

Shannon Hanchin  
Lynda Werre  
Jamioka Wilkinson  
Kara Wedekind

### Minimal Game Mechanic

1. ***Describe your core learning goal and how your minimal game mechanic relates to that.***

Our core learning goals are for the player to be able to identify and classify sources of information: to determine the validity of sources, as well as to evaluate the details of a website to distinguish whether it is a reliable or unreliable source.

On each level, the player will learn more about how to evaluate sources. Starting with Level 1, the player will engage characters and initiate a dialogue tree that will allow the player to determine who is the most credible source of information about a broken copier.

As the player progresses to Level 2, they will be able to build on the skills from Level 1 by once again evaluating sources from a cast of characters in order to determine who the culprit of the next caper is. Then the player will use this information to further construct a reliable headline based on the gathered information.

Level 3 will allow the player to use the critical thinking that s/he has developed in the previous levels in order to evaluate websites in the world and to determine which source is providing factual and unbiased information.

Our minimal game mechanic is the encounter between the player's avatar and the nonplayer character (NPC), which triggers dialogue and thus initiates the dialogue tree. In essence, the minimal game mechanic is the central game mechanic of the first two levels of the game. As discussed in class, we were instructed not to produce a full dialogue tree yet. Therefore, the minimal game mechanic has the player's avatar colliding with an NPC and initiating a single line of text. This process is the start of what will eventually become a dialogue tree.

Once more, the core learning goal is to evaluate sources and, through the interaction between the avatar Gumshoe and the NPC, there will be an opportunity to evaluate the credibility of a source of information. The game mechanic is necessarily imbricated in the core learning objective because a player will need to engage critical thinking in order to determine what information is credible or not.

2. ***What is your story or fantasy surrounding your game?***

Our game is fundamentally about encouraging a love of fact-finding and we are essentially striving to deliver an experience to students where critical thinking is fun. The story revolves around an intrepid cub reporter named Gumshoe, designed to have a gum-like appearance. Gumshoe has just started his first day working for a newspaper; before he can explore the city and track down a major news story, he first has to solve the mystery of the “gummed-up” copy machine. To prove himself as a top-notch journalist, Gumshoe must get to the bottom of the case!

Gumshoe will be given his mission by his boss, and he will interact with three possible NPCs, including: a nerdy coworker, an IT guy, and an optimistic coworker. Two of the characters will provide information that is a red herring; for example, the nerdy coworker will suggest that the copier is sabotaged by the optimistic coworker, while the optimistic coworker will suggest that the copier is outdated and needs to be trashed. The IT character will suggest that the copier is not broken, but just needs more printer paper. Gumshoe will be able to leave the office room when he realizes that the IT character has the best information. If Gumshoe selects all of the wrong prompts from the dialogue trees in his encounters with NPCs, then he will lose the game. If he is able to find good and credible information from the best source, he is able to win and advance to the next level. The goal is for Gumshoe to learn the skills of the game in the smaller setting of the office and with a simple issue of who broke the photocopier before he embarks on an adventure in the city.

The game will progress with Gumshoe’s adventures as he uses his newfound detective skills to progress in his journalistic career field and solve the various cases.

**3. *Describe your target audience and how your game-play and fantasy will appeal to your target audience?***

In *The Art of Game Design*, Jesse Schell describes the themes of two of his games—one a Pirates of the Caribbean game and the other about cartoons in Toontown. Despite the two different premises, he ultimately defines very similar themes for each game: first, “the fantasy of what it might be like to throw aside the rules of society and just start being a pirate” (60), and, second, work vs. play, where “work wants to destroy play, but play must survive.” (65) Despite their different expressions, the fantasy is fundamentally similar with work being coded as boring. It may, therefore, come as a surprise that our game, which we plan to pitch to 5<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> graders, is set in an office for the first level.

We contend that escaping work is an idea that appeals to adults; however, late elementary and middle schoolers are often excited by the adventure of work, especially working at a newspaper. The first level takes place in the smaller space of the newspaper office because it is an introductory level to get the player acquainted with the objectives of the game. The player is able to learn the controls, how to navigate the space, and how to engage characters before advancing to the larger and more complex level of the urban landscape.

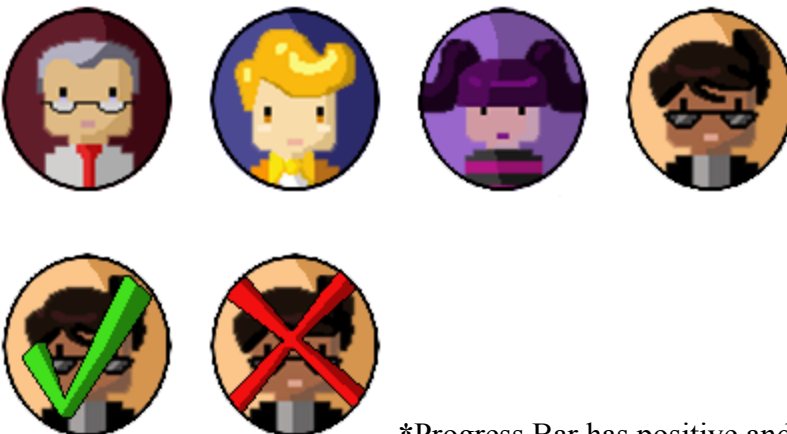
## Avatar and NPC Character Concepts



Gumshoe | NPC 1: *Boss* | NPC 2: *Grape* | NPC 3: *Lemondrop* | NPC 4: *Mr. Vanilla*



## Character Portraits for Progress Bar



\*Progress Bar has positive and negative outcomes depending on player interaction with NPCS.

## Screenshots From Testing Game



## Office Set Up



## Welcome

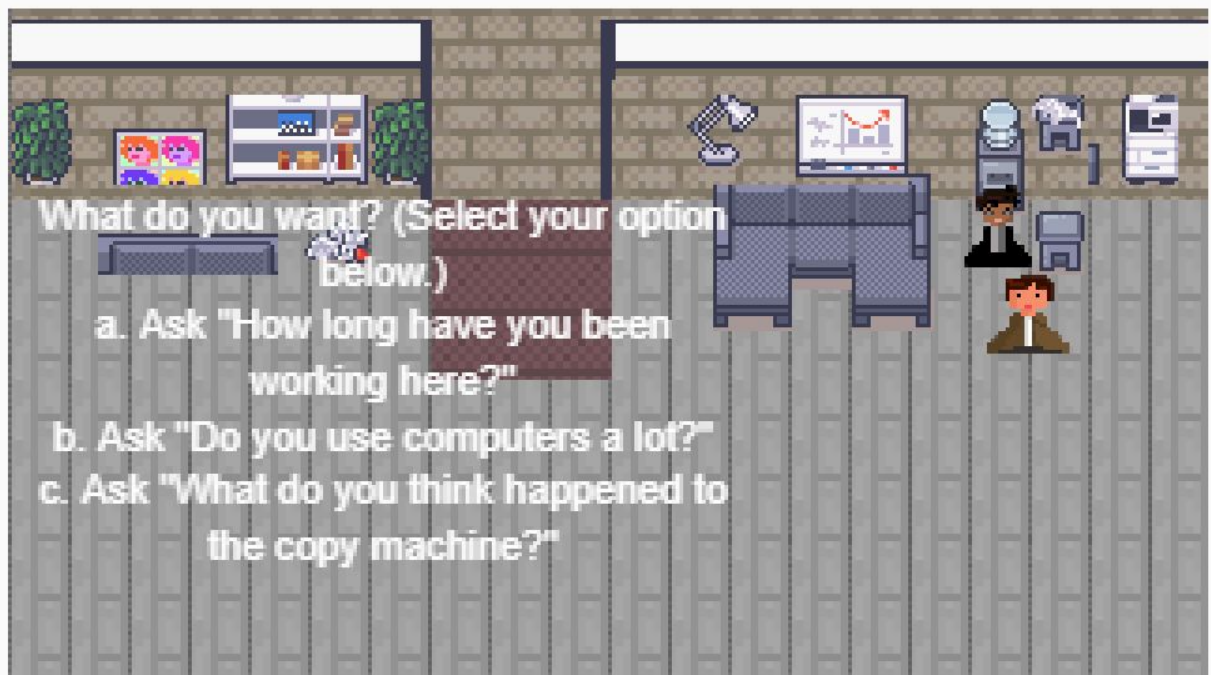


## Tutorial Dialogue





### Interaction with Nerdy NPC





If the user chooses 'A'



If the user chooses 'B'



If the user chooses 'C'

