Smoking Monkey

PLC
Flip your gameplay upside down

Universe Summary

Theme and player experience

The theme we want to go for is cybernetic. We want to give the player the feeling that they are playing inside a computer. The player will be playing as a good virus that aims to heal the computers it enters instead of destroying them. If it fails a bad virus will be released from it's cage and will infiltrate the computer, giving a narrative explanation as to why the player went Game Over.

Story and conflict

The story takes place in the digital world of a computer where viruses do battle with firewalls.You play as Vir, a good virus that has gained a mind of its own. Vir only seeks to heal computers instead of destroying them and has to fight with its former colleagues to accomplish this goal.

Personages

Vir

Vir is a good virus that after being captured by a computer's anti-virus got a mind of its own. Soon Vir realised that it brought nothing but destruction before and wanted to change. Vir managed to break free and now fights his former colleagues while seeking to heal computers.

Viruses

There are many different kinds of viruses out there but what they all have in common is that they all want to cause problems. Their only flaw: they are predictable. Every type of virus has a certain behavioral script that determinates how it reacts to certain situations. Once these get figured out it is very easy to combat them.

Character Sheet

Vir - background

The main character of the story is named Vir, a virus that turned good after getting a mind of its own. It didn't always carry the name Vir. It used to be just a regular virus, part of a highly inteligent always evolving virus branch that seeked new ways to penetrate anti-virus software. When it got caught something unique happened to it, it started to think. It created a mind of its own and realised that what it was doing was wrong. It managed to break free from the claws of the anti-virus software that held it captive and went on its mission to help computers instead of destroying them. It soon came to realise it was alone in its battle against the viruses.

Anti-virus software saw it as just another virus whereas other viruses saw it as one of them. From every point of view except its own it was seen as just another virus. It wanted to break free from this label. After doing some research for a fitting name it dubbed itself Vir, which means "good" in Latin. Now Vir helps computers fight the evil viruses it used to be a part of in the past.

Vir - Traits

Personality	Physical
• High inteligence	• Four pointy legs
• Good guy	• Two short arms
• Thinks first acts later	• Two antenas
• Does not talk	• Pointy head

Lavandos - background
A virus from a different branch than Vir. Instead of looking for ways to infiltrate computers, this branch is created to be as effecient at causing damage as possible. Lavandos is one of the most dangerous amongst his peers and can cause massive destruction with the laser that it can fire from its eye. Thanks to its sneaky tactics it hasn't been discovered until 2011. Over the years Lavandos has evolved and adapted to the new anti-virus software that came out. And while it doesn't posses much of a brain or a free will, it is able to understand the changes happening in the digital landscape and knows how to appropriatly adapt. One of the recent trends has firewalls getting more and more height to make it harder for a virus to get over it. Lavandos adapted by getting longer legs to pass over the firewalls more easily. One of its main skills is sending information it comes across to other viruses so they can do their job more efficiently.

Lavandos - Traits

Personality
• Emotionless
• Seeks only destruction
• Transfers data back to other viruses
• More of a brute than a thinker

Physical
• Four long skinny legs
• Pointy head
• One big eye
• Shaped like a tripod

Skills
• Shoots a laser out of its eye
• Able to transfer data to other viruses
• Can quickly evolve and adapt

Slammer - background
True to its name Slammer know how to get down to business. Discovered in 2003 and still slamming his way through anti-virus software, he is considered to be one of the most dangerous viruses out there. With his two massive arms he is able to take on whatever challange is thrown at him. Like Lavandos, he only seeks to cause destruction but unlike Lavandos he does not do that by staying far away from the action with long legs and a laser eye. Instead Slammer gets up close and personal. Being able to fly is a big help when needing to get over obstacles or quickly get somewhere.

Slammer - Traits

Personality
• Passive until provoked
• Out of control when provoked
• Seeks only destruction
• Brute when provoked, otherwise a relaxed thinker

Physical
• Two strong arms
• No legs but a rotorblade to fly around
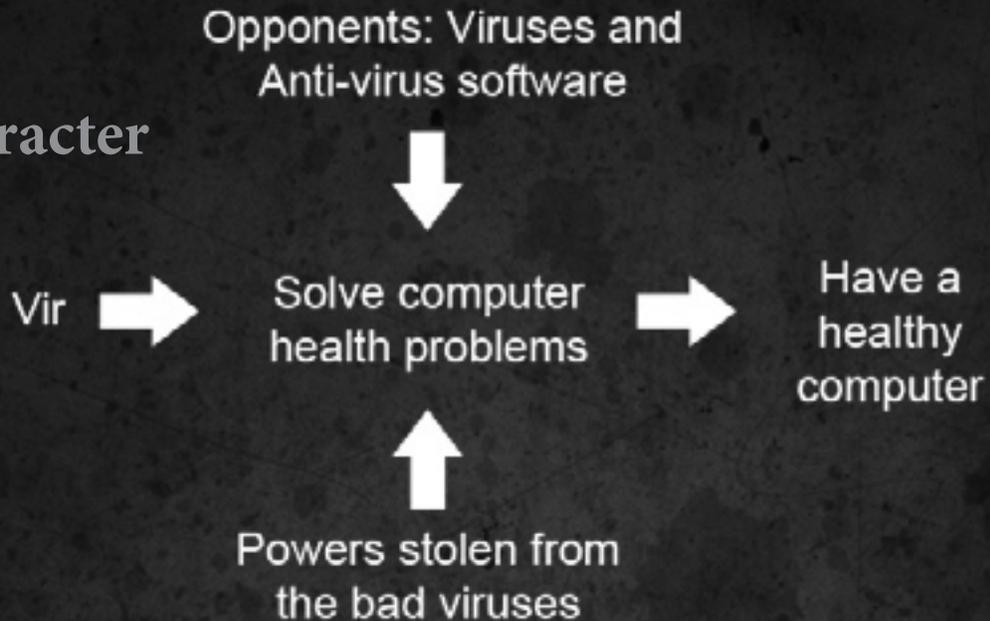• Small body big fists

Skills
• Relaxed when in rest mode, gains massive strength and goes out of control when provoked
• Able get get through the biggest obstacles using its strength
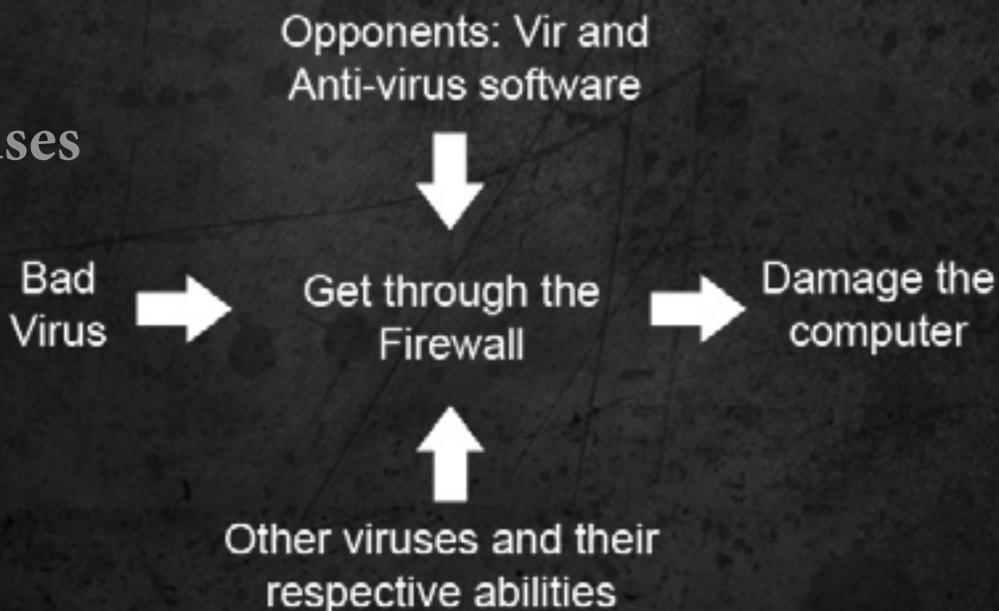• Can fly up high and hover for a bit

Character-conflict

Main Character

Opponents: Viruses and
Anti-virus software

⬇

Vir ➡ Solve computer
health problems ➡ Have a
healthy
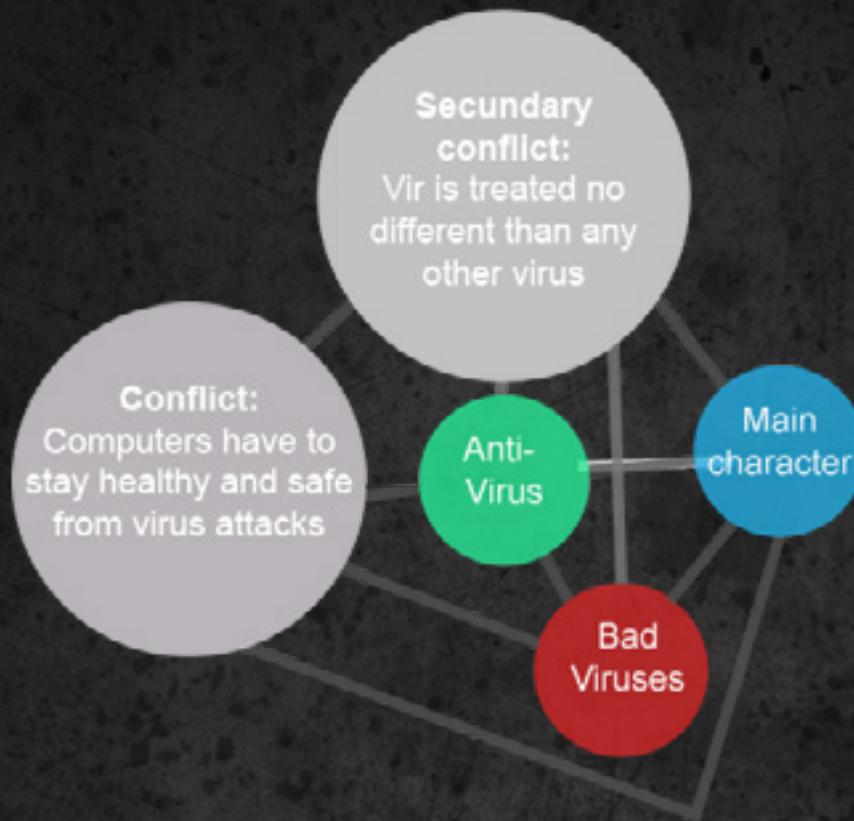computer

⬆

Powers stolen from
the bad viruses

The main character will have to solve computer problems in order to make sure the computers are healthy. In game these are in the form of puzzles the player has to solve. If the player fails the bad virus that is sealed up in the level will be set free and then the player will be game over. The player also has to watch out for whatever the anti-virus software has waiting for him, since the player is still considered to be a bad virus by everyone else. The player can steal powers from the bad viruses in order to complete puzzles.

Evil Viruses

Opponents: Vir and
Anti-virus software

⬇

Bad
Virus ➡ Get through the
Firewall ➡ Damage the
computer

⬆

Other viruses and their
respective abilities

The evil viruses seek to destroy the computers they visit. To do that they have to find ways to penetrate the anti-virus software that protects the computers from bad viruses. They also need to watch out for the main character who tries to undo whatever damage they are doing to the copmuter. They have to hope that the main character fails so they can break free from the anti-virus' grip.

World-conflict

In our game Vir wants to destroy his own species, computer viruses, by making sure computers stay healthy and up-to-date on their virus protection. This means the main conflict here is that computers need to stay healthy. A lot of them aren't, either because of a malfunctioning anti-virus or because of a sneaky virus that managed to slip through. Either way, Vir has to solve this problem.

Another conflict that directly involves Vir is that he is not recognized as the hero he tries so hard to be. Not only does this make Vir feel under appriciated, but it also means that the anti-virus software will start working against him. All Vir wants to do is fix the broken computers but when the anti-virus is fighting it the suddenly job becames a lot harder. Vir also has to watch out for the other viruses, because one bad move and they will break free from the - often times weak - prison the anti-virus software is holding them captive in.

Level 5 explanation

This is one of the first levels where the player meets another virus. It is also the first level where the player has to solve multiple puzzles in one level. This level is also the introduction to the laser bending mechanic.

Begin
The level starts with the player teleporting in at the spawn platform. Initially there isn't a whole lot to do or see. It isn't untill the player starts moving around the level a bit that the level becomes interesting. The player can hear something that sounds like a laser going off every few seconds in the far distance. When the player rotates the level around a bit it will become clear rather fast that there is a Lavandos virus stuck in a wall. Normally anti-virus software locks viruses in it's walls to make itself stronger, but this one seems to be stuck in the wall with only it's upper body. It is shooting lasers out of it's eye to try and damage it's surroundings. In the distance the player notices the exit, but as per usual it is blocked by the Firewall. Not only that but the player also notices some dangerous looking wires on the ground.

Middle
When the player walks over the dangerous looking wires they will get damaged and knocked back. These must be wires that the viruses that came here before placed. They are sending data from the computer over to the other viruses. Since you went rougue and joined the good side, you lost your ability to deflect minor virus marks like these wires. This means that you will get damaged by them if you try to step onto them. A bit back to where you spawned there is small fan that is rotating. The player has to find something to put it between the rotating fan so it will get stuck and a blade of the fan will come off. That one broken transistor that is laying on the ground would be a perfect fit.

End
Once the player places the broken transistor in between the fan using it's telekinesis power it will break down and a blade will come off. Sometimes sacrifices need to be made for the greater good. Vir can now use his telekinesis power to grab the shining blade and bend the laser that the evil Lavandos is schooting to destroy the Virus Wires that are all over the floor. The player has to watch out to not cut the good wires that belong to the computer or the anti-virus software will shut down and the Lavandos virus that is stuck will be able to break free. When the player succeeds Lavandos power will be weakened because it can't get any more energy from the Virus Wires. It will be swallowed by the anti-virus software and be completly placed inside the wall. Vir will now be recognized by this computer's anti-virus system as a good guy untill it leaves, meaning the Firewall will shut down when Vir wants to pass.

Exposition techniques

<u>Enviromental Storytelling</u>
PLC will have a lot of its story told through the enviroment. The player will be playing on a cube and by turning around the level the player can walk on different planes. All around the level there will be props (ex. fans, transistors, firewalls, etc.) that are related to a computer and the textures will be make it clear to the player that he/she is playing inside a computer. With props, sound and textures all related to the digital world of computers it will be clear to the player the second that they start playing the game that it takes place inside a computer.

<u>Cross Cut</u>
When the player enters a new area/level and there is a special item or event that is important for the player, there will be a move to that item/event for a short period. This way it becomes clear to the player if there is something special in this level. In level 5 when the player encounters the Lavandos and walks back, the camera will be place on the fan momentarily. This way the player knows this interactable object is of importance to solving the puzzle.

<u>Zoom In/Camera Change</u>
In our game it is important to be able to change your camera's point of view the way you see fit. Feel like you can solve this puzzle better when zoomed in? Go ahead. Feel like you can view the puzzle better from a different angle, spin the cube around and see if that works for you. We also have our own take on this and will sometimes put the player in a different viewing angle if it is of importance for the puzzle. Ofcourse the player can change this themselves afterwards but we will always put the player in how we think is the most optimal position.

<u>Build up</u>
This is one exposition technique that is unique to our game and hasn't been mentioned in the slides before. When the level loads in, instead of using a classic load screen, the player will be able to see the level form. All the blocks will come in one by one and form the level. Enemies will be thrown into place and Firewalls will be turned on. This takes a couple of seconds but it serves as a way for us to get rid of the classic immersion breaking load screens and bring in something fresh. It also serves as another way of informing the player that they are in a digital world, since they are seeing their world become materialized.

<u>Storyteller</u>
At the start of our game the player will be told a short story on how Vir came to be, what its actions were on why it is fighting the other viruses now. This is done over a comic style like video that has a voice over that speaks to the player. This way the player instantly gets some backstory without having to figure everything out allong the way. It makes it so that the player is more involved with Vir and creates a connection with it. You don't get a connection with a character right from the start without some backstory, and we want people to feel connection to Vir from the get-go.

Game Mechanics and Story

With our game PLC, we want to give the player the feeling of what it must be like to be Vir. First and foremost we want to make sure the player understand that they are in the digital world, a world they most likely will never visit in real life. To get this across we use various exposition techniques that can be read on the previous page. We also want to make sure the player feels connected to Vir's quest. Vir wants to protect computers and make sure they stay healthy. Only the player and Vir itself know that Vir is a good guy, everyone else thinks Vir is just another virus. It is just you and Vir, together on the quest to keep computers healthy.

Movement and rotate mechanics

We try to make this connection clear by making Vir follow your every command. Whatever direction you slide with your finger, Vir will move to in that direction. You are like "God" in his world and you are not some bystander that happens to be able to controll the main character, you are involved with this game itself. This is most obvious by your ability to rotate the level to your own desire. You can turn, flip, zoom and rotate all you want, giving you the ultimate descision how you look at the level.

Puzzles

Puzzles are a big part of PLC and with the dozens of different puzzles that are in PLC, the player will be spending a lot of time just playing puzzles. Most of the puzzles are directly related to Vir's cause and have a impact one way or another to the computer he is fixing. This will be made clear by the enviroment but also by the way you have to play the puzzle. Several analogies and metaphors will be made to make every player understand what is going on. So will a transistor be represented as a switch that will need different types of electrodes together to function and will a keylogger sending information be visualised as Virus Wires transfering data from the computer to other viruses.

Through these mechanics we want to get the player immersed in our game and understand the reasoning behind Vir's actions. The puzzles will serve as metaphors for computer parts that Vir will be fixing and the movement the player is able to do with both Vir and the level give the player a new level of immersion.

Level Design Visualisation

Level 1. Here the player has to turn the machine on the right to connect the electricity flow.

Level 3. Here the player has to pick up the up the N-Gons and place them on the R-Gon charged transistor machine to temporary turn off the Firewall.
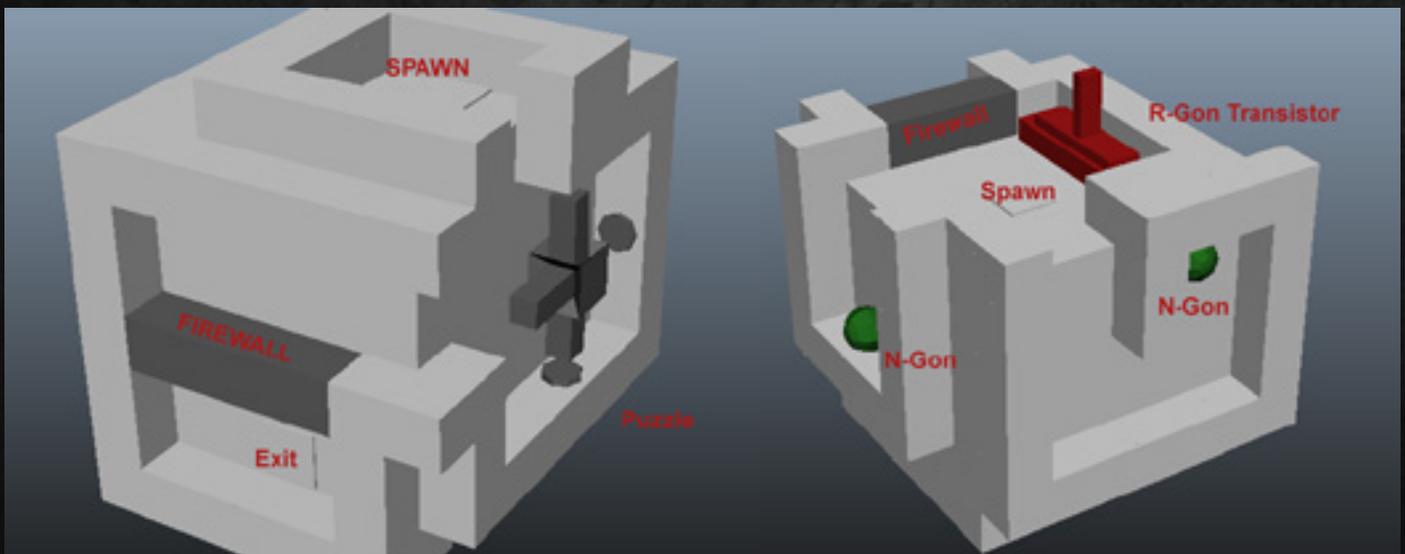
Position of the player

Point of view
The player will see our game from a isometric point of view, but is given the ability to zoom and rotate to his/her liking. Since the game will take place on a cube players might want to change the camera angle from time to time to get a better point of view.

Player involvement
The player has full controll over Vir, the main character. Vir will walk in whichever direction the player is swiping on their phone. Not only that but the player also has the option to rotate the level to better suit the player.

Position of Vir
The position of Vir in the world is that for a bad virus turned good. He lost the virus ability to not be affected by the damage that other viruses cause and can thus be damaged by things such as lasers and Virus Wires. Vir is alone in this world, because neither the viruses (who are too stupid) nor the anti-virus software (which is too stubborn) recognize him as a good guy. That means that Vir has to rely soley on you, hoping you will understand. In PLC Vir will not speak, since it does not posses the ability to speak. It does posses the ability to posses and will make screaks when damaged and when moving. Vir posses the ability of telekinsis allowing it to turn and move things around. It also posses the ability to take powers from other viruses and temporary use it as its own. This will be needed to solve some puzzles.