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Woodland Chaos

Business plan

Indie Game Start-Up IGD740

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<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Point and click games are very niche and have a small following</p> <p>Point and click adventures are mouse driven and are only practical on PC, which limits our scope to this platform</p> <p>In Point and click adventures, it is not always to the player what they need to do and the end objective is not always clear, resulting in the player losing interest</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>The small audience for point and click adventures could ensure a more targeted campaign and a loyal following</p> <p>We can add more content to each scene so that the player can explore the lore in more detail</p> <p>The mechanic of the game as well as the end objective will be communicated to the player so that they know how to play the game so that they can reach the objective</p> <p>The game will have time limits, which will mean the player has to engage with the game to complete it. These time limits will be lenient, so as to allow the player to explore the world in a way characteristic of the genre</p>	<p>UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION</p> <p>We are a newly established British-Czech independent game studio that will specialise in point and click adventures and will seek to expand and develop this genre through the production of exciting and subversive games.</p> <p>Our debut game will be point-and-click adventure in which an owl has to mobilise various creatures in a forest to take on the large machines that are destroying the forest. The owl must do this by carrying out various tasks for each set of animals to earn their respect and trust.</p>	<p>UNFAIR ADVANTAGE</p> <p>My art style, my partner's scripting</p> <p>Although explicitly not a turn-based strategy game, the game will draw elements from this genre.</p>	<p>CUSTOMER SEGMENTS</p> <p>Young adults (18-35) - male, female or other</p> <p>Gamers who play games for the narrative</p> <p>Gamers who enjoy point and click adventures such as Grim Fandango, Monkey Island or Broken Sword</p> <p>Gamers who enjoy strategy games such as Civilisation</p> <p>People who are concerned about the environment</p>
<p>EXISTING ALTERNATIVES</p> <p>The niche following of point and click adventures mean that the market is easy to identify</p> <p>Point and click adventures can be adapted for touch screens such as phones or tablets</p> <p>The relaxed, slow paced nature of point and click adventures allow for richer storytelling and give the opportunity to the player to explore their surroundings in more detail</p>	<p>KEY METRICS</p> <p>Revenue from games</p> <p>Positive customer reviews</p> <p>Positive journalist reviews</p>	<p>HIGH-LEVEL CONCEPT</p> <p>A point and click adventure where you must mobilise your fellow woodland creatures to save your forest from demolition.</p>	<p>CHANNELS</p> <p>Steam</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Reddit</p> <p>YouTube</p> <p>Twitch streamers</p> <p>YouTube</p> <p>Targeted ads</p>	<p>EARLY ADOPTERS</p> <p>Fans of narrative driven games, including point and clicks</p> <p>Fans of slow paced games</p> <p>PC gamers</p>
<p>COST STRUCTURE</p> <p>Advertising costs</p> <p>Listing the game on Steam</p> <p>Cost of broadband so I can communicate with my team</p> <p>Cost of electricity</p>		<p>REVENUE STREAMS</p> <p>Steam purchases</p> <p>Expansions packs - new maps, different characters</p> <p>Crowdfunding - Kickstarter</p>		



About our company

We are a newly established independent game studio with offices in East Grinstead, England, United Kingdom and Prague, Czech Republic. Our studio will specialise in point and click adventures and will seek to expand and develop this genre through the production of exciting and subversive games.

We are currently working on our very first title, *Woodland Chaos* and we are seeking investment from a games publisher to help us develop this game. If this game performs well, we will look to reinvest the returns from this game into developing more point-and-click-adventure titles which will also be successful and build the reputation of our studio.

The concept for our first game

Woodland Chaos is a point and click adventure game in which you play an owl that lives in a treehouse in the forest. When the owl's home is demolished by giant machines that have taken over the forest and begun destroying the forest, the owl must mobilise all of the fellow woodland creatures to take on these machines and save the forest.

In order to convince the other animals to help the owl to fight the machines and reforest the forest, the owl must carry out tasks for various groups of animals in order to earn their respect. The more respect the owl earns from any particular group of animals, the more effective they are in carrying out their tasks.

Each animal in the game has a specific class which indicates what their role is in the resistance against the machines. They are as follows:

- Dismantling: These animals fight and dismantle machines. Animals of this class have different strengths and thus can take on machines of varying sizes
- Reforesting: These animals replant and regrow deforested areas once they have been cleared of machines, Reforesting the forest can also mean new locations opening up in the game
- Building: These animals use materials salvaged from the dismantled machines to build sites and tools that can benefit the forest.
- Scouting: We are not sure if we will use this class yet but we are considering this. These animals look for new locations in the forest, as well as checking for the whereabouts of machines

The game will alternate between two different states at set intervals – day and night. Both day and night will have their own dynamics. You will be able to interact with different sets of animals, depending on whether it is day or night and the animals in question are nocturnal or diurnal. During night, there will be fewer animals and by extension, fewer tasks. There will also be fewer and smaller machines, and therefore a slower rate of deforestation meaning it is easier to move around at night. During the day, there will be more animals and therefore more tasks. There will be more machines and deforestation will occur at a faster pace.

You need to alternate between doing tasks for day animals or night animals depending on what time it is. If you earn enough respect from a certain group of animals, they may even help you at night if they are a day animal or at day if they are a night animal, meaning you have a more effective resistance.

You win the game once all machines have been cleared out of the forest and the forest has been completely reforested. You lose the game when the machines take over the forest and the forest is completely destroyed.

Revenue projections

We intend to sell this game on Steam, so to work out our revenue projections, we used similar games as a basis for working out how much our own game will make. The games that we used to work this out are two point and click adventures listed on Steam - *Machinarium* (Machinarium, 2009) and *Papetura* (Papetura, 2021).

Steam do not publish sales figures for games, so in order to work out revenue projections, we applied a method known as the Boxeleiter method, which calculates how much a game will raise after various deductions (Steam/GOG's share, discounts, adjustments for regional pricing, etc.), according to the cost of a game and also the number of reviews a game has received (Birkett, J., 2021.). To aid us in using the Boxleiter method, we use a tool online called the Steam Revenue Calculator (*Steam-revenue-calculator.com. n.d.*).

Machinarium was released in 2009, costs £12.99 on Steam and has acquired 9,418 reviews. After Steam deductions have been taken into account, this game can be estimated to have made £1.8 million in net revenue since its release, roughly equivalent to £151,270 per year.

Papetura was released in May of this year, costs £9.29 on Steam and has acquired 465 reviews. After Steam deductions have been taken into account, this game can be estimated to have made £64,097 in net revenue since its release.

Both of these games have a price that significantly exceeds the average price for a point and click adventure on Steam, which is £5.79 (*SteamSpy. 2021.*). We intend to sell our game at a significantly higher price as we aspire to these games in terms of quality, but also to factor in that the game will have a more complex than usual set of game mechanics for a point and click adventure. We project that in the first year, we will make between £70,000 and £90,000 in the first year if we sell at an initial price of £14.99.

Budget

We have scheduled 1 year of development for this game. We have calculated the following one-off and recurring costs during the course of production. Our salaries have been calculated on the basis that we would be working part time on this game, alongside our day jobs.

One-off costs	
Listing game on Steam	£74 (<i>Partner.steamgames.com. n.d.</i>)
Listing game on GOG	Free
Total one-off costs	£74

Monthly costs	
James' salary	£1,500
Tomas' salary	£1,500
Total cost of office space	£1,006
<i>Office space in East Grinstead</i>	£756
<i>Office space in Prague</i>	£250
Total cost of utilities	£63
<i>Utilities for East Grinstead office</i>	£43
<i>Utilities for Prague office</i>	£20
Total cost of internet	£61
<i>Internet for East Grinstead office</i>	£26
<i>Internet for Prague office</i>	£35
Adobe licence	£59
Total monthly cost of production	£4,189

Total cost of production for 1 year	£50,342
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Sources of funding

We intend to use two sources of funding to develop this game.

Investment

We are seeking investment from a game publishing company so that we can utilise their expertise and devote more time into the game. We will contact the following:

- Curve Games <https://curvegames.com/partner-with-us/>
- Ukuza <https://www.ukuza.com/>
- Devolver Digital <https://www.devolverdigital.com/>
- Serenity Forge <https://serenityforge.com/publishing>
- Mode7 Games <https://www.mode7.games/>
- Humble Games <https://www.humblegames.com/>
- Fellow Traveller <https://www.fellowtraveller.games/project-heartbreak>
- Steaksteak <http://steaksteak.com/>
- Whoppering <http://whoppering.com/>
- Team17 <https://www.team17.com/>

We have selected these publishers as they are well known for publishing indie games and we like some of the previous titles that they have published.

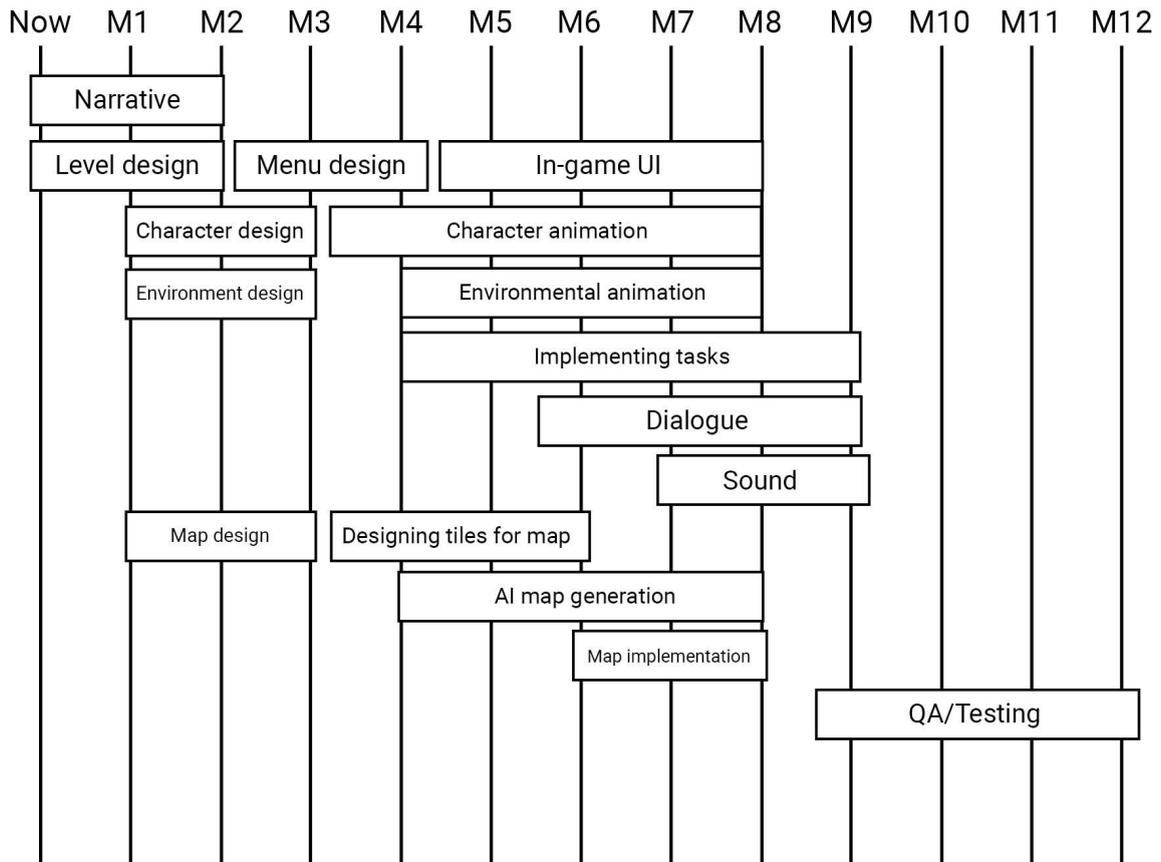
Crowdfunding

For our second source of funding, we have chosen to create a crowdfunding campaign using Kickstarter (Kickstarter, 2021). We would aim to raise between £10,000 and £15,000 on Kickstarter over a course of 60 days. We have aimed for this amount through Kickstarter as it is average for what game projects tend (Stats, 2021) to raise using the platform and we have settled on 60 days as generally projects that last longer than this are less successful. (What is the maximum project duration?, 2021).

A link to the Kickstarter page will be displayed on our website and will be used in advertising across our social media channels. We will need to decide on several reward tiers, depending on how much each user pledges.

Development schedule

We propose a schedule of 1 year to develop and complete this game. This schedule takes into account that several aspects of the pre-production stage, such as game concept as well as a large bulk of the character design and narrative has already been completed at the time of writing this document. (*Project Management in Under 5: What is a Gantt Chart?, 2021*)



Marketing plan

Goals

We aim to release our studio's debut game on Steam and GOG, with a view for it to sell 6,000 units and make a total of £90,000 in its first year if we sell at an initial price of £14.99. Although this game belongs to a genre with a niche target audience, we will be able to take advantage of this and we can aim for a conversion rate of 3%.

Distribution

The game will be playable on Windows and Mac and can be purchased and downloaded to both using one of two gaming two distribution services – Steam and GOG.

Steam

We will list the game on Steam, which has an estimated 25 million users worldwide (*Statista. 2021.*) and is by far the most dominant gaming distribution platform.

Although we will not be able to advertise and market the game on Steam's store directly, as Steam's algorithm only tracks games that are already selling highly and already have a large following, we do intend to distribute the game over Steam in a way that helps us build these sales.(Lobb, I., 2021.).

We will aim to list our game on Steam prior to the release of the game so that potential players can become immediately aware of it and register their interest by adding it to their wishlist (*Dealessandri, M., 2020.*). We can also use the Steam page to include a trailer and additional content about the game in order to help them make their decision.

Listing our game prior to release and gaining those wishlist listings will give us several additional advantages. These include notifying all Steam users who have wishlisted the game, once it has been released. On average, 29% of wishlist additions made before a game's release result in a conversion and 13% of those happen during the first week of a game's release; meaning that this will help to give our sales a boost in the initial release of the game.

We will also track the wishlist additions and use it as one of our metrics to make an estimate of how much this game would sell. We will use this to determine how much investment we

should be putting into marketing, as well as how well our other channels for marketing the game are performing.

GOG

We have decided that we will also release the game on GOG (*GOG.com. 2021.*). GOG is a newer game distribution service, having been established in 2008. It has a much smaller selection of games than Steam. Steam has approximately 30,000 games whereas GOG's library is more in the region of just 2,500. (*Edmonds, R., 2018.*) GOG is also criticised for having a lack of new game titles.

However, we believe we can use this to our advantage as we would be adding a new game title with a unique selling point and a popular following to the platform. While we expect the majority of sales will be carried out on Steam, listing our game on GOG will also allow us to gain extra sales with another platform. Furthermore, GOG is a growing platform which is well known for having a good user interface and great customer services, so if there is a dramatic shift towards GOG, we will be covered.

Promotion

We intend to use a range of channels available to us to generate awareness of our game both prior to release and once the game is released.

Website and newsletter

We will have a website that will be registered under the name of our studio and the logo of our studio will be present on the website. However, the branding for our game will be more dominant on our website for at least the one year after our game's release or until we begin work on our next game; in which case that game's branding will become more dominant on the site or our studio's branding will become more dominant. (*GDC, 2019.*)

Prior to the game's release, the website will have widgets embedded that allows the user to add the game to their Steam or GOG wishlists, so that they can be alerted once the game is released. When the game has been released, these widgets will be replaced by ones that allow the user to buy the game.

The website will feature a trailer and various images from the game that highlight gameplay. The website will also have biographies of both the founding members of the studio, which will also give our branding a more human touch and potential players will know more about the people who made this game.

The website will also feature articles which keep the user updated about our progress and will also include videos that document how far we have got with the game. The posts will also include videos of us working which will be embedded from our tie-in YouTube channel (see below).

We will also set up a mailing list with a newsletter that we will consistently encourage people to sign up to through the website. We will use the newsletter to keep users posted about our progress and how soon until the game is released. Once the game is released, we will use the newsletter to keep users posted about any updates to the game, as well as future projects. The newsletter will essentially function as an extension of the website and will be used to get our subscribers to keep coming back to the website.

Our website and newsletters will together be the most dominant online marketing tool and this will be the central focus for promoting our game and encouraging people to buy our game. However, we will have several social media channels that will serve as extensions of this and will be used to encourage people to our website and also serve as another means of promoting the game.

Social media

The algorithms for various social media changes all the time, meaning we have limited control over how our message is distributed, hence our decision to focus more on the website and newsletter campaigns (*GDC, 2019.*). However, we intend to utilise them as a means for developing a following and encouraging people to the website, where they can buy the game.

We will use a YouTube channel to document our progress on the game in the run up to its release. We will do this in a similar way to the Youtube BWDev (BWDev, 2021.), when he was developing his game *Lumberhorn* as this will allow our followers to get to know us as game designers, as well as the game we are trying to develop – they will be part of our journey.

We will also similarly create an Instagram, which will be used to document our progress and when the game has been promoted, we will use it to share extracts from the game that display gameplay and entice people to want to play the game. Instagram will be used to bring people to the website. It will not be used as much to advertise the game, but to raise awareness. Given that Instagram is a largely mobile based platform, it would be more difficult to advertise a PC game with an immediate call to action.

We will use Twitter to post updates about the game, but also to interact with our fans about the game, as well as to develop a rapport with them.

We will also use Facebook as a tool to advertise the game, raise awareness about the game and eventually encourage people to buy the game. We will make use of numerous gaming groups and communities based on Facebook to spread word about the game and encourage people to add to their wishlist.

All of our social media will be listed under the name of our studio and just like the website and newsletter, as we gain a more steady following and more titles under our belt, the studio's branding will become more dominant.

Game forums

During the development of the game, we will circulate promotional materials for the game in numerous gaming forums, which explain what the game is about and also to get people's opinions of the game concept.

We will use the more popular gaming forums to spread word of our game (Gamedesigning.org. 2021.), including:

- NeoGaf
- GameFAQs
- IGN
- GameSpot
- Reddit

When the game is released, we will use the same game forums to announce the release of the game.

Variety Twitch streamers

Within the first two weeks of the game's release, we will reach out to streamers on Twitch and encourage them to play our game and to stream themselves playing our game. (Marsden, A., 2018.)

We will offer them promotion on our social media profiles in exchange for them streaming our game.

We will primarily target variety streamers – that is streamers that are known to stream a variety of games and content, as opposed to streamers that are known only for streaming one particular game.

We will compile a list of streamers to contact, which will be based on the types of games that they play, but also important metrics such as:

- Number of followers
- Average concurrent viewership
- Follower growth
- Monthly impressions
- Engagements

To aid us in finding the most appropriate streamers, we will browse Twitch itself using various categories, but also useful tools for monitoring metrics such as Twitchmetrics.

Discord server

We will set up a Discord server for our game studio, so that our followers can interact with us directly, both while the game is being developed and also after its release. We will use this to release betas of our game so that players can test the game for us and comment on their experience of the game before it is released. This will also serve to build a rapport between us and our followers, which will allow for more success when developing future titles.

Measurement

When the game has been released, we will be tracking all sales figures of our game using sales reports on Steam and GOG, but more importantly, we will focus on reviews of the game and ensure that most of our reviews are positive and also to look out for any outstanding issues within the game that can be updated. While it is important that people buy this game, it is more important to us that they like this game and that they enjoy playing.

We will also track reviews and comments made about the game on Discord, as well as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Maintenance

We will use player reviews on Steam and GOG to work out where there are rooms for improvement in our game. Using our Discord server, we will also have channels set up to report any bugs within the game, as well as any other suggestions for improvement. We will

add these updates to the game as quickly as possible and we will upload the updates to both Steam and GOG.

Refinement

We will continuously track the performance of our game, using all of the metrics stated above and we will use sales on Steam and GOG to see if the game sells better at a lower price. We will also work on continuously adding new features and content to the game to make it more appealing to more players. We will always document these updates using our newsletters and various social media channels.

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