

Omega

Design Document Version One

Florida Man Studio

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. GAME DESCRIPTION
- III. FEATURE SET
- IV. KEY MECHANICS
- V. PROGRESSION CHART
- VI. LEVEL DESCRIPTION
- VII. USER INTERFACE
- VIII. CONCEPT ART
- IX. AUDIO
- X. EXTRAS

INTRODUCTION

Omega is aiming to be an unconventional single-player game experience, piloting on the backs of multiple genres in an eclectic way, which will simultaneously give both a distinctive, yet familiar undergoing. It will contain no particular narrative, as the player will carve out their own unique impression by observation of visual and auditory aesthetics of the game. After which the player will reflect and establish their own interpretation of the game's theme.

To have the quickest prototype iterations and most immersive player experience, Omega will be created using the most current, stable version of Epic Games' Unreal Engine, 4.25.

GAME DESCRIPTION

What is the game (backstory/High Concept/Theme)?

An immersive Walking Simulator/Thriller/Puzzle/Adventure game where you explore a futuristic world with modern architecture and unusual organic geometric structures that exist on the line between delirium and reality. The aim of this game is to explore the surroundings and discover the purpose of these existing structures by traversing the cryptic "messages" found in these worlds.

Where does the game take place?

The entire game takes place in multiple "levels" that interconnect in a non-fixed linear narrative that allows the player to replay scenes to achieve the desired outcome. Also contains alien technology and an open-ended story.

What is the main focus/goals of the game?

The main focus of the game is to have the player explore various virtual worlds by taking them out of the real one. A brief escape into some new and exciting. Ideally this game will give the player some time to reflect.

FEATURE SET

Gameplay Experience

Exploration: the player will explore environments that are unique and abstract in their own way, with various visual styles. Omega involves only one character - the player. Each player is able to craft their own experience by traversing through the various environments that exist in this game. As a rule of thumb, the game shouldn't be intensive or difficult to play. The overall mood should be relatively relaxing for the majority of the game.

Strategy: There will be some sort of puzzle/strategy mechanic to uncover areas, progress, or discover deeper parts to the game. Some examples may include finding objects that grant access to new areas, placing objects in strategic positions to access areas out of reach, slowing down time to make the ability to move around the level easier, finding and using portals in a clever way to advance to other areas, etc.

Story: having an overarching story with no clear message, that will be subject to the player's personal interpretation.

Making sure that the gameplay is accessible to the largest possible audience, several factors will need to be considered:

Minimize spoken voice narrative, and provide readable context in the cases where speech is used. For example, captions in a font that are easy to read, and in-game tooltips if applicable. The use of a symbol/icon in place of, or supplemental to -- words as often as possible. This will help players who have difficulty reading, and also help the game become more localization friendly. The font size should be large enough to easily read from a fair distance, or should include options to scale the font size manually.

As much as 10% of the world's population could have some sort of visual color deficiency. Various options for players who are colorblind should be easily accessible from the main menu and/or pause menu. At least the most common types of colorblindness should be available for selection: Protanopia, Deuteranope, & Tritanope. Adjusting these settings should impact the entire game, and not just the UI or one level.

Ideally, audio and SFX volume should also be able to be adjusted globally. From mute, 0%, to double volume, 200% is a fair range. The default being 1, or 100%.

If possible, alternative controls could exist as a bonus to players who may struggle to use mouse and keyboard. Supporting a gamepad (controller) or an on-screen interface could make a huge difference to players who would have struggled with the traditional controls' gameplay experience otherwise.

In some cases, there are players who experience motion sickness when playing a game in a first-person view. A 3rd person view sometimes improves this motion sickness, and should be the default out-of-the-box, or have an easy method of switching between 1st and 3rd person views, such as an in-game button/key press.

Enabling Eye Adaptation (Autoexposure) by default for the game will help players navigate darker areas, and not be blinded by lighter areas. The exposure should smoothly be adjusted automatically within the game depending on the areas the player is currently in. Making no need for manual gamma/brightness correction settings.

On a general note, all accessibility settings should be available as early as possible upon launching the game.

KEY MECHANICS

Camera

Game will begin with a 3rd person camera by default. If possible, there should be a simple way to implement switching between 1st and 3rd person camera views without going into any menus. 1st person camera isn't necessary for this game, but could potentially help immersion and allow for clearer navigation in tight spaces (if any).

Water

Water is a vast theme in this game! The Main Menu opens to a large body of water, and many of the level(s)/sub level(s) will contain large bodies of water, rain, puddles, or other hydro-elements. After all, water is essential to the survival of nearly all life.

Collision Detection

Nothing untraditional for collision detection. At least for interactable and moveable objects, the collision should be as accurate as possible, (called "complex" collision in Unreal Engine). There will be inverse kinematics for the controllable character; for example, on a sloped surface the feet will adjust to the height and angle of the slope, and if climbing, the players hand will reach for the surface and pull themselves up without visual glitches (such as grabbing air instead of a ledge).

Player

There is only one character and that is the player. Probably easiest to have a simple, non-descript character, but if time permits; the player character should appear realistic and not in a low-poly style. Having no specific traits would help any user associate with the character better, as it leaves no room for bias of appearance.

Portals

There will be portals that the player will be able to seamlessly walk through to transition to another area, that may or may not have a direct path to it to begin with. In some cases, a portal can close (disappear) to prevent a player from backtracking so they will need to commit to certain decisions.

Time Manipulation

The player will be able to slow down time for a limited period, after which there will be a short cool-down period before the ability can be used again. The slow-time mechanic will be represented with an audible hum, so that the player is aware when it is active/inactive. This ability can be used in cases where the player needs to get to another part of the level, but the platform to get there is moving too fast, etc.

Object Manipulation

The player should be able to interact with objects in the world. Not everything, but those items which are interactable will be represented by a glowing outline, so that it is clear to the player which objects can be manually translated. This could potentially be used to solve certain obstacles.

Travel

The player will move around the world(s) primarily by walking or running.

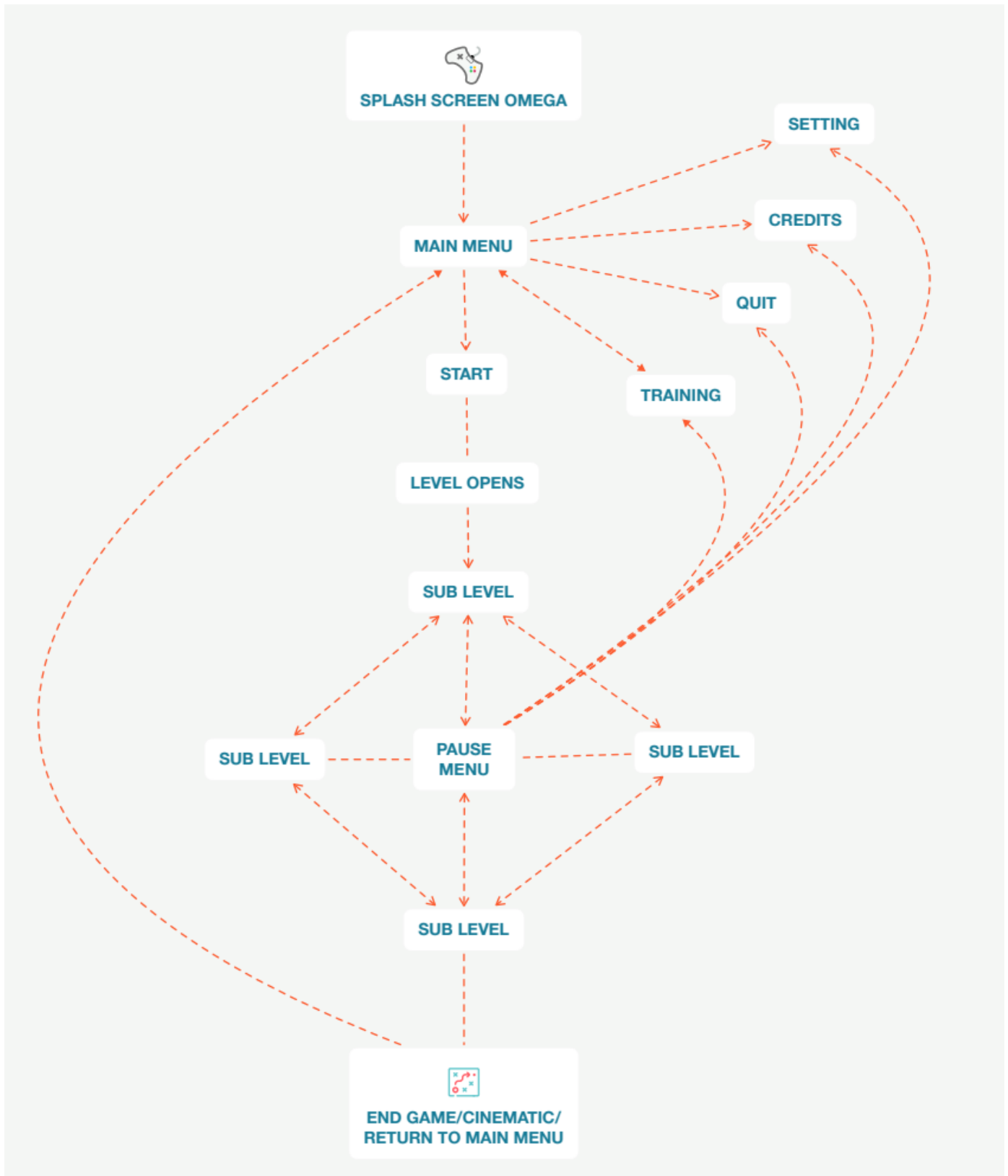
Scale

Scale will be in centimeters to make asset creation more streamlined. Assets within the game will have a scale representative to that of the real-world.

Weather

Having various weather and time of day will be necessary to have the game feel more immersive and true-to-life. At least one level should have rain, at least another should have a sunset. Maybe additional level(s) will have night, or fog, or something else.

PROGRESSION CHART



LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Ideally, there will be no individual levels, rather distinctive areas within a single persistent level achieved using sub levels and level-streaming. This isn't completely necessary, but it will avoid multiple loading screens which could make the gameplay experience better.

The important factor of these levels/sub-levels is that each has its own recognizable mood/atmosphere. All "level(s)" should be recognizable and distinct with their own mood/theme. Not every theme needs to be used, but at least 3 in some way or form, and they can be in combination with other themes. Some ideas below:

Example Level Themes

Space/Planet

Taken place in space or on a spaceship, or a planet landscape of some sort. Should be completely deserted.

Greek/Roman/Classical

Very classical styled level with bricks, marble, and statues. Should also appear empty/abandoned. A statue could be a point of interest. This level should be as photorealistic as possible.

Futuristic/Alien

Could be closely tied to the Space/Planet theme, but explores a deeper part of an alien landscape, such as a structure or cave of some sort. Could add the option for the player to explore alien technology here.

Simple/LowPoly

No particular theme outside of being a simple low-poly styled level. As if the game were made in Unity. Applying a simple cell-shading post process would make it look more convincing. Could be fun as a platformer level.

Forest/Meadow

Another realistic looking level with lots of foliage and light shafts/god rays. Could include a river, rocks, flowers, etc. Should be a very peaceful level.

Modern Indoor Home

The player could explore the interior of the home and interact with various objects. Ideally something modern and simple like an Arch Viz scene. This level could be more fun to play in a puzzle/escape sort of way.

Abstract/Geometric

Somewhat like the low-poly theme, but with more complicated shapes and structures. Might be possible to use this theme idea along with the futuristic/alien technology theme.

Japanese/Asian

A traditional looking Japanese looking level with tatami mats and temples. Could be very zen and beautiful. Might be possible to merge this level with the forest/meadow theme.

Underwater

Could be very fun to tie in with the alien/space theme ideas, and have the player explore an underwater world. Could be through swimming, use of an underwater vehicle, or something more simple like an underwater tunnel that connect other "level(s)" together.

Brutalist/Concrete Park

A large open/free area where the player can run around and explore the vast structure of the building. Could contain collections of stuff, a museum type of setting may be appropriate here.

Experimental Physics

The theme of this area could be to have abnormal physics, such as zero or low gravity. Or perhaps there is a setting that reverses the gravity in a room to solve a puzzle.

Full Level Example

The player stands before a ruined castle. In the distance, a statue emits a strange glow, the whole scene is bathed in a warm sunset. This invites the player to investigate the light afar. As the player goes towards, he/she comes across situations/scenes in the environment that will be puzzles later to be solved by the player.

- Statue of the light – to intrigue the player
- Puzzle Areas – to be solved by player
- Portal – to appear once player solves the puzzles in the environment.

Some objects that could be used in a level such as this are:

- Torch – used to burn trees
- Trees – will be used to reach other areas when cut down

- Columns – in this area, castle ruins have collapsed columns that will be used to solve a puzzle
- Rubble – some rubble will be moved in order to solve a puzzle

USER INTERFACE

The user interface will be modern, minimalistic, and accessible to as many players as possible; as mentioned in the “Gameplay Experience” part of this document, the user interface should include options to tweak accessibility settings within the main menu, pause menu, or both.

Main Menu

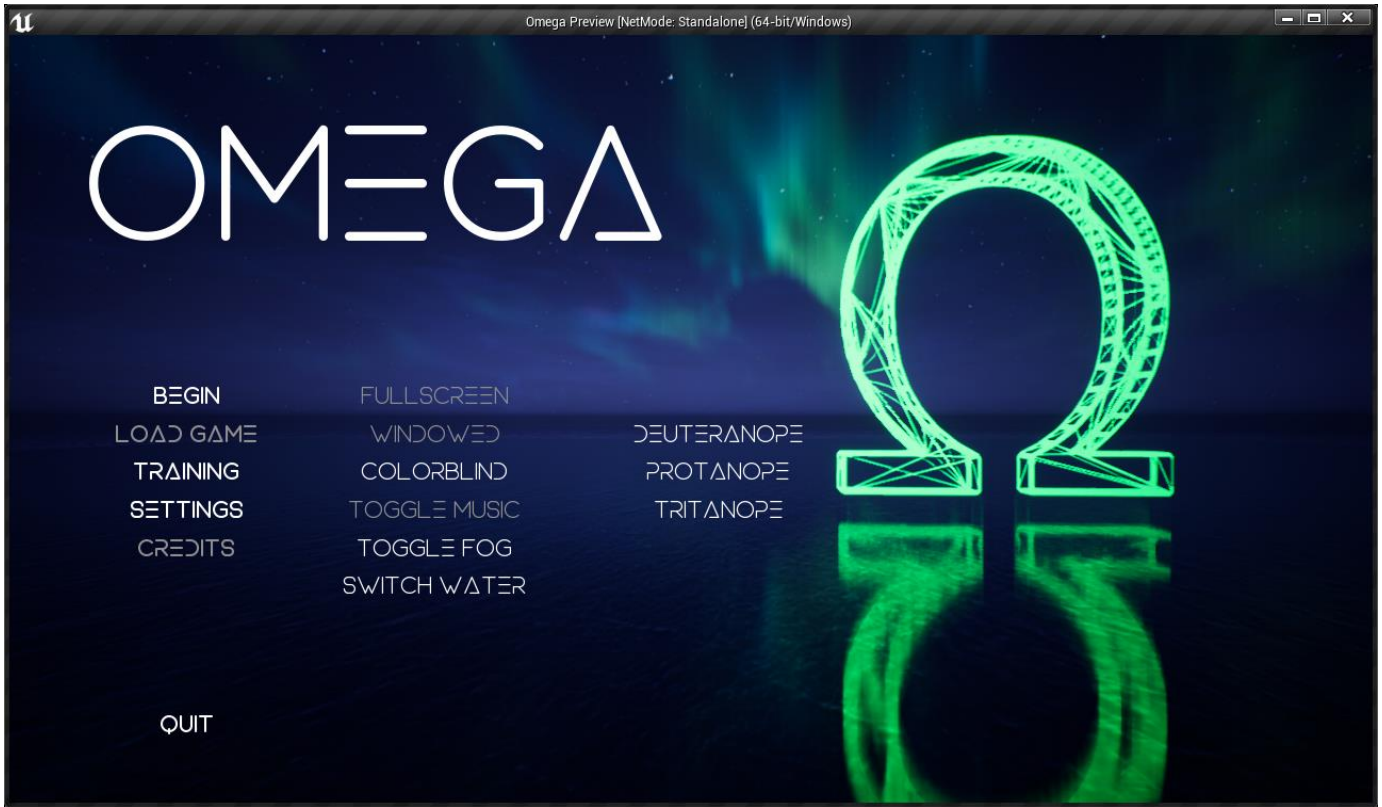
The main starting menu of the game should appear after the splash screen, being the Unreal Engine logo. There should be a small delay before the menu appears, and an audible ding should occur when the main menu is fully visible and interactable. It should contain at least the following buttons:

- Starting the game
- Loading the game from a save or checkpoint if such a function exists
- An option to go through a tutorial or training level
- Settings to adjust graphics, accessibility, etc
- Credits to the creators
- A way to quit/leave the game

Pause Menu

The Pause Menu should be accessible at any point of the game outside of loading screens, and should include at least all the same functionality from the main menu, and in addition, a way to return to the main menu (minus maybe the credits). When the game is paused, the background should remain the same camera angle state the player had just before pausing, but blur that background just enough so it doesn’t compete with focus over the pause menu’s UI elements. Any music should continue playing.

CONCEPT ART (original)



CONCEPT ART (ideas)



AUDIO GUIDELINES

Since there are no plans to include spoken dialogue, or it will be extremely limited, the mood of the game will depend largely on sound. The music and SFX will need to align with the game's visual aesthetic, and ideally compliment each other.

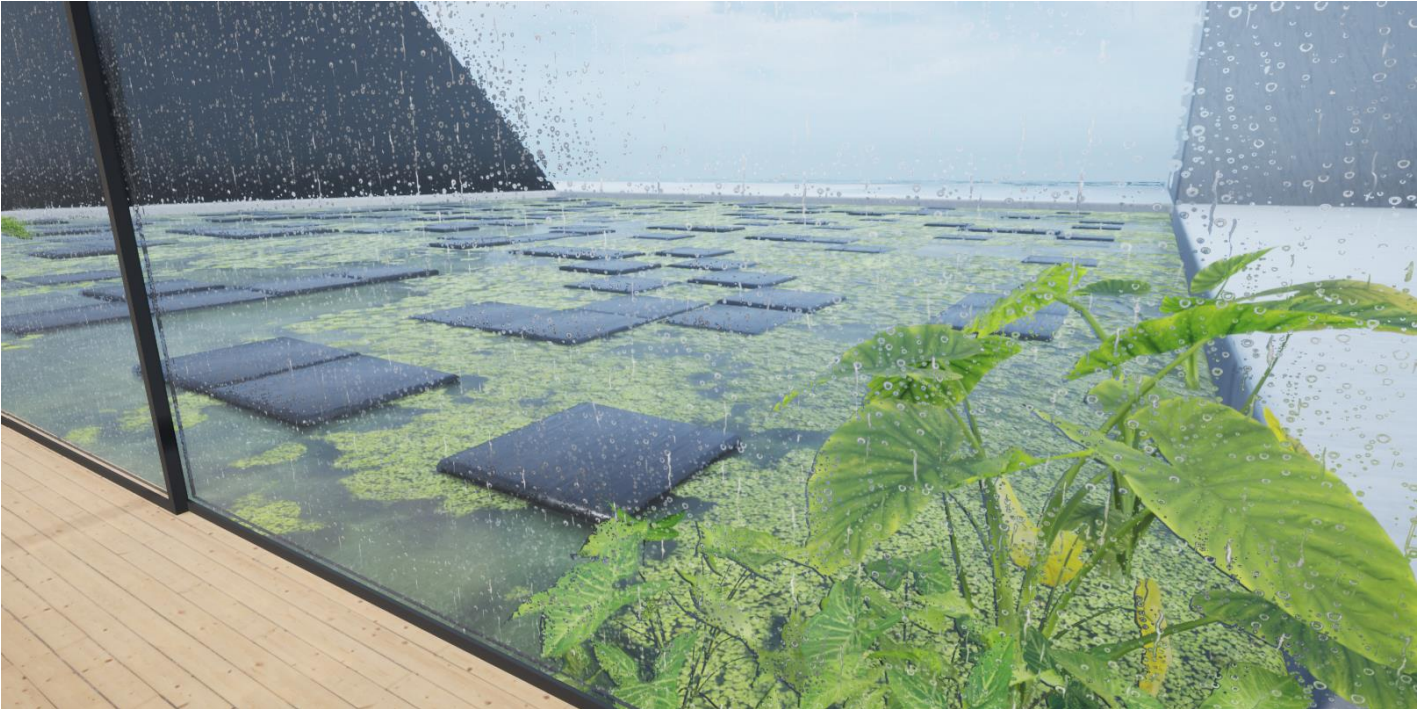
Sound Design

All sound should "sound" like they belong to the current level/theme. The mood should be similar, for example a space "level" should have a sci-fi track or ambient theme that feels like it fits. A meadow/forest level should have chirping birds or rustling leaves/trees to fit the level. If there's an underwater scene, sounds should be muted/dulled.

Vocals are fine to use in background/ambient music as long as they are kept to a minimum or the vocals are only hums, and not saying anything specific. The music of the game should be as immersive/trace like as possible to help bring the player into the game's worlds.

The UI sounds should remain consistent throughout the entire game no matter the theme of the level. All UI sounds should sound similar enough to feel like they're part of the same "pack". UI sounds should be simple and serve a purpose to notify the user that they were responsible to the action taken by the user.

EXTRAS



Whenever possible, the game should pay close attention to real-world detail for maximum immersion. In the example image above, the outside of the room is raining, and you can see raindrops slowly slide down the glass of the sliding door/windows.

An optional but fun feature to add could be to muffle the ambient audio when the game is paused, and return it to the original volume/clarity when the game is unpaused.

Another cool thing to add would be if the player is ever to enter a body of water, it should give some visual reaction by a splash or similar. If the player is submerged, the display should appear out of focus as if one was actually underwater.