

UNSOLVED

Hinterkaifeck

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Introduction

Our game is finally finished!!!

In this presentation we will briefly take a step back and explore the project as a whole. We will :

- See if we met our goals
- Talk to you about the difficulties we encountered and how we overcame them
- Give you our opinion about the project structure
- Tell you what valuable lessons we learned

First of all though let us wrap up our last presentation.

Minor modifications

As we explained last week there were some minor issues that had to be fixed after our playtesting phase. A brief reminder:

- More items in certain parts of the house
- Rescaling some objects
- Adding bullet decals to walls
- Anti cheat mechanism with locked rooms

Minor modifications



Minor modifications video



Was our project a success?

We all consider our project a success, a big one actually !

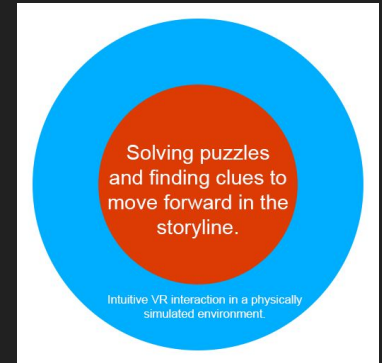
Not only because we managed to achieve the two big goals we had set out in the beginning of the semester but mainly because we failed a lot.



Goals & Disappointments

Every team in the beginning of this project named their “Big idea”. Our was to create a game where the user would be exploring and interacting with a realistic environment in order to engage in puzzles that would help him reveal the true culprit behind the Hinterkaifeck Murders. This was achieved!

One of the very first advices we were given was think small. We knew why , but being so excited to finally materialize all the things we learned in the past year we couldn't help ourselves with designing small but dreaming big and as development went on we slowly tried to add more and more content. Some of those “extras” made it into the final version and some did not. As a result even though we achieved everything we told you we wanted, there were a lot of small disappointments along the way. (Cinematics,side quests.. etc)



Development

As we stated before we had a “smooth ride” when it came to developing our project. This doesn’t mean that it was easy and without bumps. We mean that we never found ourselves lost or not knowing what had to be done in order to overcome a problem. This was mainly because of :

- A very well organized project structure
- Very careful planning and task breakdown in the second phase
- Constant informal playtesting
- Good communication between the team members
- Everyone happily walked that “extra mile”



How can the praktikum be improved?

This was not obvious for us in the beginning (how can I know from now what has to be done for the whole semester), but the project structure is almost perfect. It gives all the teams a backbone for development which guides you through the process of making a real game and makes your decision making much earlier. There are though two changes we can suggest.

- The prototype phase. A lot of games are focused around core ideas that are next to impossible to present by mockups. And even if they somehow can the final prototype will be so different from what the developers had in mind that the faulty feedback might steer them to the wrong direction.
- Playtesting should happen in every phase of development. We believe that some informal playtesting during each phase will help the teams focus their attention to what truly is fun in their games and might lead to having a stable gameplay much earlier on.
- Feedback from the supervisors.

Our experience

Lessons learned :

- Learned to develop around the Vive
- Learned new solutions to common problems found in game developing. (FPS drop due to light computation)
- Learned a different way of thinking when dealing with VR
- Learned more about other aspects of game developing like (environment modelling, design)
- Time management and stress handling of a project.
- The perspective of a player while testing our game.

Our experience

Most importantly though we learned that:

- “Good enough” has no place in game developing
- You have to think small , use your strengths and eliminate your weaknesses

A very strong example is our police chief :

- In the beginning he was just standing there moving his hands
- After that we decided to only introduce him towards the end of the speech and do a better animation
- The animation didn't turn out to be that good and his absence in the beginning raised questions

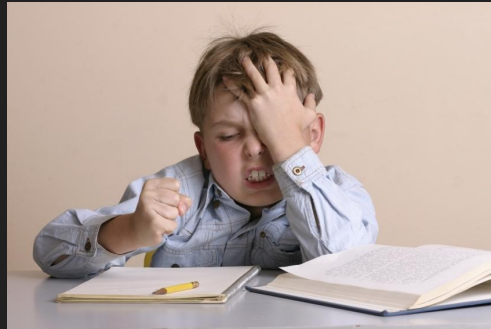
He did more bad than good for our game.. So even after spending so much time on him , he was removed.



Difficulties

Even though we had a smooth “journey” we countered a lot of difficulties that we had to overcome :

- A robust system of interacting with the environment that can support future implementations
- Realistic lighting while still maintaining constant 60+ fps
- Finding the controls that will feel more natural to the player
- Expressing a complicated story through a few notes while still maintaining the player’s interest
- Come up with puzzle ideas that are hard but not hard enough to ruin gameplay
- Find enough assets that will populate the environment but still belong to the same era
- Voice acting & human animation
- Write a number of scripts that will allow objects not just to interact with the player but also with each other



The Theme

At first we were really weirded out by the theme. It was so vague. Shortly after that though we realised that this was to our advantage, meaning that we could take any predefined idea we had, tweak it a little bit and then make it match the Munich theme. Are we correct when thinking like that though? Is the theme just a placeholder for us to place our ideas in or is it supposed to restrict us ?

- If the core idea of the project is for us to explore how a game is made from start to end and improve our game developing skills, then we believe a theme is not needed because it can take away from an otherwise good idea.
- If the core idea is to do the above but also get more comfortable with a real world environment then yes a theme is necessary, since shortly after graduating most of us will start from working on other people's ideas. So working with restrictions will surely benefit us.



On to the next project!

We learned a lot this semester, and we already have some ideas and restrictions about next semester:

- Virtual Reality was a unique experience but not again. In order to truly create something amazing and for all the members to improve together it is necessary that all team members own the vr hardware or at least the majority. The high cost of the Vive or the Oculus though grant this impossible. The way we did was that we had very frequent meeting at Chris's place where we went through code and how to improve it but this is very bad way to do it.
- Keep your project idea restricted. By this we do not mean to not have big ideas around it, but make sure that aspects of game development that you are not familiar with either play a minimal role in the final result or not included at all.

Conclusion

Looking back we are very happy that we chose this praktikum. The project structure taught us a lot and our failures allowed us to improve as developers. No doubt we consider our game a success and we are more than proud about what we created, but as always we believe we could have done better. We are wiser now, we know how to shift our attention during development and manage our time in a more productive way. We are looking forward to the next semester where we definitely plan to outdo ourselves..

Thank you !!!

Trailer



Questions

Ask 'em !