Project Interactive Media Essay, William Mooijer, wmr440, 2594900, 5/7/2017

Firstly, a heartfelt thanks to the coordinator of this project and the creators of the XIMPEL framework for providing me and my fellow students with the tools to create something amazing.

When the Project Interactive Media was first announced and explained, me and my partner were both intrigued and astounded by the sheer amount of potential this presented to us. We saw endless possibilities and were immediately overcome with countless ideas, but on the other hand, we knew we were bound to run into serious competition with this project, for the exact same reason. Because the sky is the limit for these kinds of project, we needed to be sure to balance ambition and tactical corner-cutting, in order to edge out both the groups that would overplay their hand and design a grandiose game and find that four weeks wasn't enough to finish it, and the groups that would take a modest approach and save the time to polish their product.

After the project and the framework was explained further, some examples were shown, made by the XIMPEL developers. One of them caught my attention in particular: the tour of the VU building by mario. The concept of having the choices in the game affect the player character's physical location seemed like an exceptionally intuitive idea, and after discussing with my partner, Mischa, we decided on having that as our core game mechanic. As my mind started wandering along the lines of 'moving around' and 'choice', I saw an intersection of those lines at a memory of a game I once played, called *the Stanley Parable*. It is a choice-based game where you navigate around an office to uncover the reason all your colleagues have disappeared with the help of a narrator.

Our initial idea included a narrator, but after familiarizing ourselves with the XIMPEL framework, we realised that the framework wasn't exactly made for that kind of hybrid audio-video, and we switched our plans to a visual explanation, dialogue where needed, and text bubbles to signify and expand on the beginning and endings of the story. After these ideas were fleshed out, we got to work on creating a story for this game, and after designing a story with multiple endings based on the player's choices, we made a storygraph to represent the choices and outcomes.

All of this, of course, required a lot of preparation and filming before we could even get started with the proverbial 'meat' of the assignment, which we felt was the code, because we are Information Science students, after all. We spent so much time filming everything that we were starting to lag behind the intended schedule. We consulted with

our fellow students to ask how they were tackling this problem, only to find out that almost no other groups had decided to film their own material, instead opting to use found footage from websites like YouTube. This left us with the comforting knowledge that our group had gone the extra mile with producing this assignment, but without any plan to recoup for lost time. In the end, however, we moved personal business aside, devoted some extra time to the project, and we shot everything on time. I left my project partner to make the trailer for the project, since he had access to the tools necessary to produce a great video, but also because his father is very experienced in video editing, making learning it an easier experience for him to learn. In the end our trailer turned out amazing, and it won the community vote in the category “most humorous”, so I couldn’t be more proud of my partner in this regard.

After this, we uploaded all separate clips from our filming sessions to YouTube, and I went to work on creating the XIMPEL code myself. Thanks to the great YouTube interface features included in XIMPEL, I did not have to edit any video before uploading, because all the cutting, linking and looping was done by the code. Uploading to the web server and getting the app working turned out to be much easier than we thought, so in the end we could still hand everything in in time.

In the end, what we have created, in my opinion, is a fun little game that illustrates, through hyperbole and exaggeration, a common problematic situation that many people find themselves in, and a number of solutions and non-solutions for it. While we pride ourselves on having one of the most interactive XIMPEL apps of this year’s PIM group, where it feels that your choices as a player have an actual effect on the game instead of simply lowering or raising a score or two, we do not believe that a real, measurable impact will be felt for the world at large. However, I do believe that due to the variable nature of the solution to the main problem in the app can open some hypothetical options for a person that finds him or herself in the situation described in the game.

In conclusion, what me and my partner have created is something that exceeded both my expectations and those of my partner, something that has been surprisingly fun to create, and something that has taught us some valuable lessons to take with us to next year. Once again, I’d like to thank professor Eliens, the creators of XIMPEL, and the teaching assistants for providing a fun and valuable course, and I hope you like our XIMPEL app.