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DST 61104 GAME DEVELOPMENT
BACHELOR OF DESIGN (HONS) IN CREATIVE MEDIA

Submission of

GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

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- **Basic information**

- **Game Title**

Time Invader

- **Team name/ Member organization**

- The Timekeepers**

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- **Genre and platform**

- 2D Pixel Art Narrative-Driven Platformer, Side-scroller, Unity, PC game

- **Concept and purpose**

- **Game overview (brief description of the game)**

- Time Invader is a story-driven platformer set in a steampunk city where citizens' clockwork hearts absorb their time, reflecting modern society's addiction to digital devices.

- The player, the only person born without a clockwork heart, must steal time from the environment to survive while facing moral choices: whether to save citizens and restore their organic humanity or prioritize personal survival.

- Through platforming, exploration, and choice-driven narrative, players traverse cityscapes, sewers, and the Central Clock Tower, with their actions culminating in one of two endings shaped by their decisions.

- **Story and narrative (plot, backstory, and story progression)**

- **Plot:**

- In a city enslaved by clockwork hearts that drain citizens' time, the Central Clock Tower hoards this stolen time to maintain control. The player awakens as an Outlier, a human without a mechanical heart, whose presence threatens the balance of the system. To survive, they must steal time from decaying clocks while navigating moral choices. Save citizens to restore their lost humanity or ignore them to prolong their own life.

- Through NPC encounters and hidden time shards, the player uncovers the truth behind the city and ultimately faces a climactic decision. Sacrifice all stolen time to destroy the Central Clock Tower, freeing the city at the cost of their life or escape alone, leaving the city to decay in their absence.

- **Backstory:**

Centuries ago, the city was a vibrant human society, rich with nature and community. As digital-like technologies emerged, promising efficiency and progress, the citizens were slowly controlled by clockwork hearts. These hearts, however, absorb time from their hosts, turning emotions and connections into mechanical routines, much like modern devices consume attention and disconnect people from the present. The Central Clock Tower was built to hoard this stolen time. Now, the player, the only one without a clockwork heart awakens, threatening the city's control and bringing the potential for liberation or final collapse.

- **Story Progression:**

- **Act 1: The Outlier**

The player awakens, learning to steal time from clocks to survive their depleting Time Gauge. They meet a malfunctioning librarian NPC, who reveals that clockwork hearts drain humanity, with the Central Clock Tower hoarding the stolen time. Saving the librarian (10 years) grants a Gear Key to a clock tower and a Time Shard to extend the player's life; ignoring her ensures survival but locks out the shard and key, pushing the player toward a selfish path. Hiding in sewers to evade sentinels, the player explores alleys and rooftops for Time Shards.

- **Act 2: The Resistance**

The player discovers a sewer, where NPCs resist their clockwork hearts, seeking to rediscover organic humanity. A key NPC, an artist, offers a Time Shard (extends Time Gauge) if saved (5 years), restoring their love for nature's beauty. The artist reveals the next enemy the player will face and urges them to head to the Central Clock Tower.

- **Act 3: The Central Clock Tower**

The player confronts the Steampunk Dragon, a security construct protecting the clock's core. After defeating the dragon, the player can use the Gear Key (from Act 1) to enter the Tower; without it, the game defaults to Ending 2. Confronting the core of the city, the player faces a final choice: destroy the Tower's core, using all stolen time to restore citizens' organic humanity unlocks Ending 1 (Sacrifice). Ending 2 (Betrayal), where the player escapes alone, leaving the city in collapse.

- **Game objective (what does the player need to achieve)**

- Survive by Stealing Time
- Make Moral Choices
- Explore and Uncover the City's Past
- Reach the Central Clock Tower and Make a Final Choice to Determine the City's Fate

- **Target audience (age group, player interests, etc.)**

13+, Casual gamer, story-driven, narrative-focused player.

- **Inspiration (other games, media, or concepts that inspired this one)**



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- **Game Design**

- **Game mechanics (core actions, rules, and interactions)**

Core Actions

- **Platforming**

Basic platforming with jumping (Space) and moving (WASD). Platforms are static or move in predictable patterns (e.g., gears rotating slowly).

- **Time Stealing**

The player has a depleting "Time Gauge" (their life force). To survive, they must steal time from environmental objects.

Sources of Time:

Decaying Clocks: Scattered across the city, symbolizing wasted time, yielding 1-5 years when touched.

- **Time Manipulation (Manipulate the level with your power of time.)**

Slow Time: Interact with beacons to slow down environmental hazards (e.g., spinning gears, falling debris) for safe passage.

Rewind Platforms: Use beacons to rewind crumbling platforms or gear mechanisms to their stable state, enabling safe passage.

- **Puzzle-Platforming**

Environmental Puzzles: Time enemy patrol patterns to sneak past or find hidden spots like sewers to take cover.

Dynamic Environments: Shifting platforms that activate/deactivate based on player actions.

- **Narrative Exploration**

NPC Interactions: Engage with citizens whose clockwork hearts reflect their addiction to digital-like routines, draining their organic humanity. Dialogue choices (via E) advancing the storyline and revealing the city's history.

- **Saving NPCs**

Mechanic: Use stolen time (5- 10 years) to repair an NPC's clockwork heart, partially restoring their organic humanity (e.g., regaining emotional awareness or memories of nature).

Rewards: Some NPCs grant items (e.g. Gear Keys to unlock story areas). Others provide story fragments or nothing, emphasizing risk/reward.

Rules

Story Milestones (Progression Requirements)

- **Act I:**
Players must maintain at least 30 years remaining on the time gauge to successfully pass this act.
- **Act II:**
Players must have a minimum of 50 years remaining on the time gauge to proceed.
- **Act III:**
 - Defeat the Steampunk Dragon boss encounter.
 - Access the Central Clock Tower by acquiring the Gear Key.
 - Ending Outcome: Determined by the choices the player makes throughout the game, affecting narrative and final sequences.
 - Without the Gear Key, Act 3 defaults to Ending 2 (Betrayal).

Time Gauge Mechanics:

- If the gauge reaches zero, the player will respawn at the last activated checkpoint with the same remaining gauge value they had before dying.
- **Controls (how the player interacts with the game)**

AD (Movement), Spacing (Jump), W(Climb), S(Hide), E (Interact)

- **Game setting/ World building (environment, time period, visual style)**

Cityscape (Streets and Rooftops):

Streets: Wide, open paths featuring static platforms like crates and ledges, with slow-turning gears for basic platforming challenges. Broken clocks (1-5 years) appear often, symbolizing lost time.

Rooftops: Reachable via ladders or jumps, with hatch leading to the sewers. These also serve as hiding spots from patrolling sentinels.

Sewer Tunnels:

Main Tunnels: Broad platforms over shallow water, requiring simple jumps.

Decorated with rusty gears and pipes for atmosphere. Clocks and time shards are scattered throughout.

Sewer Hub: A central gathering area where players encounter NPCs and reveal story dialogues, also serving as the path toward the Central Clock Tower.

Central Clock Tower:

Entrance: A locked gate accessible only with the Gear Key obtained from the Act 1 librarian.

Tower Ascent: A vertical climb of interconnected platforms leading to the interactive clockwork core, where the final choice awaits — destroy it (Sacrifice) or steal time for yourself (Betrayal).

- **Level design (layout, structure/ blueprint/ skeleton of the level, difficulty progression)**

ACT I – Cityscape Streets & Rooftops

A compact, side-scrolling city filled with brass towers, foggy alleys, and broken clocks. Navigation is simple, focusing on exploration and NPC interaction.

Difficulty: 3 stars

Players encounter stationary turrets that can be avoided with well-timed jumps.

ACT II – Underground Sewers

A darker, more confined level with narrow platforms, rusty gears, and dim lighting. Includes vertical movement and stealth elements.

Difficulty: 4 stars

Turrets return, along with patrolling robots. Players must use obstacles and terrain to evade detection and find key NPCs.

ACT III – Clock Tower Core

A vertical, mechanical chamber filled with massive gears and secrets. The atmosphere is tense and mysterious.

Difficulty: 5 stars

The final boss battle takes place here. Players must survive attacks and make critical choices that affect the city's fate.

- **Game loop (what the player repeatedly does)**

Time Manipulation

Players repeatedly steal time to survive their depleting Time Gauge and make moral choices by spending this time to help others or progress. This core mechanic of acquiring and using time drives both survival and the narrative, influencing the player's path and the city's fate.

- **Game balancing (how fairness and difficulty are managed)**

The game will feature intuitive controls for movement and clearly communicate the player's needs within each situation, ensuring a smooth and

accessible learning curve. Understanding the game's core mechanics and objectives will be straightforward, allowing players to quickly engage with the challenges.

- **Character & entities**

- **Main character design (Protagonist's abilities, personality, role)**
 - **Species:** Human — the only person born without a clockwork heart in a steampunk city.
 - **Role:** The protagonist is an *Outlier*, playing a key role in uncovering the truth behind the city's clockwork system that enslaves citizens by draining their time.
 - **Abilities:** The player controls the main character, who can idle, run, jump, and interact with NPCs.
 - **Personality:** Naturally curious and adventurous, the protagonist explores the city to discover why others have clockwork hearts. However, since this is a choice-driven story game, the protagonist's personality and fate evolve based on player decisions—leading to different endings. The protagonist can become selfless and save the city or remain selfish and let others suffer.
- **Enemy design (Types of enemies, AI Behaviour, difficulty)**

Enemies are categorized into **Normal**, **Elite**, and **Boss** levels

Normal Enemy – Turret (Shooter AI) Turrets are scattered around the steampunk city as a defense mechanism to maintain order and prevent outsider intrusion.

- They automatically fire at the main character, who is recognized as a threat due to the lack of a clockwork heart.
- **Damage:** Getting hit by turret fire costs the player 1 year of in-game time.
- **Solution:** Turrets take 2 seconds to charge before firing. Players can avoid being hit by timing their jumps or movements.

Elite Enemy – Patrolling Robot (Patrolling AI)

- Patrols various zones to detect suspicious behavior.
- If alerted, they chase the player. Getting caught reduces 2 years of in-game time.
- **Solution:** Players must use the environment—such as terrain and obstacles—to hide or escape. Robots cannot overcome certain jumps or barriers.

Boss Enemy – Steampunk Dragon (Boss AI)

- A massive security construct guarding the clock tower's core.

- Designed to prevent the protagonist from reaching the truth and changing the city's fate.
- **Attack Types:**
- **Direct Fire:** A straight-line breath aimed at the player's current location.
- **Sweeping Breath:** A wide-range fire attack across a larger area.
- **Charged Breath:** A powerful, delayed breath attack indicated by a charge-up animation and sound.
- **Damage:** Each successful hit decreases the player's time.
- **Solution:** The dragon's life span is set at 20 years. By timing interactions with the beacon correctly, a barrier will appear in front of it, reflecting the dragon's fire or damage back at the creature. The boss will be defeated once its health bar is fully depleted.
- **NPCs/ Other characters (Allies, merchants, or story-driven characters)**

NPCs are citizens with clockwork hearts who help guide the story and assist the protagonist.

- **Act I – The Malfunctioning Librarian:**
A knowledge-seeker who believes humans—not machines—should control society. Offers early insight into the city's history.
- **Act II – The Artist:**
Dreams of a city filled with natural beauty instead of lifeless machinery. Inspires hope and emotional depth in the narrative.

● Visuals and layout

- **Game layout design - UI, menus, HUD : Heads-Up Display (health bar, inventory, score/ XP bar, objective tracker, etc)**
 - **Time Gauge:** Displays the remaining time the player has.
 - **Health Bar (Steampunk Dragon):** Shows the boss's health during the final battle.
 - **Home Menu:** Appears before the game starts.
 - **Settings/Esc Menu:** Opens when the player presses the Esc key.
 - **Gear Key:** Item obtained from the NPC in Level 01.
- **Art style & visual direction - pixel art, 3D, cartoonish, realistic, etc.**

Pixel Art, Cartoonish

● Audio

- **Music & sound design (background music, sound effects, voiceovers)**

Music - Download online

- Each level will feature different background music to match its ambience and atmosphere, enhancing the unique situations and settings players will encounter.
- Sound effects will be included for player actions such as walking and interacting, as well as for objects like moving platforms, button clicks, enemy attacks, and more.

- **Technical and development**

- **Tools & technologies (game engines, art tools, etc)**

Game Engine - Unity

Art Tools - Pixelorama

- **Development plan/ timeline (Milestones and goals)**

Week 02 - Complete Game Design Document

Week 03 - Complete presentation slides and feedback from Ms.

Week 04 - Start asset creation, and basic control

Week 05 - Asset creation, and basic control

Week 06 - Asset creation, and basic control

Week 07 - Develop the game

Week 08 - Develop the game

Week 09 - Present the game prototype

Week 10 - Develop the game

Week 11 - Develop the game

Week 12 - Develop the game

Week 13 - Develop the game

Week 14 - Polishing the game

Week 15 - Final presentation and playable game

- **Starting story**

The game's introduction at the beginning.

- Centuries ago, the city thrived with life, nature, and community. But as new technologies promised progress and efficiency, the people changed. Clockwork hearts were created... and soon they consumed more than time—they drained emotion, connection, and humanity itself. Now, the Central Clock Tower stands as the city's core, hoarding the stolen time that once belonged to its citizens. The streets have fallen silent, and the gears of the tower turn endlessly, keeping everyone under its control... It's time to uncover the truth... and decide your fate.

- **NPC interaction / Dialogue choices**

Players can engage in conversations with NPCs and make choices during dialogues that impact the story and outcomes.

Level 01

- 1) Librarian - *"You... you don't have a clockwork heart? Incredible... I thought we were all lost."*
- 2) Character - *"Wait... what do you mean? Why don't I have one? Everyone else... How did this happen?"*
- 3) Librarian - *"This place used to be full of life, before the clocks took over our bodies. Now... we're just machines counting down our time. We traded our hearts for time — more hours, more control. But we lost what made us human. You... you're still real."*
- 4) Character - *"Why me? Why don't I have one?"*
- 5) Librarian - *"Maybe you're the last with time that's truly yours. Maybe you're meant to remind us."*
 - ☐ Spend 10 Years to Repair the Librarian's Heart
 - ☐ Walk Away

If Player choose Option 1

- 1) Librarian - *"You gave me your time? Real, human time? I can feel it again... Thank you. Here, take this — the Gear Key. It unlocks the path to the Central Clock Tower. Go. The truth you seek lies within."*
- 2) Character - *"Thanks."*

If Player choose Option 2

- 1) Librarian - *"So... you chose to survive. I understand. In this world, time is life. Just remember... without others, your time may mean nothing."*
- 2) Character - *"Sorry. I don't have enough time."*

Level 02

- 1) Artist - "Color... fades. Dreams... become patterns. Can't feel the brush anymore..." The clocks don't just steal our time... they drain our soul. You... you're real. Not like the others. Can you help me remember what beauty is?"
 - ☐ Spend 5 Years to Restore the Artist's Heart
 - ☐ Walk Away

If Player choose Option 1

- 1) Artist - *"You gave up time... for me? You still hope. Listen — to reach the Clock Tower, you'll need to face the Steampunk Dragon. It guards the tower. It won't let you pass easily. Not with strength... but with patience. Dodge, endure, outlast. Then, and only then, the tower will let you in. But you must try. The fate of this city depends on you."*
- 2) Character - *"Thank you for believing in me. I will try."*

If Player choose Option 2

- 1) Artist - *"I understand... Even kindness has a cost here. Still, I hope you find what you're looking for... before time runs out."*
- 2) Character - *"I hope... I made the right choice."*

Level 03 Boss fight

- 1) Steampunk Dragon - *"Only those bound by gears may pass. You are... different."*
- 2) Character - *"I still bleed. I still feel it. That's why I'm here."*
- 3) Steampunk Dragon - *"You seek the truth? You seek to unmake the rhythm of obedience? Time belongs to the Tower. You will not pass unless you earn the right and Prove that your time has meaning."*
- 4) Character - *"Then I'll prove it. My time is still mine — and I'll earn my way through."*

Battle...

If character pass

- 1) Steampunk Dragon - *"You endured. You did not break, nor rush. You let time test you... and you remained."*
- 2) Character - *"With time, we can feel, change, choose. It belongs to us — not the Tower."*
- 3) Steampunk Dragon - *"Then go. The Tower awaits your truth. Change, if it comes, will begin with you."*

Level 03 Central clock tower

- 1) "Do you have the Gear Key?"
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

If the system detects that the player has the gear key.

- 1) The Gear Key hums in your hand. The Tower senses it. Your final choice awaits (enter tower).

If the system detects that the player doesn't have the gear key.

- 1) You've come so far... but without the key, your journey ends here. Without the Gear Key, the Tower remains sealed. The stolen time remains hoarded. The city continues to decay, its people trapped in mechanical silence.

Enter the clock tower...reach the top of the tower...

- 1) "Do you want to sacrifice yourself to recover the city?"

- ☐ Keep your life and leave.
- ☐ Sacrifice yourself for the city.

If Player choose Option 01

Ending 01 (Betrayal)

- 1) You survived — but at a cost. You held the power to change everything — but chose to keep it. The Tower stayed locked. The stolen time remains hoarded. The city continues to decay, its people trapped in mechanical silence. You walk away... alive, but alone. Your time was yours — but no one else was saved.

If Player choose Option 02

Ending 02 (Sacrificed)

- 1) You gave everything — your time, your life. With the Gear Key, you unlocked the Tower and shattered the clockwork core. The gears halted. The hearts beat again. One spark of humanity was enough to reignite the whole city. Your time ended — but theirs began again.