THE PUDDLE JUMPERS GAZETTE

A Game by YUURRP!

Table of Contents

Revision History

Revision #	Author	MM/DD/YYYY	Change Details
1	Team	10/20/2023	- Changed the core mechanics of the game to include player movements, an open map, and a dialogue system.

Game Overview

Wield the power of gossip and drama to shape the destiny of your classmates as the editor of your school's newspaper in the world of elementary school espionage.

Concept

In *"The Puddle Jumpers Gazette"* you step into the shoes of the lead editor of your elementary school newspaper. Your mission is simple: gather and publish the juiciest gossip and rumours you can get your hands on. Each day, you embark on a reconnaissance mission, strolling through the school, engaging with classmates, and discreetly eavesdropping on conversations, all in hopes of finding the best tales. Back in your office, the pressure is on to select the day's headline. It could be the most shocking revelation, the most scandalous secret, or the most significant event you've unearthed. The choice is yours but choose wisely, for your decision sets off a chain

reaction from your fellow students. Positive or negative, the news flies through the school, shaping the destiny of your paper. Your ultimate aspiration is to achieve a coveted spot on the *"Star Student Showcase"* wall, immortalising your paper in the annals of history. As days pass, you'll start noticing patterns and gossip circles forming among your classmates. A student talking badly about someone else with a close friend only for that friend to directly tell the victim the following day. Someone picking their nose in science class was found crying in the bathroom alone after being featured as a headline. Witness your environment, classmates, and school crumble, all thanks to your infamous *"Puddle Jumpers Gazette"*.

Project Vision & Purpose

The main purpose of our project is to raise awareness of the rampant rise of fake news and misinformation, especially among young people. Besides, we hope to deliver an educational yet entertaining experience, and most importantly a fun-to-play game.

Genre

- Narrative
- Puzzle

Similar Games

Papers Please

- Papers Please utilise the top-down drag-and-drop mechanic to simulate adding stamps onto papers. We will use this as a reference for our drag-and-drop mechanic to craft newspapers.
- The game also uses ludo-narrative to create meaningful choices. The game successfully portrays the message of immigrant struggles by pressuring the players to question their morality through daily choices.

Kindergarten

- Kindergarten has similar aesthetics and settings as our narrative, which takes place within a school setting with young silly kids.
- We are also going to use Kindergarten as a reference for our character controls and camera movement.

Stanley Parable

- The Stanley Parable also forces the player to question their own decision in order to convey its message.

Target Platform(s)

Engine

- Computer / PC / Windows

System Requirements (Minimum)

- CPU: 1.5 Individual Core.
- RAM: 2 GB.
- OS: Windows XP.

Target Audience

- Young Adults (Teen)
- Social Media Users

Game Objectives

- Create a good newspaper
- Educate the masses on the consequences of mis and disinformation

Unique Selling Points

- Branching Story Based on Choices
- Dynamic Relationships and Chain Reactions
- Uncover the effects of mis and disinformation

Project Scope

Programmatic Requirements Breakdown

- Character controls.
- Camera scrolling and clipping.
- Drag and Drop mechanic, newspaper crafting.
- Character hidden stats.
- Tracking variables.
- Dialogue system.

Asset List

- Character Sprite sheet. (walking cycle)
- Environment sheet. Environmental assets such as desks and chairs and whatever else is necessary.
- School layout.
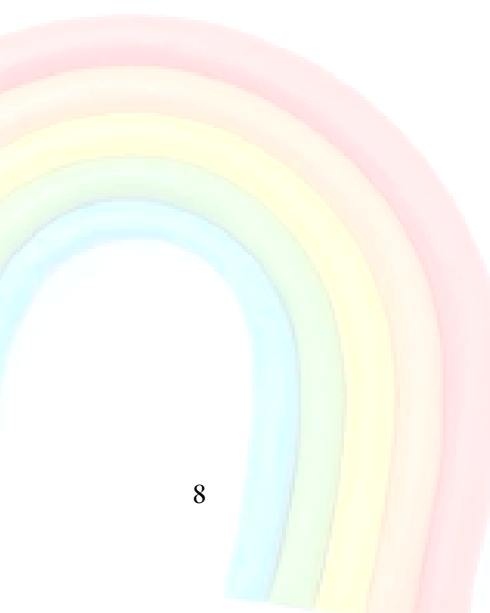
Project Risks

- The game requires a large amount of narrative work to cover a wide range of news articles and characters, as well as endings.
- The drag-and-drop programming could be quite iffy to play. We could consider adding a snap mechanic where elements can automatically snap into place when they're in the general vicinity.

User Documentation

How to Play Screen

- Players will be greeted with a brief overlay screen showing the controls of the game, including character movement controls and the interaction button (E or F).
- Before crafting the first article the player will be guided with UI overlays to know what to drag and where.

Story and Setting

Story Synopsis

The player takes on the role of the lead editor of "The Puddle Jumpers Gazette," an elementary school newspaper. Each day, you stroll around the school, listening and talking to fellow classmates about gossip and rumours. Bringing with them their own unique backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas. Some of these kids are well-connected, while others shine in their respective fields, all of which are means of information. The power is in your hands to decide what makes the headline. Do you lean toward the tantalising gossip surrounding school crushes and unspoken affections? Do you delve into the intricate web of friendship squabbles and hidden drama, or do you let the school know that you found a cool worm during recess? With your trusty stickers and glitter in hand, you customise your paper, adding a touch of whimsy to excite all who read. But be warned, for every choice you make carries consequences. Each headline you select can cause a chain reaction, shaping the trajectory of the paper towards success, or failure. Will your work be lost to the annals of elementary school history, or will you display the true power held by the one and only member of "The Puddle Jumpers Gazette"?

Backstory

As the lead editor and sole member of "The Puddle Jumpers Gazette", you've spent the entire school year reporting on your school's ups and downs. From the lively talent show to the relatively boring book fair, your newspaper has been the go-to source for all happenings within the school. Now, with the school year coming to a close, you're determined to leave your mark on the "Star Students Showcase" wall. With the goal of your "The Puddle Jumper Gazette" standing for eternity as a testament to your dedication, you stop at nothing to spread good ol' fashioned news.

Characters (Lucas Faves = Green)

Gym

- **Grog (Gym):** Ripped as shit. Working out with friend Chad. Testosterone filled. Talks in all caps.
- **Chad (Gym):** Passed out on the floor with a weight on their chest.
- **Matty B Loo (Gym Stage):** Rapper. Speaks in rhymes. Has a mic.
- **Annie (Gym Stage)**: Musical student. Dressed in red, akin to Annie from the musical. Obnoxious.
- **Mr. Porker (Gym):** Big belly gym teacher. Would have made it big but he got a slipped disk. Depressed.

Cafeteria

- **Mrs. Munch (Cafeteria):** Lunch Lady. Making "food" in the back. Orange hair... We know who this is...
- **Grease (Cafeteria):** Big fella, eats all the unhealthy food. My least favourite food is broccoli.
- **Brock (Cafeteria)** Literally an anthropomorphic piece of broccoli. Sitting beside grease. Noticeably scared.
- **Eternal Flame Warrior (Cafeteria):** Playing a card game with Dragon Heart. Very cringe. Talks like a Chuunibyou.
- **Dragon Heart (Cafeteria):** Trading cards with Eternal Flame Warrior. Actually normal, just going along with Eternal Flame Warriors Chuunibyou because they're friends.

Principal Office

- **Principle Beal Zebub (Principal Office):** Literally the devil. He's actually red and has horns but nobody notices. He says it's an ingrown hair.
- **Mrs. Atenda (Principal Office):** Very deadpan. Hates Jim.
- **Jim (Principal Office):** Very Talkative. Loves to pester Mrs. Atenda. Obviously has perfect attendance.
- **Emmett (Principal Office):** Bully. Sitting in a waiting chair. Bought a nerf gun from Yaku and shot Tag with it.
- **Tag (Principal Office):** Sitting beside Emmett. Has a big bump on his head.

Outside

- **Fuzzy (Outside):** In a fursuit. Frolicking in bushes. Trying to recruit people to the furry club.
- **Yaku Zaza (Playground):** Local mobster. Dealing maths assignments out and committing bribery, wears a suit everywhere.
- **Lil' Angie (Playground):** Wears shades. Bad girl. Rides tricycles like motorbikes. Has a peel off tattoo on her face but claims it's real.
- **Pablo "Speedy" Gonzales (Outside):** Fastest kid in school, can be found racing various children outside.
- **Dirty Dirk (Outside):** Hole digger. Worm toucher. Gross fucker.
- **The General (Outside):** Dealing Nerf guns under the slides.
- **Basil (Outside):** Gardening in the bushes. Very cute and pretty happy gardencore girl :3.
- **Mrs. Dum (Hayleigh Dummington):** Teacher. Patrolling outside.

Bathrooms

- **Kayla (Bathroom):** Member of the "Plasticks". Yappin'.
- **Jessica (Bathroom):** Member of the "Plasticks" Yappin'.
- **Reggie N. Ageorge (Bathroom):** Leader of the "Plasticks" Yappin'.
- **Brenda B Leetho (Bathroom):** Cute girl. Looks like kean. Crying in a bathroom stall covered in a bucket of fake blood... or just something that's red if blood is too violent. Talks like "Nauurrrrr".

- **Kingsley (Bathroom #2):** Hidden person in the one and only stall in Bathroom #2. Speaks words of wisdom. True Soul.
- **Worshipper #1 (Bathroom #2):** Worshipping on hand and knees outside of the stall.
- **Worshipper #2 (Bathroom #2):** Worshipping on hands and knees outside of the stall.
- **Missy Direction #3 (Bathroom #2):** On hands and knees, but they're looking for something they dropped. Not worshipping.
- **Micro (Bathroom #2):** Vaping. Total loser. Keeps asking u if you want a hit. Shows you vape tricks.

Janitor Room

- **8.0.0.8.5 (Janitor Room):** Robot kid. Working on the time machine.
- **Janitor (Janitor Room):** Crazy old man, working on a time machine.
- **Ol' Norman:** 44-year-old man who hasn't been able to pass Grade 5. Very average-looking old man.

History Room

- **Caesar (History Room):** Wearing a robe. Speaks in old roman English.
- **Bingo (History Room):** Participating in war. Try to heal wounded tango. Always in the classroom.
- **Tango (History Room):** Tango pretending to be injured. Ketchup on her chest like blood. Always in the classroom.
- **Foxtrot (History Room):** Foxtrot firing Nerf gun towards the other side of the room. Talks about his wife back home. Has a ciggy in his mouth. Always in the classroom.
- **Beta (History Room):** Not participating in war, but getting shot at by Bingo, Tango, and Foxtrot. He's an actual beta and he's talking about the inaccuracies of this war. Wears glasses. Nerd AF. Has nerf bullets stuck to his face. There on the first day.
- **Mr. Lance (History Room):** Teacher in full knight armour. Getting shot at by students. Has a giant lance. (obviously). There on the second day.
- **Genghis (History Room):** Actually Genghis Khan. Getting absolutely pummelled by Bingo, Tango, and Foxtrot. There on the third day.
- **Cleo (History Room):** Observes the war in silence at the back of the class. Running for student council president.

Maths Room

- **Will (Maths Room):** Super genius and doesn't know it. How do you like them apples?
- **Phaker (Maths Room):** Gaming warlord. Claims he just got signed to a professional esports organisation and that his father owns Microsoft.
- **Pythagoras (Maths Room):** Actual Pythagoras. Talks about how he's here because of the transmigration of souls and that he died in a past life and he is here to spread his teachings to the world. Also has been beefing with Phaker because he keeps losing 1v1s in video games.

- **Kathy (Maths Room):** Playing with rocket ships and space. Likes stars. (Based off of Katherine Johnson so don't accidentally whiteface her)
- **Norm (Maths Room):** Literally only a normal person in the math room. Baffled that everyone else is a genius. Cannot do basic maths. Does not know what BEDMAS is.

Geography Room

- **Clementine (Geography Room):** Victorian era schoolgirl. Talks in very old English. Very pretty dress and big hair
- **Marco (Geography Room):** Playing hide and seek with Polo. Is seeking.
- **Polo (Geography Room):** Playing hide and seek with Marco. Is hiding.
- **? (Geography Room):** Actual adult viking. Standing over a kid. Yelling in all caps.
- **Lindisfarne (Geography Room):** Kid on the floor.

Science

- **Doc (Science Class):** Working on a cure for cooties. Says there's a new variant coming...
- **Albie (Science Class):** Looking at the giant pit in the ground and talking about an experiment gone wrong. Looks like Albert Einstein.
- **Ada (Science Class):** Nerd programming girl drinking monster energy and wearing cat ears headphones. Computer science. (based off of Ada Lovelace)
- **Leonardo (Science Class):** Pet turtle. Has the blue headband thing.
- **Mary-Anne (Science Class):** Fossil fan. Playing with rocks and stone and shells. Talks in tongue twisters.

Teachers Lounge

- **Banger (Teachers Lounge):** DJ. Blasting tunes at the DJ set. A kid.
- **Mrs. Inyetti (Teachers Lounge):** Art teacher.
- **Mr. Hillbert (Teachers Lounge):** Geography Teacher.
- **Young Bergin (Teachers Lounge):** Science Teacher.
- **Dr. Fanta (Teachers Lounge):** Maths Teacher.

Art Room

- **Adam (Art Room):** Adam... from THE BIBLE. Naked except for a leaf. Posing in the centre of the classroom.
- **Kanzu (Art Room):** Bonobo ape. Painting Adam at an easel. Speaks perfect english. Talks about evolution as well as silly gossip (lol).
- **Mache (Art Room):** Entire head is covered in paper mache. He's going to make a sculpture out of his head. On another day it has solidified and he can't get it off...
- **Vinny (Art Room):** Bandaged ear. Says it was a skateboarding accident. Cute and shy. (based off of Vincent Van Gogh)

- **Michelangelo (Art Room):** The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle...

News Stories (Locations, Characters Involved)

Student Council Election: Who you decide to slander makes their opponent win the election, which changes the school the next day.

Chain Reactions (Consistent Storylines Throughout the Days)
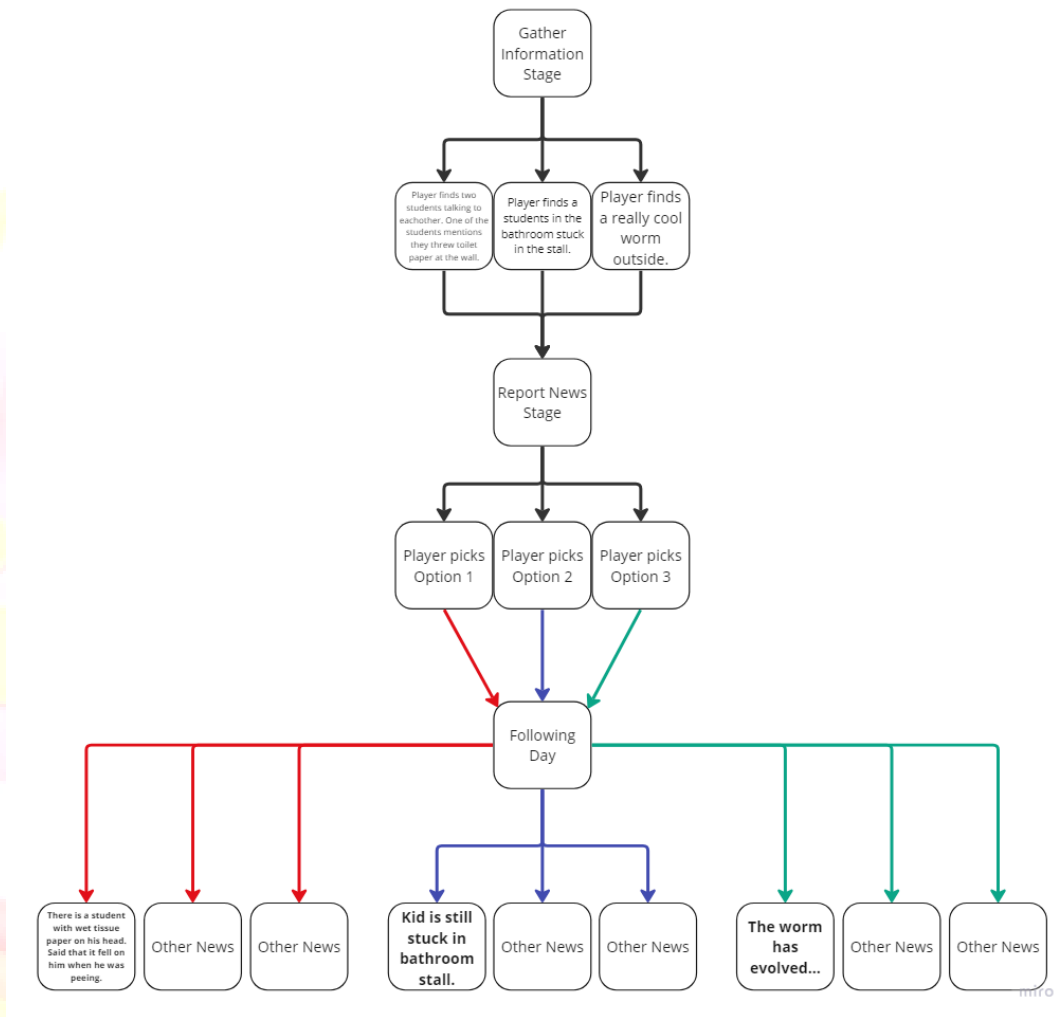
World/Environment & Level Design

Interior

Bathroom

- 2 Rooms
  - Lunch Room
  - Cafeteria
    - Kitchen

Front office reception desks

Principal's Office

- Front Desk

Gym

- Storage Room
- Main room
- Locker rooms

Classes

- Science
- Math
- Geography
- History
- Art

Teachers Lounge

Exterior

Playground

Field

Gameplay Mechanics

Core Gameplay Loop

- Players start the day in a top down 2D environment (akin to Kindergarten game series) and can walk around gathering information by clicking "E" on people or things in the environment.
- After the day's events, players will return to their "Office" and begin creating the newspaper with information they found during the first part of the day.
- Players will drag and drop relative information onto the newspaper to create the headline for the day. Depending on the information they include, the newspapers ratings will go UP vs DOWN
- Once the day is over, the next day starts and the loop repeats.

Player Controls

- WASD Controls to move around during the first part of the day.
- "E" key to interact with the environment.
- "Space" or "Mouse Click" to progress dialogue boxes during conversations
- "Mouse Click + Drag" to drop relevant information onto the newspaper.

Game Progression

- The game takes place over the course of 5 days.
- At the end of everyday, players will create a newspaper using the information they learned during the day
- Depending on what stories the player decided to run, certain effects will take place the following day
- These effects are meant to highlight the consequences of your actions
- Certain stories take place over multiple days, running one story one day can lead to a follow up story the next day, while other stories will only take place over one day
- Whether they open up a follow up story or not, each story will still have an effect on the next day that can be seen through visual storytelling and interacting with other characters
- The game has semi-linear progression
- Depending on your choices and the stories you run, the game will slightly branch off into other outcomes through the effects you see the following day and the other stories that open up, but the game follows the same day-by-day progression that will always lead to the same ending state
- There are "different" endings, but the only differences are how you did throughout the week and a reflection on your choices

Camera System

Camera will follow the player as they move around. Not very complex.

NPC System

Each day has specific NPCs laid out throughout the school in scripted places. This eliminates the need for randomness programming. Each day, there are several students the player can talk to all throughout the school. 5-6 of these students will have specific NEWS for the character to feature in their paper. 1-2 of which will result in a change to a future day. The number of possible branching story paths could range from 5 to 12 different story variations. The branching stories do not last for the remaining days, but instead will result in new dialogue for a specific character or an environmental change. For example:

There are 3 students in the history room. 2 have dialogue but no news. One has an exclamation mark above their head and has news. They say the other side of the room is using chemical warfare by farting on the bullets before firing them. Reporting this news will result in the opposing side having an exclamation mark above their heads the following day. They say that the other side is lying, and that they've been under siege for days with no access to bathroom or lunch breaks. And someone on the other team was actually using a real BB - Gun.

Character Stats and Modifiers

NPC's will have stats that the player can view after meeting an NPC for the first time. These all cumulate into an overall popularity stat, and that reflects how the NPC is perceived by the school. The popularity is what the player can use to increase how well a news story will do in the paper. An NPC's popularity can change based on whether the player included their story that day in the paper. Player action can dictate whether it positively or negatively affects the NPC's popularity through how they create their news stories, furthering the narrative.

The math for the NPC stats is as follows, x being the stat:

Positive #: **1.5·x**

Positive 1-10: **1·x**

Negative #: **-1·x**

Negative 1-10: **-0.5·x**

	Math:		NPC Stats PoC					
			Type	Popularity Stats	Value			
	7.5		#	Friendos	5		Popularity	27.5/50
	20		1 to 10	Helpingness	10			
	0		1 to 10	Smartyness	10			.
	27.5		1 to 10	Stinkyness	0			
			1 to 10	Angery Level	0			
			1 to 10	Weirdo	0			

Proof of concept for NPC stats, positive stats are green, negative are red.

Modifiers PoC	
Name	**Description**
Dolittle?	"They can talk to animals, or atleast that's what I heard" (+2 Weirdo)
Foodie	"They always have something to eat in their hand" (+3 Helpingness)
Observer	"Seems to know everything about everything" (+2 Smartyness)
Dirty	"I think they dig around in the dirt at recess, they leave a trail" (+4 Stinkyness)
Attitude	"Will probably take my lunch money, or anyone elses" (+5 Angery Level)

Proof of concept for NPC modifiers, mainly to be used for story hints and news story points, but also impacts the NPC stats. They are intended to be non-specific to a character, so any NPC can have them.

Saving System

The game will automatically save the player's progress after each day of completing a newspaper. If the player leaves the game during mid-day, their progress during the day will be reset and they will begin at the start of the day.

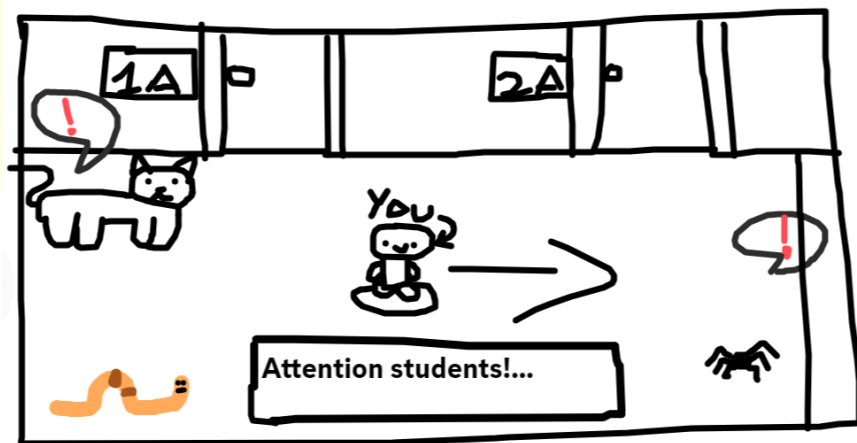# User Interface (UI) and Menus

Main Menu

The Main Menu will basically have three options: Start a new game, Load an existing save file, or Quit the application. The layout of the UI will be similar to Stardew Valley's Main Menu, with a moving background.

Reference:
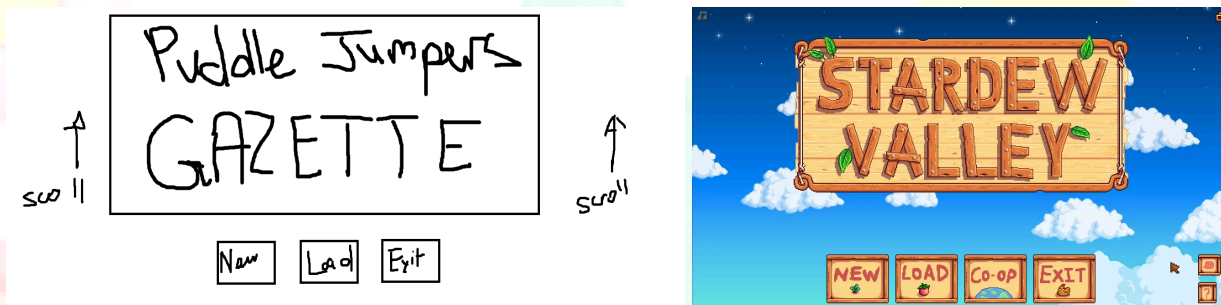


In-Game HUD

Mockup of In-game view and markers/text box (top-down)

Ending Screen

The ending screen will have a dialogue box indicating the type of ending (Good/Bad ending). The player will be able to view all the newspapers they've created, and there will be a final photo of all the characters (could be a yearbook photo), and the photo will vary depending on the ending.

Reference:
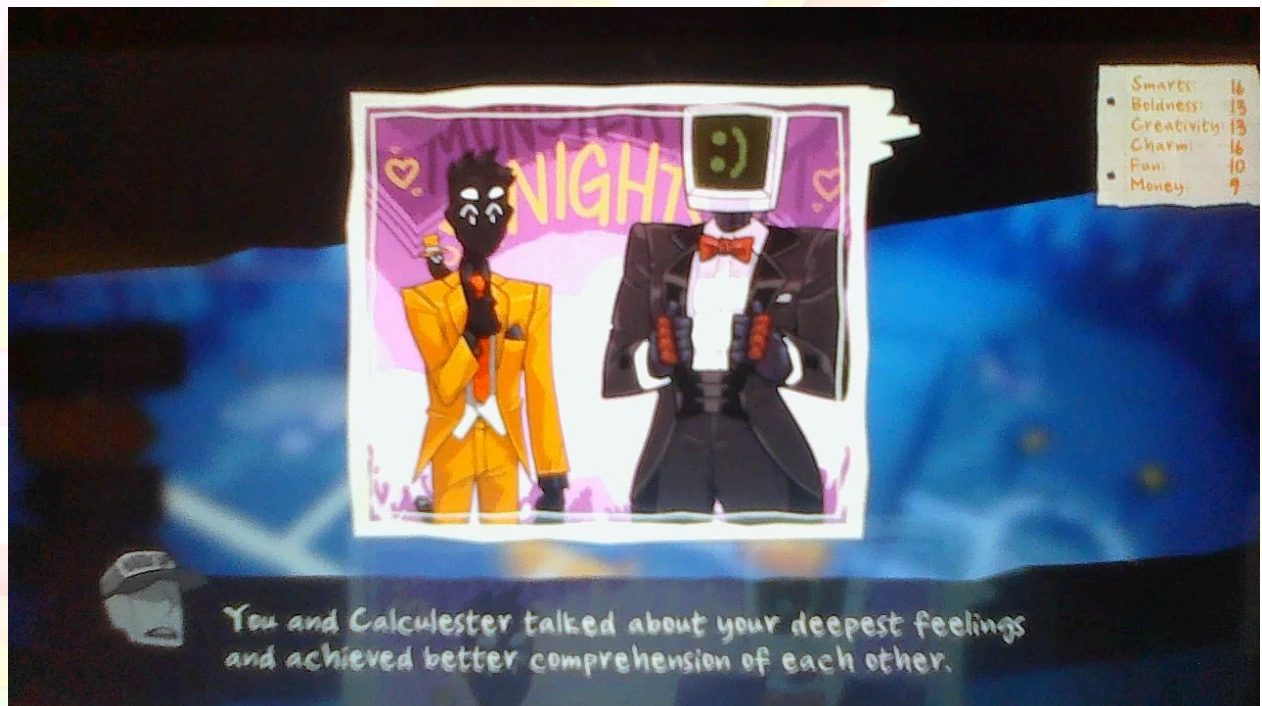
Visual Style and Art Direction

Artistic Vision

- The visual style of "The Puddle Jumpers Gazette" should be bright, colourful, and whimsical, reflecting the elementary school setting. Use a cartoonish art style with clean lines and vibrant, eye-catching colours. The overall aesthetic should feel inviting and child-friendly.
- Emphasise a hand-drawn and playful art style to bring out the charm and innocence of elementary school. Use exaggerated proportions for characters to add a touch of caricature while maintaining relatability.

Character Design

- Characters should be diverse in appearance, reflecting the various backgrounds and personalities of elementary school students. Each character should have a unique look and clothing style. Pay attention to facial expressions to convey emotions effectively.

Environment Design

- Use a vibrant colour palette with primary and secondary colours. Add playful patterns like polka dots, stripes, and stars to walls, floors, and furniture.
- Enlarge certain objects like chairs, crayons, books, and pencils to make them appear larger than life. This exaggeration adds a whimsical touch.

Animation Style

- Keep animations simple and fluid, matching the overall art style. Characters should have expressive animations for actions like walking, talking, and reacting to headlines. Environmental animations, such as swaying trees or flowing water in a nearby pond, can add life to the surroundings.

UI Design

- The UI should be intuitive and easy to navigate, especially when creating the newspaper in the office. Use a playful font for text elements and incorporate stickers, glitter, and other craft-like elements to enhance the design. Clearly display relevant information like headline options, ratings, and progress indicators.

Sound & Audio Design

Sound Effects

We want there to be the sounds of characters talking. Akin to undertale or animal crossing. Just a bunch of yapping in different tones.

- ▶ Animal Crossing Isabelle Voice Clips (NO BACKGROUND MUSIC)
- ▶ Splatoon 2 - Pearl and Marina Voice Clips

Background Music

- ▶ 2 PM - Animal Crossing: New Horizons Music Extended - Walking around and investigating
- ▶ Your Name Please (Noiseless) - Walking around and investigating 2
- ▶ Friendly Neighbors - Making newspaper
- ▶ the music from that part where you get sued in fnaf 6 for one hour

Game Progression

Progression System

Players will have two parts of the day. The first part consists of walking around the school, interacting with the environment and characters. The second half will be going back to their desk and writing the newspaper using the information they gathered. The day ends when the newspaper is submitted. The progression is linear in nature, as it is through a 5 day period from beginning to end, but narrative is non linear as depending on what news you feature there will be a different chunk of gossip the following day.

Difficulty Curve

There is not much of a difficulty curve defined by the game itself. If the goal of the game is to have the best newspaper, then featuring only the most gossip heavy and intriguing news will result in that being the case. It is the same if the player chooses to feature uninteresting news. The narrative adventure doesn't have a difficulty curve.