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Interaction Design

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Project 2 Writeup

The subject of my social justice adventure game will be on the topic of public health, specifically as it relates to the importance of masking and the COVID-19 pandemic. No one could have foreseen how drastically this pandemic would completely change our realities, and for the past year, wearing masks when going outside has become a part of our daily “new normals”. However, this action of masking to protect not just ourselves but the people we interact with, has not been a universally accepted theme, as we’ve seen on the media with the rise of “anti-maskers” and people oblivious to science and medical professionals’ recommendations. This subject of masking is extremely important, as wearing a mask helps to save lives during this uncertain and unprecedented time.

I am choosing to work on this project because I have personally been very disturbed by the complete lack of responsibility we’ve seen from these “anti-maskers”, who are mostly composed of millennial and Gen Z populations that consider themselves “untouchable” from the effects of the virus. I cannot stand how these groups have been out partying without any masks on over the course of the entire pandemic, and have been acting selfishly with little to no regard to how their actions might affect other vulnerable groups. The worst part is that when faced with questions regarding their irresponsible choices, these offending populations lack any knowledge on the benefits of masking, and this game aims to solve that issue.

Dr. Masque is my translation of education around this issue by using a social justice “game” format. The goal of the game is to recover the 4 mask shipments from the alien invaders in order to rescue the surviving civilians. For each mask found by the player, an important fact about how masking has and is a major factor in helping to stop the spread of airborne disease will be displayed on the screen, thus educating players on the importance of masking. The player will navigate around the colorful world of planet SKK-98, which I

hand-drew the environments myself. I'm really proud of myself for thinking outside of the box and going fully creative with this project. While generating original assets and illustrations took lots of time, I'm really happy with how the finished product came out.

The aesthetics of Dr. Masque are similar to those of a retro-style console game, with bright, highly-saturated and contrasting colors making up the vibrant environments. I have a personal love for the retro-game style as I grew up playing games on the Nintendo 64 and gameboy consoles, which are all infamous for their vast collection of retro games. I also chose this style because retro classic games are very attention grabbing, and fun to visually experience as saturated, neon colors just make the overall experience more fun and engaging. I was really satisfied with the pixelated effect I was able to translate into my project's environments, as I feel like adding the pixels perfectly topped off the visual aspect of the game.