ChaosInitiative – Procedural Jam Post-Mortem

Peer Marking

**Team**

**Mark Allocation**

Jake King

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Owen Ruddle

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Matt Gray

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Tom Redwood

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Game Reflection

In comparison to the previous jam, the game is as complete but less polished. This is because the quantity of assets required took up a lot of the team’s time and therefore reduced the time spent on quality of assets and overall polishing of game mechanics.

The generated theme was ‘an online game where you cure DNA for freedom’. We didn’t want to interpret this literally, keeping away from the typical science game approach, we wanted to go for a more abstract portrayal of the theme. For the initial idea generation, we ignored the online game aspect was because it was unrealistic to make an online game in a game jam. So we just fit the ‘on line’ part into our game in a different way. We thought how each part of the theme could be presented; a patriot turning communist into other patriots was the first iteration. Patriots representing freedom and the turning representing curing DNA.

This became the undertone of the game, however we thought it was too political and skirted the line of political correctness. Which led onto abstracting it further; someone on drugs (freedom) trying to get other people on drugs, but the drug user sees it as curing mutants into freedom fighters.

Our assets were thematically consistent but could still use some work as some of the animations were disjointed and didn’t have the full desired range of movement. On the other hand, we did succeed in portraying the different levels of high the player’s character is experiencing while on freedom.

Our starting sequence succeeded in setting the scene for the game, we used sounds to portrayed what was going on in each of the images. However due to it being a last minute addition the quality of the images was lacking.

The control scheme ended up being an expert system which means that while we were creating the game we became accustomed to the controls and didn’t realise that we made them more complicated than they needed to be. This is a good lesson to have learnt as it can happen not in just game jams but any games development without external testing. Next time we will make sure to keep the controls simple maybe even having someone test the controls. Taking the mouse out of the control scheme would solve a lot of the problems with it.

Finally, we managed to complete the game within the jam’s time frame; it has a working core loop and even though the player can’t win that was a design decision. We wanted to get the point across that taking drugs is bad and you’ll never win.

Group Reflection

In comparison to the previous jam, the team worked better as there was more communication using slack and generally more communication as well as brief team meetings during the group work.

Our face to face communication was excellent we did most of the work while the group was together, this allowed us to have a lot group meetings enabling us to have a solid group direction. Keeping all members up to date with the current progress of the jam. Group work was efficient and everyone stepped up to the plate when extra work was needed even if it wasn’t their allocated task to begin with.

We did what we said we were going to do a game mainly focused on assets to portray the game’s idea.

Although we used slack well enough to communicate when we were not face to face, we should have made use of Trello to keep track of task and the to do list. We did come across any problems this time as we were together for most of the work and could ask if anything needed to be done or improved. However, if this was not the case then we would have struggled communicating ideas and problems.

1-5

New unique factor - 4

Graphical quality - 3

Audio quality - 3

Ease of learning - 2

Perception of goal - 2

Increase in challenge - 3

Concentration required - 3

Skill vs luck - 4

Random variety - 3

Action factor - 4

Player controls - 2

Value per play – 3

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Playtest Reflection

1-5

New unique factor - 4

Graphical quality - 3

Audio quality - 1

Ease of learning - 2

Perception of goal - 4

Increase in challenge - 2

Concentration required - 3

Skill vs luck - 4

Random variety - 3

Action factor - 4

Player controls - 3

Value per play – 4

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Top notch idea! With more polish, graphics and sounds it would be ACE!

Playtest review

The play test revealed that the controls were not intuitive and that overall the game needs more polish.

Personal Reflection

Jake King

This Jam went pretty well we managed to complete what we set out to do, my own contribution I feel was fair. Compared to last time I was in doing technical sides of the project; code and logic.

My tasks were first to implement the freedom bar and the needle drop logic. This didn’t take very long so I dipped my toe into the art assets again, just doing the assets for the bar itself made it not the same style as the rest for the game. My mistake was not trusting in my team to get the assets all done but my ‘helping’ left the freedom bar looking out of place and not consistent with the rest of the assets. It was good that I was looking out for my team but I should have focused more intensively on my own tasks first.

I also took charge of setting up how the level would work; I think that the way this is coded was too hard coded. Looking back, I would have made it more modular making use of a prefab that could be dropped in and would create a new section in the level. This would have saved us a lot of time as when it came to setting up the level we had to manually set up the vectors for spawning and where the camera locks.

I think my communication with the team this time round was better, using slack a lot more to keep in communicate. However, I had set up a Trello board at the start of the jam so that we could keep track of tasks and progress in case we were not working at the same time. Over the jam I had forgot about it and it ended up not being used. I should have kept reminding the team to use it over the jam but we all forgot about it because the need of it did not arise. We were all working in the lab together for most of the jam, so we just asked each other what needed to be done.

For the next and last jam, I will aim to increase my focus and make use of Trello.

Matt Gray

During the jam I feel I worked well with the team as we delighted tasks and I took charge of player movement and at a later stage, the background assets. I started with the player movement as we felt it would be best to get the game to a playable state as early as we could due to the fact that we all knew the asset creation would take the bulk of the projects time. I created a basic player movement script but actually had failed to account for al eventualities with the jumping logic, luckily Tom jumped in later and fixed it during the jam so we wouldn’t get stuck while playing. I then went on to create the bat swinging and needle throwing code. I feel this went well as we had simple enough controls. One place I feel I could have improved was to get outsiders to play test the controls as I feel they were too difficult by the end of the jam. This is because I decided to make the throwing mechanic be mouse position based rather than just direction and in doing so, new players were unable to grasp the angles and often failed the level because of it. Later on in development I undertook asset generation for the background as well as the sprite swapping feature. I combined these two concepts and made a script that was usable across the board for all kinds of assets. If I had more time i would have liked to randomise the time the asset swapping took to make it less confusing when the freedom level dropped or heightened. I would also have taken the player controls back a stage as I in hindsight feel they were perfect earlier on.