

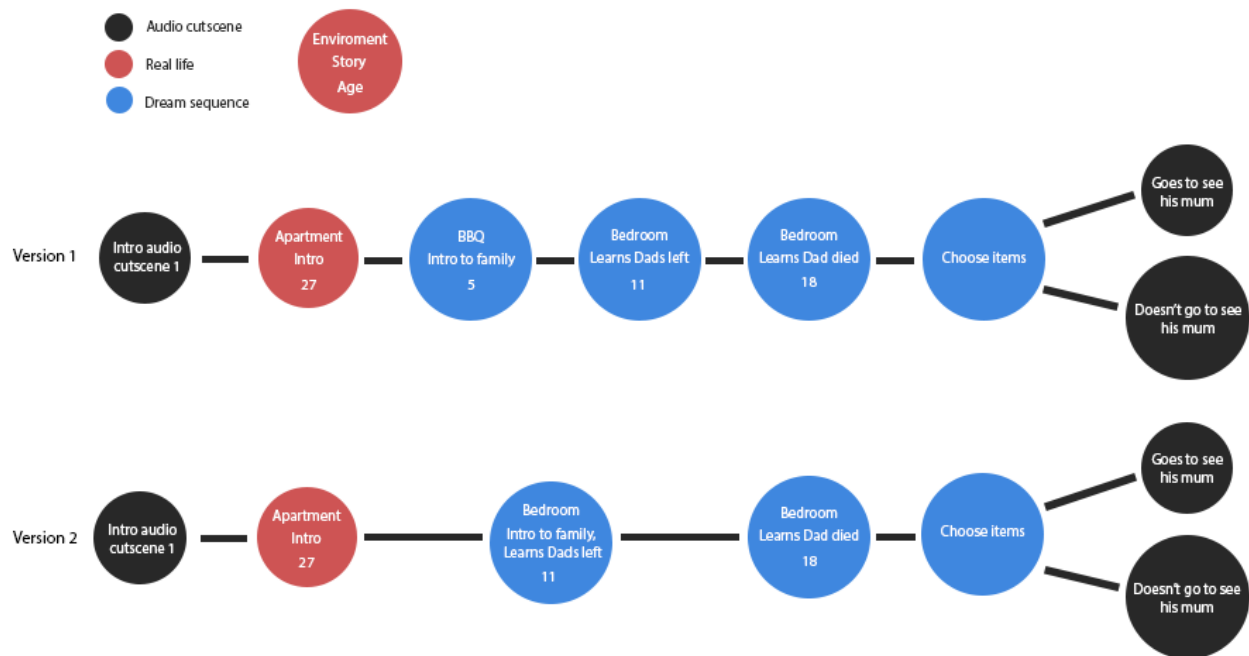
Lost Memories Design Document

Overview

In this project we will be creating a first person narrative driven adventure. I worked on this project with a team member. The aim is to create an experience that lasts around 10 to 15 minutes.

The rough premise of the game is the player will be shown a narrative about a man that has a troubled relationship with his mother. After his mother falls ill and doesn't have long to live, he is faced with the decision whether he should say goodbye to her or not. The player will be shown a number of dream sequences where they will learn about the story through objects from the characters past. At the end of these sequences the player will be given the ability to show a limited number of these items to the character. The character will then proceed to either visit his mother or not making a decision based on the items the player has highlighted. This way the player ultimately decides the ending of the story.

We came to decision of having 4 levels but later changed this to three. Firstly, this was to reduce workload and help us improve the quality of our work. I then created this node base flow chart to visually represent the game.



As you can see in the node diagram there are two versions the second version has merged two of the levels together into one as this will create a more quality over quantity experience. This means the game will have three main environments. The initial apartment where you meet the character, his bedroom when he is 11 years old and his bedroom when he's 18.

The rough plan of the game is that the player will be given an audio clip to play as an intro to the story. Then the player will be put into the apartment environment and be able to interact with items around the room and learn more about the story.

After a short time, the character will make a comment saying that he is tired. After the player interacts with the bed the dream sequences will begin.

The player will then be taken to the characters bedroom when he is 11. The player will once again have the ability to interact with objects around the room and learn about the character and his relationship with his mother. The major plot point in this scene is that the character discovers that his father has left his family he learns this through his mother. After looking through a number of items in the room the player will be presented with a doorway that will allow them to move into the next environment.

The next environment is the same bedroom but it's seven years later the character is 18 and leaving The University. Was packing up he discovered the newspaper article saying that his father died in a car accident. After finding this out the character is furious at his mother for lying to him all these years. After this sequence is over the player will have the ability to highlight some of these items to the character.

Then one of two audio cutscenes will play of the character ringing his sister saying he is coming to see his mother or not coming to see his mother.

Character & Story

I may have a rough story, but I am yet to come up with this solid character. When creating the character, I did a small amount of research into what makes good characters in stories. The YouTube video "Writing Strong Characters - The Important Distinction Between Want and Need" This video was created by Think Story and talks about the concepts of what a character wants and needs. The characters once define the main plot, this is what the character wants to achieve. The characters needs define what the character requires to gain what he wants. Usually, the character does not fully know what the needs are until the end of the story.

I already had a story laid out so designing the character wasn't too much of a challenge. I started by creating a list of attributes and traits that the character would have. The character's name is Clemmons, which means merciful and forgiving. The main theme of the game is forgiveness, so I thought this would be nice touch. He lives in New York; this is because he is very successful. He is an over worker, gives him something to focus on. And distracts him from his past. Distrust's people, prefers to work alone.

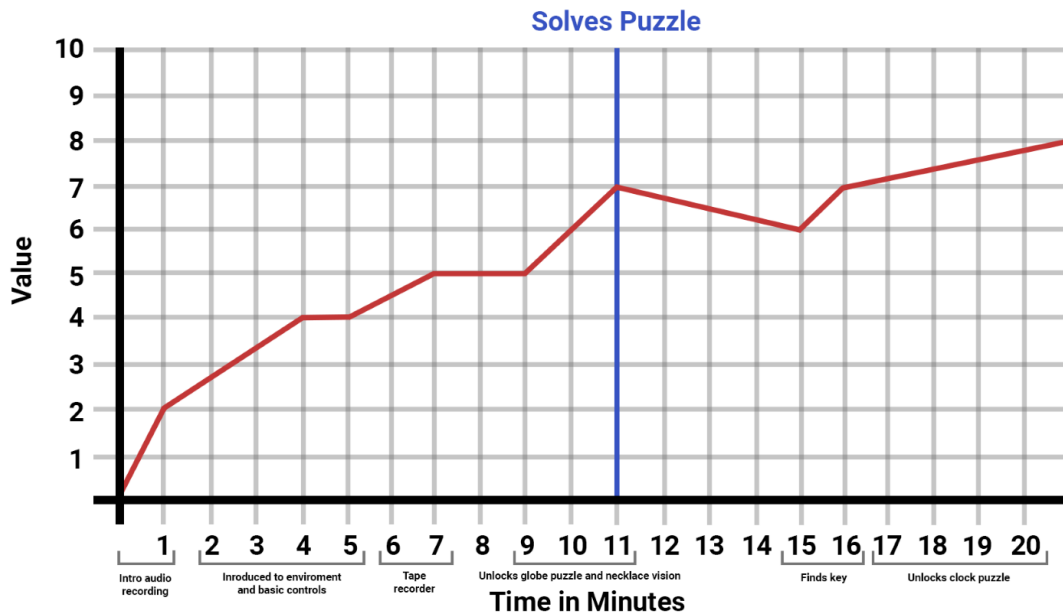
Clemmons wants to let go of his anger; he does this by ignoring his mother's illness and not wanting anything to do with her. But this is not a long-term solution. (Want). Joe needs to forgive is mother and have closure to rid himself of his anger before it is too late. (Need).

Gameplay Flow

The next stage in the planning process for my level design was to create a graph that shows the excitement level of a player during an ideal playthrough. To get a reference point to go off when creating an excitement graph for my own levels I went to a game in the same genre, which was a similar length to what we planned our game to be. The game is called What Never Was. An ideal playthrough of this game should last about 20 minutes. Below is the graph I created to show the flow of the gameplay.



/ Interest Level
| Wow Moments



This graph will serve as a template to how I should design the flow of my levels. The game takes place in one environment where's our game is planned to be across a few different environments. What Never Was is a popular first-person puzzle experience which means the flow of the game is a good template to work from, but should we take this template for each level individually or use it as a template for our entire experience spanning multiple levels. This would be because What Never Was is a 20-minute experience so condensing it into a 2–3-minute level and repeating that might not necessarily work. After talking this through with my teammate we both came to the conclusion that making using this graph as a template for our entire game is the best option.

But unfortunately, due to time constraints this graph was only used for some initial research and not used in any constructive way to design the layout and flow of the game.

Level 1 - Apartment



This is mood board for the apartment environment. The key was to get a feeling of grandeur and wealth through the fact that Clemmons is an over worker. To support this fact, I also wanted the apartment to not feel lived in, this could be through the fact that it's so pristine. I initially thought maybe everything could be dusty but in fact nothing is dusty because he hires a cleaner. Everything looks like it just came out of the box.

Notes

- Grand, expensive
- Doesn't spend much time there
- Pile up of work
- Small DVD collection

Subtle details

The DVD's I chose to be in the game were Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (Star Wars), Donnie Brasco (Donnie Brasco) and The Passion of the Christ (The Passion of the Christ). I chose these DVD's because

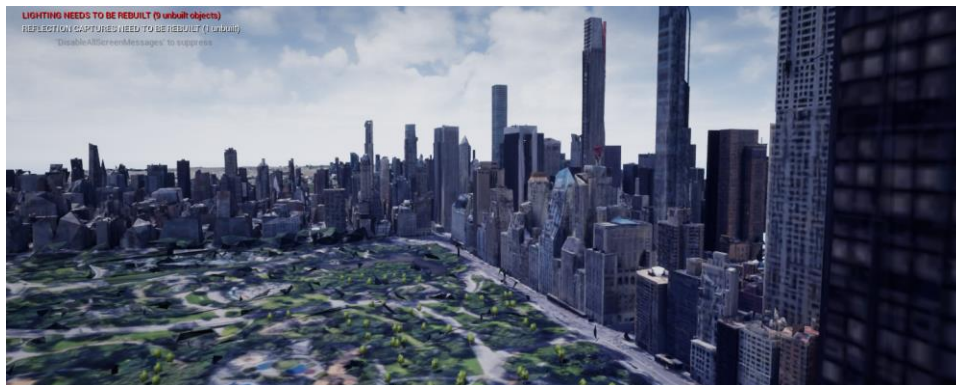
the main plot line of all these films has a moment in them where one of the characters is betrayed this is to mirror how Clemmons is betrayed by his mother.

On one of the shelves in the apartment I positioned an old Game Boy console. You see a newer version of the same game boy in one of the Clemens memory's later in the game. It was bought for Clemens by his mother, even though Clemens has a bad relationship with his mother this item still holds if on memory. If a player finds it and then also sees it later in the game in the memory sequence this might give them a different perspective to others that play the game.

White Box

In my levels I didn't do much white boxing because I used a lot of asset packs meaning it was far more natural to just import the object itself rather than putting a cube in its position to represent it.

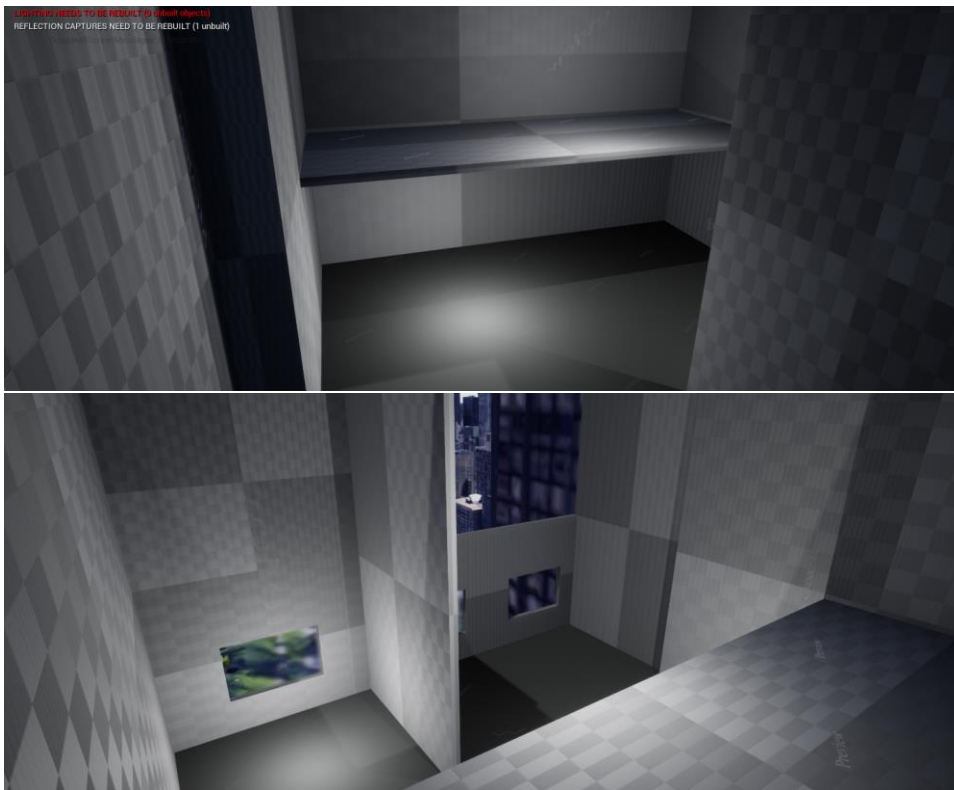
For the apartment scene I wanted you to look out the window and see New York. I didn't want to have to manually create New York so using a blender plugin I was able to rip some free information from Google Maps and use this as my New York for the game. Obviously this belongs to Google, so I am not taking credit for it.



I think the Google Earth textures are OK, unfortunately they are not high quality. This initially led me to want to blur the windows so you wouldn't see how low-res textures were. But after some feedback people said they liked to be able to look out the window and see New York. I decided not to blur the windows. You can see the comparison in the image below



My original design for the apartment was ambitious I had to eventually scale it down to just two rooms so it could be achieved within my time frame.



Level 2 – Family home (Aged 11)

This is the point in the game where the story starts to get told. The player will hear audio from the character saying that this is his childhood home. The player can then walk around the house and click on objects and learn bits and pieces of the story. A video walkthrough was made of this section of the game and shared with critics so that I could receive feedback on this project.

The images below are what the project looks like before feedback.



This is a link to the feedback form that I used: <https://forms.gle/RTkygGzfUEo5gz9c9>

Feedback

Are there any major or minor improvements you would suggest for the project.

probably add a text version of the voice over when clicking the clickable items or have the colour of the target change

Subtitles would definitely be a good idea and would help people follow along with the story. Especially if they couldn't quite hear the voice lines.

For the level based in the house, do you have any additional ideas for assets that could be added to increase the realism. E.g it would look better if there were a dining room etc. (Additionally please mention the location where you think the asset should be added)

I guess more odd bits and pieces, not necessarily interactable but dishes in the sink, things like that

Maybe some dog toys on the floor in the living room?

Both of these suggestions are good ideas they would definitely help the home feel more like a realistic environment. On a similar note when having a chat with one of the play testers they pointed out that maybe having clothes on the floor of the child's bedroom would make it feel plausible.

If you could change one thing what would it be?

some kind of puzzle perhaps?

The answer of this question although very vague made me think it might be a cool idea to have some kind of Rubik's Cube in the child's bedroom. The player could pick it up and maybe try and solve it, when done so a voice line might play that would add to the story.

Improvements

- Subtitles
- Cloths on floor
- Dishes in sink
- Dog toys
- Rubik's cube

Level 3 – Family home (Aged 18)

This is the third and final scene. Environment for the scene was designed so that it was the same as the 1st house scene, but it was during the night and it was raining, this was to set the tone. First House scene has some positive and negative memories in, whereas the final scene only has negative memories. The primary object that the player would be led to is the newspaper. Newspaper explains that the character's father died in an accident and did not leave the family all those years ago. It is a pinnacle point in the story this is when the character discovered that his mother was lying to him.

Object Selection Stage

in this section of the game the player would select certain items that they feel drawn to. Items can even be associated as a positive memory or a negative memory. What the player chooses will affect the

outcome of the game. For example, if the player chooses two negative items and one positive item The character will not go to see his mother and vice versa.

Positive Items

- Guitar
- Game Boy
- Piano

Negative Items

- Dog
- Shoes
- Newspaper

You can find out more about different objects and the elements of the story they tell by looking over my story object script.

Reference

(Donnie Brasco) Donnie Brasco (1997). [DVD] Directed by Mike Newell. Hollywood: Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia.

(The Passion of the Christ) The Passion of the Christ (2004). [DVD] Directed by Mel Gibson. Hollywood: Mel Gibson.

(Star Wars) Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (Episode III) (2005). [DVD] Directed by George Lucas. Hollywood: Lucasfilm Ltd.