Obliti

WPI Thesis

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Special thanks to Alec Markarian

Otherwise this would not have happened

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# Overview

## **Theme / Setting / Genre**

- The theme of this game will be Depression and understanding what depression feels like. The setting will take place in multiple locations, inside and outside, but every object is white and faded. Some scenes take place in a dreamstate, which is colored. The Genre of this game will be casual and educational.

## **Core Gameplay Mechanics Brief**

- Walking mechanic, being the main one in the game. No sprinting, just a casual walk

- Object interaction. Most small objects will be interactable.

- Triggering events aka memories. This will change scenes into a colored world

## **Targeted platforms**

- It will be available on both PC and Mac computers

## **Project Scope**

- 1/2017 to 5/2018

- Asset packs on the store range average at $60, so a total of $200 is estimated to be spent on this project.

- It will take me three semesters to complete this game, from 1/2017 to 5/2018

- One person team

- Design Art, and Programming

- Mitchell Stevens

- I will be working on the design and programming of the project. I will also be editing some models to fit in the game.

- Zero costs to employ myself

- Going to be using Unreal Engine 4, 3ds Max, photoshop and Mudbox. Using educational versions, all of this software will be free.

- Ranging from $60 to $200 for total price, depending on what type of asset packs are purchased.

## 

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## 

## **Influences (Brief)**

### **- Depression Quest**

- Video game found on Steam

- It is a text based game revolving around depression, which is the main theme for my game. The game has no real ending, just like depression and it is a great way of telling the story. The story makes the viewer emotionally sad and that is what I want to produce with my game as well.

### **- Asemblance**

- Video game found on Steam

- You go through the main storyline trying to piece together what is happening and what you are trying to do. The sense of mystery keeps the player involved through the entire story. With my game, adding a sense of mystery will help capture the audience better.

### **- Gone Home**

- Video game found on Steam

- With triggered events using voice acting and most objects are intractable, it helps tie the story together with emotions and mystery. Interacting with most objects, gives the game a realistic feel to it.

### **- Thirty Flights of Loving**

- Video game found on Steam

- A very simplistic game with a heavy plot, even though it makes the player's piece it together. With flashbacks or maybe even flash forwards, it sends the player for an adventure that is confusing but compelling.

## **The elevator Pitch**

Dive into the world of depression, as you relive the past and try to stay in the present.

## **Project Description (Brief):**

This project is for my Masters Project, in which is due in May 2018. Being in serious games, I decided to make a game where a serious topic was the highlight of the experience. Having and still going through depression, I wanted to tell my story, and others, through a media I knew, video games. The game's output is to familiarize them with the struggles day to day with depression. I also want this game to be an outlet for people with depression, to tell them they are not alone in this fight.

The gameplay will be calm, mostly walking and interacting with the environment. No health, no guns, just a game where there is a story and where there is an experience.

## **Project Description (Detailed)**

To go more into detail about this project, this is not my first time attempting. A half finished game inside Unity sits, gathering dust. It was my first attempt at making a game by myself, and much was learned.

I have always wanted to make a game about depression but it was hard to tackle. Thankfully, my skills have increased and I am ready to tackle this game, but in another engine. I wanted to get photorealism, to get it as close as real life as I could. To get that, unreal was the way to go but there was one problem. I am a low poly modeler and I needed photorealism in my games. This explains my route toward the asset store due to me mostly focusing on the design and programming of the game.

Taking the route of Depression Quest, you will journey on a personal journey through inner thoughts and memories.

# What sets this project apart?

- Personalized story the player experiences

- Realistic graphics to immerse the player in the experience

- Flashbacks in color but present in only white or gray

## **Core Gameplay Mechanics (Detailed)**

### **- Walking Mechanic**

- The main mechanic in the game will be walking, for that is how the player gets around in the scenes. Walking through triggers, activating dialogue, and walking to interact with the environment. The main storyline is progressed due to walking and interacting with objects found in the environment.

- The walking works when the player hits W (to walk forward), A (to walk right), S (to walk back), and D (to walk left). Using the mouse, you can rotate your camera 360 degrees around the player. First person camera.

### **- Object Interaction Mechanic**

- Being a story based game, most of the objects in every scene will be interactable. These objects will help support the main story delivered through the voice dialogue. When you interact with an object it will come closer to the camera, for better observing. You can also throw items if you want, or put them back into place.

- The interaction mechanic works by getting the object desired in the middle of your reticle, in which the object will highlight. Once there, hitting the left mouse button, will pick the object up for closer observing and trigger a dialogue that will describe said object and its importance.

### **- Triggering the past Mechanic**

- In parts of the story, it will bring them back to a past event but this event is in color, unlike the the present, which is gray or white. These past events will be walkable levels in which the player will learn valuable backstory. Once the objective is complete, aka the memory is over, the player is sent back to the present. However, no matter how long the player is in the memory, it lasts only a second in the present. (To justify the passage of time not adding up, also you will be in a dream state)

- Once promoted by both voice dialogue and a screen popup, the player will hit ‘E’ and trigger the memory. Normal mechanics apply in the memory and once the memory is complete, the player hits ‘E’ again to return to the present. A memory portal will be to enter and exit these memories.

# 

# Story and Gameplay

## **Story (Brief)**

Follow a man as he lives his normal day life with depression. His life is gray, but he tries to keep active with friends and family, but finds himself drifting from them. Dealing with PTSD from past events, he goes through frequent flashbacks to how his depression started. Can he fill his present with color by forgetting the past?

## **Story (Detailed)**

The story starts with you. *“My greatest fear is being alone”* You are dreaming, a beautiful forest with a clear defined path traveling up a small hill. As you follow this path, going up the hill, the speaker will state *“I wish my dreams were still like this”* and finished as your crest the hill. Below in the valley, is a dying and decayed forest, with the path still leading on. *“These memories haunt my dreams these days”*

“They changed into this twisted darkness...” the voice says as descending into the valley. The path leads to an open field, which holds a pedestal basked in spotlight. *“You get used to the darkness… very commonplace”* As you walk toward it, you notice the picture frame, pill bottle, and gun, sitting there. Interacting with it, triggers a flash of light. “ Let's start from the beginning”

Light fades into a house, with morning light, modeled after my own house (Details will be laid out). You start in the bedroom, with many objects to interact with. *“I wonder where she went”*. The first object encountered is a discarded shirt. There will be other objects, gathering the past of the main character.

*“This was my favorite shirt she wears, smells just like her”*

Computer*: “I need to start working on that book report, havent even started haha*

Going through the door, you are presented with a long hallway emptying into a living space. *“ Maybe she is making breakfast?”* Off this hallway, are three separate rooms. One directly in front of the door you left (Parents room), two further down the hallway to the left (Bathroom) and right (Computer Room). Entering any of these rooms will trigger dialogue pertaining to the room. All will be closed doors.

Exiting the hallway, a living room will be to the right and a connected kitchen to the left. Right of the kitchen, will be a patio door with a figure on the deck. Entering the room, dialogue appears *“There she is..”* Approaching this figure will jump cut back to the dark forest.

*“We would talk hours on that deck, about anything and everyone. With every puff of her cigarette, the words leaving her mouth were so memorizing, I sometimes forgot to talk”*

Walking down this dark path, a sharp turn to the left showcases a room that looks ripped from its original housing, the one you previously were in.

*“\*sigh\* I have always hated this one”*

Through this discarded room, objects litter the ground, each with its own story. A necklace (“*It was special to her, it was from her grandmother. She never left without it*”, possessed by her, a suitcase(“ *I always hated the idea of suitcases*”, of hers, and a note. A note saying I’m sorry. This room will be later be shown to be the room where the main character learned of her cheating on you. Dialogue will be associated with these objects.

“ I’m sorry.Yeah, me too” as the path progresses. Another clearing will house another pedestal, this time with a picture frame . Interacting with the picture frame, will flash the screen with light.”*I wonder if dad is up*”

The same house will be shown but will different aspects changed, with afternoon lighting. A ash tray will be on the night stand (“*I always told her to not smoke in the house but it's just what she did*” a computer in the corner and the door leading out of the room with be intractable. This room will hold the emotion of the picture frame, beating around the bush around whole idea with his family.

The room that is open is the parents room, where the narrator goes into detail of his great relationship with his parents. Something about not disappointing them. You will find the picture frame where there are silhouettes of the family, where the main character goes into much detail of the family life, all good. (“*My dad is always around, like a brother to me. I couldn't be happier with my family but they can be overbearing. Expecting a lot from me. Being the only child, I get a lot of attention and sometimes I don’t want that. But they mean well. I just don’t want to disappoint them*”)

Again, as the main character walks toward the living room and looks at the deck, the figure is still there. Walking to the figure will have a flash back to the corrupt forest. (“*We always talked about where we would be in 10 years, the ideas would flow out. Every second would be pure bliss*”This is the main loop of the game. Each will have different lighting, for example, morning, noon, evening and night.

As the main character walks through the corrupt forest, you come up to a clearing with non corrupt forest and a house. You can't enter the house but will expose the main characters future plans that never came true.”*This was our planned house in Canada, with seven different lawnmowers for each day, each painted a different color. It was stupid, thinking of it now. It was something. It was what we were going to do. Gave purpose of our future together.*”

With the corruption still continuing, we enter the new loop. A clearing with a pedestal, which houses a pill bottle. Interacting with the pill bottle will cut the scene to the next.”*God.. I hate taking these*”

Enter the house again, with dusk type of lighting. The room has interactable objects, for example, a journal(“ *I always kept a journal, write my personal notes there. She would write in the margins sometimes, and we would talk there.*”, makeup bag(“*She always left the house with makeup on, was just her thing*” and others. This time the door to the bathroom, down the hall to the left, will be open. “I need to take my pills”There the character notices the pill bottle, and the story behind that. ( It is for depression but the character beats around the bush about it, saying it's no big deal. Goes into the routine of the pills) “ *Take one pill daily, the side effects will leave. That's what I have to keep saying. I can’t believe I’m taking pills… It helps but it makes me feel weaker. Taken away from the reality I live in. But I need them, I couldn't handle it... “*

Going down the hallway, the same process repeats. Finding the figure standing on the deck, once interacting with her, the scene cuts back to the forest. “ *I had to take them because you caused them*”

Back in the forest, following a path, comes to a clearing, which holds the same house that was saw before in the last dream. Entering the house, you find objects pertaining to her cheating on you with another man. As you go upstairs, you see two figures talking. One is her with another man, as you get closer; the door slams shut. (“*It’s hard to mention what happened next. It's hard to talk about. This house we planned our future, it's tainted now with what you did. I am always afraid to enter the house but I have to, I have to understand why* ”

“*I always wondered what she did on the weekends. I was always happy to be with her, I just wanted it to be real. I wanted to be happy. I guess it wasn't it.*”

As the door closes “*This place holds too many negative memories..*”

Leaving the house, and continuing on the path; shows a clearing. The normal pedestal is there, but this time holding the gun. Interacting with the gun will cause a jump to the next scene, back to your house.(“*Its funny how just one pull of one simple trigger could make this go away.*”

As these scenes progress, the main bedroom you spawn in becomes more cluttered. “*I shouldn't do this… how would this end?*”Different objects to interact with and this is the final loop of this process. The new room that is open, is the computer room. Found within is the gun, where the main character talks about how he could never do it, would impact his family negatively. (“*It’s my grandfather's gun, he showed it to me one summer. So much power in a tiny thing. I have always wanted to do it. To get rid of all this darkness, and memories. But I can’t. I have to do it for my family. My mother would blame herself, and my cousin; she is too young for me to leave. She needs me in her life. So that’s why everytime I pick it up, I end up putting it down. I am doing it for them. But never for me.*”

Once you touch the normal figure, it will transport the character to the corrupt forest but will include every scene from before.

“She always was talking and engaging during dinner, but not tonight…”

“*I miss her but I don’t know if she misses me. Maybe it was stupid to believe I had a future with her but I was naive. This is what my life is now; darkness. Every day I get closer to the brink of existing and not existing, the constant contemplation. I don’t know what to do. This is my world right now and my greatest fear is being alone, and here I am. But here is my life and that is what scares me.*”

Were you ever compared to a experiment? I think that's worse than hearing I don’t love you anymore. There was no love to begin with, you were just some test. I was a te

## **Gameplay (Brief)**

The Gameplay will take place in multiple scenes, where the player walks through and interacts with the environment.

## **Gameplay (Detailed)**

Walking is the main gameplay of the game, with integrated voice lines through triggered events. Some objects or events will trigger a flashback, which the player enters a colored world of the past. There, the player has to piece together the reason for that flashback through the interaction of the objects. Once the memory has been relieved, the player goes back to the present with more information about that certain topic.

# Assets Needed

## **- 2D**

- Textures

- All textures will be on the model already but since the asset packs are not customized for this type of game, some objects will be modified to better fit the theme.

## **- 3D**

- Characters List, characters will be a bunch of floating cube like entities

- Old girlfriend - This will be found in every flashback, and the way the player gets back to the present, blueish white color scheme.

- Friend #1 - Will be used during the present, giving the player someone to interact with. Red in color

- Friend #2 - Will be used during the present, giving the player someone to interact with. Red in color

- Filler people - The world will be randomly polluted with people, giving the world life. Neutral colors, mostly matching the background.

* Gun
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/military-m9-pistol-pack
* Picture frame
  + Included in https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/hq-residential-house
* Pill bottle
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/first-aid-set

- Environmental Art Lists

-Most will include indoor scenes, but asset packs have not been determined yet. One outdoor scene will be included.

Levels needed:

* Daytime forest
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/high-fidelity-forest-package
* Corrupt forest
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/horror-forest
* Interior house with customizable assets
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/hq-residential-house
* Neighborhood
  + https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/modular-neighborhood-pack

## **- Sound**

- Sound List (Ambient)

- Outside

- Birds chirping

- Wind

- Depending on the assets used, the ambient sound will match the scene, be it a busy city or a quiet suburban street.

- Inside

- Footsteps

- The noise of interacting with an object, and depending on the material of that object.

- Depending on the assets used, the ambient sound will match the scene, be it a busy cafe or a quiet bedroom.

- Sound List (Player)

- Character Movement Sound List

- Footsteps moving on different type of materials, like dirt, or tile floor.

- Character Hit / Collision Sound list

- Small thump, nothing alarming.

- Character on Injured / Death sound list

- The character can not get injured or killed during the process of the game.

## **- Code**

- Character Scripts (Player Pawn/Player Controller)

- Ambient Scripts (Runs in the background)

- Trigger events that run dialogue to progress the story.

- Interaction blueprints on most objects

- Flashback blueprint which changes scene on player hit key

- NPC Scripts

- The NPC’s will only have the interaction blueprint on them, for the player to interact with them.

## **- Animation**

- Environment Animations

- At this time, no environment animations are planned but as time progresses, if any are needed, then they will be added to add life to the scene.

- Character Animations

- Player

- Being a first person character, the player will have no animations

- NPC

- No walking animations are needed but general shifting animations are needed to put life into the models. Hoping to use mocap to achieve this.

- etc.

Quotes in between levels?

“Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad.”

― [**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/2697.Henry_Wadsworth_Longfellow)

“There are wounds that never show on the body that are deeper and more hurtful than anything that bleeds.”

― [**Laurell K. Hamilton**](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/9550.Laurell_K_Hamilton), [**Mistral's Kiss**](https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/4198)

# Schedule

### 

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **First Semester (Jan - May 2017)** | **Second Semester (Aug - Dec 2017)** | **Third Semester (Jan - May 2018)** |
|  |  |  |
| **Not started** | **Started** | **Complete** |
|  |  |  |
| **March 14th to March 21st - 2017** | **Plan out thesis schedule** | **Start concept doc for game** |
| **March 21st to March 28th - 2017** | **Finish concept doc for game** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
| **March 28th to April 4th - 2017** | **Start collecting sources regarding depression** | **Tutorials regarding programming** |
| **April 4th to April 11th - 2017** | **Keep collecting sources regarding depression** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
| **April 11th to April 18th - 2017** | **Finish collecting sources regarding depression** | **Start thesis proposal** |
| **April 18th to April 25th - 2017** | **Keep working on thesis proposal** | **Basic paper level designs** |
| **April 25th to May 2nd - 2017** | **Keep working on thesis proposal** | **White out level inside unreal engine** |
| **May 2nd to May 9th - 2017** | **Finish thesis proposal** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
| **May 9th to May 16th - 2017** | **Start Asset creation / modification** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
| **May 16th to May 23rd - 2017** | **Keep creating / modifying assets** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
| **May 23rd to May 30th - 2017** | **Finish creating / modifying assets** | **Start revising concept doc as needed** |
|  |  |  |
| **May 30th to August 29th (Summer)** | **Revise concept doc and story** | **Unreal 4 tutorials supplied by Dean** |
|  |  |  |
| **August 29th to September 5th** | **Begin programming, based on mechanics** | **Blueprint tutorials for Unreal** |
| **September 5th to September 12th** | **Mechanic programming** | **Polish on assets** |
| **September 12th to September 19th** | **Blueprint tutorials** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **September 19th to September 26th** | **Blueprint tutorials** | **Make mock up level in unreal** |
| **September 26th to October 3rd** | **Create feedback questioneer** | **Alpha playtesting, for general feedback** |
| **October 3rd to October 10th** | **Review and implement feedback** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **October 10th to October 17th** | **Create first level in unreal** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **October 17th to October 24th** | **Create second level in unreal** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **October 24th to October 31st** | **Create third level in unreal** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **October 31st to November 7th** | **Create level pacing questioneer** | **Playtest level pacing** |
| **November 7th to November 14th** | **Fill out form for IRB approval** | **Blueprint tutorials** |
| **November 14th to November 21st** | **Basic UI in unreal** | **Make level changes according to playtest** |
| **November 21st to November 28th** | **Fill out form for school WPI** | **Create trigger events** |
| **November 28th to December 5th** | **Start putting together an IRB approved playtest** | **Start wrapping up programming** |
| **December 5th to December 12th** | **Emotions playtest** | **Make adjustments according to playtest** |
| **December 12th to December 19th** | **Bulk of programming is complete** | **Outline of thesis paper** |
| **December 19th to December 26th** | **Outline of thesis paper** | **Polish on assets** |
|  |  |  |
| **January 2nd to January 9th** | **Start writing intro to thesis paper** | **Bug fixes with assets and programming** |
| **January 9th to January 16th** | **Finish writing intro to thesis paper** | **Bug fixes with assets and programming** |
| **January 16th to January 23th** | **Collect all playtests and put into thesis paper** | **Playtest UI and flow** |
| **January 23th to January 30th** | **Make changes noted in playtest** | **Write body of thesis paper** |
| **January 30th to February 6th** | **Revise parts of thesis paper** | **Bug fixes with assets and programming** |
| **February 6th to February 13th** | **Playtest level flow** | **Implement changes due to playtest** |
| **February 13th to February 20th** | **Bug fixes with assets and programming** | **Thesis paper revisons made** |
| **February 20th to February 27th** | **IRB playest of Emotion** | **Gather information about playtest** |
| **February 27th to March 6th** | **Thesis paper work** | **Polish art assets** |
| **March 6th to March 13th** | **Thesis paper revisions** | **Polish UI** |
| **March 13th to March 20th** | **Thesis paper work** | **Polish Programming** |
| **March 20th to March 27th** | **Thesis paper revisions** | **Polish Programming** |
| **March 27th to April 3rd** | **Thesis paper work** | **Polish art assets** |
| **April 3rd to April 10th** | **Thesis paper revisions** | **Polish Programming** |
| **April 10th to April 17th** | **Thesis paper work** | **Polish UI** |
| **April 17th to April 24th** | **Last minute revisions to game and paper** | **Hand in thesis and pray** |
| **April 24th to May 1st** | **Presentations** | **Sleep** |
| **May 1st to May 8th** | **Sleep** | **Sleep** |

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