

Abstract

The Dictator's friend is a strategy digital game. Played by one player, play time last for 30-60 minutes. The player plays a double agent in the game, working as a dictator's friend in the national government but being coerced by a resistance organization to help them get government secret information, so they can launch their sabotage against the current government's rule. The different choices made by the player during the game will affect the outcome of the game. Players have to choose their own position between the authoritarian government and the resistance organization under the influence of various factors and events, while trying to avoid revealing character's identity and get killed by the government or the resistance. If the character is killed by either government or the resistance, the game will be over. If player helps the resistance to achieve their goal and successfully overthrown the national government, player will be asked to perform the execution on his friend, the dictator. If player helps the government to eliminate the threats come from the resistance, character's wife will be killed for participating in the terrorist events. If there is any other option in this chaos for the player? And how much will that cost?

Rules

Player need to select and upload government classified files to the resistance organization based on the weekly game takes assigned by the resistance organization. In this process, player need to decide whether to assist the character's friend - the dictator to stabilize the domestic stability, or to help the resistance organization represented by his lover to overthrow the regime of the country. The files uploaded by the player will determine whether the resistance organization can successfully execute their sabotage plan. If the plan is successful, which will gradually cause the instability of the country, and in the end, the resistance will successfully overthrow the dictatorship regime - the dictator who is the friend of the player will be killed; If the plan is failed, the resistance organization will be eliminated and lead to the death of player's wife.

Intention

The purpose of designing this game is to let players to experience the color revolution in the modern human history, to choose between family and friendship, between the government and the people: the different choice player made will make player suffer different consequences. This game requires players to carefully search for clues, find balance between different factions, and sometimes need to make the necessary sacrifices to protect what they truly care about. Which will also tell the player that the so-called freedom is not necessarily achieved through the most dramatic brutal revolution: "Sometimes it's best to leave well enough along."

What I learned

This game is my first collaborative game design project. I am mainly responsible for the game mechanics and game UI design, and my collaborator Tom is mainly responsible for the game programming work. In addition to learning a lot of UI design specifications, what impressed me the most is the way I learned after mistakes - when I was designing the mechanism of the game, I always worry about whether the mechanism will be able to fit with the story line, and this makes the design process very slow. The method of parameterized game mechanism helped me shift my attention back to the game mechanism design, which makes me realize it's important to build the game frame structure first, and let the mechanism structure lead the game's story design.

Personal Website for pics and video: <https://willbridgej.wixsite.com/williamportfolio>

All files provided:

8 pages in the portfolio PDF document, an introduction video.