

Design process

Game The dictator's friend is inspired by the TV show "House of Cards". In the "House of Cards" the sovereignty and stability of some Middle Eastern countries seem to be only a bargaining chip between super powers. For the national interests, super powers frequently create incidents on the territory of small countries that cause social unrest and even subvert state power to achieve the goal of expanding their influence. And super powers can always find a political factor to legalize their interference behavior, for example, a tyrannical dictator and a society full of human rights conflicts, making the word "dictator" a formidable evil word. But the truth is the authoritarian government is only a way of governing the country different from the Western democratic government. It is unfair to simply describe the dictator with evil. Which inspired me to develop a game for player to participate into an authoritarian government to experience the impact of the game between super powers on small countries.

Parameterize the story

Because the players could have made a lot of choices in the game, the design method based on the content of the file will hinder the design of the game mechanism because of the huge number of files. Classify and parameterize files by simplifying the contents of the file, and in the game set the player score system associated directly with the file parameters so that the file content does not affect the game mechanics, but also allows players to get more intuitive feedback when selecting files.

Score adjustment of game elements

The parameter values of the game elements directly affect the duration of the game. Although the larger game parameters allow the player to obtain more intuitive game feedback in the game, it also causes the player's operation to be very limited and the game duration is too short. Therefore, several parameters related to the game result are adjusted appropriately - mainly to reduce the increase or decrease of some parameters, to provide sufficient operation space for the player in the parameter, and also to extend the game duration, so that the player needs to spend relatively more time exploring the results of the game.

Set the interference character

After testing each game element, I found that if the player understands the impact of various classified files' scores to the other game elements. It's very easy to find a balance between the government and the resistance which leads to a very high degree of freedom in controlling the final outcome of the game, but this highly free game ending makes the game too simple for the player to make the choice and finish the game and lost the joy of challenge.

Therefore, two NPC characters are added in the game based on the government suspect score and the resistance rust score. These two characters are a complement to the game's plot, and a means of restrict the player. These two NPCs are activated when the player's parameters reach a critical point, they will indirectly interfere with the player's gameplay to force the player to adjust the strategy. The setting of the interference character makes the player's operation in the game have uncertain factors which helps to adjusts the rhythm of the game. At the same time,

the appearance of the interference character also makes the player have a stronger sense of substitution during the game and added a certain depth to the game.

Type design of classified documents

In the original design, the daily files that the player got in the game were set to be all classified files, in order to create the confusion, so player needs to judge by the contents of these files to make the choice: Which file is associated with the sabotage plan that the resistance organization is about to proceed.

After parameterizing the various elements of the game, the file itself is also parameterized. Files are classified into core, relative, and unrelated three different file types, and use parameterization to map these three types of files to other game elements associated with the player— the government suspect scores, resistance trust scores, and resistance 's event success rate, establishing a link between all parameters. The game's storyline and the player's logical feedback after the selection is only based on the parameters, the file content added later will not change the parameter relationship between the files, only will be enrich the story, providing more game clues to enhance the sense of substitution of the game.