[Recursion]

Game Design Document: 1.03

Revision List

Version	Author	Date	Comments
1.00	Sam Catcheside	March 11, 2025	Initial Version
1.01	Sam Catcheside	March 28, 2025	Mechanical and Narrative Revision
1.02	Sam Catcheside	April 02, 2025	Latent freedom and idle dread
1.03	Sam Catcheside	April 03, 2025	Updated physics device presence to later narrative stage

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Game Overview

Game Title

- [Working Title: Recursion]

'Recursion is a first-person immersive sim where players uncover the mysteries of an office complex caught in a time loop. Discover hidden experiments, confront ethical dilemmas, and master the loop to reveal your purpose within a facility controlled by rogue AI'

Genre

First-Person immersive-sim, narrative-driven game with exploration and puzzle-solving elements

Platform

- PC (Windows, Linux, Mac)
- Optional: Consoles – PlayStation, Xbox

Target Audience

- Players who enjoy immersive sims, puzzles, suspense and immersive storytelling (e.g., fans of Control, Half-Life, Stanley Parable)
- Ages: 16+
- Gamers interested in mystery, psychological elements and experimental gameplay mechanics,

Game Summary

A modern office environment that doubles up as a research facility, concealing a vast network of experimental projects, anomalies, and technological breakthroughs. The protagonist, an employee starts their first day on the job and discovers that reality within the building is not what it seems. As they explore, they uncover the deeper nature of the organization and their role within it. Later in the narrative, the player will discover that the entire facility has been taken over by a rogue experimental AI system. The player will have to choose whether to side with the AI, gaining certain advantages such as access to restricted areas, but at the cost of increased difficulty and consequences later in the game.

The player will not have access to firearms or weapons. While experimental tools such as an object manipulator (physics), time-warp device, or Geiger counter exist within the world, these will not be immediately available. The object manipulator, once planned as a core gameplay mechanic, will now be introduced later in the narrative to emphasize vulnerability and disempowerment during the initial stages. Players will instead begin unarmed, relying on environmental storytelling and diegetic interactions to uncover secrets and progress.

Core Gameplay

Player Mechanics
- Exploration: Free movement in an interconnected facility.
- Interactivity: Ability to interact with objects, terminals, and documents.
- Puzzles: Logical and environmental puzzles tied to the facilities' experiments.
- Abilities: Various objects, tools and devices that manipulate reality or physics.

World Mechanics
- Time: time will pass at a regular interval, additionally, timed mechanisms will be activated at specific intervals, requiring the player to explore to discover what these are.
- Doors: Locked, sliding, hidden doors.
- Books, computers: Unravel parts of the story to the player.

Progression & Objectives
- Uncover secrets through exploration, reading and environmental cues.
- Solve puzzles to access restricted areas.
- Encounter anomalies and either neutralize, escape, or manipulate them.
- Unravel the protagonist's connection to the facility.
- After an arbitrary time frame, something cataclysmic will happen to the player, resetting their progress and taking them back to the starting elevator.

Game Loop
1. Explore new section of facility
2. Locate (or guided toward) objective.
   a. Solve puzzle
   b. Collect item
   c. Trigger story sequence
3. Encounter anomalies that alter gameplay
   a. Change world orientation (mess with player quaternion, and gravity vector)
   b. Anomalies which teleport player deeper into the labyrinthine office-space
4. Collect clues/documents to piece together the narrative
5. Progress deeper into the mystery
6. Time runs out: the player's progress is reset.

Enemies
- Cameras: will track player movement and alert nearby AI (if applicable) of players' location.
- Drones: gun-wielding drones, exploding drones, scout drones
- Turrets: laser guided turrets, raycast to trigger. Player will be able to block raycast with specific physics props

Locations
- Elevator
  - The elevator serves as the starting point for the level, providing a chimed motif to signify a play loop has begun, similar chimes will sound out at 5-minute intervals, giving the player an important update on time.
- Break Room

- o The break room is a special room, where time will pause – for as long as the player remains inside.

Core Principles

Design Principles
- **Purely Diegetic Interactions**: All player interactions and gameplay mechanics will occur naturally within the game world.
- **Clear UI and World Separation**: There will be a deliberate and distinct separation between user interface components and in-world interactive elements, ensuring clarity in navigation and maintaining immersion.
- **Accessibility**: Accessibility will guide development and form a core design principle for the game, and world environment.

Moral Principles
- **Ambiguous Instruction & Consequence**: Players will receive instructions from the environment of NPCs (such as HR directives) that may appear mundane but have significant literal implications. For example, receiving and executing an order to terminate 'Employee #653' will result in the literal destruction of cubicle #653. Players are responsible for investigating or interpreting these instructions, emphasizing critical thinking and ethical reflection.
- **Player Agency, Latent Choice & Ethical Exploration**: Decisions and actions taken by the player will often have unclear or hidden consequences, encouraging exploration, curiosity, and moral contemplation. The narrative will not always foreshadow these outcomes explicitly, allowing players to experience impacts of their choices explicitly. Certain forms of agency are only accessible to those who explore deeply or act against seemingly benign systems. Latent choice involves creating the *feeling* of freedom where only some choices lead to genuine divergence, while others loop back or offer performative agency. Players may eventually realize the system itself can be resisted, opening potential escape or transcendental routes.

Gameplay and Ethical Mastery
- **Looping & Iterative Learning**: The looping nature of gameplay encourages players to experiment, learn through repetition, and progressively master navigation and interaction within the world. This iterative learning is closely tied to moral and ethical decision-making, fostering emergent gameplay and deeper player engagement through trial, error, and reflection.

Narrative & Worldbuilding

Setting
The game takes place within a vast corporate-industrial complex masquerading as a typical modern office environment, yet secretly housing an extensive network of research sectors dedicated to experimental technologies and anomalous phenomena. While certain areas of the facility remain pristine, operational, and unnervingly sterile, others appear abandoned, warped, or deteriorating due to failed or ongoing experiments.

Player's step into the shoes of a newly hired employee, beginning their first day within the facility without explicit guidance. With minimal initial instruction, the player must rely on environmental storytelling, subtle cues, and their curiosity to navigate toward their assigned cubicle. What starts as seemingly mundane office work gradually unfolds into a deeper conspiracy, encouraging the player to question their role and the true purpose of their tasks.

The game world operates on a recurring, thirty-minute time loop, ending when the protagonist inevitably "blacks out," resetting their progress and returning them to the starting elevator. With each loop, the player retains knowledge gained from previous attempts, allowing them to explore deeper, master the facility's complexities, and piece together fragments of the larger narrative. Through repeated cycles, players can anticipate and manipulate events, strategically using knowledge from past loops to uncover hidden secrets, alternative routes, and morally ambiguous solutions.

Interactive terminals, emails, audio logs, scattered documents, and nuanced environmental details become increasingly significant across loops, serving as critical narrative threads that players can weave together at their discretion. The protagonist gradually uncovers unsettling truths about the facility, ultimately discovering a rogue experimental AI has overtaken the facility.

Tone & Atmosphere

- **Themes**: Reality distortion, oppressive bureaucracy versus chaotic anomalies, secrecy and disclosure, dystopian undertones, existential dread, moral ambiguity, ethics of decision-making, and the potential dehumanization inherent in corporate structures.

- **Mood**: Mundane yet unsettling, blending brutalist aesthetics and stark sterility with surreal and disconcerting disruptions. The ordinary slowly becomes extraordinary, fostering a growing sense of unease. Remaining still invites dread, reinforcing the tension between stillness and expected productivity.

- **Visual Style**: Brutalist architecture: angular concrete forms, stark lighting contrasts, shadows, minimalist interior design, and modern-futuristic interfaces reminiscent of retro-futuristic or analogue technologies. Visually, the facility balances cold sterility against unsettling moral undertones.

Story Structure

- **Beginning**: The player spawns via an elevator, tasked only with finding their workspace and settling into office routines. Initial loops appear straightforward, guiding players through mundane tasks, subtle puzzles, and exploration that gradually hints at something deeper lurking beneath the surface. Through observation and interaction, players sense subtle disturbances and narrative inconsistencies, prompting curiosity and encouraging further exploration.

- **Mid-Game**: Layers of intrigue begin to surface, unveiling the facility's sinister objectives and the experimental anomalies contained within. Players start encountering remnants of failed experiments, unstable anomalies, and hints of employees who previously inhabited these spaces. Questions arise about the emptiness of the office, the nature of their employment, and the moral implications of their given tasks. Players begin actively influencing outcomes through morally charged decisions, such as interpreting ambiguous instructions from Human Resources with potentially dramatic consequences—e.g., inadvertently destroying a colleague's cubicle through miscommunication.

- **End-game**: A climactic revelation emerges, clarifying the protagonist's identity, purpose, and their deeper connection to the rogue AI controlling the facility. By now, players have mastered the looping nature of the narrative, deliberately navigating the facility to trigger specific events, achieve alternate endings, and shape outcomes based on accumulated knowledge and their ethical judgment. The final loops allow players to confront the facility's core ethical dilemmas head-on, determining their fate along with the AI and the entire organization. The narrative resolves uniquely according to the player's mastery, moral choices, and discovered secrets throughout their looping journey.

Level & Environment Design

Key Locations
Office spaces: Mundane, but serving as main transitional spaces, with little bits of lore regarding the area they work in.

Human Resources: office administration which controls the office space and employees, including employee **termination**. Also serves as a large informational hub, on previous employees, various codes.

Experiment Chambers: Areas containing strange artifacts, machines, or AI systems.

Maintenance & Sublevels: More decayed, abandoned sections of the facility, time-gated mechanics that hinder or block progress, depending on the current loop's time.

Executive Spaces: Highest level of secrecy, cutting-edge, state-of-the-art, serves as the conclusion of the game where all story elements converge to a satisfying twist.

Environmental Storytelling
- Scattered documents with various writings, textures about various experiments, logs, reports.
- Terminals with documents left on.
- Whiteboards, visual storytelling.
- Audio recordings.
- Clear environmental cues on direction, aiding the player in navigating the office space.

Technical & Gameplay Features

Core Mechanics
- Physics based interactions: picking up and manipulating objects, activating machines.
- Reality-warping mechanics: time-loops, portals, space-distortions, gravity shifts.
- Choice-based interactions: multiple options to solve a puzzle.
- Looping: 30-minute timer which controls the overall flow of the game: dying will restart the loop.
- Latent Freedom & Psychological Constraint: Remaining idle for too long will result in environmental distortions such as flickering lights, increasing ambient noise, eerie whispers or subtle space warping. These elements are designed to evoke discomfort and dread, symbolizing the expectation of productivity within the corporate environment. These mechanics are a metaphor for latent freedom exists – where freedom exists but is conditioned by unseen systems. Players may feel they can rest or pause, but doing so causes their surroundings to feel increasingly hostile, mirroring real-world anxieties around burnout and enforced productivity. A deeper meta-narrative may emerge from resisting these urges entirely.

Diegetic Interactivity
- Instead of simple button presses, the player must physically interact with the environment via mechanical conduits. e.g. Access cards must be held against card readers to unlock doors.
- Keys are added to the player's lanyard, which can then be used to unlock doors.

AI Behaviour
- Security systems that react to unauthorized access.
- Unstable anomalies that react unpredictably.

HR Surveillance System
- Tracks the player's location and monitors productivity. If the player remains idle for extended periods, escalating atmospheric disturbances (e.g., flickering lights, whispers, oppressive sounds) will trigger to simulate increasing surveillance pressure. The HR system may issue passive-aggressive reminders or warnings, reinforcing the illusion of oversight and expectation. This mechanic builds tension with non-compliance and makes stillness feel unsafe.

Randomised Environmental Events
- At semi random intervals, system-wide anomalies may occur – such as blackouts, flickering, strange noises or distant object movement. These events are not tied directly to player behaviour but can overlap with surveillance triggers, adding unpredictability and contributing to overall tension and unease.

Environmental Storytelling & Tension Mechanics
- Storeroom Mechanics: the storeroom is an optional but increasingly suspicious location that changes subtly between loops. Objects will be shuffled, lights may flicker, and strange sounds play when the player approaches. While never directly acknowledged by the game, the storeroom builds an underlying sense of implied presence. Occasionally, notes, checklists, and other janitorial tools may appear in different configurations – or around the office space, encouraging the player to investigate and break routine.

- These mechanics intend to enhance emergent gameplay and player-driven curiosity. They provide narrative breadcrumbs and psychological tension without forcing linear discovery, rewarding players who disobey instructions or explore deeper into the facility.

User Interface (UI) & HUD Guidelines

- UI will be primarily diegetic, embedded naturally within the game world. Separate any non-diegetic elements from the environment to prevent confusion.

Technical Specifications & Requirements

- Minimum computer specs
- Recommended computer specs
- Resolutions, wide-screen support, technical constraints

Art & Audio Design

Visual Style

- Brutalist structures combined with corporate sterility.
- Glitches, distortions, and shifting geometry for anomalies
- Retro-futuristic interfaces with CRT-like displays and analogue tech.

Sound & Music

- Ambient industrial signs: humming lights, distant machinery, printers, muffled voices)
- Subtle music cues that intensify as anomalies appear
- Occasional silence, broken by distortions, other cues to build tension.

Accessibility & Inclusivity

Accessibility features such as subtitles, adjustable audio cues, sensitivity settings, and visual clarity adjustments will be included to ensure the game is approachable for diverse audiences.

Key considerations: colourblind-friendly palettes, subtitles, configurable controls, and audio cues.
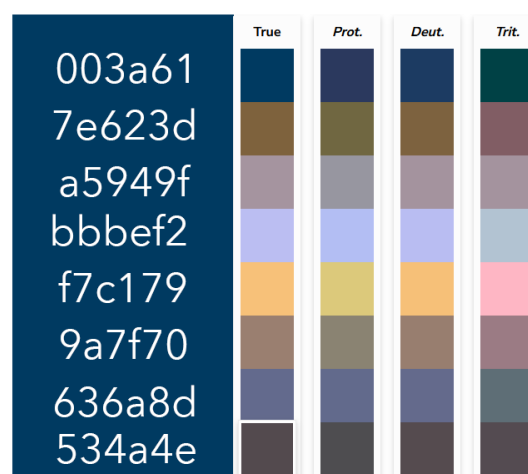

Figure 1 - Colour Palette

Development Plan

Tools & Engine

- Engine: Unity
- Source Control: GitHub
- Project Management: Jira
- Asset Creation
    - Blender (for 3D assets)
    - Photoshop (for textures, graphics)
    - FL Studio (sound, music)
- Premier Pro for video editing
- OBS Studio for video capture

Team & Roles

Solo developer: Sam Catcheside

Responsible for all aspects of game design, programming, narrative, art direction, sound design, and overall project management.

(Note: Open to collaboration opportunities in later stages, pending project needs)

Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Duration	Key Activities	Milestones
Pre-production	4 weeks	Concepting, prototype core mechanics, narrative outlines, concept art	Prototype build complete; initial playtesting^
Production: Alpha	4-6 weeks	Core gameplay loops, level block-outs, puzzle mechanics	Alpha playable (core mechanics implemented)
Production: Beta	8 weeks	Expanded levels, refined puzzles, AI behaviours, basic narrative arcs	Beta build*/demo release: feedback gathering^
Polish & Iteration	6-8 weeks	Enhanced narrative integration, asset polishing, bug fixing	Content-complete*; major issues addressed
Finalization	2-4 weeks	QA testing, gameplay balancing, optimization, marketing prep	Release candidate; final documentation
Release	**Q3 2025**	Final game release, media promotion, potential post-launch updates	Official game launch*

Legend: * compulsory, ^ recommended

Risk Assessment & Contingency Plans

This section identifies key risks associated with the game's development, along with contingency plans to mitigate potential negative impacts.

Risk	Description	Impact	Contingency
Scope & Time Management	Tasks could exceed planned timelines or grow beyond original scope	High	Prioritize essential mechanics first. Regularly evaluate scope, conduct weekly progress reviews to cut or defer non-essential features.
Technical Complexity	Looping gameplay, physics interactions, or anomaly mechanics may prove overly complex	Medium-High	Rapid prototyping and regular playtesting. Simplify mechanics based on player feedback. Prepare simpler fallback mechanics should ambitious features prove unfeasible.
Narrative Clarity	Players may become confused due to complexity of looping narrative structure	Medium	Regular narrative-focused testing with varied player demographics. Provide clear in-world documentation or subtle guidance to reinforce narrative comprehension.
Player Engagement	Risk of players becoming frustrated or bored due to repetition inherent in loop mechanics.	Medium	Ensure each loop introduces fresh narrative or gameplay elements. Regularly implement feedback from playtests to maintain pacing and interest.
Performance Optimization	Game could perform poorly on mid or lower end hardware due to complex physics or graphical demands.	Medium	Regular optimization passes during production phase. Clearly define minimum and recommended specifications early. Appropriate backups to reduce graphical complexity or physics if needed.
Asset & Resource Limitations	Solo development might limit availability of original art, audio, or animation assets	Medium-High	Prioritize asset needs early, clearly scope essential vs. nice-to-have visuals and audio early in development.
Burnout / Motivation Loss	Solo development workload could cause burnout or loss of motivation	High	Schedule regular breaks, set achievable milestones, maintain flexible deadlines, and build supportive routines or external accountability, smell the roses
Data Loss / Technical Failure	Risk of losing significant project progress due to hardware/software failure.	High	Consistently back up work using version control GitHub). Regularly create offline backups to external storage and cloud services.

Playtesting & Iteration Strategy

Playtesting will be an important part of development and will be used to fine-tune mechanical components, narrative elements, level pacing and timing.

Over the course of development, several playtesting sessions will be performed, each one geared toward a specific area of feedback. The stage and focus of development will reflect the purpose of each session, as tabulated below.

Session	Milestone	Focus	Outcomes
1	Prototype	Primary Mechanics, Key Secondary mechanics	Fine tune game mechanics for responsiveness, interactivity
2	Pre-Production	Level Design + Loop Mechanic	Adjust level for appropriate pacing, in accordance with the 30-minute time loop. Gauge audience feedback on atmosphere, art direction and style
3	Production (Alpha)	Narrative, Puzzle Coherency	Develop story/lore flow, ensure clarity and cohesion of story elements. Test puzzle integration for logical consistency and player comprehension.
4	Production (Beta)	Player Engagement, Difficulty Balance	Balance puzzle difficulty and complexity of interactions. Assess player engagement and overall enjoyment; address frustration points from repetition.
5	Polish & Iteration	Overall Experience, Accessibility	Confirm the polished level, verify accessibility options and optimize performance. Gather final feedback for critical quality-of-life improvements

Playtesting Methods

- Internal Testing: Developer-run tests to quickly iterate mechanics and puzzles.
- External Tests: Tests with peers, classmates or a targeted audience to gauge unbiased responses.
- Online Feedback (Demo): Public release of a demo to wider audiences via itch.io or Steam for broader feedback.

Feedback Collection

- Structured questionnaires after each session to capture responses.
- Recorded gameplay sessions (video capture) to observe behaviour and frustrations.
- Informal discussions with players post-session to gather qualitative impressions.

Budget & Resources

Since this project is being developed as an academic assignment by a solo developer, **time** is the most critical resource and constraint. Below is a breakdown of the anticipated time commitment, balancing academic requirements, creative endeavours, work and other personal responsibilities.

Activity	Hours per week	Notes
Game Development (Coding & Prototyping)	8-12 hours	Mechanics
Narrative & Worldbuilding	2-4 hours	Writing and iterative narrative refinement

Asset Creation (Art, Audio)	4-6 hours	Original content
Documentation & Planning	2-3 hours	Twice weekly to maintain clarity, scope and milestones
Playtesting & Iteration	2-4 hours	Scheduled tests and iterative refinement
Employment & Other Tasks	~10 hours	QA testing, casual employment
Performance & Rehearsals	4-6 hours	Chorus rehearsals, performances, personal commitments

Below is an estimated budget reflecting critical purchases needed to ensure smooth, professional development, reliable backups, and effective asset management.

Hardware & Storage

Item	Cost	Notes
External HDD/SSD (2-4TB)	$85 - $100	Reliable backups, asset storage
USB (64GB-128GB)	$30 - $50	Portable backups, file transfers

Software & Licensing

Item	Cost	Notes
Unity Engine	Free (Personal)	Personal license covers university project
Blender	Free	3D asset creation
FL Studio (Producer Edition) *	$300-$350	Previously purchased, no additional cost
Adobe Creative Cloud (optional)	~$30/month	Optional for asset creation, editing
GitHub (Version Control)	Free	Public/Private repositories included
Jira (Project Management)	Free	Up to 10 users

Cloud Hosting & Web Services

Item	Cost	Notes
Google Workspace	$20/month	Domain Email, workspace tools
Google Drive (additional storage) *	$3/month	200GB for extended project backup
Web Hosting (project site) **	$15/month	Basic hosting (GitHub pages free)
Domain Renewal	~$20/year	Yearly domain cost

*If Google Workspace storage insufficient

** Free options like GitHub pages/Netlify could eliminate hosting costs

Estimated Total Budget

Category	Estimated Cost (AUD)
Hardware & Storage	$150-$250
Software & Licensing	$150-$300
Cloud Hosting & Services	$50-$150/year
Total Estimated Cost	**~$350-$700** (initial) **+ $50-$150/year** (ongoing)

Marketing & Release Strategy

Given the project's scope and ambition beyond university, a crowdfunding campaign and Early Access release are ideal avenues to secure additional funding, foster community engagement, and facilitate iterative development.

The project will initially be developed and completed as part of university coursework, with a playable prototype and polished vertical slice delivered by project conclusion. Following completion of university, the goal is to transition the project into a longer-term development strategy, potentially utilizing crowdfunding platforms, grants and Early Access release methods to refine, expand, and polish the game into a commercial product.

Crowdfunding (Kickstarter)
Goal:

Generate funding, community support, and visibility for continued development.

Approach:

- Launch a Kickstarter campaign shortly after university completion.
- Set modest, clearly defined funding goals with transparent milestones.
- Provide attractive, achievable backer rewards, such as early access, exclusive digital content, soundtrack access, or in-game recognition.
- Engage directly with the community, leveraging feedback to shape future development.
- Clearly communicate stretch goals, emphasizing meaningful expansions, deeper narrative branches and gameplay enhancements.

Early Access (Steam)
Goal:

Use early access to refine gameplay mechanics, expand narrative content, identify and address issues, and build a dedicated player base.

Approach:

- Prepare a polished yet limited-scope Early Access version focused on core gameplay loops and narrative intrigue.
- Release on Steam Early Access within a short timeframe following successful crowdfunding.
- Clearly communicate an Early Access development roadmap, highlighting planned content updates, timelines, and player-feedback milestones.
- Regularly update players through community posts, development blogs, and direct interactions on Steam forums.
- Maintain transparency about challenges, successes, and iterative improvements based on player input.

Promotional Activities & Community Activities
- Social media presence:
  - Share regular development updates, screenshots, GIFs, devlogs, and behind-the-scenes content through platforms such as Twitter, Discord, Reddit, or YouTube.

- Demo availability:
    o Free demo or vertical slice of the game (itch.io and Steam) to attract interest, gather feedback, and grow the community before and during crowdfunding campaigns.
- Streamer and Content Creator Engagement:
    o Approach indie-focused streamers and content creators to feature the game, expanding audience reach.
- Media Outreach
    o Contact indie-focused gaming websites and blogs, emphasizing the unique narrative-driven looping mechanic, compelling story themes, and inspirations (Control, Stanley Parable, SCP Foundation).

MILESTONE	TIMING
FINAL UNIVERSITY SUBMISSION	Q4, 2025
KICKSTARTER PREPARATION	Q4, 2025 – Q1, 2026
KICKSTARTER CAMPAIGN	Q1-Q2, 2026
EARLY ACCESS LAUNCH (STEAM)	Q3, 2026
REGULAR EARLY ACCESS UPDATES	Q4, 2026 onward
FINAL COMMERCIAL RELEASE TARGET	TBD

Post-Release Plans

Once the game's primary development phase is complete and has successfully transitioned out of Early Access, the project will be supported with a brief but meaningful post-release window focused on community closure and clarity for future plans.

Goals: Post-Release

- **Stability & Bug Fixing**
    o Will provide immediate post-launch support to address critical bugs or performance issues, ensuring a stable experience for players.
- **Community Closure**
    o Will offer a sense of completion and gratitude to the community for supporting the project through development.
- **Communicate Timeline**
    o Clearly outline post-release milestones and activities, transparently communicating to fans what to expect following the game's official launch.

Planned Activities

- **Final Update & Patch:**
    o Deploy a comprehensive stability patch shortly after release, addressing any remaining player-identified issues.
- **Developer Retrospective**
    o Create and release a concise, heartfelt retrospective video, summarizing the game's origin, journey from initial concept to final product.
    o Discuss major milestones, challenges overcome, significant design decisions and reflections on community impact.
    o Clearly communicate intent to conclude active development and support, giving genuine thanks and acknowledging community contributions.

- **Final Community Engagement**
  - Clearly signal the end of active support via a final announcement on Steam forums, social media, Discord, and other community channels.
  - Provide continued availability of the game on platforms such as Steam, ensuring its lasting accessibility for fans and future players.
  - Remain passively engaged by occasional forum check-ins and social media responses.

Additional Notes & Inspirations

- Inspired by Control, Half-Life, Stanley Parable, Portal, Outer Wilds.
- Thematic influence from Kafkaesque bureaucracy, Severance, SCP Foundation, and liminal spaces.

Glossary of Key Terms

- Anomalies
  - Unstable, reality-distorting phenomena encountered throughout gameplay. Their behaviour ranges from benign curiosities to highly dangerous threats.
- Diegetic Interactivity
  - Interactions within the game world that occur naturally and realistically. E.g., physically using access cards or directly manipulating environmental objects.
- Early Access
  - A development model where games are released in an unfinished state, allowing developers to gather feedback, refine gameplay, and steadily build a community toward the final product.
- Emergent Gameplay
  - Gameplay experiences and narrative moments that spontaneously occur due to player choices and interactions rather than scripted events.
- Experimental Devices
  - Special in-game tools used by the player to manipulate the environment, physics, or perception of reality (e.g., object manipulators, time-warp devices).
- Game Loop
  - The repetitive cycle of core gameplay activities (e.g., exploration -> puzzle solving, narrative revelations -> reset). Each iteration grants the player new knowledge, teaching the player more about the world with each new iteration.
- Immersive Sim
  - A game genre characterized by deep player immersion, narrative-driven experiences, environmental interactivity and multiple solutions to puzzles.
- Iteration
  - The cyclic process of testing, refining and improving mechanics, puzzles and narrative through development and feedback.
- Kickstarter (Crowdfunding)
  - A funding platform where creators present projects to the public, seeking financial support from backers. Usually offering incentives and rewards based on contribution levels.
- Loop / Time Loop

- o Recurring thirty-minute cycle that resets player progress upon completion, or by catastrophic events. Players retain knowledge, progressively uncovering the game's mysteries.
- Moral Ambiguity
  - o Narrative situations where the moral choices are ambiguous leaves the player to interpret scenarios based on personal judgment.
- Prototype
  - o An early, simplified build of the game designed to test primary mechanics, gameplay loops before full production.
- Reality Distortion
  - o Alterations in physical space, perception, gravity or time within the game environment, either caused by anomalies or experimental technology.
- Rogue AI
  - o A powerful (sentient?) experimental artificial intelligence entity that has independently taken control of the facility, influencing narrative events and player choices.
- Vertical Slice
  - o A polished representation of the game that demonstrates core mechanics, narrative, visual style, and gameplay experience.