

1. Game Story

Game story of FreeDroid

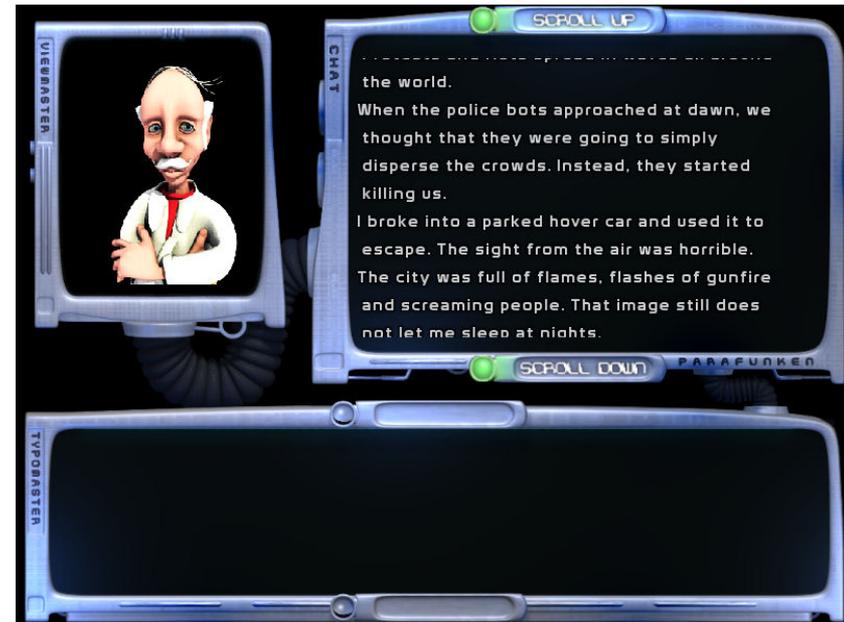
Consistent story-line

(1.1 Understanding of the story line as a single consistent vision)

■ Rating: Major

■ Problem:

- Background of the story is somehow “out of reach”.
- Even though player gets some pieces of information by communicating with NPCs, we can't really count on only that to get the player truly interested.



■ Solution:

- How about some nice screens that contain graphics and few sentences at a time? This could be done really retro style, just to respect the old way of video game story telling.

Story outcomes

(1.3 Player spends time thinking about possible story outcomes)

■ Rating: Medium

■ Problem:

- A story should always have different outcomes, otherwise it would be like watching a movie.
- When playing RPG, player is expected to be aware of that there are multiple ways to complete missions, quests or puzzles.



■ Solution:

- FreeDroid should make clear to the player that player's actions are free, and the game should support this freedom of choosing the way how to play. Show an example or two.

The world is going on

(1.4 Player feels as though the world is going on)

■ Rating: Minor

■ Problem:

- FreeDroid's world is populated by bots and human-like creatures, but still the world seems to do pretty much nothing without player's actions.
- NPCs just wonder around aimlessly and enemies just wait to be killed.



■ Solution:

- There could be something like progressing construction sites, daylight changes and other weather phenomena (surely futuristic apocalyptic scene looks livelier), NPCs communicating with each other, and so on.

Personal involvement

(1.7 The game transports the player into a level of personal involvement...)

■ Rating: Minor

■ Problem:

- It seems to be a difficult job for a human player to sympathise a walking, talking, and fighting penguin (or is it linarian?).
- Players expect RPGs these days to provide a fully encapturing gaming environment, where player feels like (s)he is a part of something.
- Player must feel like, either he is really there, or the character he plays is really there.



■ Solution:

- Could the quests, characters or other key-objects be related to modern politics, historical events, or something like that?
- The game could even agitate the player, which could lead to an arisal of emotions.

Interested characters

(1.8 Player is interested in the characters)

■ Rating: Medium

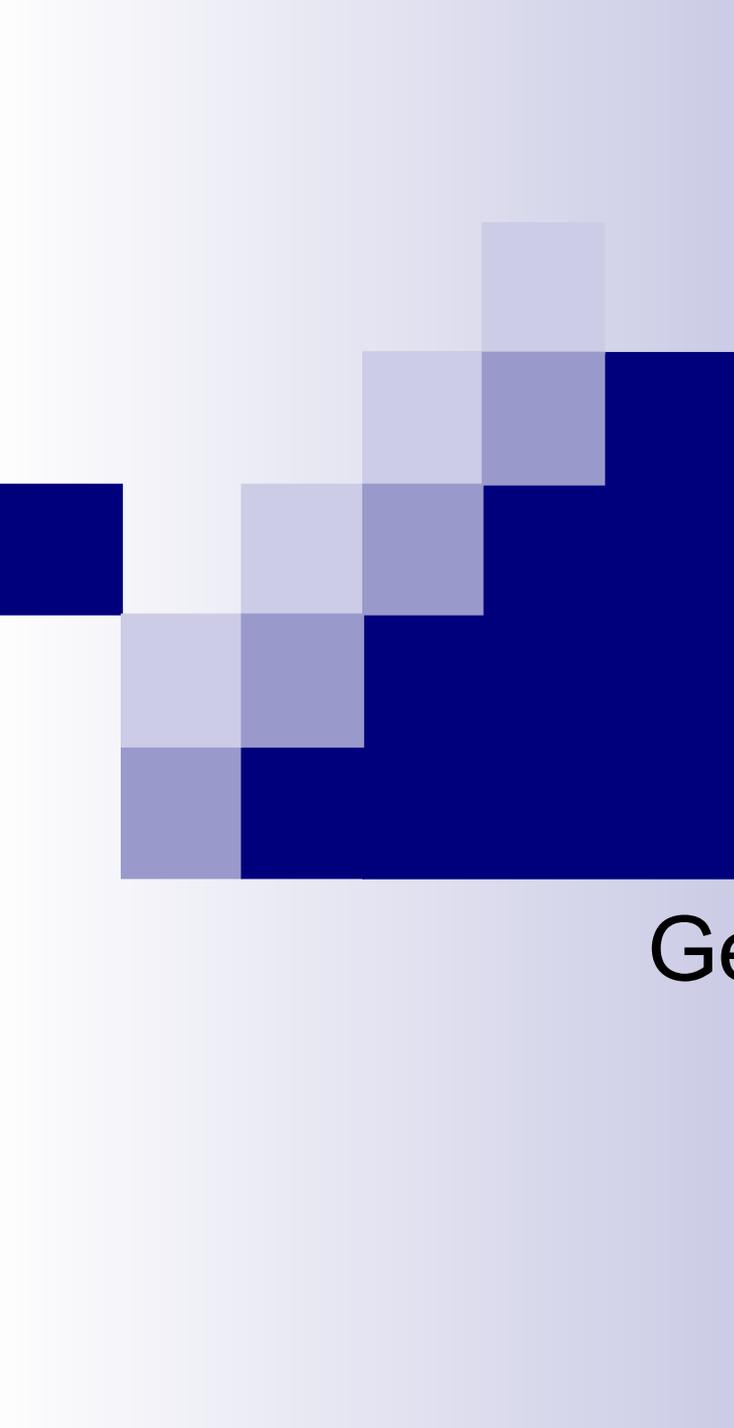
■ Problem:

- We feel that the characters lack some “existence”, meaning, they feel sometimes distant and robot-like.
- Attending NPCs sometimes feels like attending vending machines; you just pick the choice and something expected happens.

■ Solution:

- Characters should be more than a fuzzy picture and a dialog.





2. Game Usability

General usability of FreeDroid

Feedback

(2.1 Provide immediate feedback for user actions)

■ Rating: Minor

■ Problem:

- The console contains only three lines of text.
- The space for output is limited.



■ Solution:

- Maybe it would be possible to smaller the font size, making it possible to show more output on the console.

Start-up Information

(2.3 Upon initially turning the game on the Player has enough information to get...)

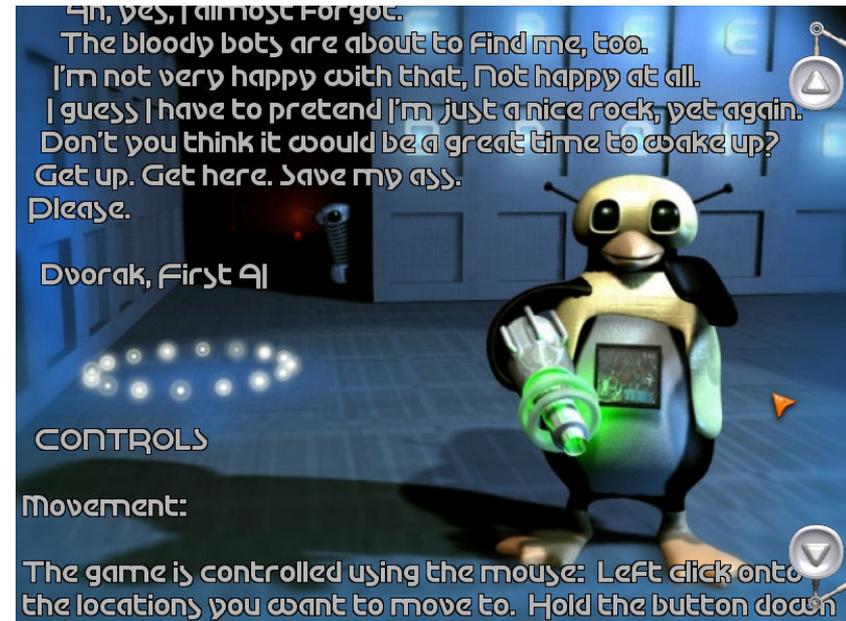
■ Rating: Major

■ Problem:

- In the beginning of a new game, player is forced to go through the start-up sequence.
- The sequence is not very user friendly.
- The text is just way too long for the player to read and to remember.
- It just isn't fair to make player go through all that.

■ Solution:

- Try to replace the opening sequence with something fast, informative, and entertaining.



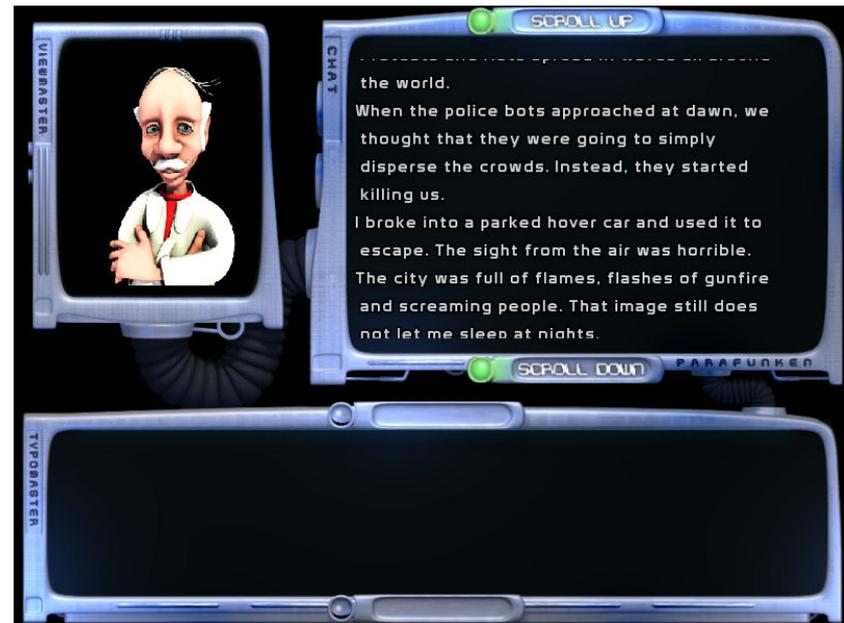
Start-up Information

(2.3 Upon initially turning the game on the Player has enough information to get...)

■ Rating: Major

■ Problem:

- Player takes over; what to do next?
- Player has no idea what to start doing in the game, and why.
- Why should the player do something?



■ Solution:

- There should be something to get player to feel like he or she is a part of a bigger picture.
- Provide something to assist player, and motivate player to do something.

Context sensitive help

(2.4 Players should be given context sensitive help while playing)

■ Rating: Medium

■ Problem:

- We would like to see more of explaining text labels.
- For example, the buttons marked “LOG”, “INV”, “CHA”, and “SKI” provide no explanatory text.
- Player shouldn't spend time on browsing these through, in order to make sure that “INV” really means “inventory”.



■ Solution:

- Bar that shows health has this feature. Could the same feature be used also to explain above mentioned buttons?

Need of manual / keys

(2.6 Players do not need to use a manual to play game)

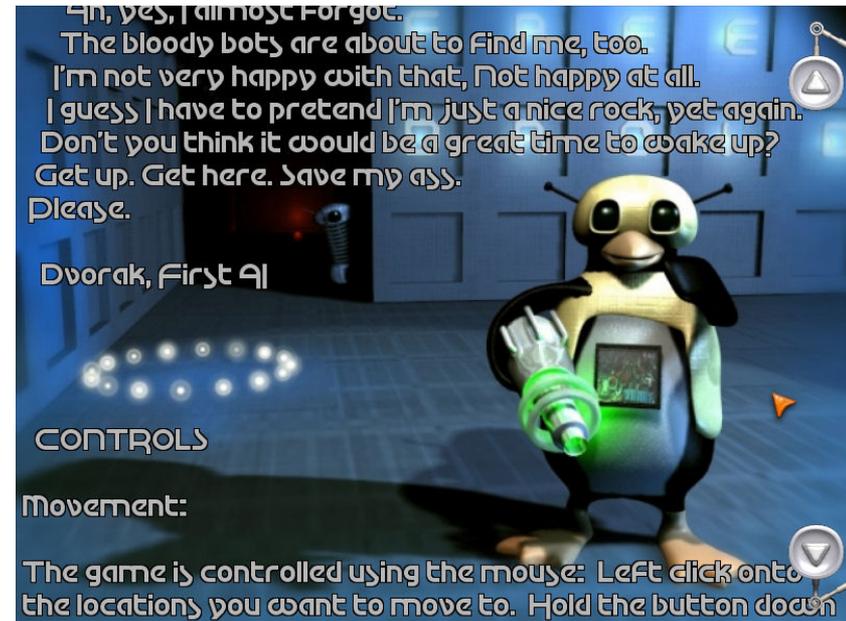
■ Rating: Major

■ Problem:

- Even if the long list of key commands is built in the game, it is still quite manual-like.
- Player shouldn't be made to go through this procedure of "force learning" the keys in the beginning of the game.
- You forget them anyway.

■ Solution:

- We propose the usage of a key chart; press certain key that opens up a chart of keys, where player could find the command (s)he is looking for.



Tutorial

(2.7 Get the player involved quickly and easily with tutorials...)

■ Rating: Medium

■ Problem:

- There is no tutorial in FreeDroid.
- The beginning of the game is very important, because it will decide whether the player gets hooked or not.



■ Solution:

- We think that there should be a tutorial part that is short, rewarding (maybe some kind of item or money), and easy to approach. Player should know immediately in the beginning of the game that the tutorial will be worth his or her time (or if it's not, it can be skipped).

Character recognition

(2.8 Art should be recognizable to player, and speak to its function)

■ Rating: Minor

■ Problem:

- What could be improved is the recognition of important characters.
- Sometimes it's difficult to spot the key characters, and sometimes it's confusing which character is which.



■ Solution:

- Even though extra labels and graphical pointers ruin the mood, and the feeling of reality, it could make the game more usable. It would be nice to be able to spot the important things from distant.

Play area

(2.8 Art should be recognizable to player, and speak to its function)

■ Rating: Medium

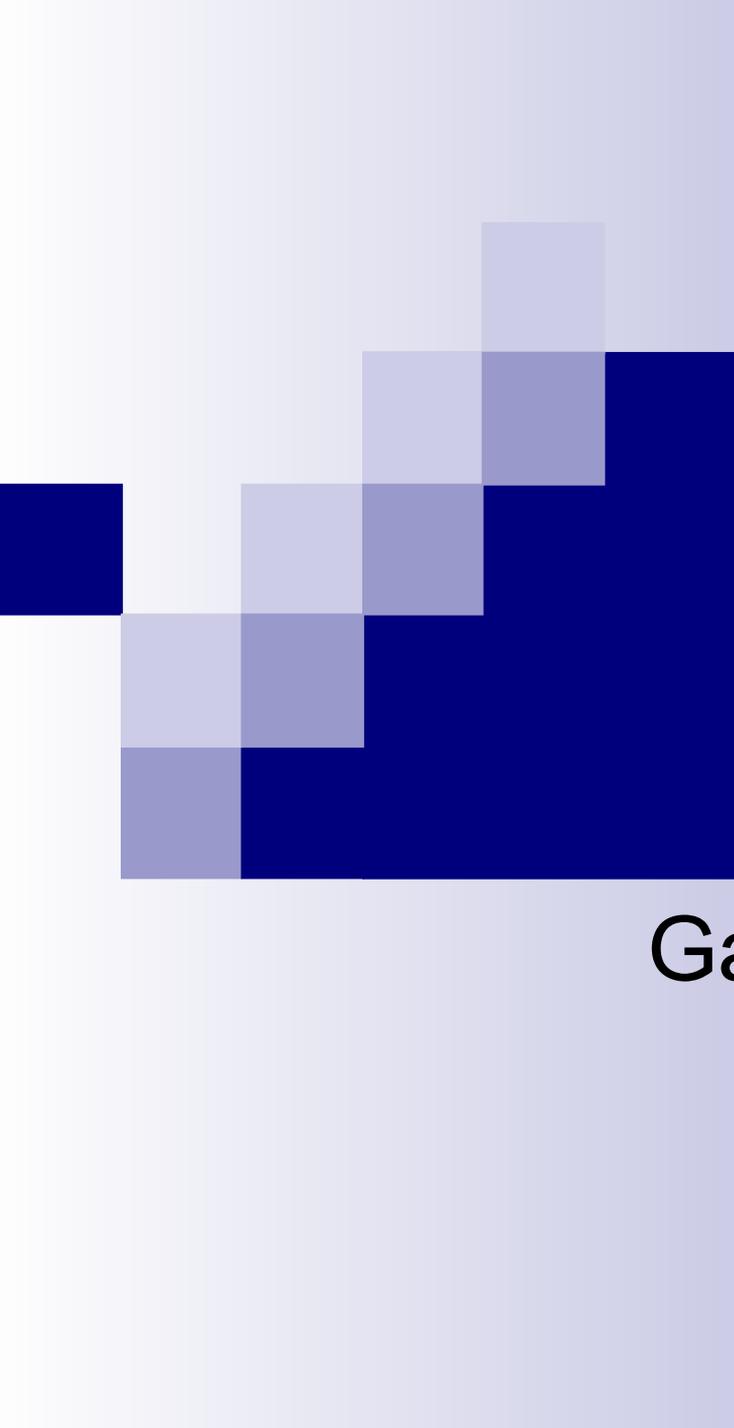
■ Problem:

- The city area where player starts in the beginning of the game is just too wide.
- This makes it difficult for player to remember, and to recognise, where important things are; if there is a similar building after another all the time, it just gets confusing.
- Having to run around, looking for the right shop is not fun when you have to do it repeatedly.

■ Solution:

- Could there be something like a quick-access to important vendors?
- Areas that player cannot access before receiving the quest could actually be covered completely (by “fog of war”).





3. Game Interface

Game interface of FreeDroid

Control customization

(3.1 Controls should be customizable and default to industry)

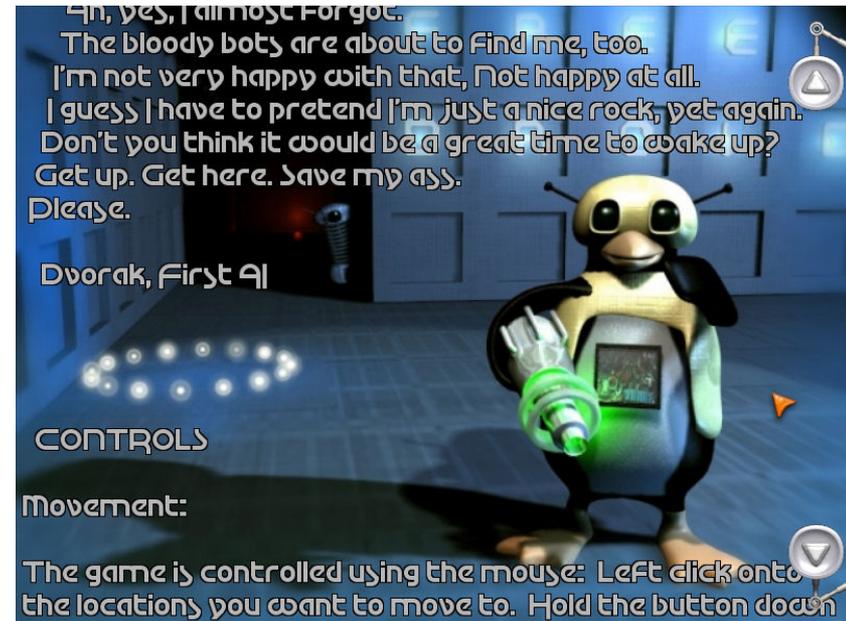
■ Rating: Minor

■ Problem:

- FreeDroid does not allow player to customize the controls.
- Some players would like to be able to adjust things like mouse speed, scrolling speed etc.

■ Solution:

- If possible, provide a menu to customize controls.



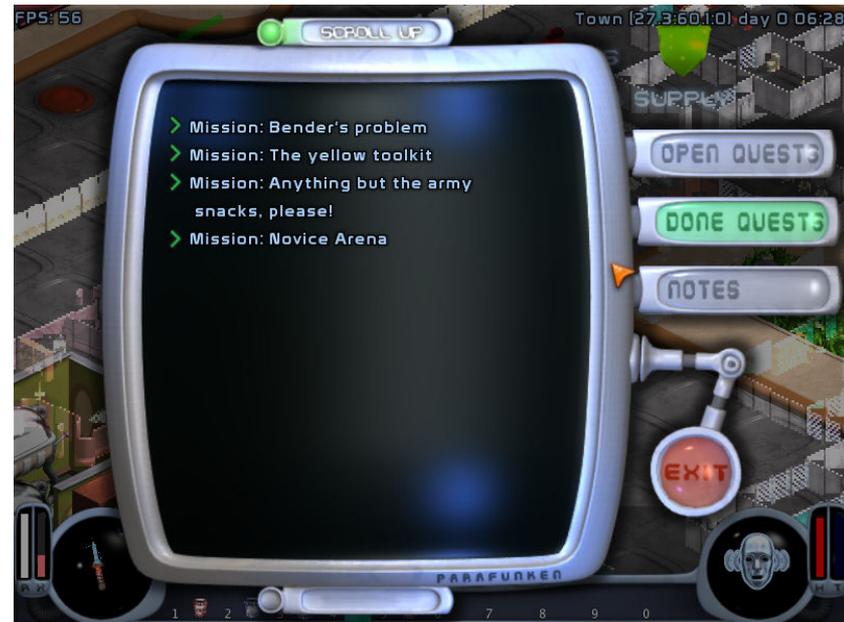
Quest log

(3.3 A player should always be able to identify their score/status...)

■ Rating: Medium

■ Problem:

- Available information in quest log is minimal, and contains only the reason behind the quest.



■ Solution:

- Could there be more info, like small pictures to assist the player to remember, where to find key objects or persons, and how they look like.

Consistency

(3.4 Interfaces should be consistent in control, color, typography, and...)

■ Rating: major

■ Problem:

- In menus like inventory and character, there is no exit button to be found.



■ Solution:

- We would like to see clear exits from these menu screens; "LOG" -menu has the feature, why other menus ("INV" etc.) don't have.



4. Game Mechanics

General usability of FreeDroid

Involving the Player

(4.1 Get the player involved quickly and easily)

■ Rating: medium

■ Problem:

- By the time the player reaches the town (s)he might have forgotten most of the background story.
- After the first task it's not so clear what the player's supposed to do.



■ Solution:

- Maybe there could be a little more hand-holding and reminding of the game goals in the very beginning of the game?

Changing Background Music

(4.2 Game should react in a consistent...)

■ Rating: minor

■ Problem:

- Sometimes when walking close to the town's walls the background music changes into the one that is meant for areas outside the town's walls.



■ Solution:

- This is clearly a bug, hopefully you'll find time to fix it.

Movement Logic

(4.3 Make effects of the Artificial Intelligence...)

■ Rating: medium

■ Problem:

- The droids don't follow Tux very well if there's any obstacles in the way
- Tux also sometimes chooses quite strange paths to walk.



■ Solution:

- We know that you've been working with the AI's logic. Hopefully you'll make it supergood.

Predictable AI

(4.3 Make effects of the Artificial Intelligence...)

■ Rating: minor

■ Problem:

- This is not exactly a problem, we just thought it would be cool if the AI wasn't always so predictable.



■ Solution:

- Consider introducing "Berserker-robots" that go in to a rage and shoot everything, including other bots to increase unpredictability.

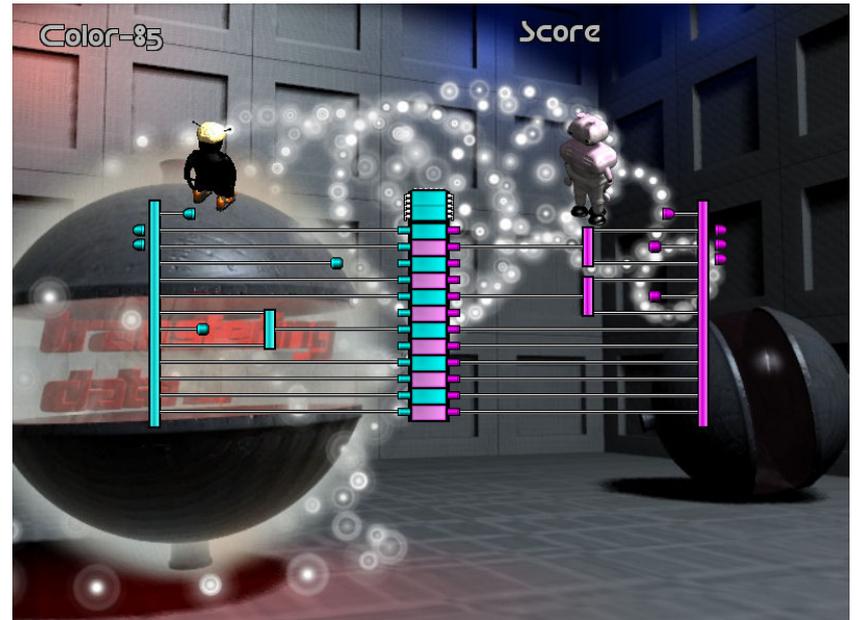
Inconsistent Controls

(4.4 Mechanics/controller actions have...)

■ Rating: minor

■ Problem:

- Most of the game works with a mouse but in the droid hacking minigame arrow keys are used.



■ Solution:

- Consider making it possible to play the minigame, too, with the mouse. You could also make the arrow keys useful in the rest of the game.

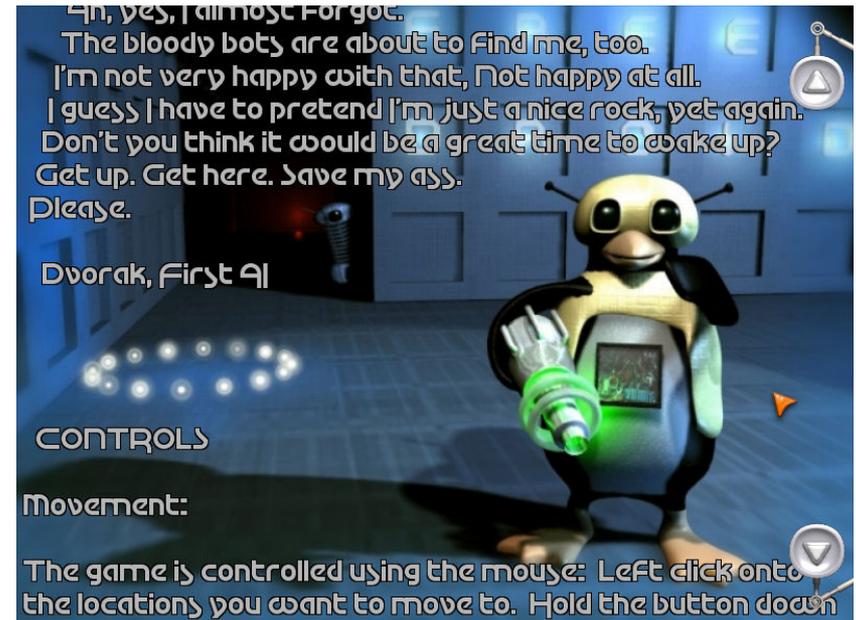
Advanced Controls

(4.6 Player should be given controls that are...)

■ Rating: medium

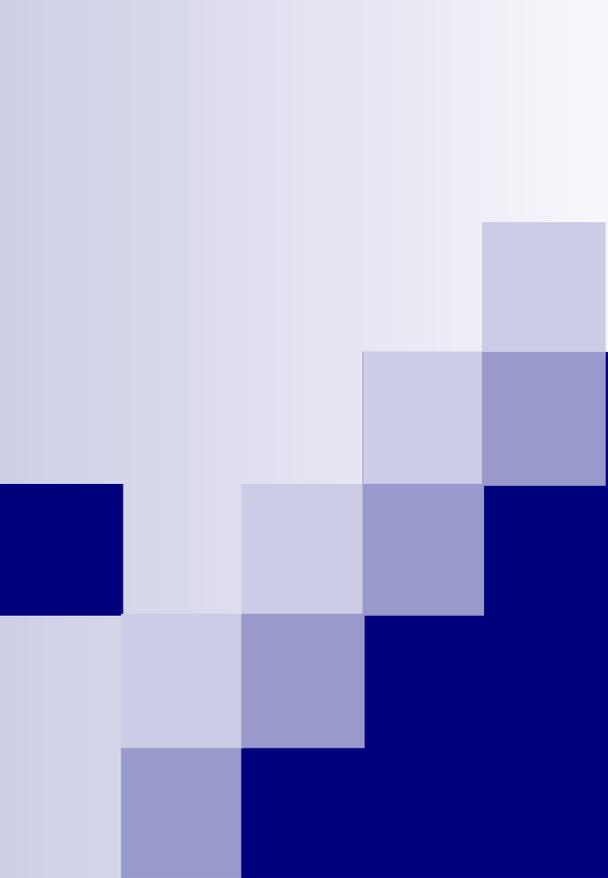
■ Problem:

- The game includes a possibility to use advanced controls but they're not informed very well.



■ Solution:

- Make it clear to the player what key does what (see also slide number 12).



5. Game Play

General usability of FreeDroid

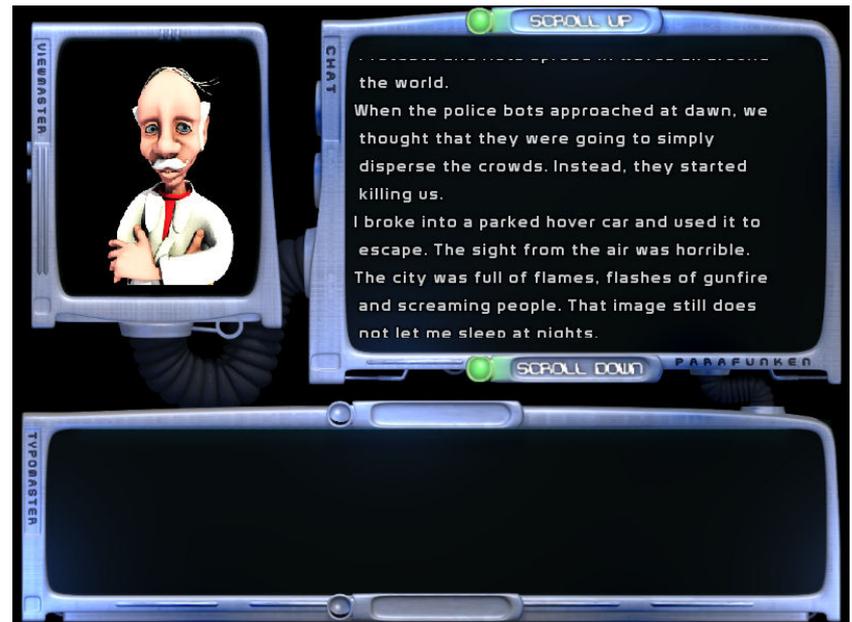
Killable Non-Player Characters

(5.4 Player should not experience being penalized repetitively for the same...)

■ Rating: major

■ Problem:

- Critical Non-Player Characters (NPC) start fighting the player too easily. This affects the game in general and may cause increase in difficulty.



■ Solution:

- Create a way to calm down NPCs or to avoid combat with them.

Quest Difficulty

(5.8 Challenges are positive game experiences, rather than a negative...)

■ Rating: medium

■ Problem:

- Quests in the beginning are quite hard to complete.
- It may feel easier to quit playing than to clear a room full of robots.



■ Solution:

- Create more variety in quests, especially for the low-level quests. (Trading items, fetching items from other NPCs...)