Stitch Media

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Role: Post-Doctoral Fellow, Research Partner, and Game Designer

Department: Systems Design Engineering and English Language and Literature

Project Type: Collaborative Project

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Project co-researchers: Judy Ehrentraut, English PhD candidate and Researcher; **Michael Hancock**, Post Doctoral Fellow and Researcher; **Neil Randall**, Faculty Supervisor and Consulting Producer

In collaboration with Stitch Media and co-funded by Mitacs and SSHRC, the researchers participated in the development, and investigated **Terrorarium**, a Personal Computer (PC) game about "wanton destruction and adorable gore in player-made murder gardens". In the game, you play as a space granny, obsessed with winning the blue ribbon from the Intergalactic Horrorcultural Society. The researchers used the design/development process of creating a commercial game as a case study to further IMMERSe research topics surrounding: narratology, interactive narratives, cultural analysis of games, and innovative gameplay interactions.

The development of Terrorarium helped the researchers understand how the rhetoric of video games and generated visuals in multimodal environments influence young audiences. Using a variety literary, folkloric, and mythology theories, they established how specific actions allow players to engage with the game world, drawing on their real-life experiences with institutions and plants. They expanded the applicability of rhetoric to the study and game design of Terrorarium by examining how the game creates roles for its players. To help understand how environments influence players, the researchers also used Terrorarium to understand how to build dynamic, virtual worlds by writing interactive storylines and character backstories.

Interesting fact: There is a live "Moogu Death Counter" on https://terrorarium.games, reaching over 40 million "deaths" and counting. Terrorarium was selected for the IndieCade Festival at the Electronics Entertainment Expo (E3) 2019!

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