

AD4Games: Applying Audio Description in Video Games

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Game Accessibility

Challenges for users with diverse abilities when playing video games

Gaming options for visually-impaired/blind users

- Play simplified versions

- Play with sighted families/friends

- Play audio games

To make games accessible

visual elements => auditory or haptic feedback

AD4Games Project



Brings together

Game developers

Audio describers

Game Players

Academics

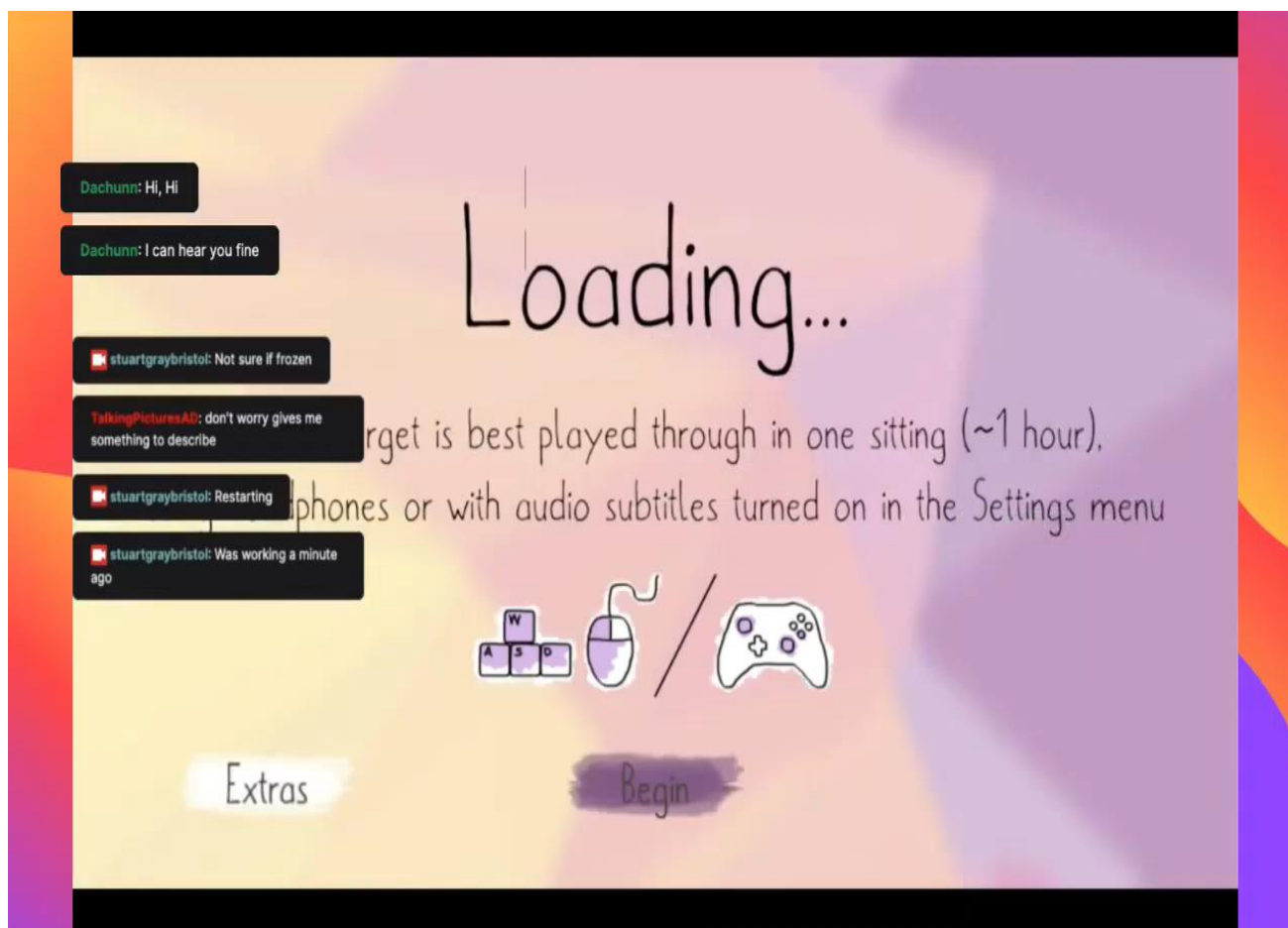


1. Recorded AD of a game play video

Start Timecode	End Timecode	Script
00:03	00:19	Against a background of pastel yellows, pinks and mauves, black text in a handwritten font reads: Before I Forget. Then, the logos for 3 Fold Games, Humble Originals, Made with Unity and FMOD
00:21	00:26	On a menu of options, click 'New Game'
00:27	00:33	Begin a new game? This will delete any existing save data. Click 'Yes'
00:34	01:01	Loading. Before I Forget is best played through in one sitting (around one hour), using headphones or with audio subtitles turned on in the Settings menu. Hand-drawn symbols show options of a mouse and keyboard using the W/A/S/D keys or a gaming console. In the bottom left, a button to select 'Extras'.
01:02	01:05	Pastel shades bleed across the white background
01:09	01:25	The blurred and jerky view of a front porch. There is a window to the right, an internal door to the left and an external door behind. Ahead is a table with undistinguishable objects on it. Above the table, a noticeboard.



2. Live AD of Game Streaming



Audio Describer:

So we find ourselves inside a room in a house an almost colourless room. But outside the window you can see the red bricks of another building and a green bush. The view of the room is blurry but there are...

Sunita: Where am I?

Audio Describer:

But there are some glasses on a table, which have been picked up and turned around.

Sunita: Is this the right place? Ah Dylan will know I'll find him

Audio Describer:

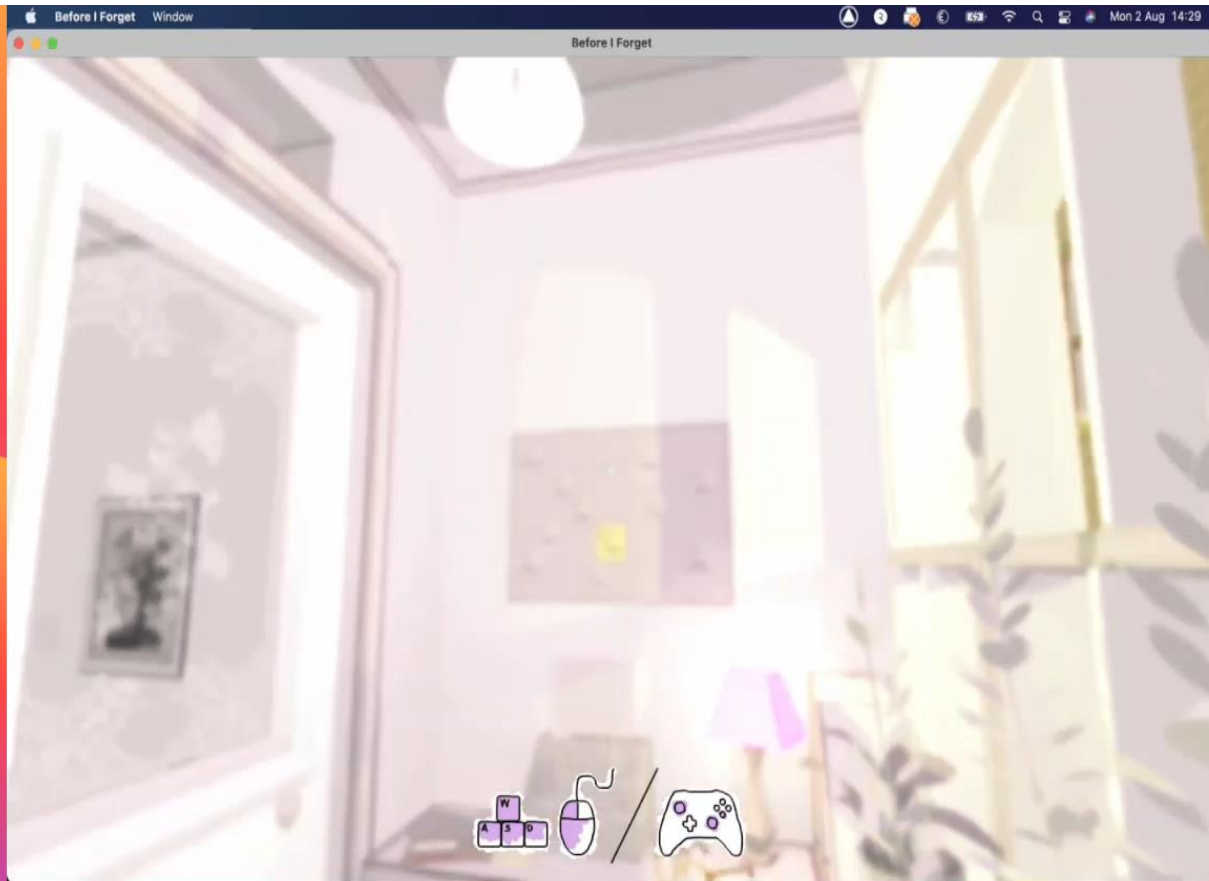
There's a note on the desk, a post-it note. It says "gas bill overdue we'll sort it together". Because the glasses are...

Sunita: Overdue? why hasn't Dylan paid it?

Audio Describer:

There's an envelope which has an urgent stamp on it

3. Live AD of Game Streaming (audio describer as game streamer)



Audio Describer:

I'm gonna select begin, so we find ourselves inside a room it's a bit blurry and washed of colour. Although there is a lamp shade that is pink and there seems to be a yellow post-it note on a pin board straight ahead but it's very out of focus.

To my right, out of the window there's a big plant outside with a green bush in it and red brick a red brick wall and a yellow window frame which suggests the lack of colour is only inside. So I'm gonna walk ahead to the table. There's a pair of glasses on the table

Sunita: Where am I?

Audio Describer:

I'm going to select the glasses and they've gone from black to a sort of brown tortoiseshell colour. I'm going to turn them around.

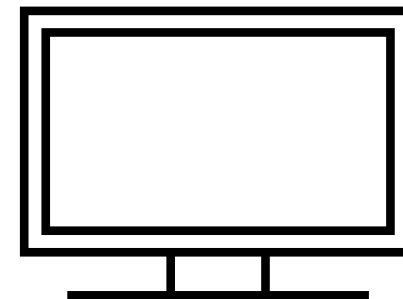
Sunita: is this the right place? Ah Dylan will know I'll find him.

Audio Describer:

So I've put the glasses on and now the room is in focus and on the post-it note. On the pin board it says "find Dylan". I'm going to walk a bit closer, there are other notes on the pin board that have all been scribbled out but on all of them it says "find Dylan".

Script-based or live?

“Script-based description wouldn’t allow for community interaction, but would provide a tighter and more cinematic gaming experience, since all the right words would be used to convey exactly what’s happening, as opposed to live description where the describer may not be able to think of the right word, forcing them to approximate.”



Challenges in audio describing game playing

How would you like the player to be described?

Description (optional)

- A As 'you', for example 'when you are playing this game'.
- B As 'we', for example 'when we are playing this game'.
- C As 'they', for example 'when they are playing this game'.
- D Described without the subject, for example 'Walking through the door', 'Drinking from a cup'.
- E As 'I', for example 'I am walking through the door'.
- F As the character in the game, for example 'Sonita is walking through the door'.
- G Other



AD-Assisted Gameplaying

Group 1:
a visually-impaired participant + audio describer 1
online via Zoom

Group 2:
a blind participant + audio describer 2
in person in a coffee shop chosen by the participant



Audio described co-playing

Social play

Audio describer – be their eyes, hands, and friends

Two sessions

- 1) One players
- 2) Two players (friends) – gaming party
- 3) Two players (blind gamers)

How did it go? Polly will share her experience



Implementing AD in Before I Forget



AD: A desk calendar next to a stack of sticky notes with a note saying “today is” with an arrow pointing to the calendar Thursday the 12th of July 2001.

AD: Written on a blue sticky note “dentist on the 18th 10:30 AM”

Sunita: Dentist I don't know where it is? How will I get there?

AD: Corridor. The corridor leads from the porch past the window which looks out to a wide street with terrace town houses opposite. Lamp posts, trees, and a red post box lined the curb. At the end of the corridor, there's a small desk with a calendar and a stack of sticky notes.

What's next?

Could AI help?

Voice controlled games?

