**GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT**

THUMP



A game about anxiety

**Last Updated:**

01/10/18

**Prepared By:**

Grace Feehan

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Game Analysis 3

Mission Statement 3

Genre 3

Platforms 3

Target Audience 3

Storyline & Characters 4

Gameplay 5

Overview of Gameplay 5

Player Experience 5

Gameplay Guidelines 5

Game Objectives & Rewards 5

Gameplay Mechanics 5

Level Design 6

Control Scheme 7

Game Aesthetics & User Interface 7

Schedule & Tasks 8

# Game Analysis

Introduce the game. Present information on why this game will be fun, the purpose of the game, what the player does, and so on. This is meant to be a quick analysis of the game and what you can expect from it. Shouldn’t be more than 1-2 paragraphs.

‘THUMP’ is a mixed-mechanic 2d game based on the experience of anxiety and how it interferes with perception and relationships. They player plays as Digbeth, a tough-looking ex-biker who moves to a new place and finds himself dealing with difficult emotions. The purpose of the game is to go through different scenes as the main character and join in their experience, with occasional choices to be made that will affect outcomes. Mechanics will include 2d side-scrolling exploration, NPC interaction, use of a mobile device, extraction of concepts from thought clouds, and more. In-game scenes take place over a period of two weeks.

# Mission Statement

In 1-2 sentences, explain the game as if you were pitching it to potential players. This should be very intriguing. It typically includes the title, genre, platform, and brief idea of what the player does or has to overcome.

Join Digbeth, a tough-looking ex-biker, as he moves away from his usual home and journeys through the resultant anxiety this causes in *THUMP*. In this indie game for the PC, search the side-scrolling city of Halifornia, talk to old friends and new and try and make the best choices to get Digbeth through these painful new experiences.

# Genre

List or describe the game’s genre/genres

Visual novel, multiple-choice, 2d sidescroller, art game, mental health.

# Platforms

List or describe the platforms the game will be made for.

Windows PC

# Target Audience

Provide information on the audience the game is targeted to. Add details and information on the intended audience such as their habits, behaviors, likes, and dislikes. Are you targeting your game to a specific age group or perhaps people that enjoy certain genres? Is your intended audience from specific communities or will their locale play a role?

Any kind of player, those who have experienced those issues or not, probably over the age of 10 just for the type of issues. The game may trigger some people so warnings should be given, and should be designed to elicit a mild amount of distress as it deals with a difficult subject. I suspect only people who enjoy visual novels will want to play this game.

# Storyline & Characters

This is where you present a story synopsis, and discuss how the story will unfold as the player makes his or her way through the game. Include information on the key characters in the game, including descriptions, abilities, characteristics, how they fit into the story, how they affect gameplay, what the player will learn from them, etc.

Storyline and Choices:

1. Prequel scenes, we see how Digbeth was very happy with a close group of friends and his role in a biker gang. Then, he gets a new job out in Halifornia – his dream job, working on bikes and designing custom add-ons. Digbeth has a nice goodbye party and a housewarming party with his old friends, all of whom say they miss him and they’ll stay in contact. Digbeth waves them off with a warm face, hopeful. Two people in particular are his closest friends: *Derby*, his closest friend (a cat person?) and *Didcot*, an ex-partner.
2. Day ONE. Digbeth starts the new job, it goes well. He works in his own workshop, by himself, with occasional visits from people in the nearby workshops. They’re nice! We meet two new characters – *Dawlish*, a next-door neighbor, and *Dulvi* (Dulverton), someone who works in the workshop across the hall. Digbeth also meets a local cat – Digbeth doesn’t know its name or gender, so he nicknames it ‘Egg”. “We’re out here together, Egg. Thank you for stopping to let me pet you.”
3. Day TWO. The second day at Digbeth’s job. Didcot checks in with Digbeth, asking how work is going – this makes DB feel happy, but also a little worried why Derby hasn’t checked in too. (FLASH OF a background thought – ‘She doesn’t care about you’). ‘Maybe she’s busy’, DB tells himself – but the little niggle is still there (ANX UP).
4. Day THREE. Dulvi asks if Digbeth has any hobbies on their walk home. He tells them about his crew from ‘**back Home’**. “You still call it home?” Dulvi asks, which DB feels guilty at. (ANX UP)  
     
   “We miss you!” They send a picture from their weekly bike meet-up, and some unusual feeling curls inside Digbeth’s stomach. “Not being there hurts. Could one of you stream a bit of the event?” DB asks, and Derby happily does so. At first, it feels good to watch and still be a part of it, but after a few minutes, DB starts feeling sick. ((**OPTIONS: TURN OFF THE STREAM, TELL THEM YOU FEEL BAD, JUST LEAVE IT ON IN THE BACKGROUND**)).
   1. He turns the video off, and when someone asks him about it, he tells them he lost signal. He tells them he still doesn’t feel good. (+1 bad response)
   2. Someone in the background asks a confused question – ‘Make your mind up, Dig” – but Derby scolds them. ‘No worries, pal. We’ll figure out what works best for you’ she says. (+1 good response)
   3. He leaves it on in the background whilst he tries to read (but it is still playing on his mind – eyes flicker over). Derby gets annoyed at him for asking but not paying attention. She doesn’t care for his excuses about how he feels. (+1 bad response)
5. Day FOUR. Digbeth is invited to a dinner party at Dawlish’s, with Dulvi also attending. He spends the night checking his phone to hear from his friends back home, worried that he embarrassed himself yesterday. Derby and Didcot are busy again all evening and don’t respond to his messages until a long time has passed. (PLAYER has option to keep checking phone.) **X number of phone checks = different outcomes**, one being good and one being bad. Player prompts are given in view of Digbeth’s thoughts – ‘I wonder if one of them has replied yet’. Eventually Derby replies, apologizing for being busy and sending a photo of her and Didcot going to the cinema together. The edge of DB’s vision clouds, and he doesn’t feel like eating anymore. If the player checked phone a lot, Dawlish and Dulvi will be annoyed and suggest ‘maybe you shouldn’t check on them so much and you should focus on where you are!’. If the player didn’t check so much, they will offer comfort – ‘I’m sure they would have taken you if you were still there’ and ‘want to go see a film another time with me, after work?’.
6. Day FIVE. Friday! Reassured by his new friends, Digbeth spends a lot of the day distracted by work. A lot of customers come by and ask for custom decals on their bikes. DB gets to see Egg on his way home again, and he tells her things he couldn’t tell other people – it didn’t seem like it outwardly, but his first week has been tough. Thinking about his old friends hanging out together makes him jealous, scared that they will forget him, frightened that he can’t keep up/can’t compete with people that are actually *there*. He also feels very lonely, even in the company of other people. He’s been having…strange thoughts. Thoughts he can’t stop and are messy. Buuut, he isn’t worried about that right now. Right now he’s worried about getting home, eating some pie, and flopping into bed! His life is good enough, and he tells Egg he shouldn’t be complaining. **If he picked poorly earlier, he says ‘I don’t need those people to make me happy! I can do it without them.’ If he picked well, he says ‘I just have to remember to be honest about how I feel around them’.**  
   SCENE of DB having a nice evening to himself.   
     
   Night time. When sleeping, DB struggles to control his thoughts in his sleep – intrusive thoughts. MINIGAME: Find the ‘truth’ amongst what fear tells you is real. It’s like, words in a word cloud zooming around and you have to choose which is the truth. If you pick ‘wrong’, it won’t say – but will make a difference in the game overall. (Could do something with words following the cursor, or the cursor being dragged to the negative ones)
7. Day SIX. DB wakes from a bad night’s sleep, but doesn’t really remember what his nightmares were about. It’s a bright, sunny day, but he doesn’t really have the energy to go outside. He tries several hobbies, all by himself in his house, but can’t seem to settle or enjoy one and just feels like he wants to sleep. **If player chooses to browse internet for a while/go on phone, he sees pictures of friends hanging out or having a good time. “I had such a wonderful day with my love, Monty!”, “Biker Gang is Best Gang. Can’t wait for the next meet-up”, etc.** DB feels his heart start to pound. It’s difficult to see the screen – perhaps tunnel vision again. Maybe add some kind of blur effect to the screen. “What is this horrible feeling?” DB asks himself, wincing through the pain. “I hate it. I hate that my body keeps doing this.” ((DOUBLE CHECK THIS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE OTHERWISE THIS LINE MAKES NO SENSE)). (FLASH of a thought, ‘I hate myself’). **Player can choose to either *go back to bed* or to *message a friend*. If he messages one of his old friends, they respond but slowly (HEART RATE DOES NOT DECREASE). If he messages a new friend, heart rate decreases slightly and friend recommends a good film he can watch – they’re out with their family at the moment but they could watch it tomorrow in the evening when they get home.**
8. Day SEVEN. ((FRIEND FROM YESTERDAY)) messages part way through the day to say oops, I can’t make our games hangout tonight. Their childhood best friend is . Before DB realizes it, he is kneading the flesh on his arm – it turns red/bruises. Day is saved by Egg again. “You wouldn’t cancel on me, would you, Egg?” **If it’s a good run, Egg sniffs away at him like a dismissal. “You’re right, I probably shouldn’t think things like that….**” **DB responds. “It’s very hard not to get caught up in reacting that way to people. I don’t want to be in any more pain.”. If it’s a bad run, Egg licks at his arm wound “I’m tired of being left behind”. DB says, melancholy.**
9. Day EIGHT. Didcot suggests they have to reschedule their weekly catch-up call, because she just took up a new hobby (knitting?) with the biker gang and it means they can’t make it anymore. “Can we put it on another night?” (The thought ‘I’M WORTH LESS THAN A HOBBY NOW’ flashes up. Heart rate starts pounding again and DB feels angry. Response options are **‘It’s okay, I don’t want to hang out anymore’, ‘Do you not care about me enough to skip it?’ and ‘Sorry, I can’t talk now, I don’t feel so well.’** Didcot will respond poorly to most, but to the latter will offer sympathy and apologises for ‘picking a bad time’. DB thinks, ‘It’s never a good time to hear these things, is it?’
10. Day NINE
11. Day TEN
12. Day ELEVEN – **If bad run,** Didcot isn’t having a good day, so he is very quiet when he goes to get a pedicure. He says something like, ‘If you miss me so much, why don’t you come to see me? Or just move back here?’ as a joke. **Two choices – push him away and be spiteful, or be honest and ask for an apology. If a bad run, the honest option is all crinkled and small, like demon text.**
13. Day TWELVE. ((From here on, NPC text starts getting corrupted – like glitching, but seemingly saying things that aren’t the truth. The truth can be seen on mouse-over, perhaps?))

If the run is really bad, perhaps unlock a final episode – a redemption arc? Taking meds, avoiding triggers, being honest about feelings. Validation – like a therapist, ‘Of course you would feel bad if these things were happening to you. Your perception of the world is just different and you believe what your head tells you’.

“If it’s based on your experiences, depends how dark they’ve felt.’

What kind of bad thoughts *have* I felt?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Character | Description | Characteristics | Misc. Info |
| Character Name | Describe the character. It is a playable character or NPC. How does this character fit into the story, etc. | Describe the character’s abilities, personality and so forth. | Present any other notes about the character. |

# Gameplay

## Overview of Gameplay

Include information on the game genre and how it is different, similar, or a hybrid of existing genres. Discuss what platform the game will be on, if it is going to be on multiple platforms discuss ways the game will be modified for each platform. Also, provide a general overview of the game modes available in single player and multiplayer. Also, list the Key Gameplay Features (selling features) of the game.

## Player Experience

Provide a general overview of how the player experiences the game. Walk them through the screens they will see, what the level looks like and what their character can do. Give them a brief idea of objectives & hazards they will face. This should be in a second-person point of view using the word “you” to tell a story to the audience (players).

## Gameplay Guidelines

This is a set of guidelines that the game must adhere to throughout the development process. These include rules for what is allowed and not allowed in the game. For instance, if you are creating a game for children, you will want to define guidelines for the level of violence presented in the game, what language can be used, and so on.

## Game Objectives & Rewards

This is where you present more details on how the gameplay will motivate the player to progress through the game. Discuss rewards and penalties and the difficulty level. You can use the table below to help break down objectives and rewards.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Rewards | Penalties | Difficulty Levels |
| List ways of how the player is rewarded and when. | Discuss things that hinder the player on progressing | Discuss the difficulty levels within the game |

## Gameplay Mechanics

This is the where you start getting more specific on how some of the systems in the game will work. This includes how characters move in the game, what gameplay actions are available, item inventory and attributes, and how the game progresses from level to level.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Character Attributes** |  |
| **Character** | **Movement Abilities / Actions Available** |
| Name of character | List the characters abilities & how the player can perform them |
|  |  |
| **Game Modes** |  |
| Game Mode / Difficulty Name | Describe the objectives, hazards in the game mode. And discuss how the player progresses from level to level |
| **Scoring System** |  |
| **Points/Coins/Stars/Grades/Etc.** | **How it’s Awarded & Benefits** |
| List the scoring attribute | Describe how the player obtains this and the benefits. For instance, does getting more points unlock a special level. |

## Level Design

Discuss the levels. How many levels will the game have, what will be included in each level. Include overall look and feel, hazards the level presents, difficulty, objectives, etc.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Levels** |  |
| Level name and/or pic of it | List or describe the level’s look, difficulty, hazards, and objectives. |

# Control Scheme

Describe the control setup for the game. Does your game use touch input, a controller, or mouse & keyboard? Discuss the functionality of each button/touch. It may help to insert a diagram/pic to help explain the actions.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Button/ Touch Input** | **Action it Performs** |
| List the button | Describe what functionality the button press has within the game. |

# Game Aesthetics & User Interface

Discuss the design techniques to be used. Describe the look & shape of the characters, environment and pathways. Will the game look realistic or have some other art style. Discuss what type of theme the game will have & what type of emotional impact you are hoping players experience. Discuss how the player’s gestures/interactivity has an affect on the visual experience.

Present a general overview of the UI. How will the buttons be laid out, how will the HUD work, how does the menu system function, and so on. It is a good idea to insert photos, diagrams or concept art to help explain the UI.

# Schedule & Tasks

List the tasks that need to be completed along with the basic timeline to complete them by. The task list can be as detailed as you like to fit your studio’s needs. The table below can be substituted for the excel file. This table is a great start but the tasks should be much more detailed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tasks to Complete & Schedule** | | | | |
| **Tasks** | **Task Lead** | **Start** | **End** | **% Complete** |
| **Development Phase** | | | | |
| Design |  |  |  |  |
| Storyline | John Doe | 9/4/15 | 9/8/15 | 0 % |
| Level Mechanics |  |  |  |  |
| Art |  |  |  |  |
| Level 1 |  |  |  |  |
| Special FX |  |  |  |  |
| UI |  |  |  |  |
| Engineering |  |  |  |  |
| Production Pipeline |  |  |  |  |
| Prototypes |  |  |  |  |
| Audio |  |  |  |  |
| Sound Design |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone: GamePlay Features & Music |  |  |  |  |
| **Testing Phase** | | | | |
| Test Plan |  |  |  |  |
| Beta Testing |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone: QA Testing |  |  |  |  |
| **Deploying Phase** |  |  |  |  |
| "Go Live" Plans |  |  |  |  |
| Milestone: Ready for Usage |  |  |  |  |