GDC
March 20-24, 2023
San Francisco, CA

Emergency Meeting!
It's the Among Us VR Postmortem

#GDC23

Thanks to Disguised Toast

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SHHHHHHHH

Who are we?

Michal Ksiazkiewicz

Senior Game Designer
@Schell Games

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Senior Game Designer
@Schell Games

Shawn Patton

Principal Game Designer
@Schell Games

@shawndesign

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Shawn Patton

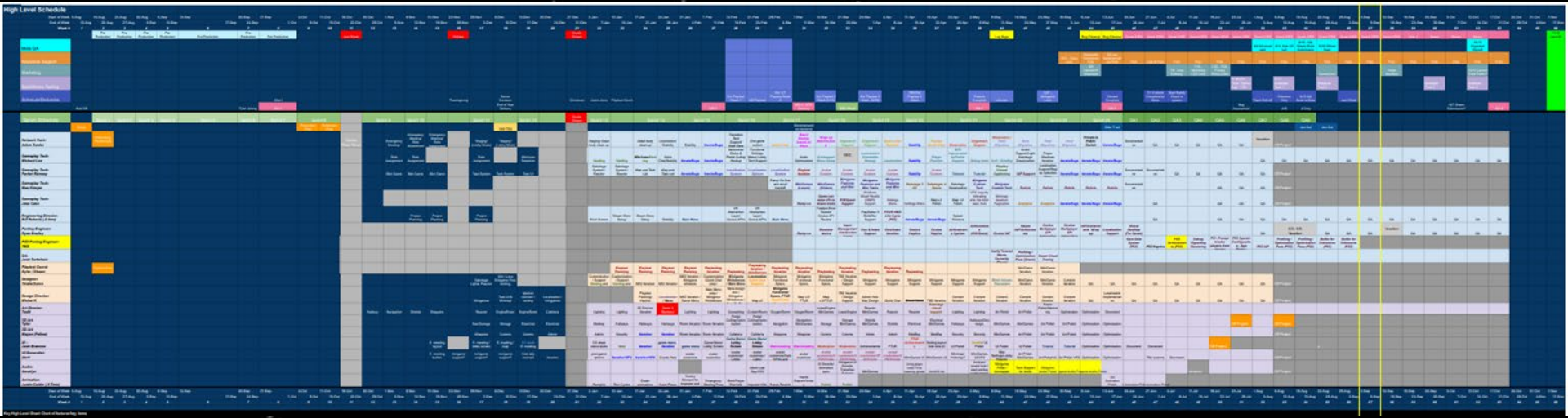
Principal Game Designer
@Schell Games

@shawndesign

Jennifer Rabbitt

Senior Production Manager
@Schell Games

Project Timeline



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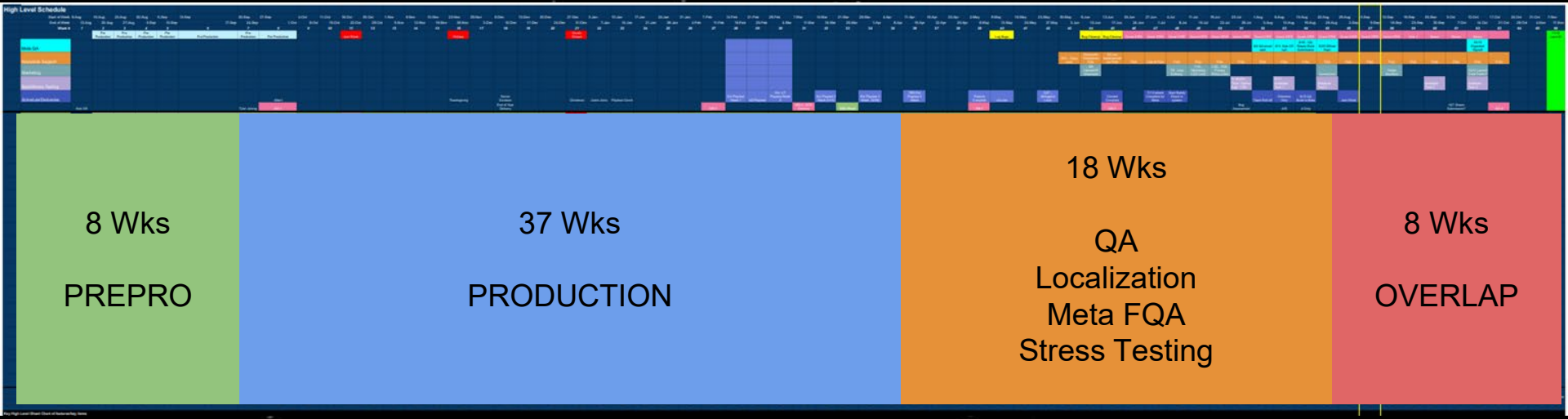
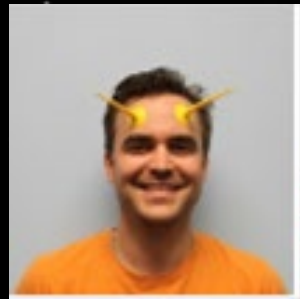


	Name	Project Role
	Jennifer Rabbitt (she/her)	Senior Producer
	Mike Traficante (he/him)	Project Director/ Principal Engineering Manager

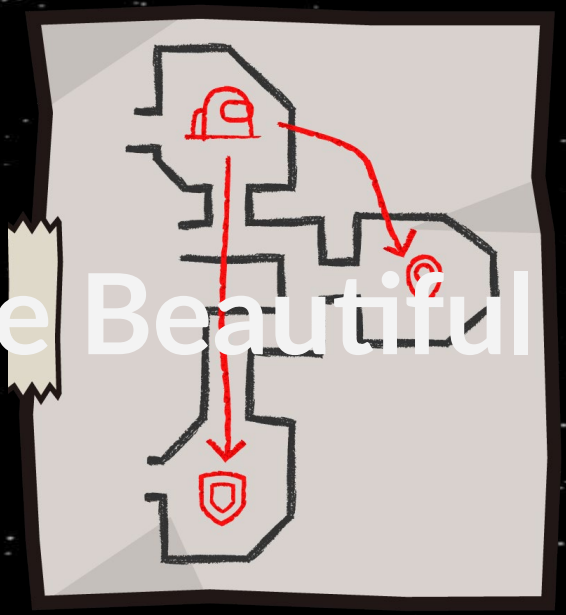
	Michal Ksiazkiewicz (he/him)	Design Director/ Senior Designer
	William Roberts (he/him)	Tech Director/ Principal Engineer
	Todd Verdeyen (he/him)	Art Director/ Senior Artist

Project Staffing

Pre-Pro: Questions to Answer

- How are we going to Network?
- What is even possible for Among Us in VR?

The Beautiful Corner

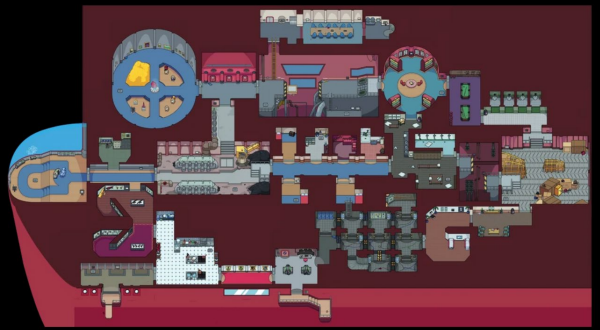


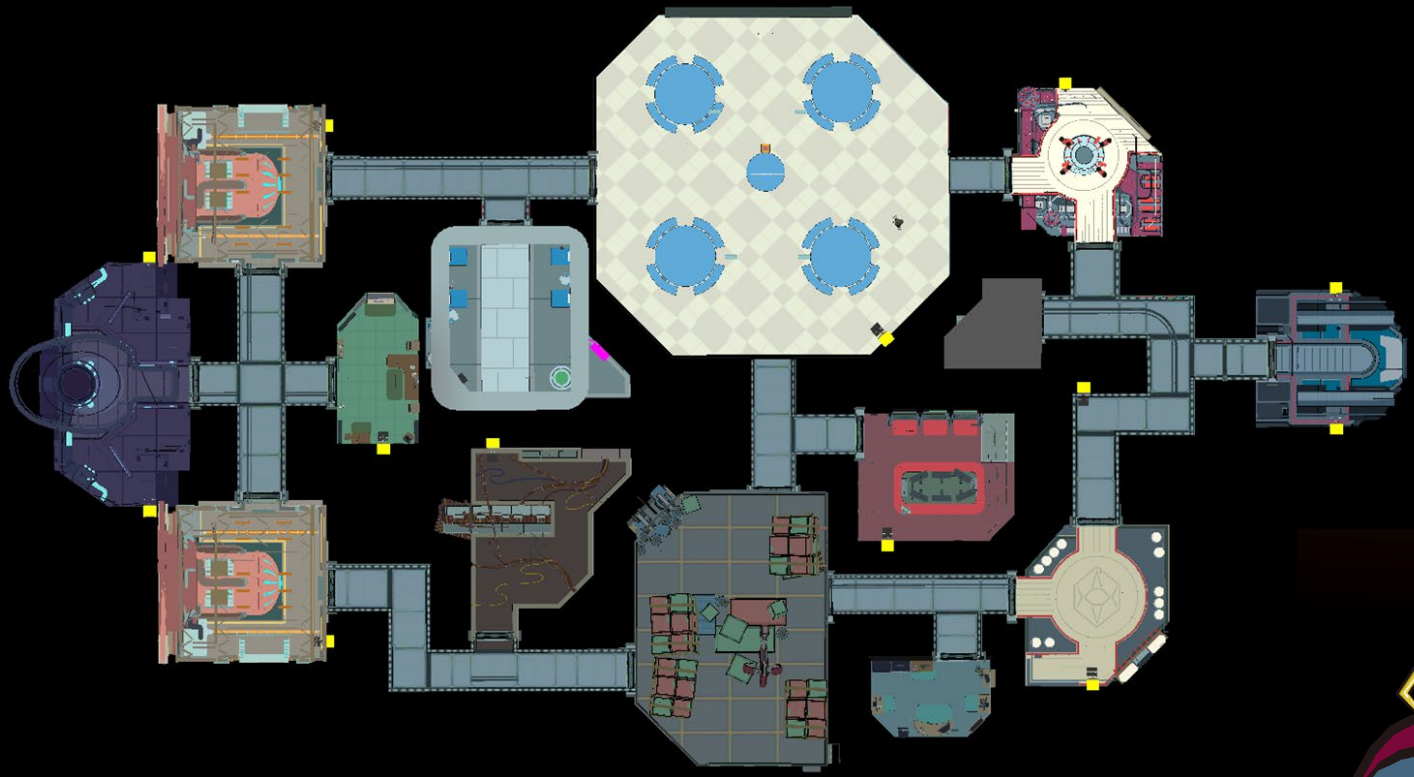
THE SKELD

MIRA HQ

POLUS

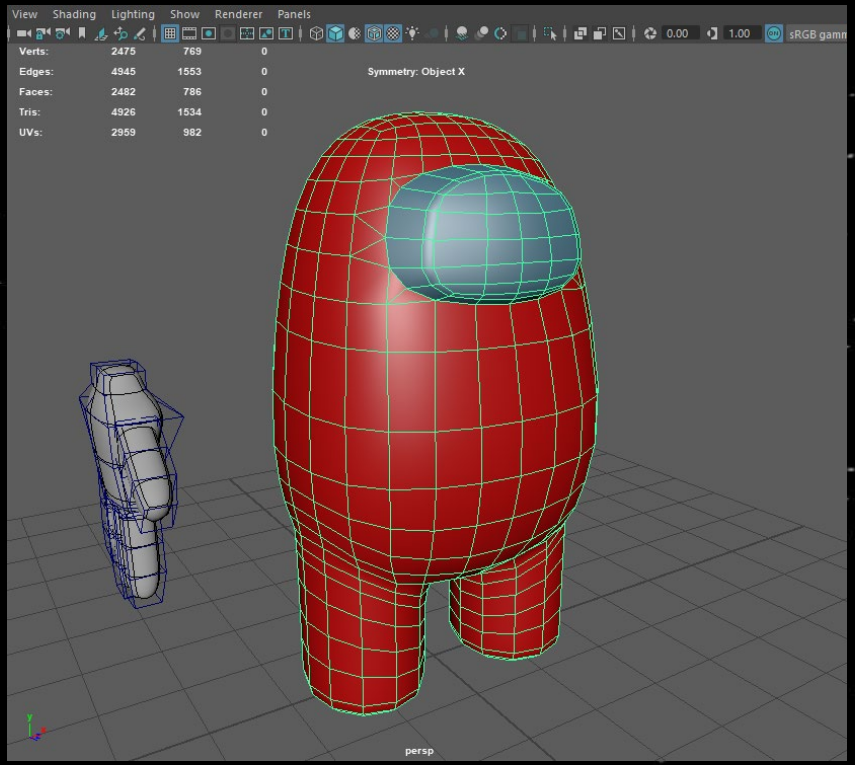
the AIRSHIP



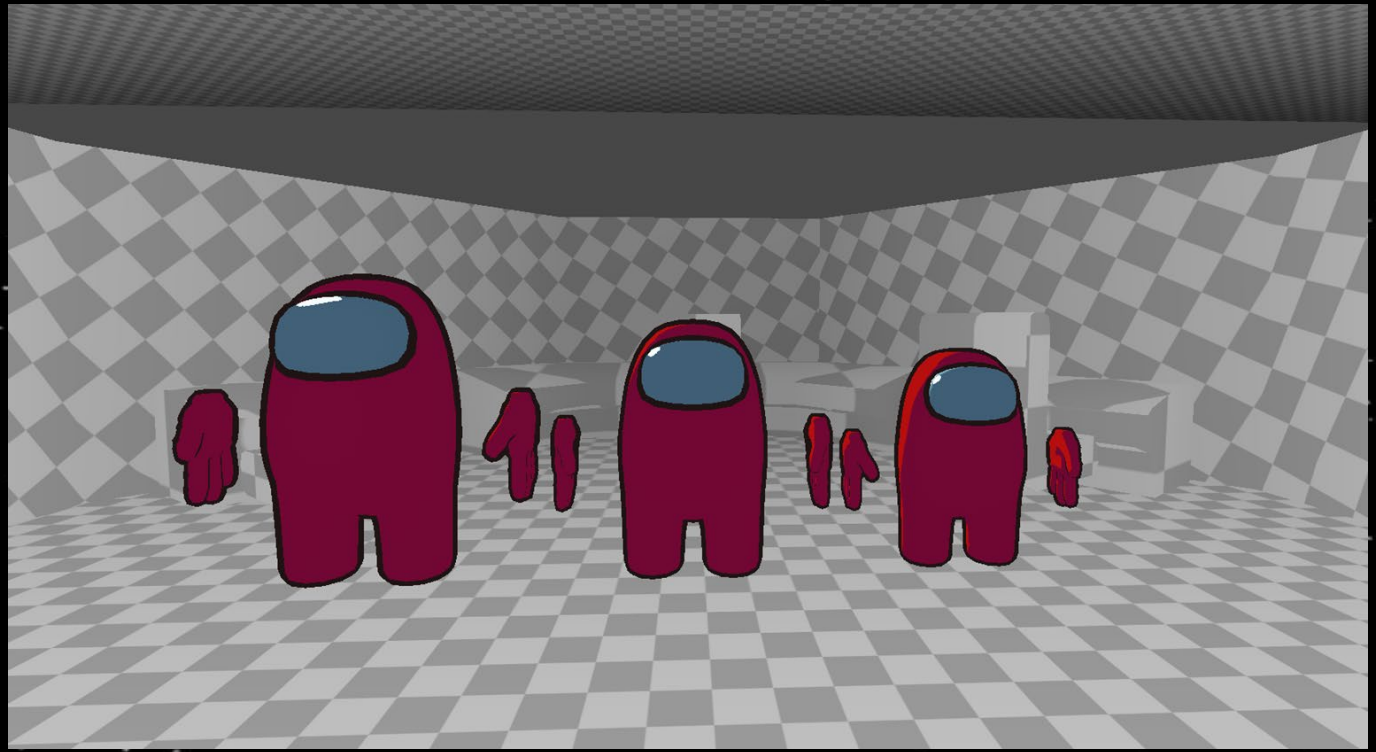


Most Popular!

Beautiful Corner - Scale and Size

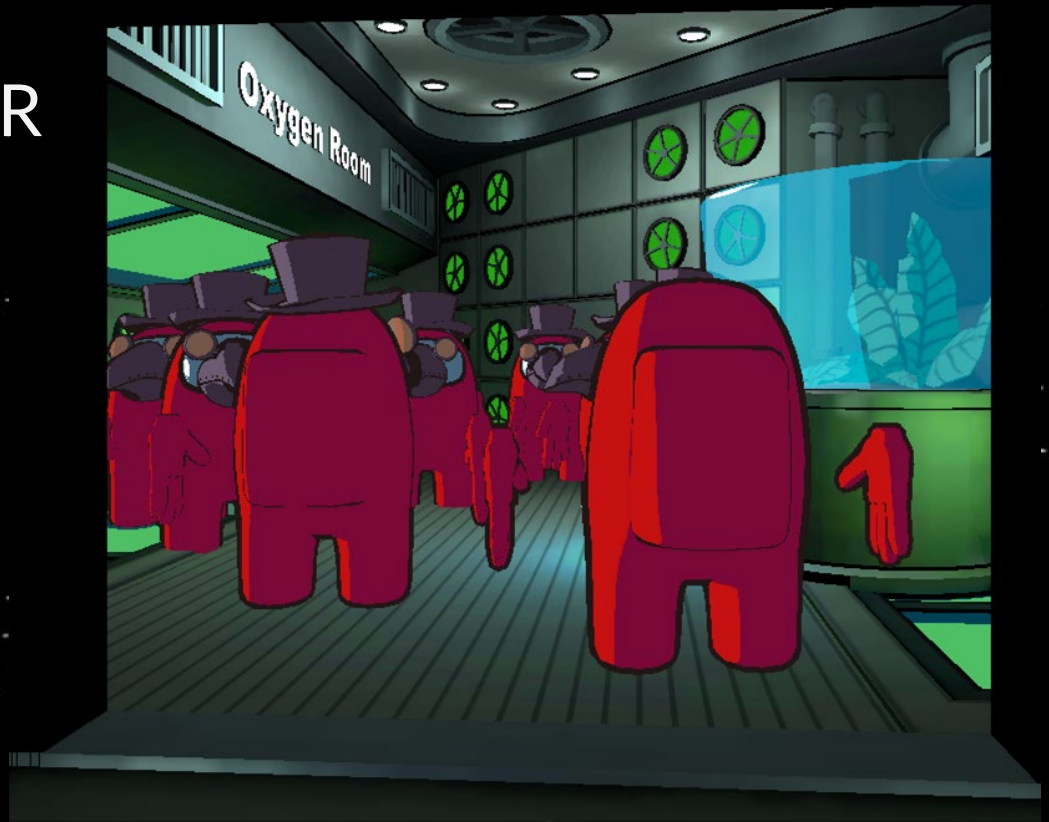


Beautiful Corner - Scale and Size



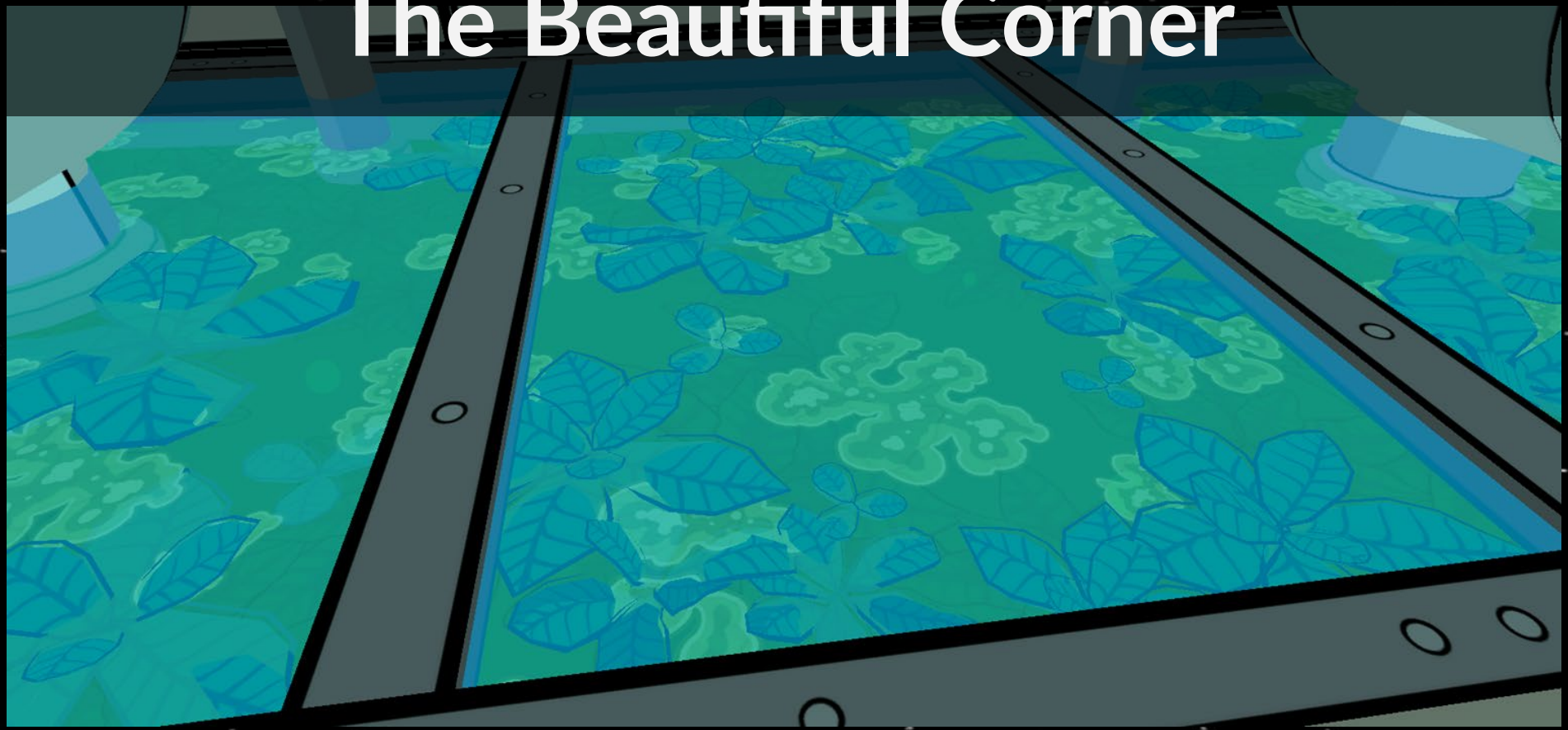
Beautiful Corner - Performance Check

- 10 Players Max for VR
- Matched the launch of Among Us 2D

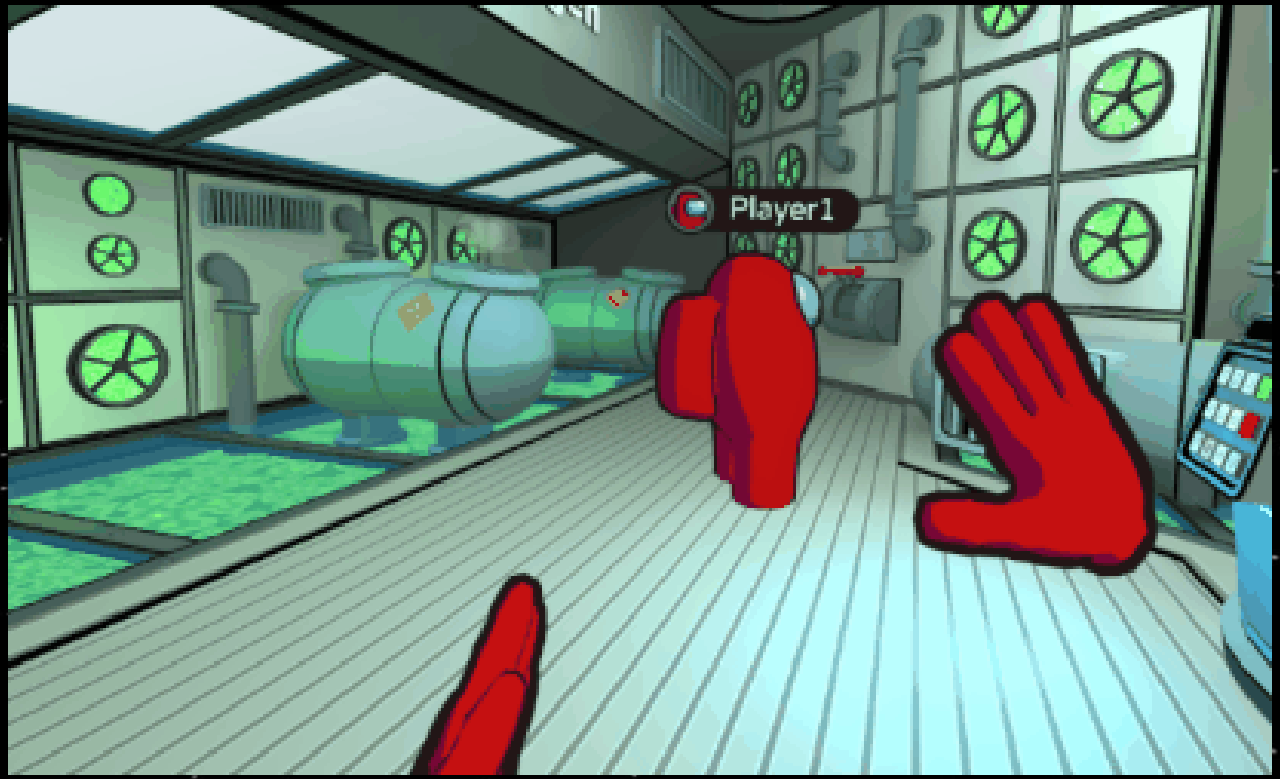


The Beautiful Corner

The Beautiful Corner



Beautiful Corner - Style Check



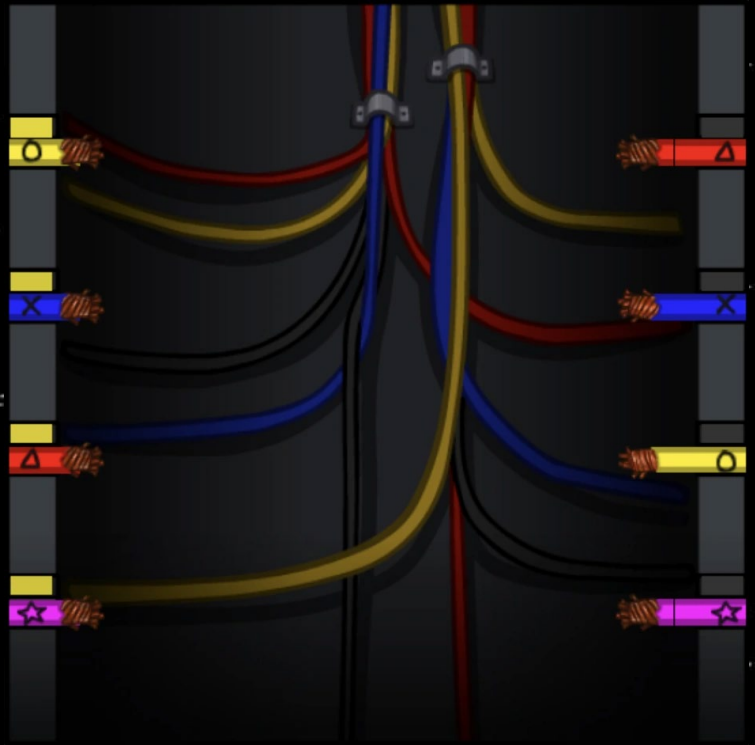
MS1 Delivered +

= TGA Trailer

AMONG US VR
Follow @AmongUsVR for Updates
Meta Quest 2

Networking

Pre-Pro Challenge: Networking



- Unity
- Only One Solid Networking Choice
  - Fusion
  - Pun & Bolt
  - JK…Back to Fusion

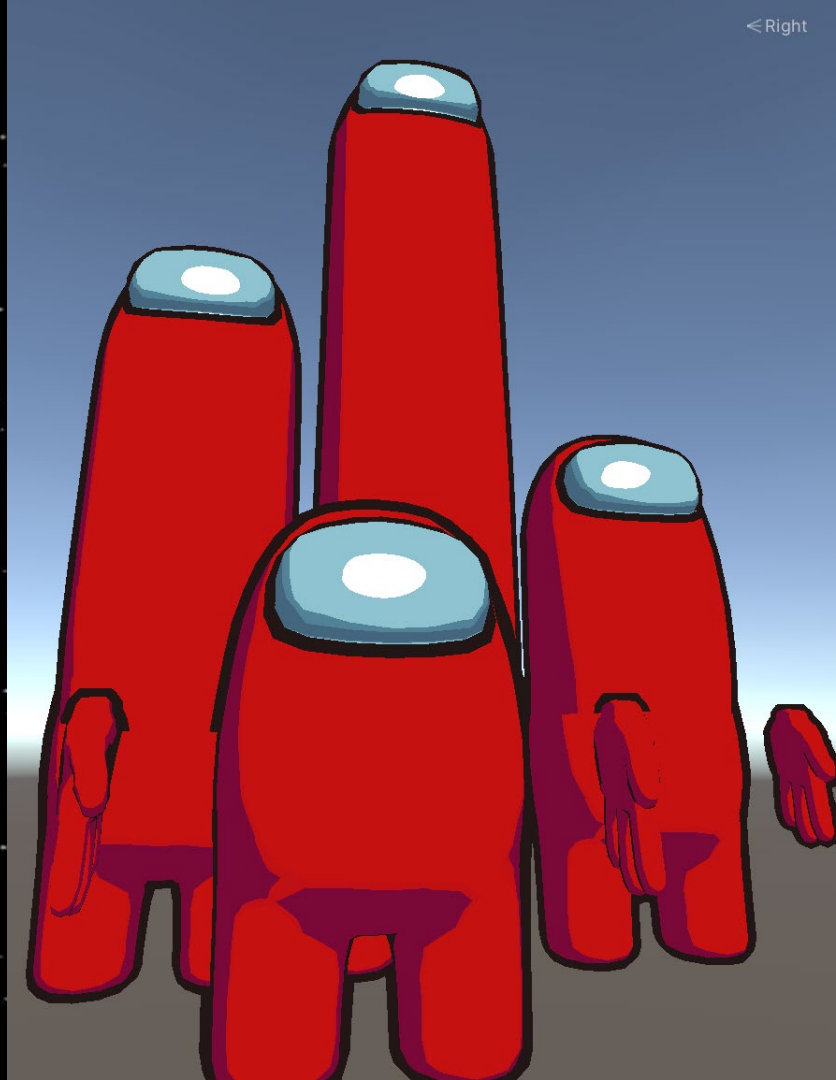
Developing before network solution hits Beta

=

Extra QA & Debugging

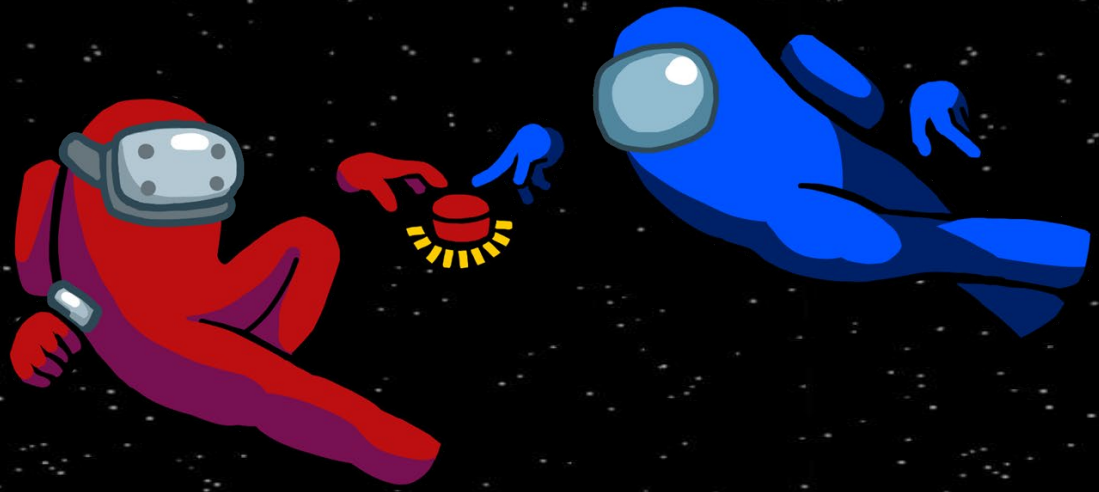
Project Pillars

Pillars define truths that protect the project's vision.



How to use Pillars Well?

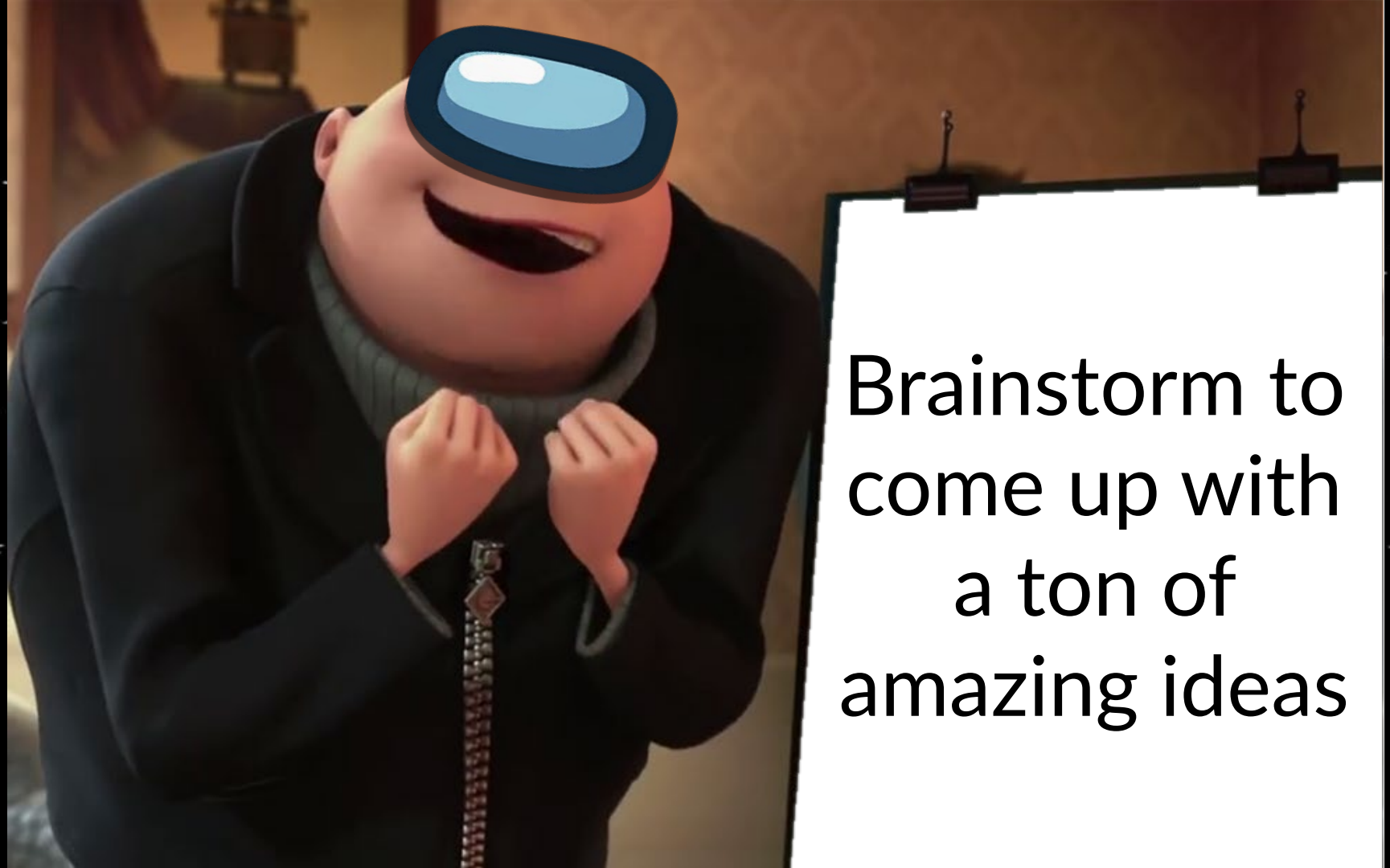
- Don’t make too many.
- Get your team’s buy in.
- Respect your pillars.

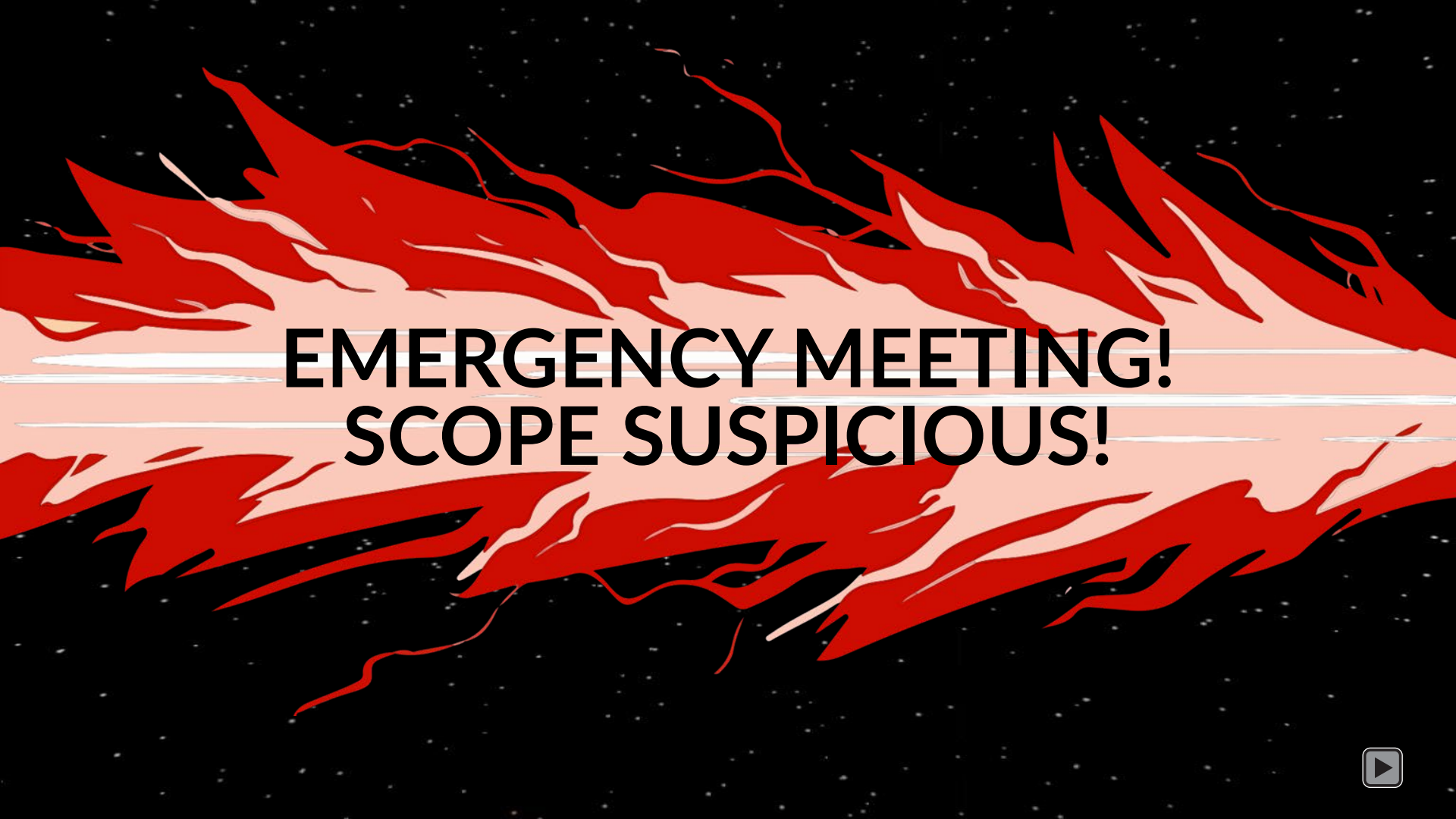


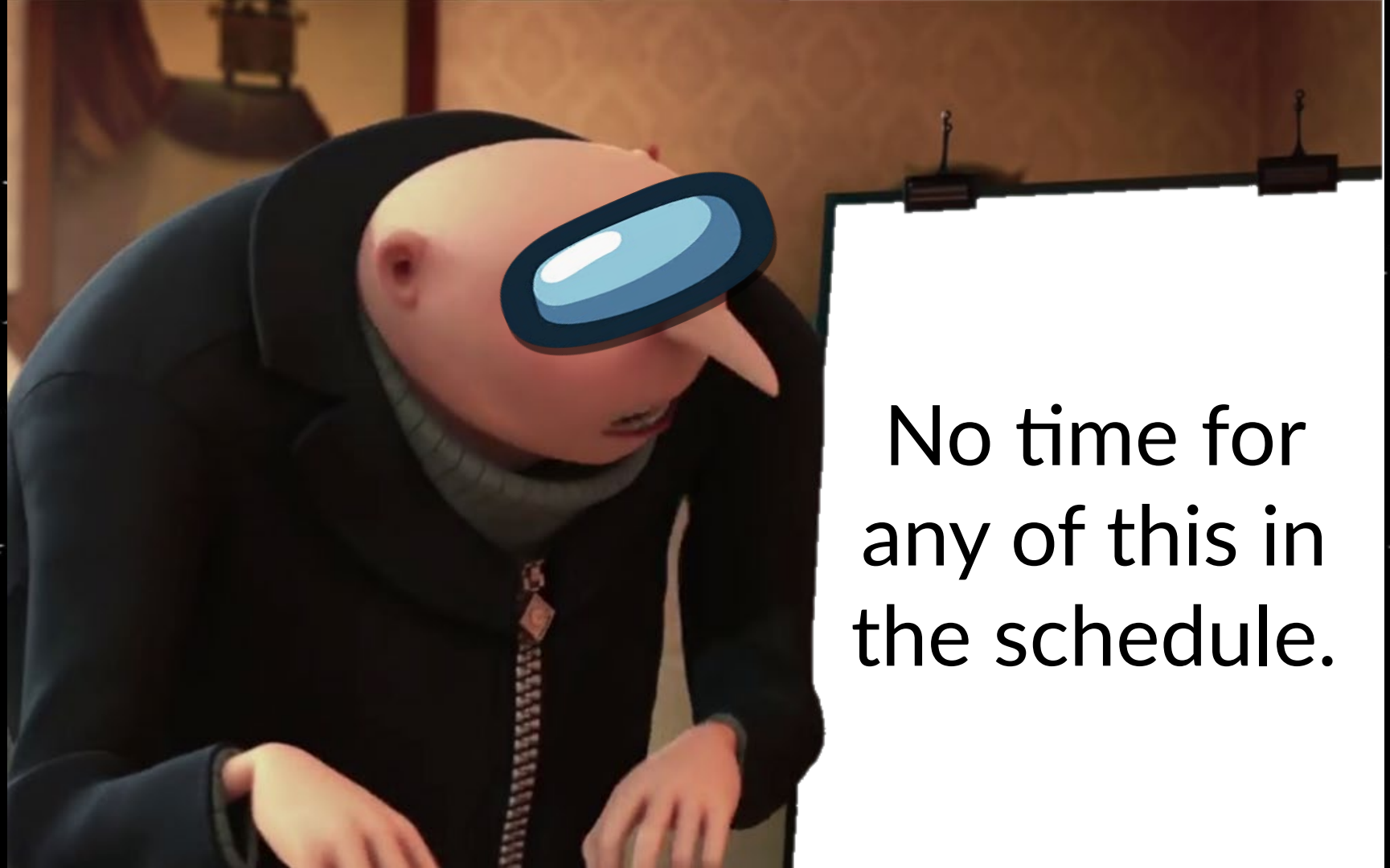
- The Best of Among Us in VR
- People-play over Gameplay

We perfected
the AUVR
formula.

It’s time to take things to the next level.


Brainstorm to come up with a ton of amazing ideas

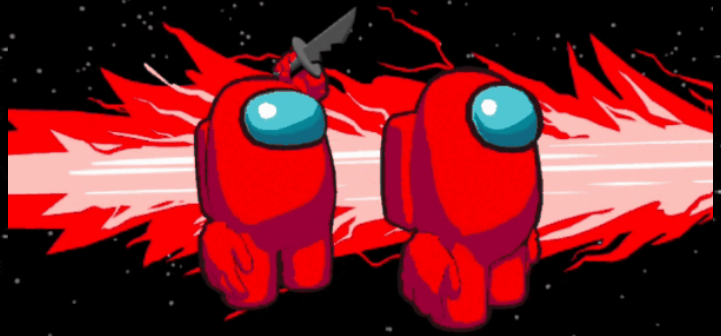

EMERGENCY MEETING!
SCOPE SUSPICIOUS!


No time for any of this in the schedule.

MVP

Minimum Viable Product

- Absolute smallest game you're willing to launch
- To prevent "death by 1000 paper cuts"
- Come out the gate with a "cut features until it hurts" approach



MVP for AUVR

AMERICA'S
TOP TEN
Favorite
1. Vanilla
2. Chocolate
3. Cookies N' Cream
10. Neapolitan
IDFA
INTERNATIONAL
DAIRY FOODS
ASSOCIATION
Source: 2017 International Dairy Foods Association Ice Cream Survey, a national survey of ice cream makers and retailers. Conducted by Research America Inc.

AMERICA'S
TOP TEN
1. Vanilla
2. Chocolate

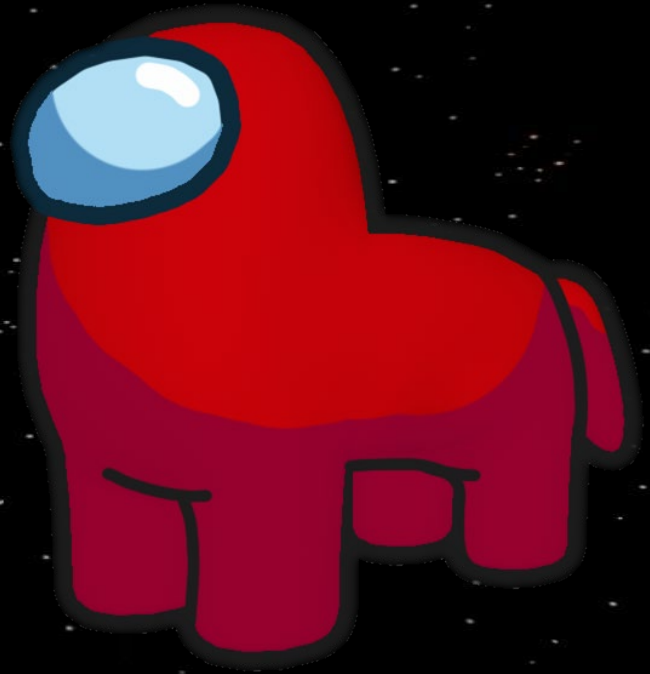
EMERGENCY MEETING!
VANILLA IS GREAT

In VR we can definitely hear you scream.

Translation to VR

Design Opportunities Aplenty

- Proximity Voice Chat
- Optimization x Simplification
- Balancing Shortcuts



Double-edged Prox Chat

- Vent Voices
- Séances
- GhostFX

Double-edged Prox Chat

- Lie
- Deceive
- Get away with murder

Moderation

Optimization X Simplification

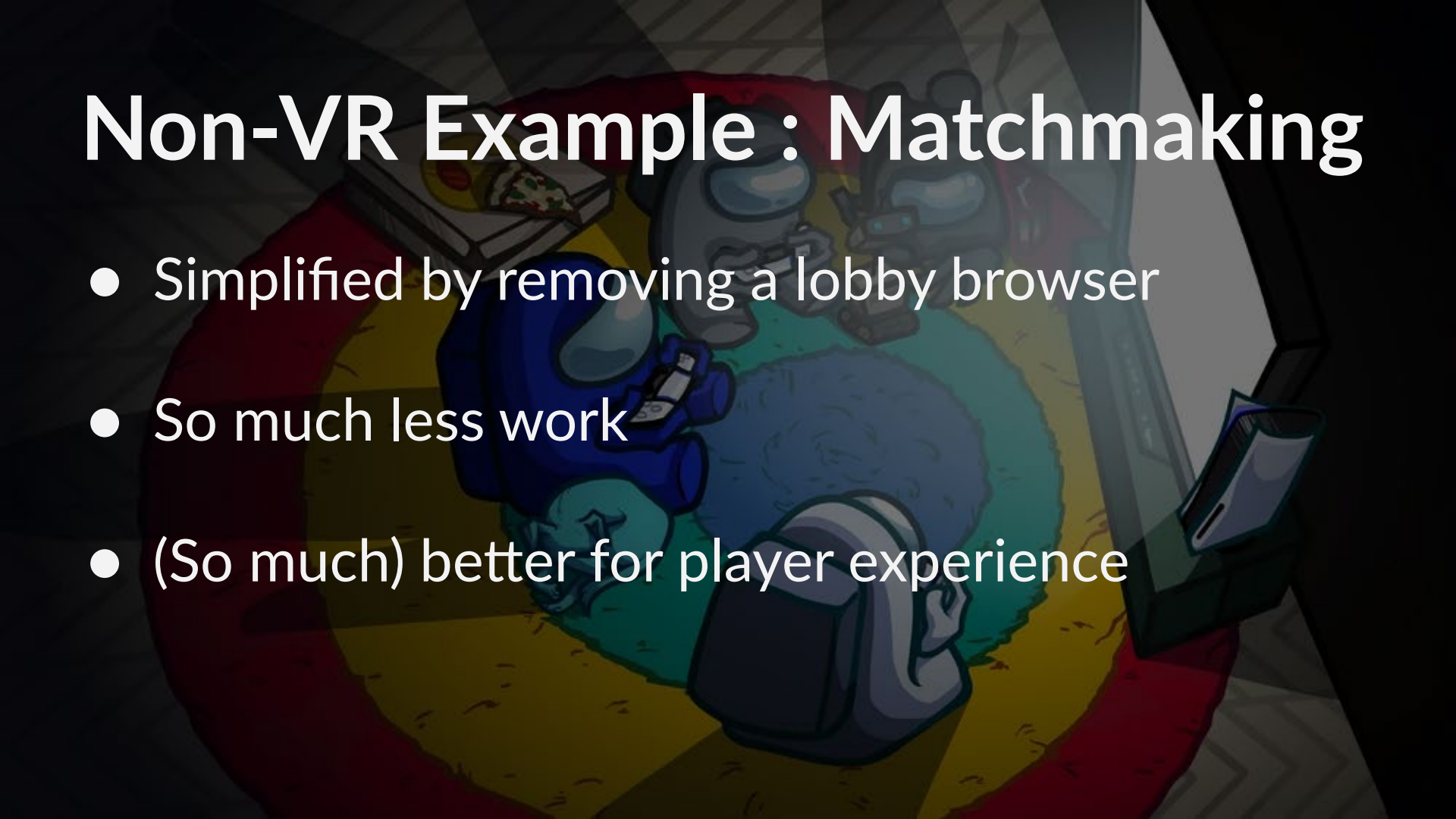
Optimization is critically important.

Simplifying things is good.

This is a win-win!

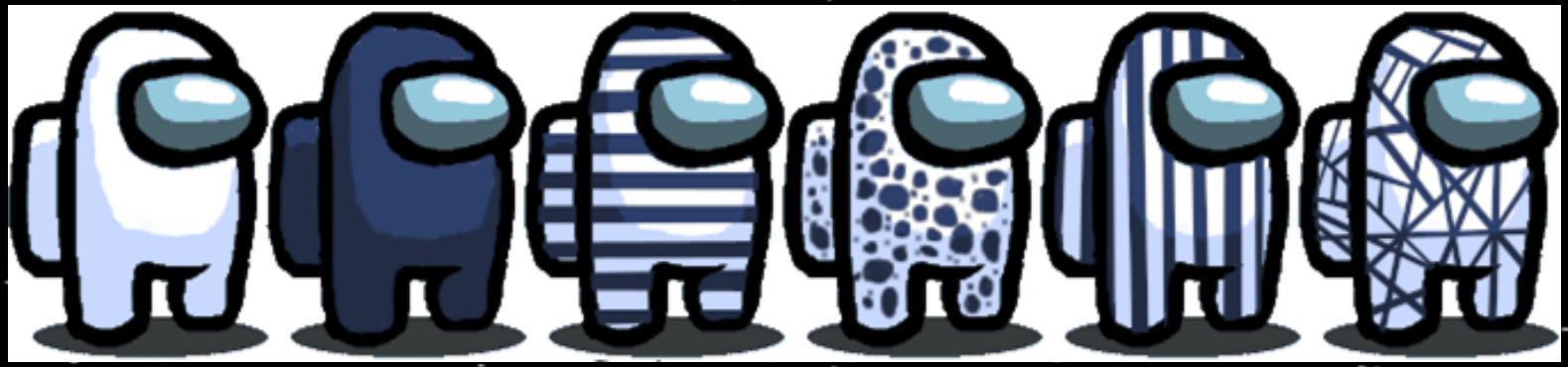
Tasks as Distractions not Challenges

Non-VR Example : Matchmaking



- Simplified by removing a lobby browser
- So much less work
- (So much) better for player experience

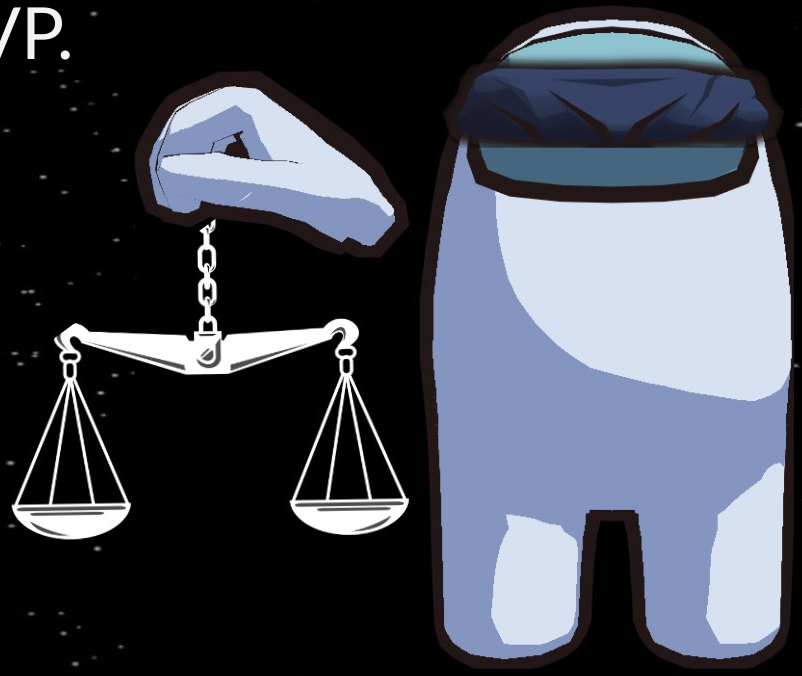
Accessibility X Simplification



- “All minigames must be completable with a single hand.”
- “Dexterity should not be a major factor for player’s success.”

Balancing Shortcuts

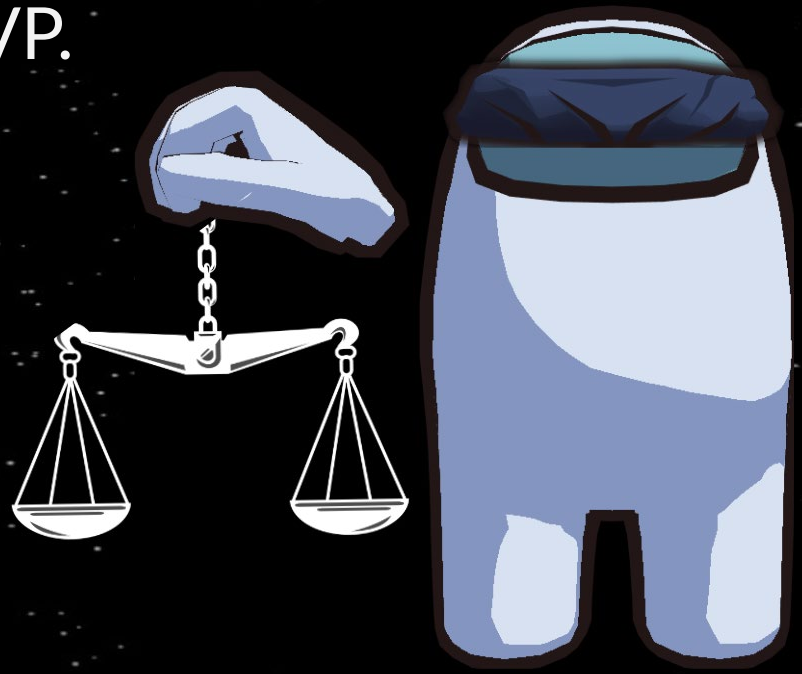
- Can’t omit this from MVP.
- Copy off the 2D game!



Copy* 2D Layout

Balancing Shortcuts

- Can’t omit this from MVP.
- Copy 2D level layout.
- Copy 2D run speed.
- Copy Match Settings.



Design Opportunities Recap

- Proximity Voice Chat
- Optimization x Simplification
- Balancing Shortcuts

EMERGENCY MEETING PLAYTESTING

Multiplayer

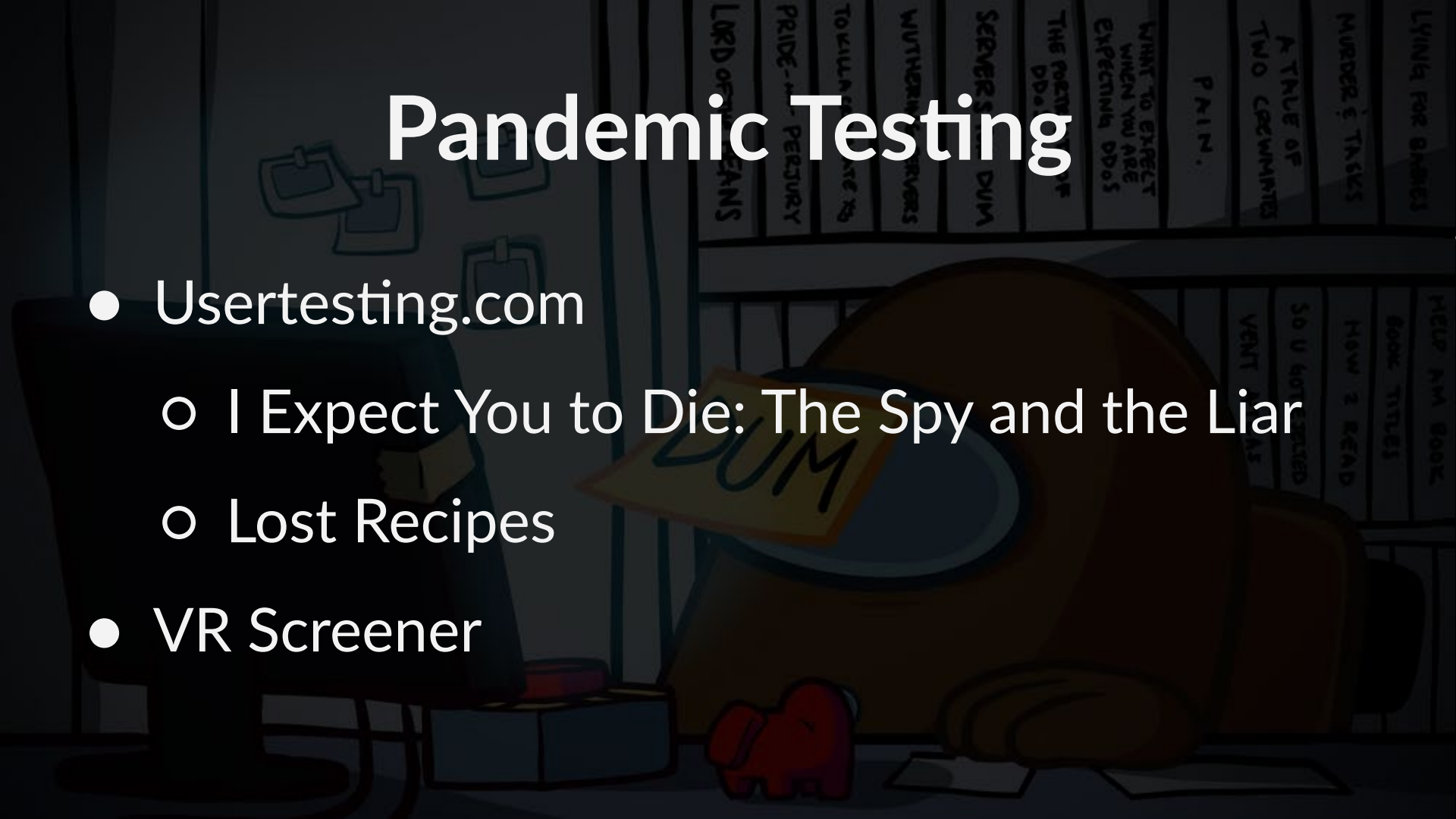
Playtesting Among Us VR

During a Pandemic

Playtesting Challenges

- Pandemic 😷
- Multiplayer 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦
- Established IP 😎
- Locomotion 🚶‍♂️🚶‍♀️
- 1000s of players 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦👨‍👩‍👧‍👦👨‍👩‍👧‍👦👨‍👩‍👧‍👦👨‍👩‍👧‍👦👨‍👩‍👧‍👦

Pandemic Testing



- Usertesting.com
  - I Expect You to Die: The Spy and the Liar
  - Lost Recipes
- VR Screener

Which of the following Virtual Reality (VR) headsets do you have access to right now?

Not a thing

- Famicom 3D

Did Among Us VR just leak ~~a~~ an xbox VR headset

Rumor

132 Comments

S Xbox Moda

- Pimax 4k, 5k, 8k

Not a thing

- Playstation Portal S
- Playstation VR
- Samsung Gear VR

From 1962

- Sensorama
- Valve Index
- Virtuality

Reddit fodder

- Xbox Moda

- Famicom 3D
- Google Crimson
- HTC Vive, Vive Pro, Vive Eye
- HTC Vive Focus
- HTC Vive Cosmos
- Magic Leap
- Oculus Go
- Oculus (Meta) Quest
- Oculus (Meta) Quest 2
- Oculus Rift, Rift S
- Pimax 4k, 5k, 8k
- Playstation Portal S
- Playstation VR
- Samsung Gear VR
- Sensorama
- Valve Index
- Virtuality
- Xbox Moda

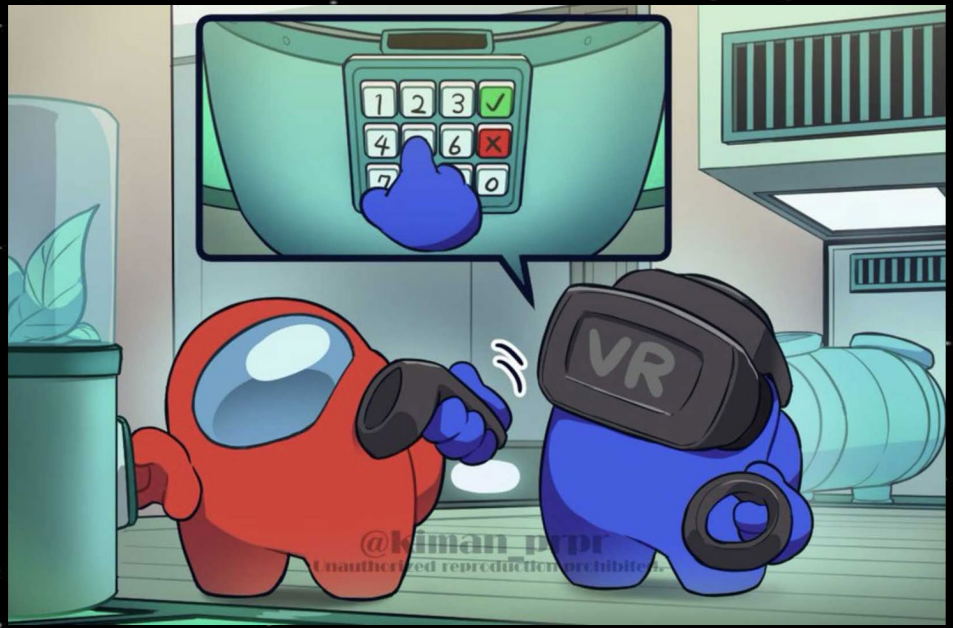
Pandemic Testing

- Usertesting.com
  - I Expect You to Die: The Spy and the Liar
  - Lost Recipes
- VR Screener
- ~~Carry out the test with multiple people~~

Handling Multiplayer

Three tests per player:

1. Pre test
2. Active Test
3. Post test



Credit @kiman_prpr

Issues

- Liars ☹
- Device not charged ⚡
- Device not updated 😮

Issues

- Liars ☹
- Device not charged ⚡
- Device not updated 😮
- Audio Issues 🎧
- No Shows
- Debug Options

Playtesting Challenges

- ~~Pandemic~~ 😷
- ~~Multiplayer~~ 👩‍👩‍👧
- Established IP 😎

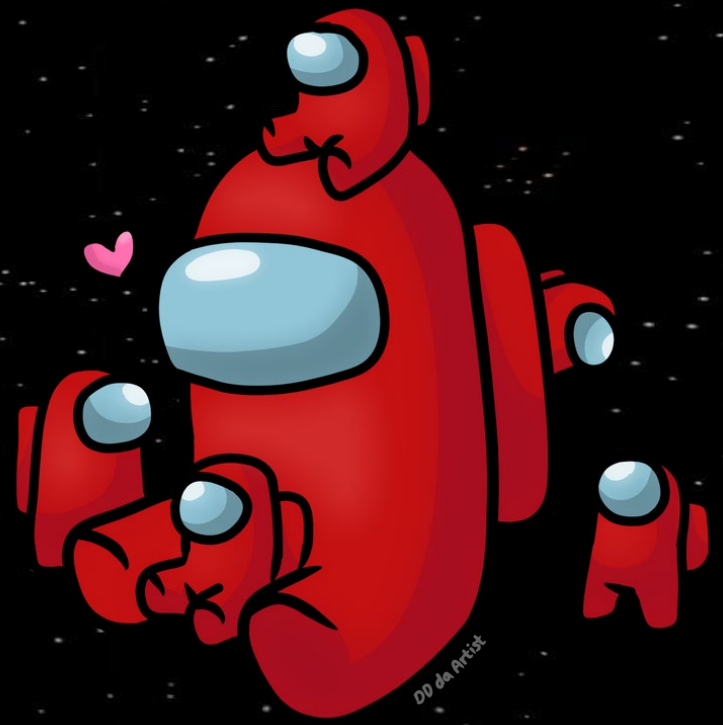
Established IP

- All Naive
- All Familiar
- A Mix

EMERGENCY MEETING: TARGET AUDIENCE GROUPS

Picking Our Favorite Players

1. Players new to VR and AU
2. Players new to VR only
3. Players new to AU only
4. VR + AU veterans



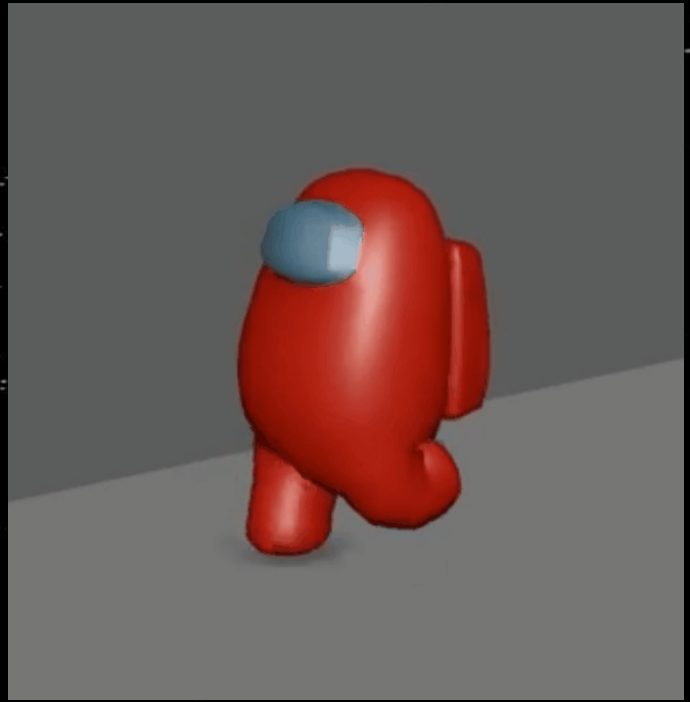
Target Audience Sacrifice

Playtesting Challenges

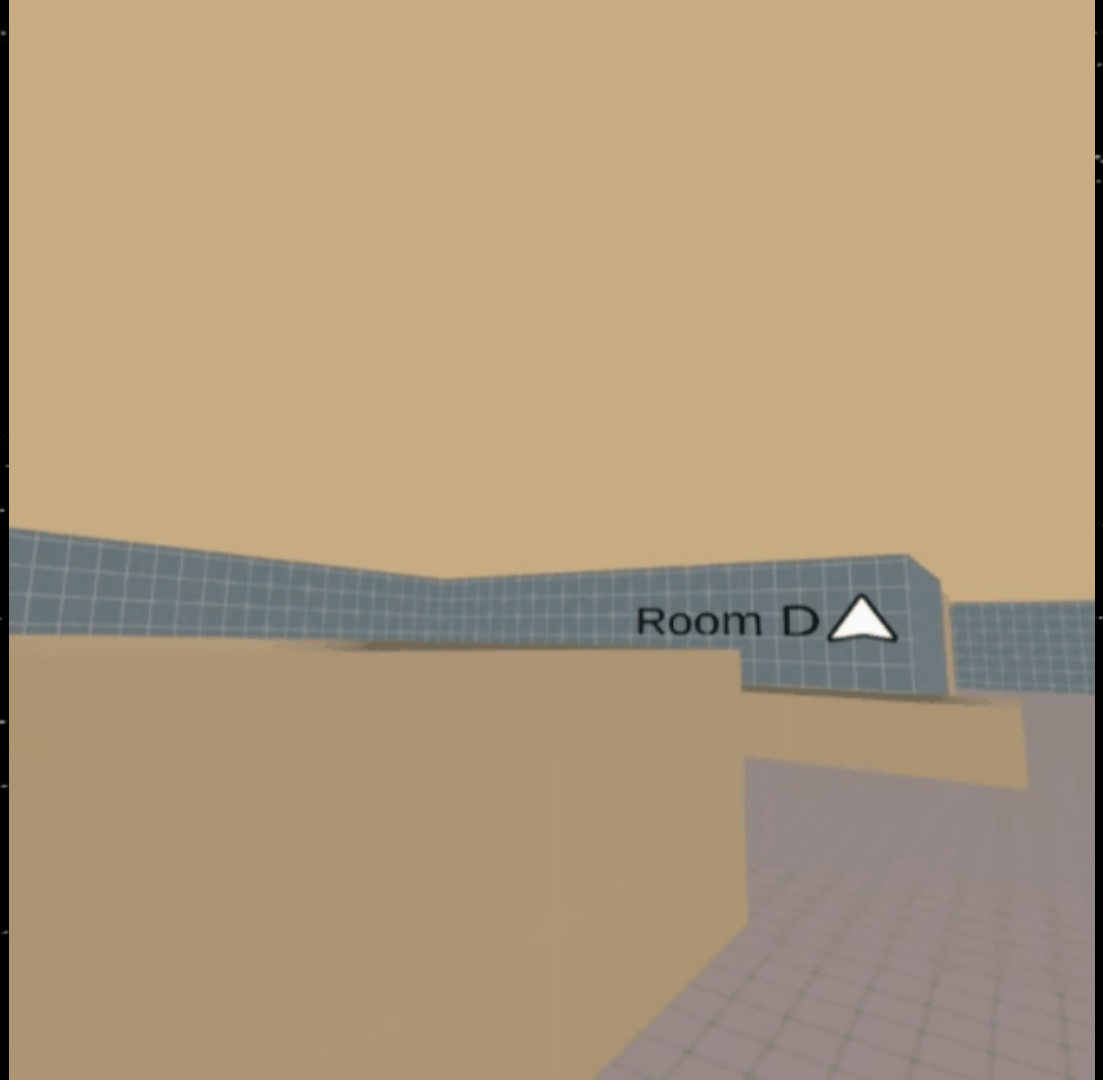
- ~~Pandemic~~
- ~~Multiplayer~~
- ~~Established IP~~
- Locomotion

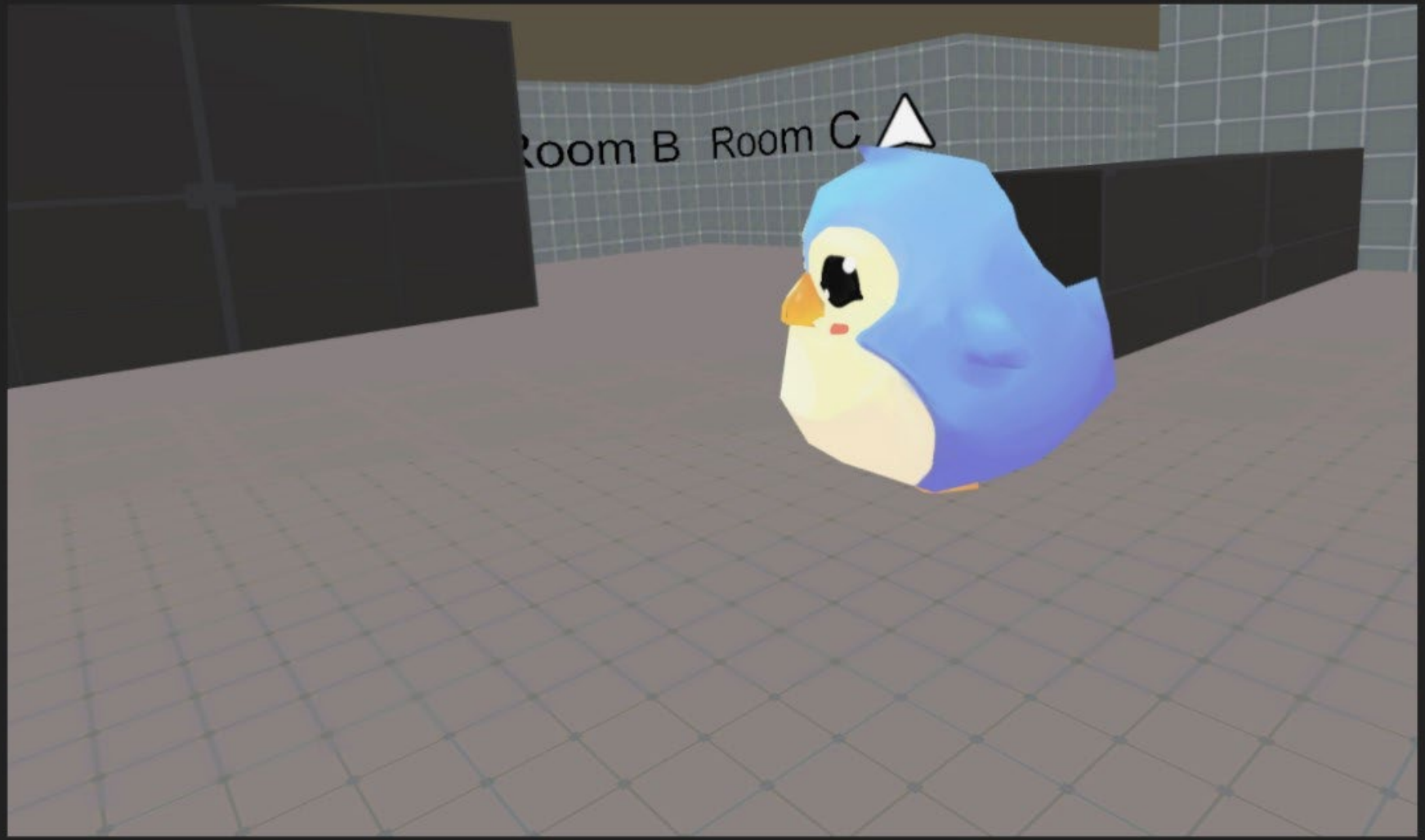
Locomotion

- Direct Thumbstick Move
- “Third Person”



EMERGENCY MEETING!
IN MEMORIAM: PENGUIN

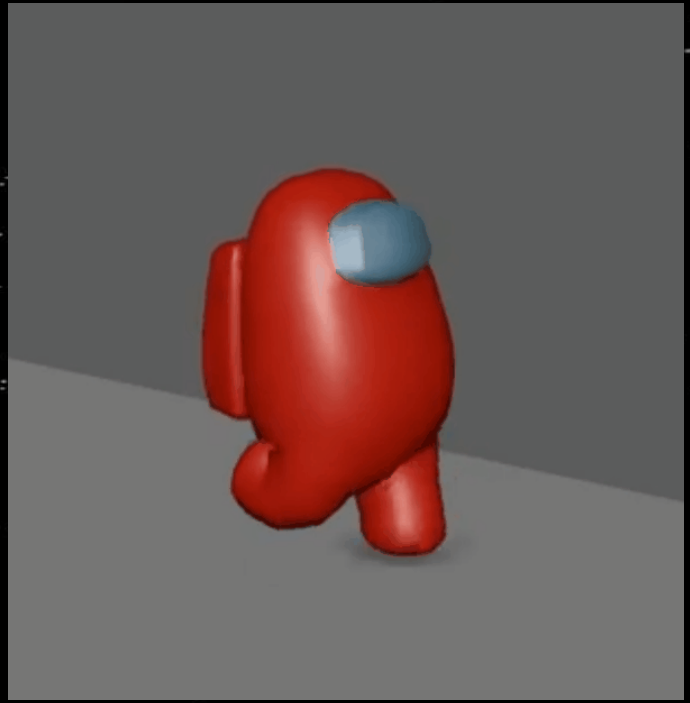

Room D


Room B Room C

Locomotion

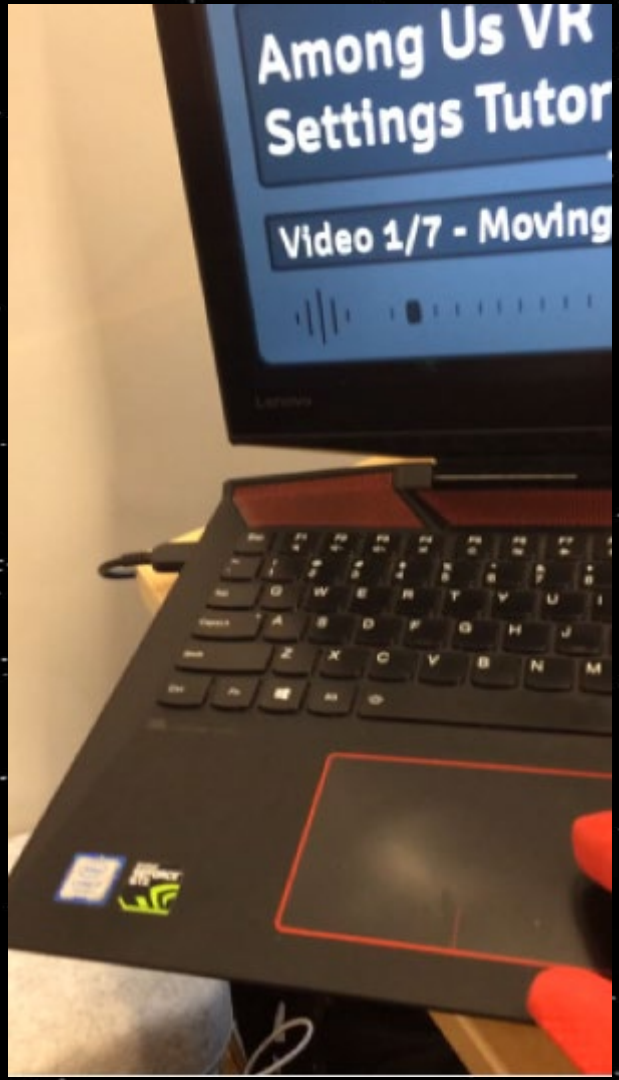
- Direct Thumbstick Move
- “Third Person”

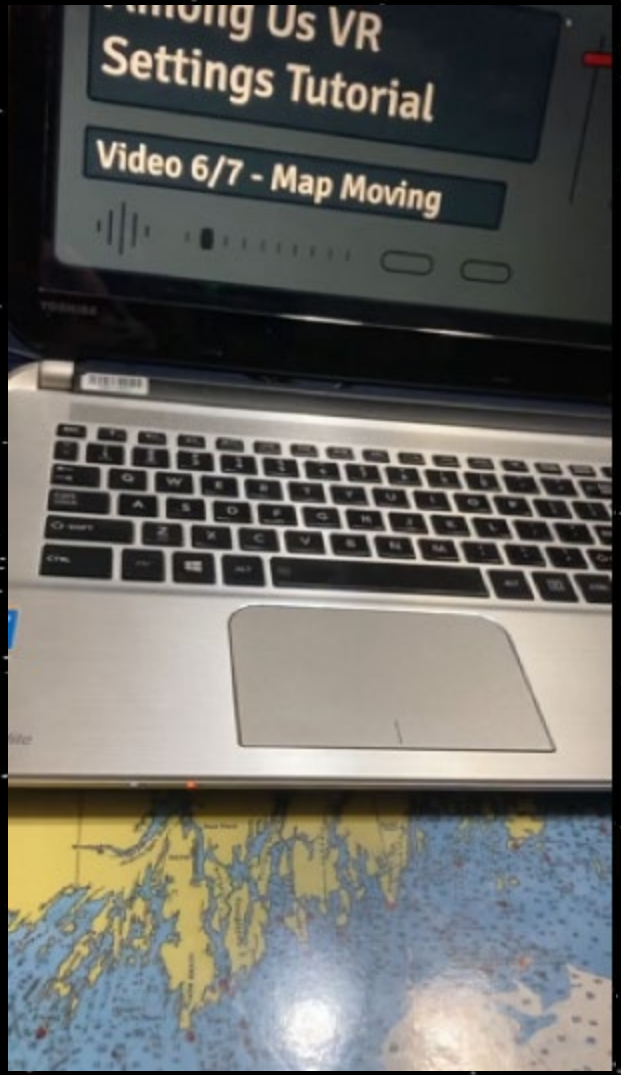
BUT



EMERGENCY MEETING!
SETTINGS VIDEOS

Settings Videos


Among Us VR
Settings Tutor
Video 1/7 - Moving


Among Us VR
Settings Tutorial
Video 6/7 - Map Moving

Playtesting Challenges

- ~~Pandemic~~
- ~~Multiplayer~~
- ~~Established IP~~
- ~~Locomotion~~
- 1000s of players

1000s of Players

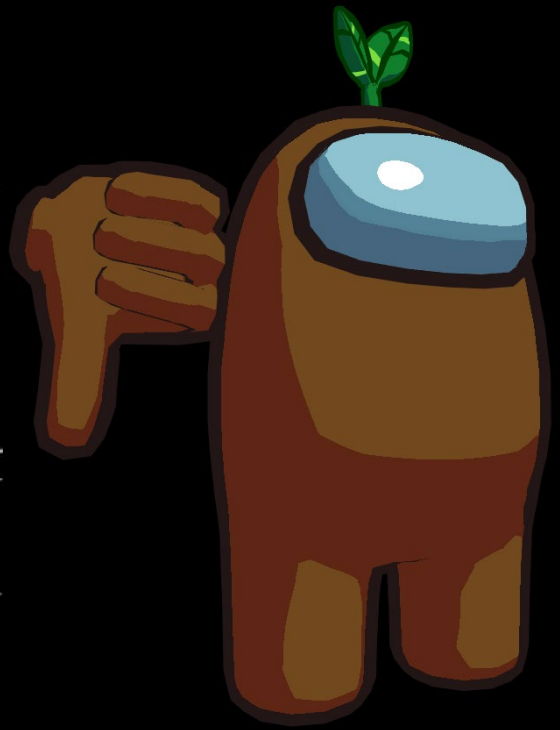
- Freeplay
- Stress Photon Fusion
- Marketing Considerations
- Not a “Design Test” but…

1000s of Players

- Freeplay
- Stress Photon Fusion
- Marketing Considerations
- Not a “Design Test” but…
- Tested with primarily fans!

VR Playtesting

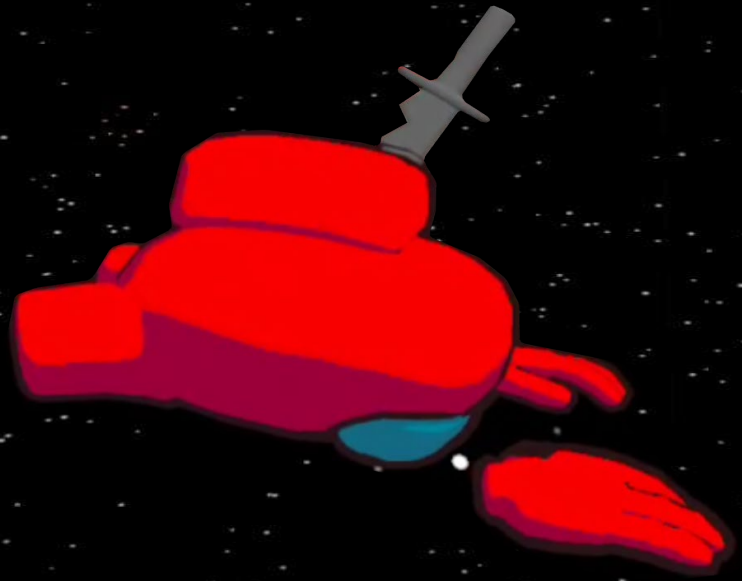
Beta testing issues



- Getting Testers
- Distributing the Builds
- Testing Impostor # Logic

Tested # of Impostors Logic

That’s why they call it the bleeding edge



Totally Worth It

- Weathered the Storm
- Balanced the Game
- Validation

VR Playtesting

FFWW Questions

- Frustrated
- Favorite
- Wanted
- Wand

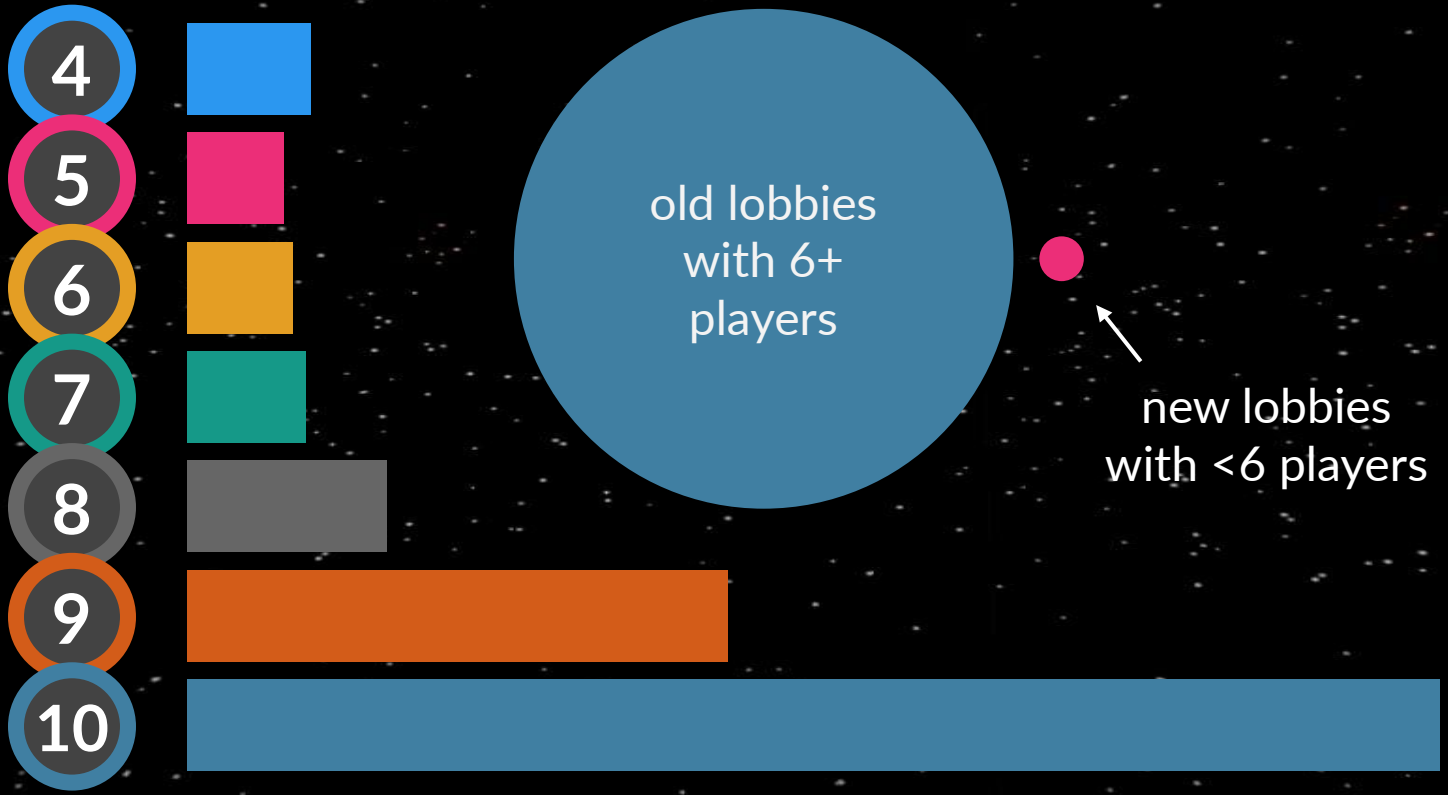
EMERGENCY MEETING!
MATCHMAKING SCRAMBLE

Emergency Matchmaking Scramble!

- Players always got placed in full lobbies.
- That’s not great because…
  - Can’t get their friends in fast enough.
  - They’d join at the loudest moment.
- Suspect: Matchmaking

Matchmaking

Oldest-first Matchmaking



Sequential Matchmaking

EMERGENCY MEETING!
REALLY RUNNING OUT OF TIME!

Emergency Recap!

WINS:

The Beautiful Corner

Pillars

MVP

Translation-into-VR

VR Playtesting

CHALLENGES:

Networking (schedule impact)

Moderation Features

Target Audience Sacrifices

Matchmaking

VR Playtesting

What's Next?

Victory
No Impostors left alive!
Jennifer
Michal
Shawn

Thanks! Questions?

Slides:

tinyurl.com/AUVR-GDC23