



# Under The Nose - Game Design Document (GDD)

Title	Under The Nose
Overview	You play as a journalist in this stealth game. Your objective is to expose Ace Chemicals' illegal waste dumping.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Game Concept

Under the Nose is a stealth-based investigative thriller where players step into the shoes of an investigative journalist infiltrating a mysterious chemical industry to uncover its dark secrets. With a blend of tension, strategy, and environmental storytelling, players must navigate guarded facilities, outsmart intelligent AI, and piece together the truth.

### 1.1.1. High Concept

A stealth-driven investigative thriller where players sneak into a corporate facility, gather critical evidence, and escape to expose the truth. Getting caught results in failure, making patience and observation essential.

### 1.1.2. Game Summary

Players take on the role of Miles, an investigative journalist who has received an anonymous tip about Ace Chemicals' environmental crimes. Armed only with their instincts and a camera, they must infiltrate the facility, collect solid evidence, and escape unseen. At the end, players filter their findings and submit them for ranking.

The game is short and re-playable, with the goal of improving investigative accuracy and achieving a better ranking.

## 1.2. Target Audience

- **Age Range:** 18-35, primarily young adults and working professionals.
- **Location:** North America, Europe, and other regions with strong indie game markets.
- **Gaming Habits:** Players who enjoy immersive single-player experiences, especially in stealth, thriller, and investigative genres.

## 1.3. Genre(s)

### 1.3.1. Primary Genre

Stealth

### 1.3.2. Sub-genres and Influences

Adventure, Thriller, Investigation

## 1.4. Game Flow Summary

### 1.4.1. Core Gameplay Loop

- **Infiltrate** – Sneak into restricted areas while avoiding detection.
- **Observe & Investigate** – Search for evidence, eavesdrop on conversations, and analyse clues.
- **Document Findings** – Use a camera to collect proof of wrongdoing.
- **Adapt & Escape** – Find creative ways to evade security and exit safely.
- **Submit Evidence & Rank** – Filter findings and submit them for ranking at the end.

### 1.4.2. Game Structure

- **Single Mission Design** – One infiltration; no multi-mission progression.
- **No Traditional Leveling or Unlocks** – The game is skill-based; success depends on stealth and investigation.
- **Replayable for Better Ranking** – Players can refine their approach to gather more accurate evidence.

## 1.5. Look and Feel

- **True Investigative Stealth** – No combat, no hacking, only evasion and intelligence gathering.
- **Player-Driven Discovery** – The game trusts players to connect the dots.
- **A Realistic Take on Corporate Deception** – Inspired by real-world corporate corruption.

# 2. Gameplay Design

## 2.1. Core Gameplay Loop

### 2.1.1. Overview

The core gameplay loop revolves around **infiltration, investigation, documentation, and ranking**. Players must stealthily enter the facility, collect incriminating evidence, filter out unreliable information, and escape undetected.

## 2.1.2. Core Loop Diagram

Infiltrate → Investigate → Collect & Filter Evidence → Avoid Detection → Escape → Submit Findings → Get Ranked (or Fail if Evidence is Insufficient)

## 2.2. Controls

### 2.2.1. Input Devices

The game will support Keyboard & Mouse.

### 2.2.2. Control Schemes

- **WASD** – Movement
- **Shift (Hold)** – Walk Silently
- **Ctrl/C (Hold/Toggle)** – Crouch
- **Q/E** – Lean Left/Right
- **F** – Interact (open doors, use objects, pick up evidence)
- **G** – Quick Distraction (throw equipped object from inventory)
- **TAB** – Open Inventory
- **ESC** – Pause/Menu

## 2.3. Difficulty and Balance

- **Static Security Measures** – Guards follow set patrol routes and do not dynamically escalate.
- **Game Over on Detection** – If caught, players must restart.

## 2.4. Feedback Systems

- **Visual Feedback** – Subtle UI elements indicate player awareness levels (e.g., vignette darkening when in shadows, slight screen blur when detected).
- **Audio Feedback** – Footstep intensity changes based on movement speed, distant alarms sound when security is alerted.

- **Environmental Cues** – Flickering lights, security monitors showing alerts, and guards reacting to noises provide non-verbal clues about detection risk.
- **NPC Reactions** – Guards adjust patrol routes or increase vigilance if they hear something suspicious, but do not dynamically escalate security.
- **Minimal HUD Approach** – Players rely more on environmental awareness rather than on intrusive UI elements.
- **Environmental Reactions** – NPC behavior changes only if the player is detected.

## 2.5. Replayability

- **Mission Replay for Better Ratings** – Players can replay missions to optimize investigation and refine their approach.
- **No XP, Levels, or Unlocks** – Progression is tied solely to investigative success.

# 3. Game Mechanics

## 3.1. Core Mechanics

### 3.1.1. Primary Gameplay Elements

- **Stealth and Evasion** – Players must navigate areas undetected.
- **Evidence Collection & Filtering** – Players must verify and filter relevant information before submission.

### 3.1.2. Game Rules and Systems

- **Evidence System** – Players must analyze documents, recordings, and environmental clues to determine their credibility. Contradictions, missing signatures, or inconsistencies require careful cross-referencing before submission.
- **Filtering Mechanic** – To construct a compelling case, players must sift through misleading or redundant data, verifying authenticity and ensuring logical

consistency before submission. Submitting weak or false evidence results in mission failure.

- **Stealth-Based Gameplay** – Avoid detection through shadows, cover and movement.
- **Game Over on Detection** – Getting caught forces a restart.

## 3.2. Interaction Mechanics

### 3.2.1. Player-Environment Interaction

- **Environmental Navigation** – Players must crouch, hide in shadows, and use objects like crates and doorways to remain undetected.
- **Evidence Collection** – Players interact with documents, voice recorders, and physical evidence scattered throughout the facility.
- **Distractions & Cover** – Players can knock over objects, activate machinery, or throw small items to divert guard attention.
- **Restricted Access Workarounds** – Players can find clearance cards to unlock doors or gain access to restricted areas. Alternatively, they can use vents, backdoors, or blind spots to bypass security.

### 3.2.2. Player-NPC Interaction

- **Line-of-Sight Based Detection** – If a guard spots the player, they will pursue. Breaking line of sight allows escape.
- **Sound Sensitivity** – Running, interacting with noisy objects, or stepping on loud surfaces increases the chance of being heard.
- **Static Patrols with Reactive Behavior** – Guards do not actively hunt the player but will investigate disturbances. Guards follow predefined patrols and react to sound and movement but do not escalate dynamically.

## 4. Story and Narrative Design

### 4.1. Themes

### 4.1.1. Primary Themes

- **Corporate Corruption & Environmental Destruction** – How far companies will go to cover up illegal activities for profit.
- **Truth vs. Power** – The struggle of an individual journalist against a powerful corporation.

### 4.1.2. Emotional Tone

- **Tension & Paranoia** – The player should feel like they're one step away from being caught at all times.
- **Frustration & Outrage** – The more evidence the player uncovers, the more they should feel disgusted by corporate deception.
- **Satisfaction & Accomplishment** – Successfully exposing the truth and outmanoeuvring the system provides a rewarding payoff.

## 4.2. Plot Structure

### 4.2.1. Narrative Arc

- **Exposition** – Miles, an investigative journalist, receives an anonymous tip about Ace Chemicals dumping untreated waste into the river.
- **Rising Action** – He infiltrates the facility, searching for incriminating evidence while avoiding security patrols.
- **Climax** – He uncovers definitive proof but faces increased security presence, forcing him to make a tense escape.
- **Falling Action** – Successfully evading guards, he reviews and filters his collected evidence.
- **Resolution** – The game ends with the submission of findings and an evaluation ranking based on the quality of gathered evidence.

### 4.2.2. Story Beats

- **Entry Point Decision** – The player chooses a way to infiltrate the facility.

- **Finding & Documenting Major Clues** – Key discoveries shape the player's case.
- **Avoiding Key Guard Patrols** – Navigating through restricted areas while staying undetected.
- **High-Risk Moment** – A scenario where the player must hide or improvise to avoid capture.
- **Exfiltration & Submission** – Making a clean escape and submitting findings for final evaluation.

## 4.3. Narrative Perspective

### 4.3.1. Point of View

The game is played from a **first-person perspective**, enhancing immersion and tension.

### 4.3.2. Narrative Voice

There is no external narrator; all storytelling happens through environmental details, documents, and overheard conversations.

### 4.3.3. Player's Role

The player directly embodies Miles, experiencing the investigation firsthand rather than being told what to think.

## 4.4. Tone and Style

### 4.4.1. Overall Tone

The game is suspenseful and investigative, creating a sense of urgency while maintaining realism.

### 4.4.2. Literary Style

Minimalistic and environmental; storytelling happens through clues, overheard conversations, and discovered documents rather than traditional narration.



## 5. Worldbuilding

### 5.1. Setting

#### 5.1.1. World Overview

The game takes place inside Ace Chemicals, a sprawling industrial facility hiding environmental crimes beneath corporate professionalism.

#### 5.1.2. Time Period

Set in a modern-day or near-future corporate environment where technology is advanced but grounded.

#### 5.1.3. Atmosphere and Mood

The setting is cold, sterile, and artificial, masking corruption and wrongdoing under a facade of order and efficiency.

#### 5.1.4. Aesthetic Style

Inspired by industrial realism with a muted colour palette, emphasizing shadows, artificial lighting, and environmental storytelling.

### 5.2. Key Locations

- **Ace Chemicals Facility** – A high-security industrial complex with multiple restricted zones hiding evidence of environmental crimes.
- **Storage & Shipping Area** – Large open spaces with crates and containers, offering hiding spots but little cover.
- **Corporate Offices** – Where internal reports and classified documents can be found.
- **Research Labs** – The most critical area containing hard evidence of illegal activities, but also heavily patrolled.
- **Waste Disposal Site** – The core of Ace Chemicals' crime, where proof of illegal dumping is hidden.

# 6. Characters

## 6.1. Main Characters

### 6.1.1. Protagonist

- **Name:** Miles
- **Background:** An investigative journalist known for exposing corporate corruption.
- **Motivation:** Received an anonymous tip about Ace Chemicals' illegal waste disposal and is determined to gather proof.
- **Personality:** Methodical, observant, and determined, but cautious. He understands the risks of exposing powerful entities.
- **Abilities:** Skilled at stealth and investigation; no combat training, relying on patience and intelligence to succeed.

# 7. Level Design

## 7.1. Level Objectives

### 7.1.1. Level Overview

The entire game takes place within **Ace Chemicals**, where the player must uncover and document evidence of illegal waste dumping.

### 7.1.2. Primary Objectives

Gather enough credible evidence to expose Ace Chemicals and escape undetected.

### 7.1.3. Success and Failure Conditions

#### Failure Conditions

- Getting caught by security results in mission failure and a restart.

- Submitting insufficient or inaccurate evidence results in a **failing score**, meaning the investigation is inconclusive, requiring a replay.

**Success Condition** – Successfully escaping the facility with solid evidence, leading to a final evaluation and ranking.

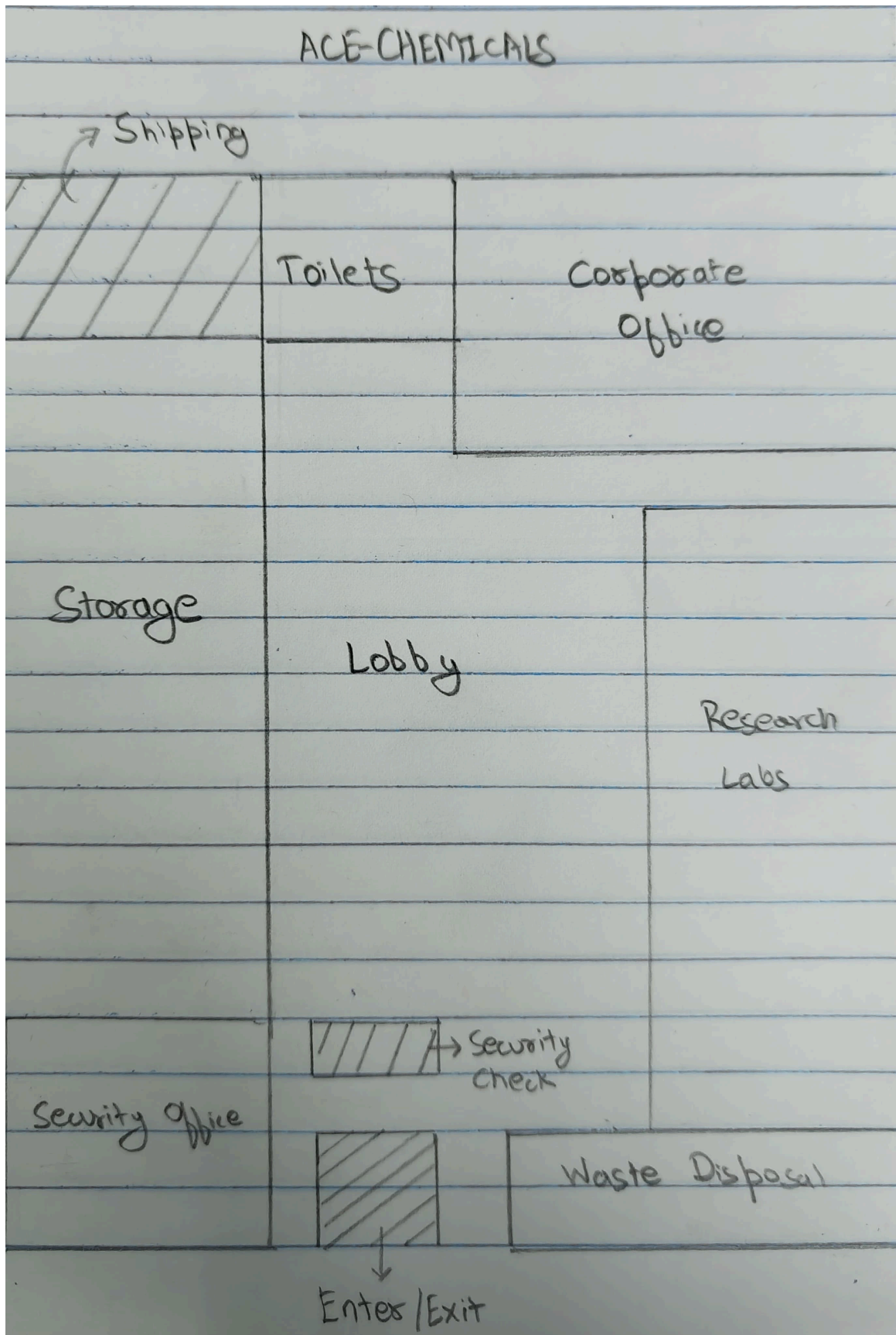
#### **7.1.4. Learning Outcomes**

The player improves their ability to navigate stealth gameplay, analyse environmental clues and filter misinformation.

### **7.2. Layout and Structure**

#### **7.2.1. Level Map**

The game takes place in a single, interconnected industrial facility with distinct zones for evidence gathering.



### 7.2.2. Spatial Design

- **Storage & Shipping Area** – Open spaces with crates and minimal cover.
- **Corporate Offices** – A more secure space where internal documents can be found.
- **Research Labs** – The most dangerous area, containing key evidence but heavily patrolled.
- **Waste Disposal Site** – The core of the company's crime, with proof of illegal dumping.

### 7.2.3. Navigation Flow

Players must plan their route, avoiding open spaces and security choke points. Multiple infiltration and escape routes exist, some riskier than others.

## 7.3. Gameplay Flow

### 7.3.1. Sequence of Events

Players start outside the facility, identify an entry point, gather evidence, and escape without detection.

### 7.3.2. Player Actions and Interactions

Players will sneak past guards, collect documents, use clearance cards, and hide to avoid detection.

### 7.3.3. Enemy and NPC Placement

Security guards follow preset patrol routes, with some guarding high-value evidence zones.

Risk increases as players go deeper into the facility; labs and disposal sites have the most security.

## 7.4. Pacing and Difficulty

### **7.4.1. Difficulty Curve**

The game starts with low security, but as players move deeper into restricted areas, patrols become more frequent, and hiding spots become scarcer.

### **7.4.2. Tension and Release**

Players experience brief moments of safety (storage rooms, blind spots), but labs and disposal areas are high-risk zones requiring precise movement.

### **7.4.3. Adaptive Difficulty Elements**

The challenge remains consistent, requiring players to learn guard patterns and plan carefully.

## **7.5. Interactive Elements and Hazards**

### **7.5.1. Interactive Objects**

Players can interact with doors, computers, file cabinets, security keypads, and clearance cards to access restricted areas.

### **7.5.2. Environmental Hazards**

Noisy floors (gravel, metal grates) increase detection risk, while soft surfaces (carpet, grass) allow silent movement.

### **7.5.3. Dynamic Elements**

Some areas may have moving security cameras, forcing players to time their movements carefully.

Players can throw objects, trigger machines, or manipulate light switches to lure guards away.

## **7.6. Environmental Storytelling**

### **7.6.1. Visual Story Elements**

Office desks with discarded reports, chemical storage rooms with illegal waste barrels, and locked filing cabinets hint at the company's misconduct.

## 7.6.2. Contextual Clues

Half-shredded documents, emails left open on computer screens, and hastily abandoned workspaces suggest a cover-up in progress.

## 7.6.3. Audio Cues

Overheard conversations between employees discussing recent inspections, security guards referencing suspicious orders, and distant machinery humming ominously.

## 7.6.4. Integration with Main Narrative

Players must piece together the truth from fragmented environmental details rather than being told directly.

# 8. UI & UX Design

## 8.1. Core UI Elements

### 8.1.1. Visual Style and Theme

A minimalist UI that stays out of the player's way, emphasizing environmental awareness.

### 8.1.2. UI Components

- **Subtle Awareness Indicator** – A faint vignette or slight screen blur when guards are nearby.
- **Inventory & Evidence Filtering** – A simple menu where players organize and submit findings.
- **Interaction Prompts** – Small, unobtrusive text cues when near objects (e.g., "Press F to Inspect Document").

### 8.1.3. Screen Layouts

No excessive overlays; information is presented only when necessary to maintain immersion.

### 8.1.4. Feedback Indicators

- **Noise Feedback** – A small visual effect indicating sound levels when running or interacting with objects.
- **Detection Warnings** – Gradual colour shifts or slight UI pulses when nearing discovery.

## 8.2. Menus and Navigation

### 8.2.1. Main Menu

Includes Start Game, Settings, and Exit options.

### 8.2.2. Pause Menu

Allows players to resume, adjust settings, or exit to the main menu.

### 8.2.3. Settings Menu

Includes audio, graphics, and key remapping.

### 8.2.4. Inventory Screens

Used for evidence filtering before submission. Its a simple, image and text layout

## 8.3. In-Game HUD

### 8.3.1. HUD Components

- **Awareness Indicator** – A subtle vignette or colour shift when guards become suspicious.
- **Interaction Prompts** – Small, fade-in text cues (e.g., “Press F to Inspect Document”).

### 8.3.2. HUD Layout

Minimalist design; no permanent UI elements outside of contextual prompts.

### 8.3.3. Dynamic HUD Elements



The HUD only appears when necessary (e.g., near objects or in high-alert moments)

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