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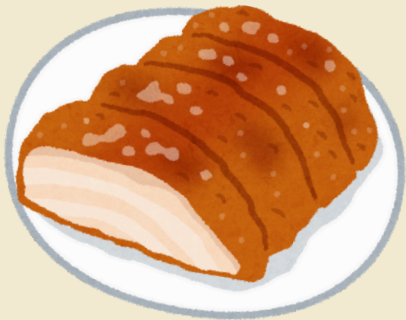
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## Elevator Pitch

Working hard to make a living is something that everyone can relate to. But how far will you go to satisfy your customers and do your job? ClusterCluck tackles this question in a exaggerated and slapstick manner, by putting chickens in a kitchen where they are serving chicken nuggets to other chickens. Your dedication to serving customers is tested when the kitchen runs out of ingredients... Where else could you obtain more chicken...? ( $\tau_{\text{=}} \text{J}_{\text{=}}$ )

ClusterCluck is a 2D top-down restaurant simulator with a narrative twist. Players play as two chickens who run a fast food joint where they make and sell nuggets to other chicken customers. The gameplay follows a typical restaurant simulator loop, as follows:

## Gameplay Loop

- Players pick up raw chicken
- Players grind up chicken
- Players batter the chicken into nuggets
- Players fry nuggets
- Players serve fried chicken nuggets to chicken customers
- Players collect cash
- Repeat



However, when the supply of chicken is depleted, the game transitions to a Player versus Player shoot em' up environment until one Player remains. The surviving Player then has to cook and serve the defeated Player to the customer.

## Concept Research

The game's dining mechanics are inspired from restaurant management games like *Overcooked* and *Penguin Diner*. The dark humour and cannibalistic nature of the game is reminiscent of movies like *The Menu* and *Delicatessen* and games like *Godlike Burger* and *Cannibal Cuisine*. The cooking gameplay is combined with chicken sacrifice, bringing a darker take to the typical *Overcooked* formula.

The game's dark humour is similarly found in many forms of media in popular culture, in games like *Godlike Burger* and *Cannibal Cuisine*. Both games involve killing guests to cook and serve them as food in a lighthearted and comedic way, conveyed through the game's art style and exaggerated motions.



*Godlike Burger*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjcqfP8IOa8>



*Cannibal Cuisine*. <https://thisgengaming.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Cannibal-Cuisine-brawl-1024x576.jpg>

In the movie 'Delicatessen', where food is scarce, a butcher lures his victims using advertisements to murder and sell them as a cheap source of meat to other customers. The setting of the movie is surreal and darkly comedic, which enables to filmmakers to explore complex themes like desperation and erosion of morality.



<https://tonemadison.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/delicatessenfilm-hed.jpg>



<https://assets.mubicdn.net/images/artworks/545733/images-original.png?1685562449>

# Thematic Research

## Cognitive Dissonance

As the narrative unfolds and players gradually realise the meat supply is unsustainable, they are faced with increasingly questionable decisions—such as continuing to serve food at all costs or sacrifice their co-op partner to keep the business running. This introduces **cognitive dissonance**, a psychological phenomenon where individuals experience mental discomfort when their actions conflict with their moral beliefs.

In ClusterCluck, players might believe that harming others is wrong, yet find themselves justifying these actions within the context of gameplay for efficiency, progress or survival. This tension is heightened by the game's humorous, exaggerated tone, which encourages players to compartmentalise their ethical discomfort and continue playing. The dark comedy softens the impact of these moral breaches, allowing players to laugh at what would otherwise be disturbing—an emotional release that helps resolve dissonance.

To preserve this balance, ClusterCluck frames its events clearly as satire, ensuring players perceive their actions as part of a fictional, absurd world rather than a reflection of personal ethics. This lets the discomfort stay thought-provoking but entertaining, rather than paralyzing or off-putting.

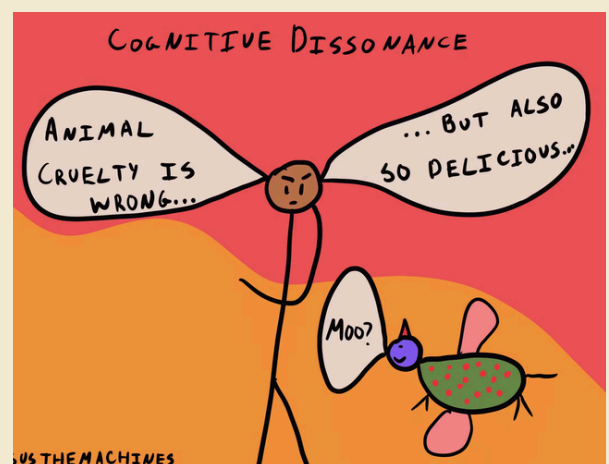
### COGNITIVE DISSONANCE THEORY

Cognitive dissonance is an internal conflict that occurs in a person when they hold two conflicting beliefs simultaneously.

DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
Cognitive dissonance theory states that our minds go through a process of confusion and logical conflict called cognitive dissonance when faced with new information that conflicts with existing information. We aim to resolve this to return to a state of cognitive equilibrium.	Smoking vs. Health: Smoking is generally known to be harmful to health, yet people continue to smoke despite this knowledge. It presents a cognitive dissonance for the smoker who must accept that their behavior contradicts their beliefs about health and well-being.

HELPFULPROFESSOR.COM

<https://helpfulprofessor.com/cognitive-dissonance-examples/>



<https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/cognitive-dissonance>

## Inspiration

At the end of the movie 'The Menu', the head chef, obsessed with his craft - sets his restaurant on fire, killing all the guests, staff and himself, sparing only one diner.

The lone diner watches the restaurant burn as she enjoys a cheeseburger, symbolising her victory and freedom. A similar concept occurs at the end of our game when the winner cooks the dead player to the last customer.



<https://static1.scrdn.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/anya-taylor-joy-as-margot-eating-a-cheeseburger-in-the-menu.jpg>

## The twist, catharsis and closure

Much of the early gameplay echoes other restaurant management games, where players must serve customers before their patience runs out to earn money. The pixel art style and background music serves to deepen that impression further. The twist occurs at the end of the game where one player must kill the other to serve the final customer when supplies of nuggets run out.

### Twist

- At the end of the food serving gameplay, the two players are given shotguns. The player that kills the other wins the game.
- Players who have been occupied managing their diner and serving customers are abruptly thrust into a situation where they have to react quickly for their survival.
- The background music suddenly changes, changing the atmosphere from a busy but relaxed restaurant to an intense and chaotic shootout scene.
- The scarcity of chicken nuggets and the need to eliminate the other player dramatically increases the stakes and tension of the game.

### Catharsis

- The stress of managing a diner is released in the final moment when players shoot at each other.
- The shock of the twist and the subsequent shootout allows players to experience and purge strong emotions, especially about killing their teammate.
- The killing of the other player gives a strong and darkly humorous conclusion to the game's cannibalistic theme.

### Closure

- The cannibalistic nature of chicken players serving chicken customers chicken nuggets reaches its logical, if extreme conclusion, providing a narrative and thematic closure of the game.
- The change in gameplay at the end is a climatic end to the player's journey.
- Players are forced to confront the implications of their actions since they still have to cook their dead teammate to serve the last customer.



## Gameplay

Clustercluck's main gameplay mechanic revolves around cooking and preparing nuggets for customers. There are three main stations for cooking: the Meat Grinder, Batter Bucket & Deep Fryer. Additionally, there is also the Freezer, where raw meat is stored, and the Table, where players can put down items.

Players press the [Interact] button to pick up items and bring them to the respective stations to be prepared. When an item is picked up, players carry it over their heads. Players press [Interact] again to drop the item at its corresponding cooking station.

Some stations require no player input to function and will display a timer while processing the item. Other stations requires the player to interact with it to proceed. Each station is distinctly designed for clarity and timers are displayed over the station while processing food. Below are the stations in the kitchen:



### Freezer/Corpse [x1]

- Contains a limited amount of Raw Meat
- Freezer has different sprites representing full (more than 50%), depleted (less than 50%) and empty (0%)
- Corpse shares sprite with Raw meat and is spawned by a player killed in PvP
- Players can interact to pick up Raw Meat



### Meat Grinder [x1]

- Accepts 1x Raw Meat > Outputs 3x Chicken Slop (displayed as 3 sprites on the table)
- Automatic - Does not Require Player Supervision to Function
- Cook Time 7-10s



### Batter Bucket [x2]

- Accepts 1x Chicken Slop > Outputs 1x Raw Nugget
- Manual - Requires Player supervision to operate (Player must press alternating buttons)
- Time taken to complete: 5s (30 ticks)



### Deep Fryer [x2]

- Accepts 1x Raw Nugget > Outputs 1x Chicken Nugget
- Automatic - Does not Require Player Supervision to Function



### Table [x1]

- Empty Table with 3 slots.
- Players can Place and Pick up items from the Table.



# Gameplay

## Movement & Interaction

Players have the ability to move around in all directions through the use of the controller joystick.

They can utilise a single action button to pick up and place ingredients at their respective cooking stations. Items picked up are displayed above their head along with a thought bubble directing them to the corresponding station.

## Restaurant Profit

To facilitate the narrative progression in a way that does not spoil the ending, players are provided with a decoy goal of earning a certain amount of profit for their restaurant.

Customers spawn in the seats in the diner and start an internal "patience timer". They have three different sprites to reflect their levels of patience, and based on how fast their order is completed, customers tip more money:



S5 - Satisfied  
(within 15s)



S3 - Annoyed  
(within 25s)



S1 - Irritated  
(25s and above)

## Gameplay

There are five seats in the diner, and each empty seat has a 30% chance to spawn a customer every second. This chance increases to 50% after 3 seconds and a customer is force spawned after 5s.

Orders are completed when a cooked chicken nugget is placed on the customer's plate, and will net the players money based on the customer's patience timer. Completing an order removes the customer from the seat and resets the spawn timer.

### PvP Kill Mechanic

Lastly, the game also has a secret player versus player mechanic that is only triggered at the end of the game. Once the freezer has been fully depleted of meat, one last customer will spawn. The mechanic is then activated.

When activated, the soundtrack changes to the second variant and the two players pull out shotguns. The players' new goal is to kill the other player and cook them for the final customer.

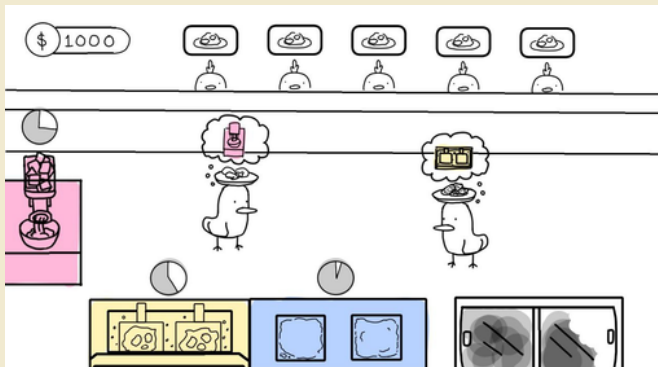
The shotguns are single shot weapons with a 0.8s delay between shots. Each player has 3 lives shown by a health bar above them.

They aim with the right joystick and fire with the [Right Trigger] button. When hit by 3 shots, the player will die and turn into raw meat. The remaining player has to cook and serve the final customer to end the game.

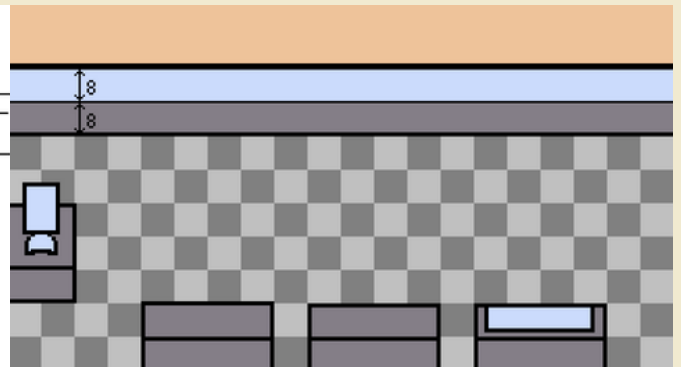


*Player Health*

## Layout



*Draft Sketch*

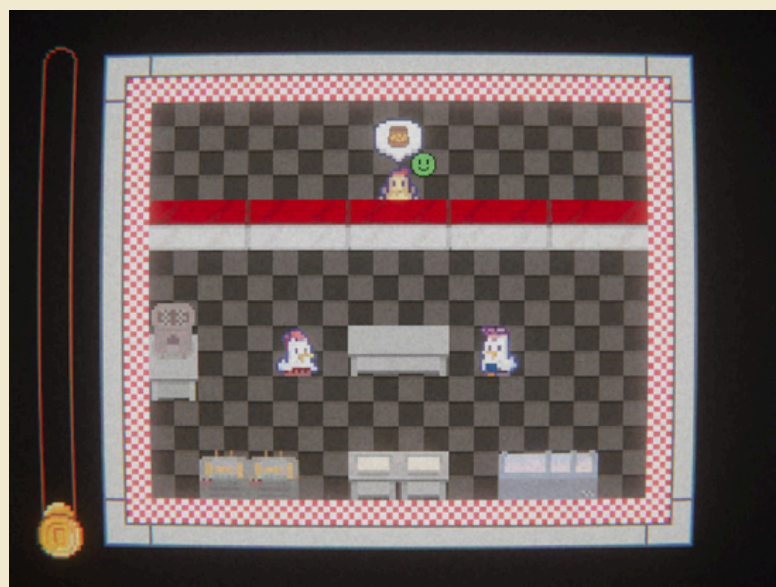


*Pixel Draft Layout*

The game has a simple single-screen layout, mainly focusing on the kitchen. The various cooking stations are scattered throughout the kitchen, and when in use, have timer UIs displayed above them. The top section of the screen is where the customer seats are and customers spawn in by popping up in the seats with their order displayed above their head.

The characters' movements are limited to the kitchen area, and when an item is picked up, its sprite is displayed above their head along with a thought bubble directing them to the corresponding station.

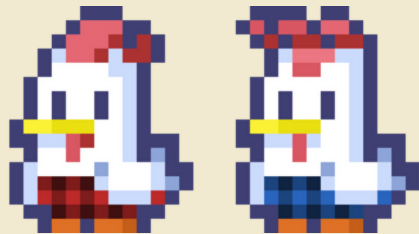
Below is the finalised layout with the station sprites and counter area where the customers will seat.



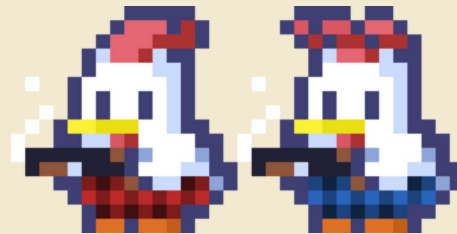
*Screenshot of Game Layout*

## Art Style

All assets in the game are made with pixel art. The environment is built with a 16x16px tileset. Similarly, players are represented by two 16x16px chicken sprites with different combs and flannels.



*Player 1 (Left) and Player 2 (Right)*



*Player 1 (Left) and Player 2 (Right)*

There are five different types of customers visiting the diner. From left to right, a chicken dressed as Michael Thompson, a Rhode Island chicken, a Silkie chicken (and variations).



*The different patrons in ClusterCluck*

Additionally, all UI assets such as the instructional hints, player HP bar, revenue, timers etc. are also designed with a pixel art style to ensure that the game has a consistent design language and style.



*Controls present in the game*



## Technical Info

The game is a 2D top-down simulation game made in the Unity Engine. Unity contains many features that support a 2D pixel-style game, such as its Tilemap system, which will make the development process much smoother.

Additionally, ClusterCluck also uses Unity's Input System, which allows for the use of Gamepads. This lends to a smoother control scheme and better game feel.

# Audio

## Overview

The audio in the game is to create a more engaging experience. It creates an immersive environment and also provides important player feedback as they are playing the game.

It has 2 phases: restaurant phase and the combat phase.

## Sound Effects

The Sound Effects (SFX) of ClusterCluck uses a combination of literal and comical sound effects. For example, if the player is cutting food on the chopping board, there is a sound of the foley recorded in real life, with additional bubbly sounds to compliment the cute and casual theme of the game.

SFX is used to complement players' interactions like pressing UI buttons or interacting with objects during gameplay.

## Background Music

There are 2 Background Music (BGM) in the game, one for each phase in the game. The setting starts as a busy but relaxed restaurant, then it drastically changes to a intense and chaotic music.

## Audio

Theme	Description	References
Restaurant	A Bossa nova style of music. Steady, yet calming to match a chill and busy theme. This will also be played at menus.	<u>Overcooked! 2</u> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meHVEqe4AMA&amp;list=PLndid7j4vly5Aj0vwICw1oRxPpaW5Q9-N&amp;index=7&amp;ab_channel=Zyrac">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=meHVEqe4AMA&amp;list=PLndid7j4vly5Aj0vwICw1oRxPpaW5Q9-N&amp;index=7&amp;ab_channel=Zyrac</a>
Battle	A fast rock music to match the intense and chaotic setting when the 2 players are fighting each other.	<u>Super Meat Boy!</u> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is30-gYgFXs&amp;list=PL1A86CAFBA7B7323E&amp;index=2&amp;ab_channel=OnlineOST">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=is30-gYgFXs&amp;list=PL1A86CAFBA7B7323E&amp;index=2&amp;ab_channel=OnlineOST</a>

### Voice-overs

As the player and other characters in the game world are chickens, the sound of a chicken will be used to represent them talking, like when customers are ordering food, dialogues or other interjections like "ouch!", "ugh", "ah!", etc.



# Audio

## Production

Audio uses a mix of foley recording, SFX and instruments from synthesizers and the school library.

Foley is recorded using a condenser microphone, an audio interface, and a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW). Further edits like mixing and adding effects will be done in the DAW as well.

The DAW we are using is FL Studio. It takes in audio recordings from the microphone and it has instruments we can use to write and produce music.

BGMs need to be loop-able to avoid abrupt change to the music.

The school has Metadigger, a library of sounds that we can use for this projects. It will be especially helpful for sound that are difficult to record such as gunshots, explosions, etc.

# Audio

## Implementation

As we are using the Unity engine, audio is scripted in the editor. The timing of when it plays is controlled through scripts. For example, when a player clicks a button, a script will call the sound effect for the button clicks.

For BGMs, they are played based on the phase of the game and are looped.

## Accessibility

Some features to implement if time permits:

### Volume settings

For a more customised audio experience for the player, there are two separate audio settings: one for SFX and one for BGM. The players can then adjust each settings in their preference.

## Audio Style Guide

### Mono Audio

All SFX are recorded and implemented in mono. There will be no 3D audio, such as panning, attenuation, etc. This is to avoid confusion and distractions for the players as the audio should complement the visuals instead of an additional sense that the player has to think about. BGMs will be mixed accordingly to create a fuller sounding music.

### BGMs

For the two BGMs, the Restaurant theme is in the background to avoid distracting the player from other audible feedback from the SFX. On the other hand, the Battle theme is meant to be chaotic so it will be generally louder, intruding the audio space to create a more chaotic feel when the players are attacking each other.

## Schedule

The team is split into three sections, the Gameplay Team, the Art Team and the Documentation Team.

### Gameplay

Clement (Implementation)  
Yun Jing (Implementation)  
Daniel (Design)  
Jeryl (Audio)

### Art

Ye Jin (Character)  
Joanna (UI)  
Sheryl (Poster)  
Ashley (Logo & Food)  
Darren (Environment)  
Joanne (Environment)

### Documentation

Joanne (Research)  
Darren (Mechanics)  
Daniel (Mechanics)  
Jeryl (Audio)

The Gameplay team will focus on the implementation of mechanics and gameplay, as well as art and audio assets. The Art team will create assets required for the game, such as sprites and animations. The Documentation team will be focused on doing research and documenting the design and mechanics for the game.

Below is the projected schedule for the game's development:

<b>Week 8</b>	Research & Ideation	
<b>Week 9</b>	Finalization of Design	Design Documentation
<b>Week 10</b>	Prototyping	Poster
<b>Week 11</b>	Prototyping	
<b>Week 12</b>	Prototyping	
<b>Week 13</b>	Polishing & Submission	

## Game Poster

Inspired by Penguin Diner's poster of the main protagonist serving food to show the core main mechanic of the game.

