

Game Concept Document - **TEAM JEFF**

(Shelby Carleton, Jeff Cho, Kieran Downs,
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Game Idea

Our game will have the player interacting with unknown entities and try to determine whether or not they are an artificial intelligence or a human based off of their responses. There is also a branching narrative that is available to the player that can lead to special interactions and different endings.

Story

Our story is about the player and their experiences working at a mysterious corporation. They are tasked with determining whether or not entities they encounter are AI's or humans. The setting is alluded to be a future where AI's are starting to exceed the human population and many ecological/economical issues are starting to arise. The player eventually learns that they are a part of a pro-human company and everyone whom they determine to be an AI is shut down. The player is eventually approached by a pro-AI faction and is asked to turn against their own company, and are told that they themselves are an AI. The player's choices ultimately determine the ending.

Player Actions

The player will navigate puzzle-like conversations in determining which entities they interact with are and are not AIs. They will also have to make decisions in conversations outside of these puzzles that affect the narrative and endings of the game.

Game Mechanic

The main game mechanic besides text is the puzzle-like conversations the player has to solve. The player must be able to identify signifiers that the person they are talking to is AI or a human such as typos, logical paradoxes, racism, among other things. This enhances the story by mirroring issues raised in the game, such as the difference between humans and AIs.

Authoring Environment

How does your engine enhance your game?

Ren'Py is well-suited for our GUI-based concept, where our interface looks like a computer desktop with icons and windows for interacting with the actual text-driven narrative. One of the primary mechanics will involve chatroom windows where the player will interact with unknown entities, and then determine whether that entity is a human or AI.

The engine allows us to overlay icons on the background which will be clickable to open up our chat interface, and other modal interactions such as an email inbox and individual emails that can be opened and read. In our research of available engines, we found this one to be the most robust in delivering the style we have in mind, which we feel will generate a greater impact on the player instead of a flat text interface, or a text interface overlaid with static images.

Research Material References

We looked at a variety of games and academic papers to help us determine what direction we wanted to take our game in, as well as what overall aesthetic we were looking to achieve with our game.

Games

VA-11 Hall-A: Cyberpunk Bartender Action, Sukeban Games

Her Story, Sam Barlow

Cibele, Star Maid Games

Emily is Away, Kyle Seeley

Digital a Love Story, Christine Love

Papers

Sicart, Miguel. "Defining Game Mechanics." *Game Studies* 8.2 (2008): n. pag. Web.

<http://gamestudies.org/0802/articles/sicart>.

Walther, Bo Kampmann. (2003). "Playing and Gaming: Reflections and Classifications."

Game Studies 3.1: <http://www.gamestudies.org/0301/walther>.

Dormans, J. (2011). "Integrating Emergence and Progression." *DiGRA/Utrecht School of the Arts*. <http://www.digra.org/wp-content/uploads/digital-library/11310.25319.pdf>

Game Submission Document: **TEAM JEFF**

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Changes from Prototype

The only major change to our game concept from the Design Document was altering the UI from a graphics-based, Windows XP-style interface to a terminal-based, Unix-style interface. This was already a part of our Prototype build and has continued to the final product.

The Prototype was the base implementation of the first day, encompassing the new user registration, login, chat, and email. Since then, those base implementations have been expanded and refactored significantly to expand functionality, efficiency, and error handling. Philip Adams, the player's supervisor, has been added as a character and is now the initial chat that starts the game. The day's flow was also reworked to necessitate more transitioning between apps.

Day 2 required the implementation of the day rollover functionality, tallying scores, calculating accuracy, reporting success rates, and loading new chats and emails. Characters are introduced and developed, from new one-time chat partners to further developing Lola (the 10-14 assistant bot) and characterizing the Resistance through the initial contact from SOTER.iOS. A new chat class implementation was required to facilitate the non-standard Resistance chat interaction, and the exploit app was developed as well as the custom logic surrounding the "installation" option for the app as well as its execution. New audio was engineered to accompany these changes, particularly in relation to the Resistance, and new UI schemes were designed for the exploit app.

Additional days made use of existing structures for the most part, plus a dynamic ending. The quantitative changelog between Prototype and Submission builds follows:

- 3 new sound effects
- 4 new original songs
- 10 new emails
- 20 new chats

- 5 new screens/applications
- 1 new custom class
- 4 new animations

Lessons Learned

We did not expect to be undertaking writing an entire text adventure game engine essentially from scratch in September. Had we known the scope of work and hours that would go into that aspect of our game creation, we may have chosen a different engine to work with. However, this would have severely limited our capabilities in creating a cohesive experience, and precluded us from building things like the exploit app, which take advantage of the underlying Python to build custom classes and functions.

Because of how well we functioned as a team and our goal of creating a game that was also worthy of being a decent portfolio piece, we most likely would not have done things very differently, except for some of the planning and project management.

Walkthrough

Since our game can be played in a number of ways, toward different goals, and in a somewhat non-linear fashion, this walkthrough will not be a step-by-step walkthrough of the whole game. For example, players may choose not to report a chat correctly if they are helping the Resistance; others may decline to install the Resistance exploit app as it may jeopardize their job. Therefore, this walkthrough will instead highlight how certain choices may affect scores and outcomes for a playthrough, such as a listing what the “correct” answers are for each chat.

Monday:

- sheep_1015: AI
- max: Human

Tuesday:

- courtney chat: Human
- dakota chat: AI
- garmin chat: AI
- unknown/SOTER.iOS chat: reporting the chat as suspicious will boost the player’s affinity with Electric Sheep, giving them extra points. Answering any way to whether the player will help the Resistance or not will not actually affect game flow, and they will get the opportunity to install the exploit app either way.

- spam87 email: choosing to install the exploit app will make the app available from the main screen thereafter, whenever the player has more than one available chat or one unread email. Choosing not to install the exploit app will not make the exploit available, but the player will be given a second chance to accept the app on Wednesday.

Wednesday:

- jordan chat: AI
- blake chat: Human
- sados chat: AI
- spam87 email (if not installed on Tue): same as Tue

Thursday:

- ashley chat: AI
- finley chat: Human
- sophie chat: Human

Friday:

- sera chat: AI
- sheep_1014 chat: AI (report Human to get “good” Lola epilogue)
- p_adams chat: Human
- Soter.iOS chat: AI

Endings and Epilogue:

- Adams reported Human, Soter.iOS reported Human:
 - “Status Quo/Indifferent” ending
- Adams reported Human, Soter.iOS reported AI:
 - “Pro Human” ending
- Adams reported AI, Soter.iOS reported Human:
 - “Pro Resistance” ending
- Adams reported AI, Soter.iOS reported AI:
 - “Anarchy” ending
- Lola reported Human:
 - Lola happy epilogue
- Lola reported AI:
 - Lola destroyed epilogue

Easter Eggs:

- Type the command “game” from exploit.app to see the “hacking” game that Brandon worked on - upon finishing the game, type “look” to get the exploit.app screen back