas:

* The message was received before the arrival at the forest and is in fact the reason we are there.

2)You got there on your own –

* Do we need a sort of vehicle to get around and go long distances? Do we travel only by foot?

3)The super computer: I think it could be nice if he'll be names after a famous jazz musician (don't know why a jazz musician of all things, just popped to my mind, by the way) – any Ideas for someone extra cool? Groovy! How about Joplin? (not jazz, I know; but ragtime is almost jazz, right?)

4)A tutorial could be useful if we choose a point and click game – to get you familiar with your surroundings:

* Maybe a map of the state – with all the zones: forest, city, lake, industrial area etc.?) Cool. For point and click we can draw an actual map, and for text-based we can use ASCII art!
* Get you to know your computer companion (He could actually be the one to "introduce" the tutorial)??? Does that sound logical?  
  Maybe we can have a stark contrast between the computer companion (Joplin?) and all the corporate-controled computers and cyber-stuff. Joplin will be cynical and funny (almost human), while the corporate computers will be technical and legally responsible!

But – I think the tutorial should not reveal any of the back story (see above) but only help you get accustomed to the environment of the game. Not over-explaining.

5) status details -

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Status -- | |
|  | presentation: percentage? |
|  | health |
|  | hunger |
|  | thirst |
|  | sickness? (maybe event-specific with a specific cure for each sickness event)  I like the sickness event. I'll add it to the list of events I'm starting to work on. |

**6) Items to add to inventory: add more-----**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| -- Inventory -- | |
|  | sandwiches (gotten from tree-console) |
|  | bottles of water (tree-console) |
|  | event-specific medicine |
|  | the super computer? [maybe should not be part of the inventory] |
|  | encrypted message? [maybe should not be part of the inventory] |

* Point for thought about inventory:

Does the fact we have a super computer mean it can spare us having all kinds of physical items? For instance – it will save us the need to build a lock pick since the door is computerized and the super-computer can simply hack it? Or – we don't need actual maps or a compass because the computer can help us navigate? Yes, I think having a computer with maps and code-breaking capabilities instead of physical maps and lockpicks can remove clutter from the game.

So do we need a physical inventory –AND - an inventory of the virtual "skills"?

I think we should have **some** physical items we find around and use – and not all virtual. So – partly virtual "tools" and partly objects we find. Agree? I definitely agree. And they will need to be implemented differently anyway, since physical items perish once consumed, but virtual items are persistent, do not perish.

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