

Game Concept Document

A Mouse Life

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[Game Charter 1](#)

[Mission Statement 1](#)

[Meeting Schedule. 1](#)

[Hours Worked per Week. 1](#)

[Code Review Process. 1](#)

When Things Go Wrong. 1

Decision-Making Process. 1

Rules of Conduct 1

Team Roles. 1

Administrative Roles. 2

Integration Schedule. 2

Executive Summary. 2

High Concept 2

Locale. 2

Genre. 2

Basic Controls. 2

Game Goal 2

Target Platform.. 2

Target Audience. 2

Game Walkthrough. 3

Game Flow Chart 3

Key Features. 3

General Features. 3

Gameplay. 3

Comparative Products. 3

How this Product Stacks up. 3

Treatment 3

Dust Jacket Story. 4

Game Story. 4

Characters. 4

Items. 7

Environments. 9

Puzzles 10

Interactivity 11

How the Player Marks Progress. 12
Game Rules. 12
Scoring. 12
Winning/Losing. 12
Loading/Saving. 12
Transitions. 12
Overworld map 13
Dialogue13
Rewards 13
Art and Production Design. 13
Art & Animation Style. 13
Sound Effects Style. 13
Music Style. 13
Asset List 14
2D Art 14
Storyboards and Sample Art 15

Game Charter

Mission Statement

We at Blue Screen Of Death are a dedicated group of game designers. We take pride in all that we create and “A Mouse Life” is no exception. We feel that this game will meet and exceed the expectations of the bored seeking entertainment. Our game offers replay-ability as well as versatility which makes “A Mouse Life” playable by all.

Meeting Schedule

We will be meeting on Thursdays (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm) and on Saturdays (1:00 pm – 3:00 pm), while having minor consolation periods at various times.

Code Review Process

The producer sets goals being of sections of the game, to be completed by the programmers by the given date. Rough code will then be formed and distributed among the other programmers for review and revision. Once approved, the code will be refined, and the next section will be assigned.

When Things Go Wrong

Minor problems to be fixed by the individual who originated the problem. When that person is unable to fix the problem, they are entitled to ask a team member who would be able to help then. If the problem should be larger than the people already involved, an emergency team meeting will be called to solve the problem.

Decision-Making Process

During sessions, ideas are formed and consulted between members. All final decisions are then passed through the project manager and then assigned accordingly to the proper team member.

Rules of Conduct

Will attempt to not completely insult each other, although in a humorous manor at each meeting. Each member will attempt to keep the other members on task once they are needed for discussion. All members are expected to attend the meetings, unless reported with a valid reason to the Project Manager for their absences.

Team Roles

Jessica Tardy – Producer, Team Leader (scheduler)

Justin Sinke – Game Design, QA

Colin Foster – Lead Programmer

Jackie McDonald – 2D artist, Art Director

Darwin Minard – 3D artist, Art Director

Administrative Roles

Jessica Tardy – Producer, Team Leader (scheduler)

Justin Sinke – Game Design, QA

Colin Foster – Sound Lead, Lead programmer

Jackie McDonald – 2D artist, Art Director

Darwin Minard – 3D artist, Art Director

Executive Summary

High Concept

A simple pick up and play, but unlike other puzzles games, there is a way to “save” and not have to start from the beginning again.

Locale

Cartoon setting of a house or other buildings.

Genre

Adventure/ Puzzle Solving

Basic Controls

In the Main Menu the player can interact with the buttons provided by using a mouse to make their selection. In the game the player uses the arrow keys to move the avatar about, the space bar to interact with objects when possible, and the I key to open the inventory. Inside the mouse hole

The camera at all times will be mounted to give an obscured bird's eye view.

Character Interaction:

This is a single player game. Interaction will take place between the user and NPCs. Dialog will be written for them. Teamwork exists with the player and NPC depending on which particular one it is.

Game Goal

There is no real game goal except for what the player sets for themselves.

Target Platform

PC:

Internet Connection

Target Audience

Those who have little time and who don't want to deal with complex rule systems.

Game Walkthrough

When you first start the game, a start image and menu will appear. Here, the user has the choice to start a new game, or load a previous game by entering a code they had received when they saved. When a new game is selected, they are taken to a new screen where they can choose a rodent between a mouse, rat, hamster or gerbil. They then can select between various colors for the fur. Upon hitting OK the play is then taken to the living room; where a quick dialogue box appears giving them a quick instruction guide. From there, the player can roam as they please.

General Features

- Cartoon environment
- Isometric stationary camera

Gameplay

- 4 different rodents
- Semi-Customizable rodents
- Multitudinous items

Comparative Products:

Nintendogs

Zelda-like Puzzles

Hamtarow

How this Product Stacks up:

Just as good as any other “play the game because i’m bored” type games

Follow-up Products

Treatment

Dust Jacket Story

There’re more to rodents than meets the eye. Play as one of four possible rodents as you explore multiple environments, from the great indoors to the great outdoors. Help out fellow rodents, find cool

collectables, dress up, challenge yourself, wreck havoc, or just lounge around. Your imagination is the only thing stopping you; it's all up to you. So sit back and relax. It's a rodent's life, and it's yours to do as you please.

Game Story

There is no plotted story in this game, aside from a few events. Transitions from one environment to another have some elements of a story in them so the puzzles make sense, but don't truly form a plot. Such events include sneaking into a package or sneaking into a car.

Story Elements Key Points:

Intro:

When the player first enters the game, Old Martin walks them through a quick tutorial. The basics of moving, climbing, moving objects, collecting items, how to access mini-games, are explained, as well as solving a simple puzzle.

From there on the player directs everything and may do as they please.

Characters

(In each environment, there is a "helper" character who knows the place well)

Old Martin

Old Martin has been around for quite a long time, to put it lightly. He put several miles under his paws when he was younger and though he's now retired (so to speak), he can still get things done. However, he's not quite as adventurous as he used to be. Old Martin has attained quite a bit of wisdom over the years and tries to teach the younger generation whenever he can, be it the easy way or the hard way. Both his wisdom and teachings have earned him a fair bit of respect. When a rodent's looking for guidance, or just bored and wanting something to do, they go to Old Martin.

Role: Old Martin acts as the tutorial at the beginning of the game, though this is option, creating a story to go with the learning so the tutorial isn't dull. After that, he's a help center and a goal giver. The player can get hints and help for any mini-game or challenge they've encountered, as well as general help and redoing the tutorial. If you tell him, "I'm bored", he'll tell the player where they can find a challenge, though not in too blunt a manner.

Steve

Steve is the rodent equivalent of the stereotypical college student: Outgoing, fun loving, energetic, and doesn't have a care in the world. He loves pulling his own style of pranks on the students in the dorm, and never tires of the same old tricks. He's rewired the TV so he can watch it when he wants, long ago figured out the radio, and had even figured out the computer to some extent. Steve loves making his own fun and can always think of something interesting to do.

Role: Similar to Old Martin, with key differences. Steve will not offer the tutorial, and though he can suggest activities, he can also lead straight to mini-games or instanced challenges. The player can also pair with him, as his assistance will be needed to access certain dorm room areas.

Alexander

Making his home in one of the displays of the local museum, Alexander (who refuses to have his name shortened to Alex) is a soft spoken rodent who enjoys peace and quiet. He makes his home in a castle diorama, suited to his taste. His only quibble being that he must hide his belongings when the dioramas are cleaned. That happens infrequently enough though, so it is not too much of a nuisance. He can easily think of several quiet and peaceful activities, but a creative mind can make them more exciting. He's quick to scold but never really follows through, believing that karma will deal with them in the long run.

Role: A helper character, giving information, help, and challenges.

Quick Claw

Not quite wild, not quite domestic, Quick Claw is somewhere in between. She escaped life as a pet, and lived in the nearby woods. She is obsessed with the idea of freedom, and tolerates the player's character only because they are not a pet. However, she can't comprehend why the player's character even considers being near humans. She knows the woods well, though she has not strayed too far from civilization. If asked about it, she will evade the question, and will become downright mean if pressed. Quick Claw has a few scars from the years and will show them off with pride, telling (likely exaggerated) tales of how she attained them. As the player "proves" their wilderness skill, Quick Claw will show them how to reach new areas.

Role: A helper character, giving information, help, and challenges.

Tiger (A.K.A. Fluffy)

Tiger is something of a spoiled cat, indulging in the foods his owners make for him. He is pampered almost beyond any reason. Tiger finds rodents more of an annoyance than anything else, and finds eating them disgusting. However, he is not beyond playing with them for his own amusement. He'll pounce on them, bat them around, and carry them by the tail for a time. While not much of a conversationalist, she will exchange a few words with rodents if he's bored, and play with them if they begin to annoy him.

Role: Tiger will often be an obstacle, as if he is not blocking one area, he's blocking another. The methods of moving him vary and create multiple challenges. Talking to him can also lead to interesting conversations.

Ramon

Ramon is a laid back, easy going lizard. He's a pet, like Tiger, but not as pampered. He

doesn't care much though, and enjoys the easy life. His owners have given him free reign of the house, and he makes his way around at his own leisurely pace. A slow and steady kind of person. Tiger jokes that one of his parents must have been a turtle, or tortoise. Ramon doesn't care, just goes on. He's friendly to everything, and will help other when asked without a second thought.

Role: Ramon serves mostly as transportation, getting players nearly anywhere though at a relatively slow rate.

Jenny

Jenny, a bird, is flighty to say the least. That, and absent minded. Once one starts taking to her, they can hardly get a word in edgewise without interrupting her. She often needs to be hauled back to the original subject, as she can go off on three separate tangents in about as many sentences. Despite all that, she is very social and loves doing things for others. Especially flying, which she immensely enjoys doing already.

Role: Jenny is another mode of transportation, though she is a bit limited as to her landing spots. Riding atop her can also lead to mini-games and challenges.

Transitional Challenges

(Challenges must be activated by talking to local "helper" character)

House to Dorm: Find a way to and into a package without being spotted by the parents.

House to Museum: Find a way into the car (multiple solutions: Hiding in purse, stow away in car from garage.)

Dorm to House: Stow away in luggage.

Dorm to Museum: Sneak into girlfriend's purse

Museum to House: Get into gift shop bag.

Museum to Dorm: Sneak into backpack

Items:

Worn as hats

Clothing

Strapped to the back

Miscellaneous accessories

Collectables

Puzzle items

Items

Head:

Cowboy hat
Spartan Helmet
Veil
Infantry helmet
Tricorn hat
Captain's hat
Bandana
Blue cap
Grey cap
Oversized helmet
Feather plumed hat
Navy cap
Pilot helmet
"Night vision" goggles
Wigs (red, blonde, brown, black)
Sunglasses
Snorkel
Thimble

Body:

Cowboy vest
Roman armor
Toga
Flack Jacket
Military fatigues
Pirate Outfit
Union uniform
Confederate uniform
White sleeveless shirt
Camouflage shirt
Tutu
White dress
Pink dress

Black dress
Red dress
Toilet paper
Leather jacket
Wetsuit
Various paints

Back:

Toy rifle
Backpack
Scuba gear

Collectables:

Doll bed
Toilet paper bed
Sock (used as sleeping bag)
Wolf figurine
Dragon figurine
Hawk figurine
Bear figurine
Stop watch
Simple watch
Fancy watch
Pink eraser
White eraser
Key set
Napkins
Frog bookmark
Cartoon bookmark
Note pads (yellow, blue, pink)
Doll dresser
Doll desk
Doll table
Doll chair
Doll couch
Diamond ring

Silver necklace
Gold necklace
Gold earrings
Diamond earrings
Pencil
Mechanical pencil
Cell phone
Toothbrush

Environments:

House:

The starting environment. This location offers a balance of every kind of puzzle/challenge/mini-game in the game. Most of these activities lean towards the easy end of things, but there are some trickier sections as well to prevent it from becoming boring. The house has transition challenges to every other location (starting and future updates), and is currently the only area from which the player can reach the Outdoors environment. The house has predominantly light colors, though it is a bit darker behind the walls or under the floor.

Dorm Room:

The dorm room, while using darker shades than the house, is still light. The explorable area is reasonably smaller, making the challenges slightly fewer and more packed. Many of the challenges the player can do need to be started by the environment helper character Steve. He, however, is very easy to find. The dorm room is likely the second area the player will encounter.

Museum:

The museum is always played nearly exclusively after it is closed, except during transitional challenges. Power must be restored to several areas, that being a main puzzle element to be found in the environment. The museum is the largest area to explore, the Outdoors coming in behind it. The museum predominantly features fossils and dioramas, both life size and miniature. This environment offers many collectables and wearable items, as well as the widest range of home options. There are not quite as many puzzles, but there are several challenges and mini-games. The museum is predominantly in shades of brown, leaning towards the lighter shades.

Outdoors:

The outdoors is the second largest area, featuring ground floor, treetops, and underground tunnels. There are not quite as many mini-games as can be found in the other areas, but there are many puzzles everywhere. While much of the outdoors is forest, there is a bit of a field area as well. It is always daytime there, and occasionally raining.

Puzzles/Challenges/Mini-games

(Some puzzles/challenges/mini-games can be found in multiple environments)

House:

Getting to/into the TV: The TV is inaccessible by climbing but there is a nearby scratching post. “I’d need someone strong to move this. Maybe the cat...”

Solution: Talk to the cat. If you ask for help, the cat ignores you, if you insult him, he begins to chase you. Run to the scratching post without the cat catching you. If he does, he “plays” with you a bit, get bored, and go back to his resting place and you must start over. Make it there and you automatically run under the TV stand, the cat knocks over the post, taunts you a bit, then leaves. New route available.

Reaching a larger mouse nest: There is a crack in the wall. “There’s likely a lot of space back there. If only I could break this open...”

Solution: Find a fire cracker under the dresser in the boy’s room and place it by the crack. Find a match under the fridge in the kitchen. Once both are collected and at the crack, the player will be asked if they are sure about it. If yes, the rodent lights the fuse, takes cover, and the fire cracker opens the hole.

A rubix cube may be available, and keep track of time and moves.

Hot wiring the car takes place in a tile based puzzle (Moving parts around to make it drivable)

Multiple mazes will be available behind the walls of the house (as well as in the other environments), including pipes, structuring and cobwebs (among other things depending on location). The museum will feature a Labyrinth, the most complex and largest maze. (There will always be an option to “turn back”, automatically returning the player to the last point they entered.) With mazes that lead to particular locations, once an exit is found, players can either shortcut or do the maze again to find other exists, or for fun.

One young mouse in the kitchen has lost his “coat”, and asks you to help him find it. Asking other mice (and the cat) will get the player clues as to where it is. Once found and returned, the mouse will show you a secret entrance into the fridge (no coat required).

There is a race challenge in the fridge, where you must start at the bottom, weave your way past various groceries, and reach the end at a certain point in the freezer.

In the kitchen, there is a collection of spoons on the counter, as well as a bag of peanuts. You can use the spoons as catapults to launch nuts at the cat, judging both the power and the angle needed. Every time the cat is hit, he will move to a new location.

The player can play a dancing mini-game, using the arrows to execute dance moves to the beat (kind of like DDR). The player can play either for fun or competitively against another (computer controlled) rodent. The dancing rat or hamster has to be funny.

There is a locked second floor room, with a door that can not be crawled under. There is an exit in the wall maze that leads to the attic. In the attic, there is a small hole in the floor, but the fall is too far to simply jump. In the boy’s room, among toy soldiers, there is a parachute. That is used to make a safe

landing. Shortly after landing, a mouse drops a line, allowing you to leave (or another puzzle).

Dorm:

In the dorm, there is a maze of clothes where the player can not walk over the clothes, but can walk through them. Walking through sleeves and pants is required to finish. (A bulk in the material shows the player's location.)

There are finger boards that the player can find and skateboard around on.

A "diving" mini-game, where the player jumps off the top bunk and does diving maneuvers, landing in a heap of clothes. The player is judged on the dive.

Museum:

In the museum, most of the power starts shut off. There are puzzles throughout the museum in which you have to rewire areas by getting colored wires to certain locations without crossing each other. Since they've been tampered with, crossed wires would short circuit the system.

Outdoors:

Outside, the player may build a ladder out of properly sized twigs to reach higher areas.

Finding and pushing different sized stones to make a staircase.

Riding a bird through the treetops, avoiding branches

Different variations of the shell game

The player can make a home in a T-Rex Skull, various dioramas, under beds (in dorm), behind walls, nook in attic, underground, in a tree.

Interactivity

Main Menu –

- Menu is done in Flash
- A simple start, options, credits, and exit button are on it

HUD –

- An item/inventory box in the lower right of the screen
- a score on the top left for mini games
- Health bar

Player Experience

The player as the general kind of freedom as found in a game like Grand Theft Auto, meaning that for the most part they create their own experience. Much of the player's time will likely be spent in exploration. The other experience that will likely occupy a player's time is mini-games. Games such as racing, flying, or riding a skateboard present activities that will challenge the player. A player is bound to find something they enjoy. There will also be many puzzles and challenges for the player to find through their exploration. Many of these puzzles will be repeatable. While none are likely to be brain-racking, they will take some time and logical thought to solve. Some puzzles will be harder than others, and the player will have access to free tips if they are ever stuck.

How the Player Marks Progress

Progress is marked only by what the player wishes to accomplish. There are a couple areas that need "unlocking", and make the greatest milestones for the player to keep track of. Getting access to the dorm, outdoors, and museum are all events the player will likely remember. Also, there are areas within each environment that are not accessible until a condition is met. While these areas are all optional, players can make progress in the game by finding and accessing these "hidden" areas. As updates are added, the player has more options/areas to explore, and more things to do.

Game Rules and Elements

Winning/Losing

Well, there's no beating the game, but you win when you complete the goals you set for yourself. You lose when you don't.

Loading/Saving

Players may chose to save their progress at any time. When the player decides to exit, they will be given a password that marks their accomplishments (similar to how many old system games used to save). This password then needs to be input at the load screen to return the player at their point of accomplishments. The player will start in the home area (one of which is designated to the player at the end of the opening tutorial).

Transitions

There are several transitions to get from one main environment to another. These are all achieved by preset puzzles or challenges. Transitions include:

- House to Dorm
- House to Museum
- House to Outdoors

Dorm to House
Dorm to Museum
Museum to Dorm
Museum to House
(Transitional puzzles/challenges discussed earlier in document)

Overworld map.

An overworld map will be available to show the player where they are, key features of their current location, and areas still unexplored.

Dialog story elements.

Some NPC's will offer challenges, in which the dialogue will give a meaningful and logical reason for the challenge. (i.e. a rodent had lost his coat, so you must ask around about it, collect clues, find and return the coat.)

Rewards

Rewards will mostly be in the form of collectables, things that the player's rodent can where or use to personalize their home. Other rewards include access to new areas or in the case of transitional challenges, reaching a new environment.

Art and Production Design

Art & Animation Style

Characters and environments will have a primarily cartoonish feel to them while still resembling the real thing. Animations will be similar, looking at least somewhat realistic while being moderately exaggerated to be humorous and interesting.

Sound Effects Style

Sound effects will include animal noises appropriate to the respective species. While some will be accurate representations, there will be a few mildly exaggerated ones as well to fit with the relaxed cartoon atmosphere. Other sound effects will follow the same philosophy.

Music Style

The ambient music will change based on the main environment, but the overall theme will be an even to moderately quick paced music that stays consistently upbeat. This keeps the mood light and enjoyable, also allowing the music to blend more into the background, being more a subliminal relaxer than a big musical score.

2D Art



