

Escape the Museum

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Part 1: Description

Escape the Museum is an interactive platformer game where the player must find all the clues, navigate the darkness, and escape the museum. The game interweaves commentary on museum decolonization and the return of stolen artifacts, drawing inspiration from real historical items to foster awareness and reflection. The overall purpose of this game is to educate players about the repatriation of museum artifacts while still providing moments of joy.

Along with educating players about museum repatriation in a humorous way, this game also imparts information about real artifacts Egypt wants returned. All “clues” in the game represent real items such as Nefertiti’s Bust or a sphinx’s beard that are currently being exhibited or stored in other museums around the world, and of course, Egypt is only one of many countries with much of its heritage spanning the globe without lawful permission.

In order to be interesting and engaging, *Escape the Museum* relies on traditional game mechanisms. For instance, the player is able to jump onto clues to collect them and lose lives if they fall in the water. This introduces a “reward” of collecting five clues to proceed through the game while also adding an element of danger if players fall into the crocodile-infested waters and lose a life. Losing three lives means game over. There’s also background music and sound effects to further immerse the player.

The target audience of my game would be people of different ages who enjoy nostalgic platformers. As the educational message is interwoven into the game play, they don’t need to be particularly curious about museum decolonization but may be someone who is open to learning about different things.

Part 2: Interactions

- Move through scenes
 - Click a scene (e.g. the title screen) to proceed onto the next scene.
- Navigation
 - Use the right arrow key to move right.
 - Use the left arrow key to move left.
 - Use the up arrow key to move up.
 - Combine arrow keys (up and right) to jump in a particular direction.
- Collect clues
 - Collide with a potential clue to collect it.
 - The clue will be pushed away and vanish.
 - Text will appear on the parchment to indicate collection.
 - A sound effect will be played upon successful collection.
- Lose a life

- Jump into the water with the crocodile to lose a life.
 - Heart vanishes.
 - Player is teleported to the start.
 - A sound effect will be played when you lose a life.
- Lose the game.
 - Lose three lives.
 - All three hearts will vanish.
 - A “game over” screen will appear.
 - A sound effect will be played upon game being over.
 - Player can refresh to play again.
- Win the game.
 - Collect all five clues
 - The flashlight effect will disappear, and the scene will be lit.
 - An informational scene will appear.
 - A sound effect will be played upon winning the game.

Part 3: External Tool

Name: Phaser 3, a Desktop and Mobile HTML5 game framework.

Why: I chose to integrate Phaser 3 as a Javascript library because it appeared to be the best game engine to fulfill the purpose of my project. It supported 2D graphics, provided a large framework that could enable the interactions I was visualizing, and appeared easy to learn.

How it was used: Phaser 3 has three phases: “preload,” “create,” and “update.” I relied on these phases to load my assets into the scene, create visuals such as a tilemap, and update interactions such as losing lives. I used both Phaser’s “language” as well as Javascript (e.g. if statements) to design my game.

What it added: My game relies almost entirely on Phaser 3 to operate, so Phaser 3 provided the necessary framework for key mechanisms of my game to succeed, such as movement, collecting items, and losing lives.

Part 4: Iterations

My initial prototypes explored two different ways to convey information about museum decolonization — an interactive “Where’s Waldo?” game and a platformer. Ultimately, I chose to go in the direction of a platformer both because there were more resources on how to make a platformer on Phaser 3 and a platformer would be more engaging for players. After making that decision, my subsequent iterations focused on educational messaging and player experience.

For instance, it was important to me to be subtle about how I discussed museum decolonization because people are often opposed to persuasive messages that are too “in their face.” So I had the clues include both an educational description as well as a funny description, only expanding on the historical significance of the clues later on. Similarly, I introduced new game mechanisms

like losing lives or crates to jump over to increase the challenge of the game while still making sure it was a relatively easy game to play.

Part 5: Challenges

Overall, I struggled with Javascript, so learning an entirely new library was an enormous challenge to overcome, and as no one really knew Phaser 3, I had to problem solve myself with limited support. Another challenge was teaching myself the basics of game design and development — I'm not a big gamer, and I'm fairly unfamiliar with the platformer genre. Ultimately, despite some of the obstacles, I'm glad I pushed myself and designed a product entirely different from anything else I've ever worked on.

Appendix:



WAVE

web accessibility evaluation tool

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[WebAIM](#)

Address: 

Styles: OFF ☐ ON ☒

Summary



Summary



Details



Reference



Order



Structure



Contrast



0

Errors



0

Contrast Errors



0

Alerts



1

Features



2

Structural Elements



0

ARIA



WAVE

web accessibility evaluation tool

powered by
[WebAIM](#)

Address:

Styles: OFF ☐ ON ☒

Details



Summary



Details



Reference



Order



Structure



Contrast

☒ 1 Features

☒ 1 X Language



☒ 2 Structural Elements

☒ 1 X Heading level 1



☒ 1 X Main content



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