



ARCANE WRITER by “VERY GOOD GAMES”

POST MORTEM DOCUMENT

Arcane Writer is a first person, role playing game featuring turn based combat and typing interaction mechanic, result of the combined effort of the members of our team Very Good Games.

The game tells the story of Purwin, a young girl imprisoned for being the daughter of a witch during the Dark Ages.

Project link:

<https://16t1studio2.itch.io/acrane-writer>

Background

<Programming (AI, Environment Interactions, Player Management)> Stefano Deflorio

<Programming (Combat System)> Owen Cunnings

<Game Design and Sound> Jacob Macdonald

<Game Design, Level Design> Jarrah Holt

<Game Design, Animations> Cheta

Tooling

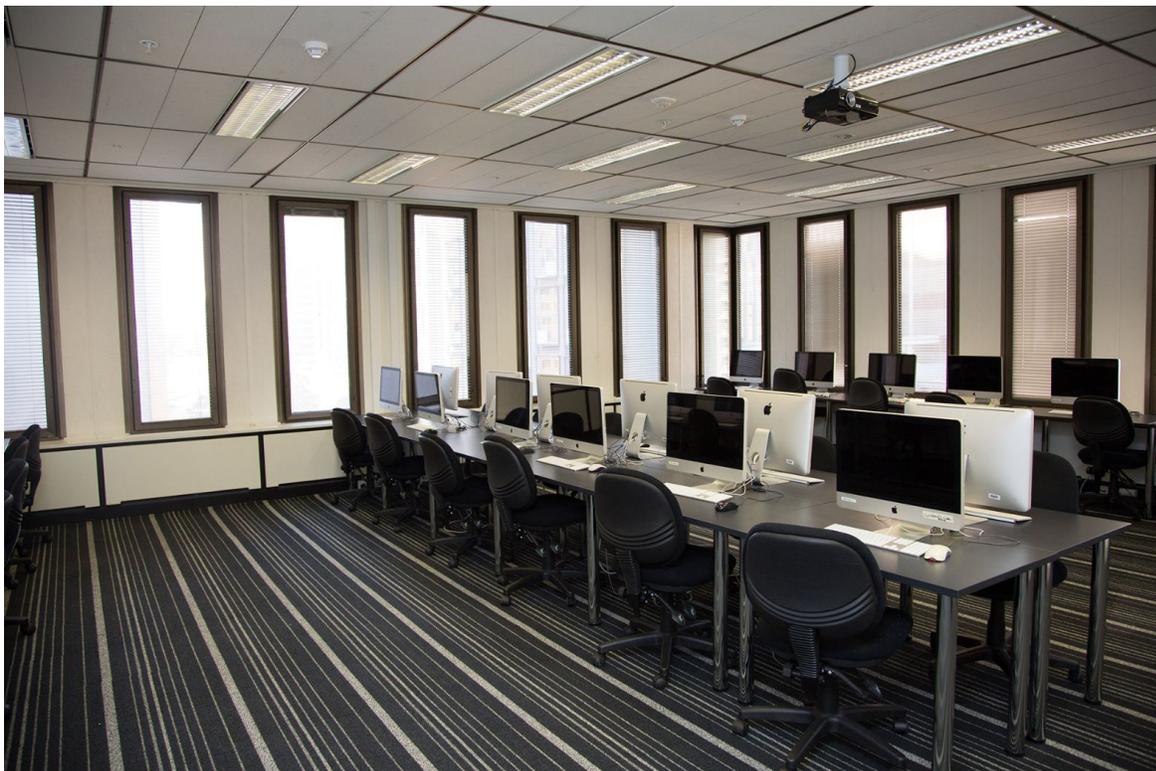
Based on the team members knowledge and skill, we have agreed to develop our game with the Unity Engine, using some external APIs, such as iTween. For sound manipulations, background music adaptations and voice acting recordings we have used both Reaper and Audacity. For textures and other graphics we used Photoshop. 3D assets have been purchased and downloaded from the Unity Asset Store.

To manage team members communications we have decided to use Slack with the occasional Skype call and we have used Trello as a main project management tool.

Location

The development of Arcane Writer was done at SAE, Sydney Campus.

Development has gone from February 2016 till May 2016.



Brainstorming

The scope of the project was to create a playable game, start to finish, with turn based mechanics and with a focus on creating on the player a feeling of anxiety.

On our first brainstorm, we thought of a game based on a spaceship environment where the player was supposed to avoid traps and enemies to reach the end of the level before the time expired. We didn't want to stop on our first idea, so on the following week we tried to explore other settings and environments that could also help to summon that kind of feeling. A prison seemed quite appropriate and the dark ages, witchery setting was immediately accepted with enthusiasm. We voted, and so we began building the prison and it's inhabitants.

It took a few session to decide about the story, the protagonist background. First thought was to imprison the witch, but then we decided that burning the witch and imprisoning the daughter would have been more dramatic and interesting story wise.



Process

<Describe your team's development process as a list of steps>

Development of Arcane Writer was spread on 13 weeks, from half February 2016 to half of May 2016. Here a rough timeline of the processes involved:

Week 1 - 2: Brainstorming

Week 3: Game Design Document and Technical Document redaction

Week 4: Building the Tutorial

Week 5: Alpha Release

Week 7-9: Development (3D assets, Sounds, Level Building, Programming)

Week 10: Beta Release

Week 11 - 12: Playtesting, Polishing

Week 13: Full Release

What Went Well



I believe the overall development of the game from the team point of view has gone quite well, without any major setbacks and without scrapping big chunks of work. From my personal point of view, i am quite happy to have worked quite steadily on the code without being majorly stuck on game breaking issues. The input interface is quite solid, the traps all work well, and their prefabs are quite easy to duplicate and implement. The Sound Randomiser tool i made was simple but yet effective at helping in recreating the atmosphere we were aiming for the game. The spell system has been well implemented, it's simple but effective.

What Didn't Go Well



There are also features of the game that i believe could have been better polished; the inventory system isn't exactly exhaustive or necessarily useful a part for giving simple infos. The loot system has not really been expanded much (only potions and coins are lootable). In regard of the assets i believe we could have worked a bit harder in terms of improving 3D models, add some extra variations in sound and animations, especially the earlier weeks. I have encountered some lack of motivation in the early development where i felt that i had to have some serious talk with my colleagues, that thankfully turned the tide and gave good results overall.

Research

Parallel to development i have wrote a series of research blogs related to the work i was doing, in particular taking examples from other games and how they have implemented certain parts, such as the tutorial or the AI. This was definetly a great help to try to minimise time testing features about their effectiveness, by taking ideas from fully released games.

This is the link to visit the blogs: <http://www.stefanodeflorio.com/blog>

Final reflections on the development

The final design of the game quite accurately matches the initial idea that we had for the game in terms of aesthetics and environment. Combined with the soundtrack, environmental sounds and the positioning of traps and hostile enemies, the overall result gave a good feel of hostility toward the player. In regard of the environment interaction, i believe we could have tested some other variation of the player input interface but unfortunately it couldn't be done with the time we had available, since we preferred to give priority to the implementation of other key mechanics of the game.

I am overall satisfied with the development of Arcane Writer, i think we all worked hard to reach the final release and we manage to achieve a rewarding result.