

CRASHED

TEAM ALPHA

STEFAN DALEN (3D MODELER, TEXTURE ARTIST, AUDIO)
KELVIN LEUNG (RIGGER, ANIMATOR, TEXTURE ARTIST)
NEIL PENDSE (IMMERSION RESEARCH, SETUP CREATION)

GOALS

Crashed is an immersive environment which sets the player in an exotic environment where they have made a crash landing and we the sole survivor. To create a more engaging experience, we implemented a narrative where they must locate a medical kit which was strewn into the jungle during the wreck. We chose to do a jungle environment because it is something that most people have not experienced, and we felt that it would offer compelling exploration due to the various elements we could incorporate which pique our human curiosity. These elements include things such as ancient ruins, foreign foliage, various types of wildlife, and an immersive soundscape which captures the location. With our setup, our intended user experience was to create auditory/visual immersion and an illusion of reality primarily using Sensory and Imaginative Immersion.

RATIONALE/MOTIVATION

We chose this goal and approach for the project because we felt that it was within the realms of our teams skill level and would be possible to create in the way we envisioned it. Our motivation behind this was to evoke emotion in our users and allow them to experience something that they wouldn't normally be able to. We approached the design of the level the way we did because one of our team members (Kelvin) has had experience in Panama jungles and could offer insight into what would make it a believable setting.

FRAMEWORK

The Immersion Framework (by Jay Vidyarthi) allowed us to apply proper terminology and classify the components of our project as needed. We found that the principals within the framework gave us new perspectives and techniques to create immersion. The framework was challenging at first to get a grasp of understanding, but once you do it opens up opportunities to understand what makes immersion and how the senses are related to it. This allowed us to design our environment with the Immersion Framework in mind and help accomplish our intended user experience.

METHODOLOGY

Design Approach: We took an iterative design approach to our project, spending a lot of time researching real-life environments and which parts of them are most compelling to the average person. Amongst the things we researched were wildlife, visuals, and the auditory experience of a typical jungle. We then translated this into Unity over several stages (adding terrain, props, etc.). After gaining feedback, we went back again to make some more changes and create a more effective subtle narrative.

Technical Implementation: To achieve our goals we used Unity 3D, Maya, 3DS Max, Photoshop, and Audacity. These programs allowed us to create all of the assets, textures, and audio needed for our environment. We used a projector and setup which occludes the surrounding environment for our display.

FINDINGS

After our initial tests, we found that some users were unclear about which direction to travel in our environment, although we had placed several visual markers to "lead them". We also found that our visual cue based narrative was a bit unclear to players. Some of them didn't notice the plane behind the starting location although we had audio and debris which hinted at it. All of the players enjoyed our visuals and soundscape however, and thought that they in and of themselves were quite immersive.

CONCLUSION

We found that our environment was fairly immersive in the way we intended, however that we could have done certain things to make it even more immersive. Users did enjoy the experience we created and found the jungle interesting to explore with unique components to discover. To improve upon this, we could have used some sort of way to guide the players in a more defined path, found a more powerful computer to increase jungle size, and perhaps tested out different options for immersion (like smell & surround sound).