

Game Design Document

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-Viral Impact-



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1. Introduction

1.1. Game Summary

A roguelike where the player must traverse through various digital worlds, based on social media apps, like WhatsApp, Instagram & TikTok. Each world has a few rooms where the player will encounter some enemies, and after defeating them a person pops up from hiding. The player must then talk to the person in order to convince them to help in their journey.

1.2. Inspirations

Hades

The game Hades is a rogue-lite dungeon crawler with excellent story and mechanics. This was the main inspiration when it came to how we wanted to do the rogue-lite element of our game. There the player goes on runs where they can collect different types of boon and other loot. The boons and gold can help the player on that run, but they are lost after dying. Other currencies are, however, not lost and can be used to upgrade the player making them feel like they are progressing in other ways other than gaining skill & knowledge.



Moonlighter

Moonlighter is a dungeon crawler game with extremely addictive game loops. The player in that game has to fight enemies in a dungeon, but they also need to collect loot from monster encounters. The dungeon lets the player decide when to leave, adding to the idea of choice, because if you leave by your choice you get to keep everything, otherwise you lose the loot, so it adds the replayability of the rouge-lites, while not having the permanent loss of certain items and progression. After fighting and coming back victorious



the user can either stash the loot for future use, they can sell it for gold, or they can use it to upgrade their gear and weapons.

Cult of the lamb

This game is a roguelike that focuses more on the aspect of creating and maintaining “a cult”, so we can take inspiration from this game. It can be on storytelling and colony management, while also looking into the combat part since that is also a relevant story beat.



We should talk

From this game we got our inspiration for the dialogue system, because it adds the fun factor of having to choose and craft the response from a set amount of options to an otherwise boring system, while also providing a much needed functionality that can show how messages that might seem similar can have very different meanings.



1.3. Genre

The game's genre will be a combination of rogue-lite & dungeon crawler with some relevant RPG elements.

1.4. Target Audience

The target audience is people with Mild ID, for most ages, teenagers to adults, but with limited mental capabilities, and even lower empathetic capabilities.

1.5. Project Goals

- Helping people who have Mild Intellectual Disabilities to recognize potential threats on social media platforms and AI through dialogues topics.
- Helping the clients communicate better via social media platforms through repeated dialogues.
- Helping the clients relies more on the caretaker through minigames and subtle suggestions.

1.6. Platform

The primary platform is going to be Windows PC.

1.7. Development Tools & Softwares

Unity 6:

This choice was made because of the ease of use, everyone knows the engine a little more than the rest, but more importantly because it fits, firstly the art style that is not hyper realistic 3D, in which case Unreal Engine would've been the clear choice, but also not 2D pixel art, in which case Godot would work better for us. This combined with the fact that similar games like Cult of the Lamb and Moonlighter were also made in Unity, while Hades was made in a Proprietary Engine made the choice clear.

2. Core Concepts

2.1. High-Level Concept

A roguelike action game set inside a digital world, where the player is pulled into a virtual dimension and must progress through procedurally generated runs, learning safe communication skills through repeated encounters and dialogue interactions. The player returns to a central hub between runs to upgrade permanent stats, talk to the caregiver, and prepare for another attempt.

2.2. Vision Statement

A replayable roguelike experience where players grow stronger through repeated attempts, using gradual progression and guided support (via the caregiver) to teach safer behavior and awareness in digital environments.

2.3. Pillars of Design

- Repetition as Learning: The difficulty curve and frequent early failures encourage players to replay many runs, reinforcing key lessons about communication and digital safety.
- Gradual Empowerment Through Upgrades: Coins earned during runs can be spent in the HUB on permanent powerups, helping players feel steady progress even if they fail a run.
- Safe Support Structure: The caregiver in the hub provides stability and guidance, reinforcing learning and serving as a consistent presence between attempts.
- Accessible, Guided Gameplay: The game begins with a short storyboard and a structured tutorial that teaches each mechanic one at a time before giving players full control.

Player Experience Goals

- **Feeling of progression** as they gradually push farther in the digital world after each upgrade.
- **Motivation to retry**, encouraged by early difficulty and a clear upgrade path.
- **Safety and comfort** in the HUB through the presence of the caregiver.
- **Curiosity** about what lies deeper in the digital world.
- **Satisfaction** in finally reaching and defeating the final boss, leading to the story conclusion (such as the main character returning to their human form).

3. Gameplay Overview

3.1. Player Experience

Progression Structure (runs, world, hub)

3.2. Difficulties and Mode Curves

- General: 4 - 4 dialogue choices (3 wrong and 1 correct)
- Difficulty Curve: Every time the player passes a level and moves onto the next level there will be more enemies, more HP and Higher Attack.
 - 1st Boss: Test player skill and stats, they will not be able to beat it the first time.
 - 2nd Boss: Slightly more difficult than the 1st boss
 - 3rd Boss: Slightly more difficult than the 2nd boss

For more information on how the difficulty should be scaled for each world, take a look at [this document](#)

4. Player Mechanics

4.1. Movement

Basic movement

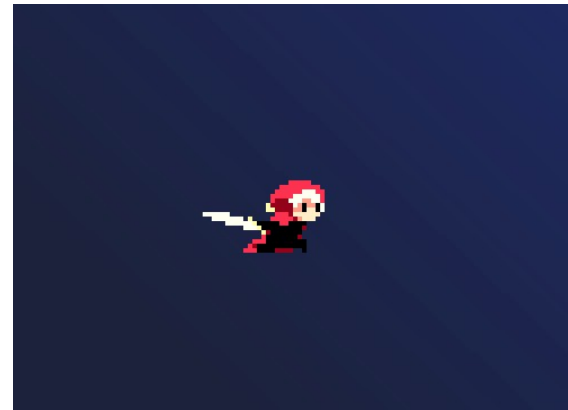
The player moves around the map in 8 directions.

Dash

- The player can Dash based on the latest input
- Medium dash, 0.5s cooldown (the dash should only happen again once the previous dash is finished)
 - They will be able to Dash up but if the steep is too high(2 terrain units height) then they won't be able to dash up
 - They will hit like a wall and maybe get damage from it

4.2. Combat

- Players can do a combo of 3 slashes in which they can knock back enemies and also deflect the bullet from ranged enemies.
 - The player cannot move while doing the attack
 - The attack follow the mouse and the character direction also change with the attack (For example: When the character attack left the player will turn left)



5. Systems

5.1. Dialogue System Initiating

- When players interact with an Online Person, a dialogue interface appears.

Inputs

- Below the input field are two sections, divided in the middle. Each section can display up to 4 options.
- Players construct a sentence by choosing one option from each side.
- The selected options populate the input field as a combined sentence.

Outcomes

Dialogues have two outcomes:

- Good outcome:
 - Granted if the player completes the dialogue successfully.
 - The player receives a random [power-up](#) as a reward.
 - The player build up 1 heart toward the character's friendship level
 - *The player gain 1 like*
- Bad outcome:
 - Nothing will be gained.

5.2. Friendship System

Build up Friendship Levels with each character through the dialogue system. Every time the dialogue is successful, they go up 1 level. Each friend has a different Friendship Level, at which when reached the required level to unlock, they will then appear at the hub where they can grant the player permanent upgrades in trade for *Likes*.

5.3. Upgrades & Powerups

Upgrades

After unlocking the friends in the hub, the player can interact with them to use their likes and buy permanent upgrades which will help them with their run.

[\(Details in this document for which character gives what upgrades\)](#)

Powerups

Powerups are stats buffs that the player can get from the run by successfully finishing a conversation with a character. Here are the stats that can be buffed.

- Attack Damage: The amount of damage dealt per attack by the player
- Max HP: The maximum amount of health the player can have.
- Speed: The moving speed of the player.
- Attack Speed: The attack speed of the player, the higher the stat, the lower the attack cooldown.
- Dash speed: How fast the dash happens. The higher the stat, the lower the duration of the dash.
- Dash distance: How far the dash goes. The higher the stat, the longer the dash will be.

5.4. Companion

Companions are another addition to help the player with their run. Each companion will provide a special effect to the player which helps them survive. The player can either get a new companion from buying from the shop in the hub with likes or unlock them by exploring the maps or other special conditions.

5.5. Save System

What data will be stored in the game:

- Dialogue logs
- Likes currency
- Friendship progression

The game will save during these times

- When going back to the hub
- When finishing the run and the result screen show up
- When the player die and the result screen show up

The game will not save the progress during these times

- When the player abandon the run (Going back to the hub)

When the player exits to the main menu, their current checkpoint will be saved.

6. Level & World Design

6.1. Level Generation

- Levels are generated by using the same map structure with 3 islands
 - 2 small islands: These islands shouldn't focus on the details but instead focus on connecting to other islands
 - 1 big island: A big island that is focused on aesthetics.

6.2. Enemies's Damage

- Enemies HP will have a white lerp indicator to show how much health was lost
- Damage Number are shown next to the enemies
- A red flash will be visually shown when the attack connect
- The enemies will get stunned for a brief 0.3 second when they are hit while in the free and roam state. However, during the attack animation state, they can not be stunned.

6.3. Splot light for care taker

The game will emphasize on the caretaker to be the "safe place" for the clients. This is shown through:

- Putting the caretaker in the safe/rest levels (Make it looks like that the caretaker is the one in charge of that stage). By having the caretaker associated with stages that don't have enemies only, we can ensure that they will be a sign for the player to know if a stage is safe or not.
- Emphasizing the caretaker in the dialogue as "the people who will solve the problem" by associating them with the solution in some scenarios.

7. Enemies

7.1. Monsters

Monsters that roam the world. You have to defeat all of them for the Online Person to spawn and progress.

[\(Details in this document\)](#)

7.2. Mini-Bosses

Each mini-boss fight is a test for players with high reward and built as a gradual increase in difficulty before the boss fight of the world itself.

Whatsapp world:

- The mini boss creates 3 mazes; each maze can only be completed by killing the mini boss inside it. After defeating 3 mini bosses, the player then has to talk to the bosses and pass the dialogue. If the player fails to persuade the boss, no reward will be given.

Instagram world:

- The miniboss of this world will be Billy, referred in [this document](#)
- Billy will go toward the player, when the player is in range, he will raise the hammer up and slam it onto the ground, creating an AOE attack with high damage, the player is advised to avoid this attack by dashing away. He will do this three times then get tired so the player can attack him.

Scam world

- The Scam world re-introduces the mini-bosses from the previous two worlds, but this time they fight together in turns. After the player deplete the attacking boss health down to half, the other will tag in and fight. This will happen until both of them run out of health.

7.3. Bosses

Whatsapp world:

- The boss of this world will be Chatty, referred in [this document](#)
- Chatty is a summoner enemy with large health and will spawn random whatsapp enemies like Chatram and Leaflink

Instagram world:

- The boss of this world will be I.G.M, more information in [this document](#)
- I.G.M is a quick and nimble enemy that can freeze the player with its camera flash. It has decent health but high speed and being weaker when its attack misses and has to recharge.

Scam world:

- The boss of this world will be Silen, more information in [this document](#)
- Silen is an enemy that can morph into other enemies, but with the addition of higher stat. Silen will morph 3 times, the first time morphing into one enemy from whatsapp world, the second time, splitting into an instagram enemy, and the third time, splitting into two enemies, one from instagram and one from whatsapp.

8. UI/UX

8.1. Control

Functions	Keyboard mapping	Xbox controller mapping	Ps Controller mapping
Movement	WASD / Arrow keys	Joysticks	Joysticks
Attack	LMB		
Dash	Space/RMB		
Interact	E		

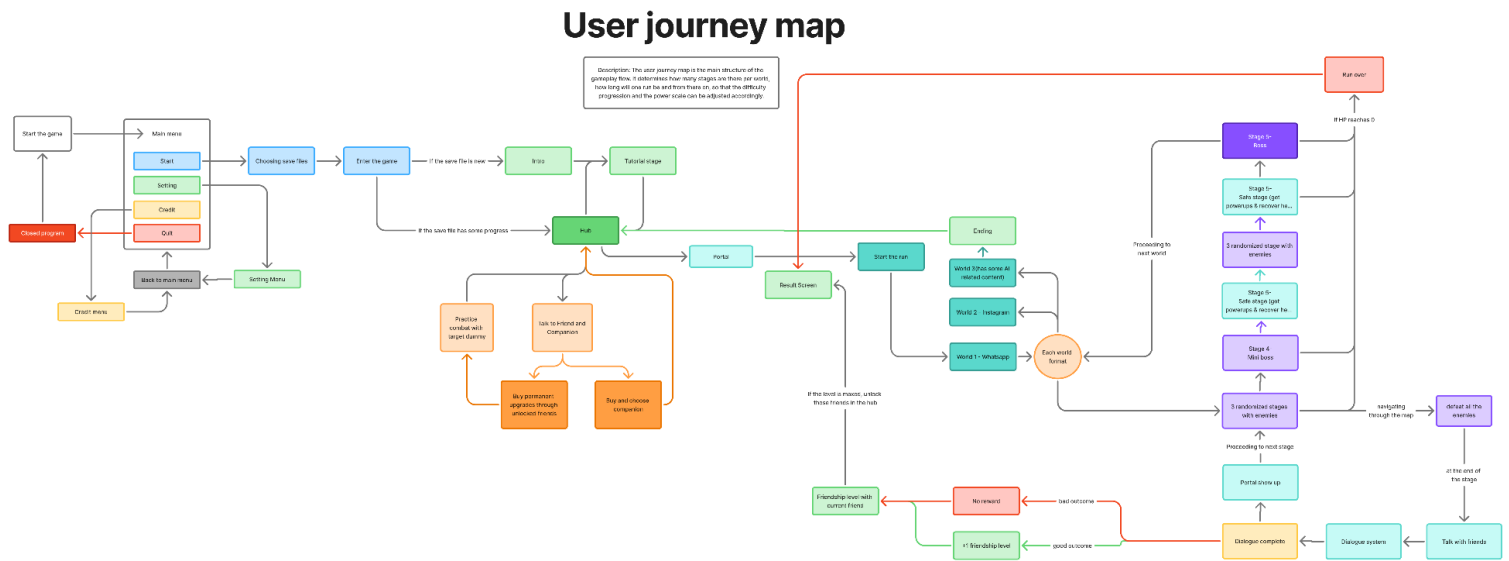
9. User flow

9.1. User journey map

Overview

The user journey map is the main structure of the gameplay flow. It determines how many stages are there per world, how long will one run be and from there on, so that the difficulty progression and the power scale can be adjusted accordingly.

Details player's journey diagram: User Journey Map



Shortened structure of the map:

Enter the game

Main Menu -> New save file -> Intro -> Hub

Start the gameplay loop

Hub - Enter the portal -> 3 Combat levels -> Rest stage -> Mini boss ->
3 combat levels -> Rest stage -> boss stage - hub