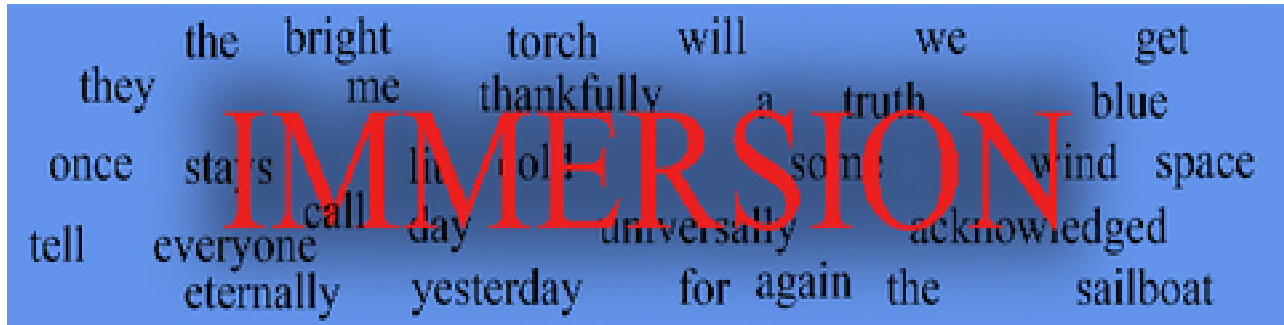


Game Info



Game Title:	<u>Immersion</u>
Type of Game:	Casual
Game Systems:	PC, Xbox 360
Rating:	E10 - T
Demographic:	Men and Women, 15-35
Target Audience:	Men and Women, 21
Game Modes:	Single Player, Level Editor
Competitive Products:	Braid, Bastion
Expected Ship Date:	December 5th, 2012



Game Outline

The game begins with the player's character standing on a translucent platform with words swirling underneath his feet in a giant **Maelstrom**. Out of the disorder arises a cryptic instruction to move forward. As the character walks, words emerge out of the **Maelstrom**; they begin to tell the story of who he is and why he's here.



Game Story:

At first, the character only learns that his name is Jacob. When he reaches the end of the platform he's on, another flies by at a high speed before stopping and returning in the same direction. Jacob jumps on and continues to learn more. After jumping onto a few more platforms Jacob learns that he has recently died and that he is in some sort of purgatory.

From there, the game transfers to four other characters who were near Jacob just before his death. Through their stories the player begins to piece together what happened.

The first person the player gains control of is Daniel, a friend of Jacob's. Sarah is after that, a friend of Jacob's girlfriend. Finally, Jacob's girlfriend, Jessica, is the last story the player hears. From all the bits and pieces, the player learns that Jacob and Jessica had been fighting recently. After some time apart they had decided to reconcile. Jacob calls Jessica and asks her to go for a drive to talk. Jessica agrees and goes to pick up Jacob. On this drive, Jacob apologizes to Jessica for the pain he caused her. As Jessica begins to reply with her own apology, the car begins to drift, drawing ever closer to an abandoned car ahead. Unbeknownst to Jacob, Jessica had been nursing her pain with alcohol. Sadly, Jessica is unable to respond quick enough and they strike the abandoned car.

The player regains control over Jacob and is left with two simple choices: see Jessica one more time or leave. If the player directs Jacob to leave, the game is over. If they direct him to go to Jessica, Jacob will forgive Jessica for her fatal error, and the couple will embrace as the game concludes.

Game Flow:

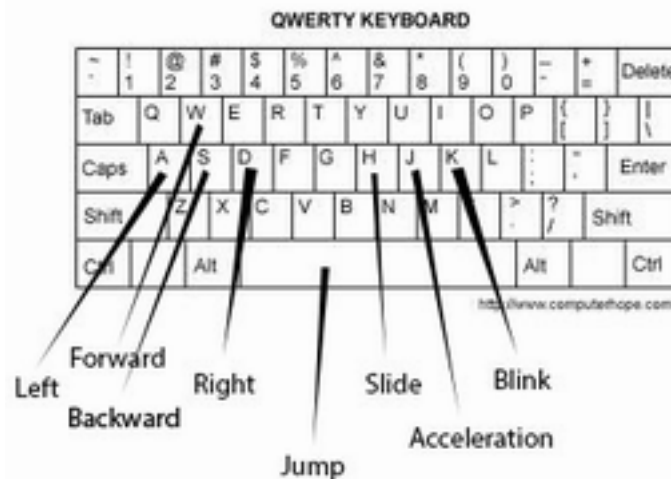
Each level will feature one of the characters jumping from platform to platform. All of the levels will feature the **Maelstrom**, however the backgrounds, fonts and platform styles will change in order to distinguish each character. The world is viewed from a third person isometric angle. Every moment of the game, the player has the same goal of uncovering more of the story. Each time the player is able to direct the character they are controlling onto the next platform, they will get another piece of the story. The larger goal is to reach the end of the level in order to see the next perspective.

The player will be challenged by platforms that are increasingly difficult to jump on, as well as other obstacles that will require new skills to overcome. These are explored in depth in the gameplay section.

Character

As per the story, the player will control five characters throughout the game. Each one is related to the main character, Jacob, and has a different perspective on what happened. Although each character tells a different part of the story, their controls are all the same.

Basic movement is controlled with the traditional W, A, S, and D keys. Each character has the ability to jump from the start. The player executes jumping by pressing the spacebar. This is the main method of getting from platform to platform. Players will encounter different abilities they can collect throughout the game. To gain an ability, the player simply walks into contact with it. After the player has collected different abilities, they can use them by pressing the H, J, and K keys depending on which they want to use. These moves, used in combination with jumping, will get the player everywhere they need to go.



In terms of the story, each character is in their mid-twenties. They all attended the same college and are now entering into careers in the same city: Austin, Texas. Jacob has just gotten a job as a graphic designer at a small advertising company. It's exactly the job he wanted. He and Jessica have been dating for about two years. Daniel knew both Jacob and Jessica before they were dating. He is still looking for work but his prospects are good. He is better friends with Jacob, but gets along with Jessica fine. He is the guy who usually organizes big events for him and his friends. Sarah is Jessica's closest friend; the two have known each other since middle school. Sarah is more introverted and does not hang out with the rest of the characters as much, she prefers one-on-one interaction. When Jessica got frustrated with Jacob, Sarah is the first person she turned to. Finally, Jessica is kind, organized and driven. She just got offered a job as a journalist at a small newspaper. She is anxious about starting the next chapter of her life, but now that she has a job offer, things are beginning to take shape and she is becoming more relaxed. The fight between Jacob and Jessica

transpired over what city the two should live in. Jessica wants to go to a big city, but Jacob is content to stay in Austin with his job. Jessica snaps out of frustration from not having a job, but she did not intend to hurt Jacob.

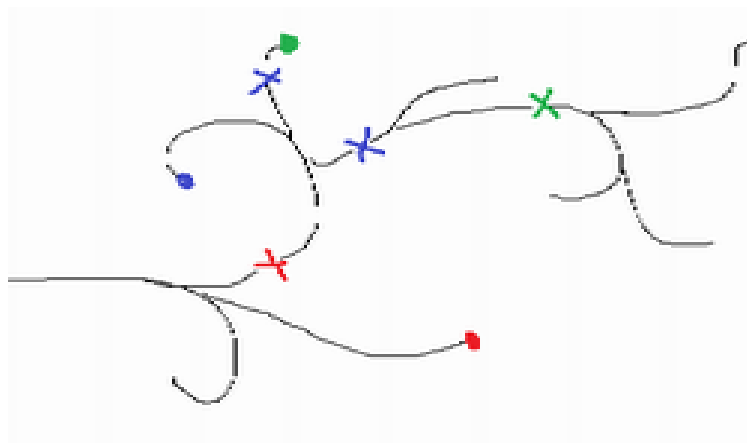
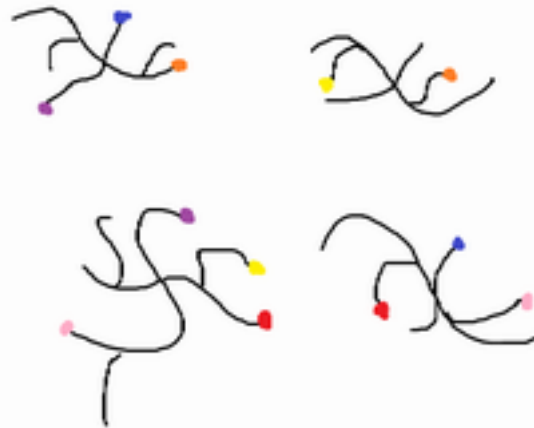
Gameplay

Immersion is a top-down isometric platformer, where the camera is centered on a single hero. The world unfolds as a series of platforms, divided into levels, thematically tied to characters in the story (see Game World).

The path through the game will be semi-linear, with a main story-line that weaves back and forth through the levels, passing in focus from one character to the next.

The diagram to the right shows how an exaggerated example of how the levels may be connected. Colored dots show the connections between the levels. There will be five levels in total, with multiple **sequences** in each level. A sequence is a series of interesting challenges, made up

of the various Game Mechanics and Enemies (see corresponding pages), such as quick-moving platforms. The black lines represent these sequences, which must be passed through to progress in the main story-line, and to get from level to level.



Off of this main storyline will be side-branches, as seen in the diagram to the left (imagine a zoom-in of one of the levels). The bold dots represent **Key Memories** for the hero, that once obtained will allow him to traverse past **Lapses**, or barriers otherwise impassable, represented by the Xs on the map. This will encourage a habit of exploration in the player that will benefit him down the road.

There will be a few points on the map that will serve as **Decision Points**. These are special branches that are one-way, and provide a choice between multiple paths. The path the player chooses will not only affect the sequence he or she must then traverse, it will also reveal different aspects of the story, perhaps highlighting different attributes of one or more of the characters that would otherwise go untold. The choice of paths will correspond with a choice the narrator makes in the story.

The actual gameplay of the journey itself is covered more thoroughly in Game Mechanics.

Game World

The game world is going to be largely abstract, with no defined set pieces. As the player navigates the game they will encounter different abstract locations characterized by unique fonts and color schemes. This definition with font and coloring will help the player realize who holds the information that they are presently discovering.

Throughout the gameplay, as the player uncovers Jacob's story, they will enter level that express the personality of one of his loved ones. Their personality will be expressed through font and color. The diversity of the locations will make the difference between the characters clear to the player. For example, if our character moves on the platform where he will discover his girlfriend's side of the story, the world around him may suddenly be characterized by light pinks and lavenders, and feminine cursive fonts. Whereas if the hero enters a platform where he will find his best friend's perspective, he may find his world darker, characterized by bolder, more masculine fonts.



Game Experience

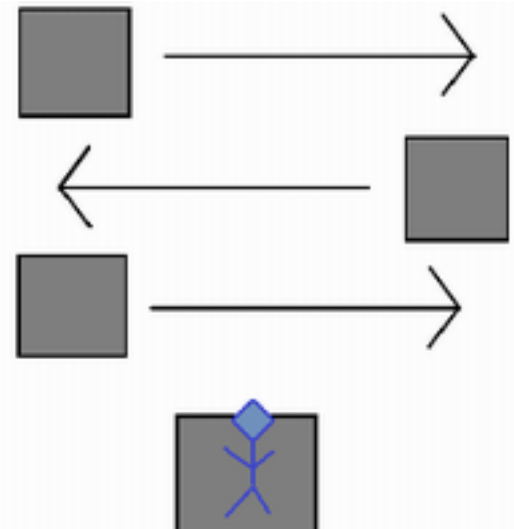
The game opens up in universe of words moving about in a random fashion. Soon meaning begins to materialize out of this **Maelstrom** and the player realizes that in this disorder there is actually definition. Soon the player begins to feel a sense of foreboding as the character begins to realize that some mishap has befallen him. This foreboding will permeate the game, and evoke a desire for closure within the player. The game should conjure up an invested curiosity as the player tries to ascertain the events that led to his character's predicament.

The player should feel a connection to story as they unveil it, as they feel connected to Jacob and seek the truth of his story. The revelations throughout the game will keep the player guessing as to the nature of Jacob's calamity. This will also leave the player with a bit of anxiety over the concern that a secondary character that they have been growing connected to may be guilty of harming Jacob.

All of the foreboding and anxiety, along with the search for closure, will leave the player feeling very alone. Even in the interactions with secondary characters the player will feel alone as the narratives being shared with him are completely one-sided with no input from Jacob. These emotions will be encouraged with simple instrumental music: piano, viola, etc. The music will not be a major element as the narrative playing out should be main focus beyond of the game play. The music will change to give a sense of added severity as called for by the story. The use of singular instrumentals will contribute greatly to the sense of isolation.

Game Mechanics

The main *mechanic* in *Immersion* is the **Moving Platform** (see right). These platforms, in their most basic form, are quickly-moving and must be navigated by the player by jumping from one to the next. Platforms may have rails on one or more sides to prevent the player from jumping/falling off. They are translucent on bottom to reveal the **Void** below the player. Platforms can have various attributes (or a combination), and possible examples include:



Collapsing Platforms will fall into the Void below the player after a certain amount of time after the player lands on them. These platforms require quicker traversal than regular platforms.

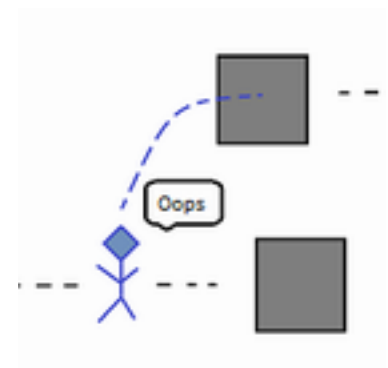
Slippery Platforms have less **friction** than regular platforms, and may be missing rails. This can provide a challenge to the player, but it can also be helpful for getting through certain levels, since speed can be more easily maintained on these platforms.

Bounce Platforms allow the player to jump higher and farther, or to maintain some momentum from the previous jump.

Stable Platforms are those that have no associated hazards and are safe respawn points. They may or may not be moving platforms.

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The primary *hazard* of *Immersion* is the **Void**, the area underneath the player where the **Maelstrom** of words rages. If the player falls into the void by missing a platform, they die but immediately respawn at a recent, stable platform, which should be no more than 30 seconds of gameplay back from the point of death. Other more dynamic hazards will exist and are covered on page 8.



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Collectables and **Powerups** in *Immersion* will take the forms of **Memories**, or significant items from the story unfolding beneath player. They will be placed at more difficult to access areas of the map and at important points in the storyline. **Key Memories** will allow the player to progress past points in the map that are otherwise unreachable called **Lapses**.

Skill Memories are rarer and will grant the player new permanent abilities:

The **Slide** will allow the player to “slide” in one direction at reduced frictions. This allows the player to maintain speed, for instance, to get past Collapsing Platforms. Because the various platforms at significantly different speeds, landing on a platform in a slide will have a very different effect than landing normally.

Acceleration allows the player to speed up very quickly after running in one direction for a few seconds. Jumping while accelerated will carry the player much farther, allowing platforms to be reached from farther away. Combining acceleration with a slide can be very useful for traversing other obstacles. Finding ways to line up enough space to accelerate will provide an additional challenge for the use of acceleration.

The Player can also **Blink**, instantly teleporting a short distance. The blink can be useful both for correcting mistakes and for getting to otherwise inaccessible areas. Unlike the slide and acceleration, blink will have a cooldown.

Enemies

Enemies will not exist in the traditional fashion in *Immersion*. Because of attempt to create a feeling of isolation, the player will not come into contact with other “living” creatures within the world. Instead, there will occasionally be active hazards that will prevent the player from progressing. Such hazards might include:

Bullies are torso-sized balls that follow a path and will knock a player down on contact. If the player is on a platform, this will only slow them down; however, if the player is jumping over the **Void**, this will knock them off course, likely into the void.

Gusters are stationary enemies that will blow wind, either continuously or in bursts that push the player off course. These can force players to time their jumps more carefully. They can be used

Zappers are hovering enemies that will zap anything that passes underneath them. Platforms may pass under zappers, and the player will have to bail off beforehand.

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Rather than “Boss Fights,” Immersion will include a number of **Challenge Sequences** that will force the player to perform at a higher level than normal. These sequences will combine multiple obstacles together in quick progression, and draw on any abilities the player has gained so far in the game. Each level will contain two such sequences: one before the level’s **Skill Memory** is awarded, and one at the end of the level before it can be completed. The challenge that “guards” the skill memory will highlight the difficulties that can be overcome by that skill. The challenge at the end of the level will test the player’s ability to use his or her new skill.

For example, before getting the **Blink** ability, the player may be presented with an incrossable gap, and the only way to get to the other side is to go around. This involves passing through a challenge sequence; however, once the player completes this sequence they are awarded the Blink skill. The only way back will be to blink across the previously incrossable gap. The rest of the level will help to train the player to use blink, and when the player gets to the final challenge sequence, it will involve skillful use of blink.

Cutscenes

There will be no cutscenes as such in *Immersion*, as the story will unfold in text below the player, as described earlier.

Bonus Materials

In-game, the main bonus materials will come about through exploration. Extra **Memories** will be discoverable for players who try side-paths. As well, certain details of the story will unfold on these side-paths that will shed light on events later on in the game. At the end of the game, the player will be able to see how much of the story they uncovered (or didn't), which should encourage replay value.

The main bonus material will be the **Level Editor** that will ship with *Immersion*. This will be the same editor that we will use to design the actual levels of the game and will therefore be fully functional. The editor will not be as polished as the game, but it will give adventurous players the ability to create their own maps. Such an editor is as much a necessity of the game's design as it is a bonus. The levels will be sufficiently complicated that designing them without some visual representation would be very difficult.