

Project Proposal - Steffan Wilkins

by Steffan Wilkins

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Steffan Wilkins

2101242

Computing (Games Development)

Independent Project

ACCA6020

Preferred Supervisor: Gordon Dickers

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Developing a game demo

Project Background

The goal for my project is to increase my skills in game design as well as give entertainment value as studies “have shown improvements in mood, reductions in stress, and feelings of competence and autonomy resulting from playing video games.” [1] To achieve this I will need to create a plan of what the game will look like, then create a first draft of the game so that the basic elements can be tested. Once the first draft is complete, I will then conduct interviews to see how people feel about the draft, then I will go back to the game to make alterations according to the feedback I received. The desire of this product is to create a fully functioning video game demo that people play and enjoy.

Critical review

One of the main sources that I will be using is Scott Rogers’ book called ‘Level Up’[2] which is a book focused on video game design and goes to all aspects of video games such as level design, boss fights, and game puzzles. The reason why I’ve chosen this book as one of my main sources is that it is an excellent starting book for game developers as it covers a wide range of topics. Another reason is that this book encourages engagement by having corresponding images to help convey their message and gives well-known examples that the reader might be familiar with.

Another source I will be using for this project is Mathew M. White’s ‘Learn to Play.’[3] The focus of this book is to teach the reader how to create a tutorial, which in regard to my project will be most of what the player experiences so that they can learn each part of the game. The reason I believe that this resource will be highly effective is that throughout the book there is plenty of references at the end of each section allowing for easy further research into a point, the book gives example in pseudocode, and finally, the book summarises its main points at the end of every chapter allowing for quick reminders.

Rationale

The field that my project lies in is game development, which has many different aspects such as concept and design, programming, art, and testing. With all these different challenges, I will be able to develop a lot of my skills. In addition, this project will be an excellent representation of what I can do for interviews after the university, as it's something that I created, and it is what I'm passionate about pursuing in the future.

Aims and objectives

The overarching aim of this project is to create a functioning and fun game demo for people to play. For this aim to be achieved the course of action can be split into several main sections.

First, I will develop a first draft of the game where most aspects are not refined yet and only allow the player to get a feel for the basics of the game, this is done when the player can go through the game and try out the main concepts of the game without any huge hindrances. To guarantee this objective achievability there will be hardly any created textures or effects and will be primarily focused on the gameplay. This objective will be done over two months to give me enough time to ensure its completion.

Next would be to gather different viewpoints from a diverse group and conduct interviews on what they thought about the game to get in-depth and specific answers from each participant. This task will be completed after 4 interviews have been conducted. This should be able to be achieved within two weeks.

Once I've finished the interviews, I will need to analyse the interviews to try to get a better understanding of what to do for later tasks, this must be done to ensure that I get a clear understanding of what players want to see. The objective will be complete once I have gone through each interview thoroughly and gathered up different points that can be improved or are desired. This should be achievable in a short time however to allow me to have a clear idea of what can be improved I will allocate two weeks for this objective.

Finally, I will refine my project by using the received feedback to complete the demo. The demo will go through a tutorial teaching the player how the game works with one challenge at the end to bring everything together. This task will be completed when their tutorial is complete, the basic level and the character design are created and set with a level design made to show the player how each of the mechanics works and how challenges can be overcome through said mechanics. This game demo won't be very in-depth as it is my first time creating one therefore, I will take extra time to complete this task. As this would be the biggest part of my project, I will be allocated three months to complete this task to give myself plenty of time to figure out how to make everything to an acceptable level.

Expected Outcome

At the end of this project, I expect to have a fully functional video game demo that can give the player a good idea of what a full game would look like. Alongside the first draft and the finished project, I will be handing in the primary research that I did, which would be the interviews and analysis.

Project Design

The content of my project will be a video game that is a 2D platformer game, where the player will be playing as a slime who will have to jump, swing and bounce to complete levels but will also have to solve puzzles by pulling and pushing objects around to progress.

Data collection methods

For objective one, I will be using secondary data in the form of books and articles from the library as well as the Internet to gather information on game design and to help with the programming of the game. The second and third objectives will both be using primary data as these objectives are going to focus on gathering and then analysing the Interviews I will be conducting. Finally, in the fourth objective, I will be using both the primary data I've collected and using secondary data to inform what final features and adjustments I will be making.

Potential issues

Whilst doing this project, there will be many issues that might arise throughout, one such issue I will be dealing with is the time limitation on this project, therefore I will have to be aware of how long I spend on each task and plan accordingly. Another limitation will be my inexperience with animation and art; therefore, this game will have less focus on those aspects. When conducting my interviews there are ethical rules, I must follow so that no one is negatively impacted by this project. I must make sure that I follow laws such as GDPR [4], one way I can do this is to make sure no one else can access my interview recordings and transcripts. When gathering inspiration for this video game I must make sure I don't directly copy anything to avoid any legal issues.

Research

The research I will be doing for my project is reliable as I will be picking participants with different experience levels to simulate the public. Validity "is the extent to which an instrument, such as a survey or test, measures what it is intended to measure," [5] from this description I know that my research is valid as I will be having in-depth interviews with each participant on their experience and thoughts on the game. I believe that the test I will conduct will not be generalisable as the Interviews will be unique as the opinions on my project will be different to another video game.

Result

The Interviews that I will be conducting will be opinionated therefore I will have to look at the responses each person gave and compare them to each other. The way I will do this is by using both prescriptive analysis and exploratory data analysis.[6] When reviewing the answers given to each question, I will write down the main points given and then think of a way to answer their feedback. Once I have done this for all the interviews, I will look at my solutions and try to decide how to answer as many replies as I can for each point.

Resources

The resources I'll need for this project are Unreal engine to allow me to create the game, I will also need Adobe Cloud for Photoshop so that I can create the character design and different level assets, and a graphics tablet would be needed to draw onto Photoshop.

Planning

TASK TITLE	START DATE	DUE DATE
Making First Draft		
Research	6/11/23	7/1/24
Basic Movement	13/11/23	26/11/23
Level Desing	27/11/23	10/12/23
Character Desing	11/12/23	24/12/23
Advanced movement	25/12/23	7/1/24
Interviews		
Creating Questions	8/1/24	14/1/24
Conducting Interviews	15/1/24	21/1/24
Transcribe Interviews	15/1/24	21/1/24
Data Analysis		
Examine Interviews	22/1/24	28/1/24
Compare Interviews	22/1/24	28/1/24
Create Plan	29/1/24	4/2/24
Final Game Demo		
Fix bugs within the testing	5/2/24	18/2/24
Implement feedback	19/2/24	3/3/24
Animations	4/3/24	17/3/24

Level Details	18/3/24	31/3/24
Finish Levels	1/4/24	14/4/24
Extra time	15/4/24	31/4/24
Report		
Write a report	7/1/24	7/5/24

References

- [1] D. Johnson, "The brain gain: why video games can make people happy", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Oct. 9, 2013. [Online] Available: <https://www.smh.com.au/opinion/the-brain-gain-why-video-games-can-make-people-happy-20131008-2v63o.html> [Accessed Oct. 11, 2023.]
- [2] S. Rogers, Level Up: *The Guide to Great Video Game Design*, 1st ed., John Wiley & Sons, 2010
- [3] M. White, Learn to Play: *Designing Tutorials for Video Games*, 1st ed., A K Peters, 2014
- [4] "Data Protection", *Gov.UK*, [Online] Available: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection> [Accessed Oct. 13, 2023]
- [5] S. Shantikumar, "Validity, reliability and generalisability", *Faculty of Public Health*, 2018. [Online] Available: <https://www.healthknowledge.org.uk/content/validity-reliability-and-generalisability?fbclid=IwAR1BpkWmcAjT8Xt0-ipPyhgkVyKOuvEuFGXD4ba93qx3E9rw4sTJGubhr44> [Accessed Oct. 13, 2023]
- [6] N. Tyagi, "7 Types of Statistical Analysis: Definition and Explanation", *Analytic Steps*, Jul. 19, 2022. [Online] Available: <https://www.analyticssteps.com/blogs/7-types-statistical-analysis-definition-explanation> [Accessed Oct. 14, 2023]

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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

54/100

Intro / A&O (400 words)		
Project title; Identification of a specific problem to be investigated; Well-defined aims and SMART objectives; Explaining why this project is worth doing; Discussion of what the project needs to do in order to be a success; Description any deliverables that will be produced at the end of the project A reasonable introduction, however the scope of this project is wide reaching and overly ambitious.	20	7
Background to the Project / Literature Review (400 words)		
Description of how the work to be done by in the project relates to the work identified in the literature review; Discussion of any ethical issues raised by the project Identifying what has already been done within the field; Topic familiarity; Brief literature review using appropriate sources – 6-8 journal papers and book chapters rather than just websites; Selection of relevant models & concepts	20	10

Some further research into the development of game assets and levels, game AI and logic, etc would have revealed this to you. I suggest you focus on part of the game and evaluate that in the game context and in an academic sense too. E.g. - path finding in games or user interface and user experience experiments, and so on		
Project Design (500 words)		
Clear statement of which development methods are to be used and why they are appropriate; Clear statement of which tools are to be used and why they are appropriate; Clear description of how data collected will be analysed A reasonable project design included, but the scope and scale are massive and must be honed.	30	14
Resources / Planning (200 words)		
List of any deliverables; Clear diagram showing both timing and resource	15	11

use; Completed ethics form; Limited and relevant appendices		
Limited resources required outlined well.		
Document Presentation		
Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation; Flow of narrative/fluency; Coherence; Word processed ; Correct use of referencing with bibliography; Strict word limit	15	12
A well-written and presented document.		
TOTAL	100	54

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