AUTOMATON

THE WORLD IS YOUR ARMORY

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Executive Summary:
- *Automaton* is an exciting, new, and immersive first-person RPG with original and compelling gameplay and an intricate and unique story
- Set in late 1800s Prague, *Automaton* depicts Europe as a sprawling steampunk inspired metropolis of incredible steam-based technology.
- The world is on the brink of war and it's up to a brilliant young inventor to save the city and discover his hidden connection to the chaos that has been brewing
- The core game mechanic is item creation. Mobile walls, cannons, robots, flying machines, battering rams, and even factories can be created from junk strewn across the city
- Enemy forces exhibit realistic behavior and engage in swarming—perfect for realizing gigantic battles
- Compelling character driven story touches on social issues such as abuse, proliferation of weapons, politics, warfare, environmentalism, censorship, loyalty, subjective vs. universal truths, and the very definition of reality itself.
- The game features realistic graphics, physics, and audio that brings the fantastical setting to life.
- An online community based on the trading of builds and cooperating on new builds to fulfill user-defined goals and missions will bring a new meaning to sandbox gameplay
- Realistic day and night cycles coupled with changing population movements in the streets bring this futuristic past to life

GAME OVERVIEW

High Concept:

A shadow looms over the city of Prague. A shadow created by a massive army born from an ungodly fusion of metal and flesh has taken the world in a storm of fire and iron. Despite the surviving nations uniting to fight the hordes they continue to push slowly and inexorably across Europe. It is up to a lone inventor to discover the force behind the invasion and put a stop to it, discovering that he has what it takes to be a great hero along the way. A clash between technology, humanity, and the trauma of the human condition, *Automaton* a story of war brought to life by the insanity of technology.

Genre:

Thematically, *Automaton* is a steampunk/sci-fi dystopian epic. With this game we aim to change the way people see their reality. Gameplay wise, the game is a sandbox game with elements of a first person shooter. The invention aspect of the game means keeping track of various components and stats; this gives the game a definite RPG quality that we think even casual FPS gamers would be able to appreciate. In theory this game can be played as a sort of first-person shooter, but it is our vision that this game's genre be seen as that of an *immersive role-playing game*. The purpose of this game is to make the player feel like he is a mad genius.

Gameplay Synopsis:

What does *Automaton* look like to the player? What will the player do? What are the challenges and actions? How is this game won?

Automaton evokes a completely alien feel but as a development team we are confident that this game will become a new reality for the player. To the player, *Automaton* is a world rife with violence, class dissent, war mongering, and hard steampunk technology that gives players just one suggestion: take what you want, build what you want, and rule them all how you want. The power to reshape the world—the power to save the world—is in the hands of the player. The player will do whatever it takes to subvert the every growing threat they will encounter. Building armored tanks, fortresses, autonomous robots, turning freight trains into battering rams; these are what the player will be able to do. The world literally is a weapon, a weapon capable of saving the city and defeating The Marquis. That is the end goal and by achieving it the player will achieve a sense of power and wonder never evoked by any game before this one.

Hooks:

- Item creation is the core game mechanic. Have you ever wanted to be a mad scientist who can create anything? Now's your chance!
- Inventions go beyond normal weapons. Have you ever imagined defending a fortress with a floating wall of steam and steel?
- First-person perspective means you're immersed in the game completely. The perspective never changes; your immersion never lessens.
- Compelling character driven story touches on social issues such as abuse, proliferation of weapons, politics, warfare, environmentalism, censorship, loyalty, subjective vs. universal truths, and the very definition of reality itself.
- The choices you make affect more than just an ending cutscene. People's opinions of you and your actions will be the deciding factor when the time comes for the people to rally to your cause and free Prague from bondage.
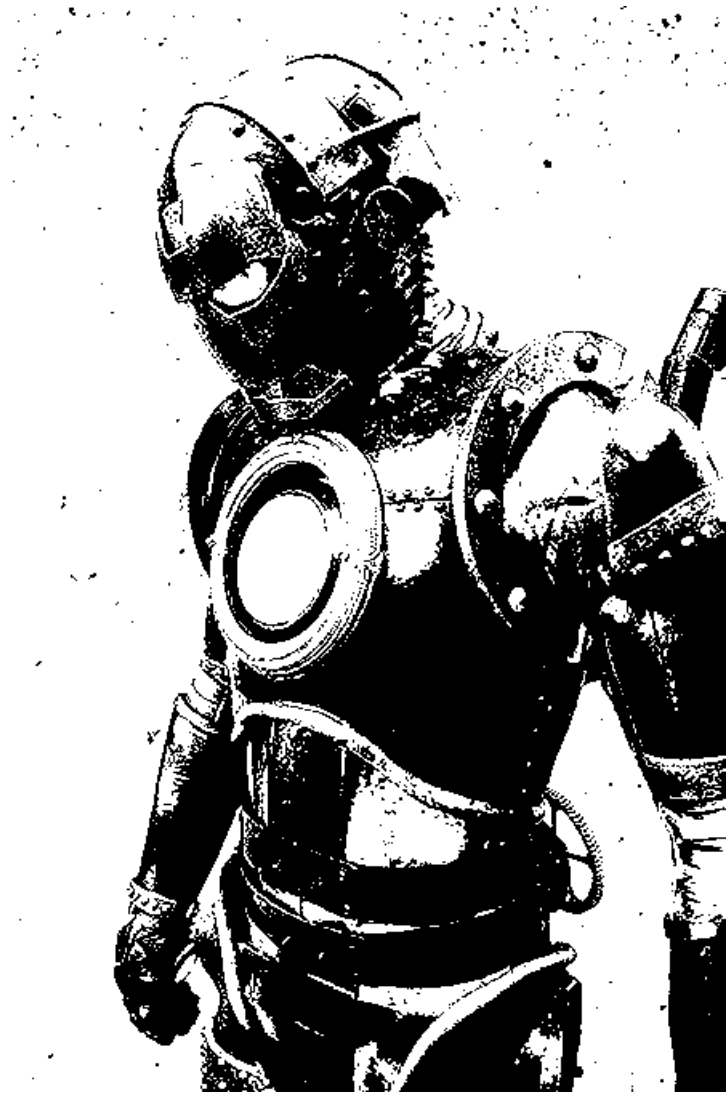
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Gameplay Highlights:
- The various environs of the city will be huge and richly detailed, giving a new meaning to exploration
- Enemies have realistic intelligence and cunning, making for fierce and competitive play. War has never been so smart.
- If you can touch it, you can make something out of it.
- Tradable items. Players can trade their creations online and collaborate with each other on builds.
- Realistic day and night cycles with varying population movements bring the city and the war to life

Online Highlights:
- An online community built around the sharing and contributing to new automata and inventions
- Online play yields infinite possibilities. Players can choose from set objectives or create entirely new ones
- Bigger, better, and more epic creations. Two heads are better than one. So are seven. Players can team up and pool their resources to make even more ridiculous creations to obliterate the competition.
- Sandbox gaming redefined: an online environment where anyone can use the world around them to build anything and everything they have ever dreamed of.

Technology Highlights:

Automaton features true-to-life physics courtesy of Havok. Utilizing the game's physics simulation, environments can be manipulated into makeshift mechanical systems. Solutions to the problems around you involve object's physical properties, such as shape, weight, and buoyancy. Every environment is destructible and every environment is a piece of the puzzle. With enough skill, the city itself can be made into a weapon. The world and its laws are at the player's fingertips.

Prague will be rendered in photo-realistic detail, with the full 24 square-kilometers of the city being accessible. Artificial intelligence introduces a learning factor to the enemy, causing massive swarms of enemies to form up and take the player down! Realistic high-dynamic-range rendering allows for crisp and beautiful preservation of detail all possible contrast ratios.

Art and Audio Highlights:

     Automaton features a sprawling rendition of late 1800s Prague; beautiful gothic art infused with a Victorian-esque steam punk aesthetic. A world you never could have imagined lives and breathes around you with full surround sound and realistic sounds that change with range. You never leave first person view; you never leave the overwhelming grasp of the brave new world that surrounds you. The game will be accompanied by a sweeping techo-classical score, in keeping with *Automaton's* genre bending gameplay.

Hardware:

Recommended System Requirements
OS - Windows 7
Processor - Intel Core 2 DUO @ 2.2GHz or AMD Athlon 64 X2 4400+
Memory - 2.0 GB RAM
GPU - NVIDIA GeForce 8800 GTS/640 or similar

Minimum System Requirements
OS - Windows XP
Processor - 2.8 GHz or faster (XP) or 3.2 GHz or faster (7)
Memory - 1.0 GB RAM (XP) or 1.5 GB RAM (7)
Video Card -256 MB
Hard Drive - 12GB
Sound Card - DirectX 9.0c compatible

COMPETITION

        Automaton will face competition from games such as The Elder Scrolls, Fallout, Grand Theft Auto, and to an extent Half-life and portal. We are confident, however, that this game will stand on its own and without much competition due to the novelty of its gameplay. Gary's Mod, which can now be considered a full-fledged game boasts some similar aspects but the facts are clear: this game, as far as gameplay is concerned, is completely unique. Never before has any game allowed players to intuitively create mechanical systems, utilize them as weapons/items/power-ups, and reshape the environment to their will like *Automaton* does. This is a freeform, sandbox type game, but as we have said, it is *unique* in what it is trying to achieve.

GAME WORLD

Backstory:
        With the advent of high-pressure steam technology in the 1700s, this alternate version of Europe experienced an era of technology comparable to our own 21st century, albeit based on steam power. Computers, film, television, wireless communication—all possible, but based on very different and even impossible (in our world, at least) science. In this era of technological supremacy based on steam, Western Europe and the US are the leaders in technology, with a vast technological exchange having formed across the Atlantic. With such incredible technology comes a price, however. As with reality, the Great War is on the loom and it's about to be started by a Czech marquis, who's tragic past and bloody vendetta drove him conspire to plunge the entire world into war in order to create a new world order. *Automaton* begins on the eve of this bloody push for power, introducing the player to their role as The Doctor, a young genius befallen on hard times who is about to prove that the human heart has more power than the iron-chambered heart of war.

Game World:
        The physical dimension of the game world is a steampunk version of 1880s Prague, a scale 'replica' in terms of game size (approximately 24 square-kilometers). Scale does not change when moving indoors/outdoors. Relative sizes of people and objects are realistic. The world itself is bounded by impassable mountains and military checkpoints.
        Time is a meaningful element of this game, changing the environment of the city according to the current time. Lights burn out, packs of people will move throughout the streets and loot the decaying world late at night. Population movements change according to time, allowing the player to take advantage of whatever group he is dealing with. A group of peasants,

for instance, is a lot easier for a charismatic inventor to deal with, as opposed to an armed group of enemy soldiers. The player cannot adjust the flow of time; he can, however, set a wait function to wait specific intervals. Things like food and sleep are necessary, with sleeping having its own unique mechanic. Time spent during sleeping is accelerated so the player can 'sleep' but the human player will have enough information (in the form of sounds) to react and wake up the player in accordance with what is going on in the world. Falling asleep in the streets at night, for instance, is not a very safe idea.

   While the game is set in a specific era, the world is vastly different from the historical one due to the advanced steampunk technology. Technology was the main pursuit of this society but the populace has since degenerated into social anarchy due to warring factions. Because of Prague's history as the seat of the Holy Roman Empire, there is a definite Christian sensibility to the area, as evidenced by the architecture. As such, clothing styles will be typical of that time: the poor will visibly look poor, while the nobility and upper classes will enjoy bright and flamboyant regalia. The entirety of the city can be explored and detail is rich, although spacing between buildings may be altered in order to fit the city into the game world. The technique was used by Grand Theft Auto 4 in order to fit a realistic and interactive Liberty City into the game. The bombed out city and chaotic nights will establish a dark and unnerving mood that inspires a sense of panic in the player.

   There is a significant emotional dimension to the game world. The death of certain characters, and even unnamed NPCs should carry meaning. The player's primary goal is to shepherd the displaced and lawless populace back into civility. The player has 'built in morality', which prevents him from killing non-enemies. Civilians can still die due to the players actions, however, and this is the main point of gameplay. The player will have to choose between violent and nonviolent solutions and he will have to deal with the consequences of his actions. The more needless deaths, the less support the population will give the player. There is no 'law' which can prosecute the player, however. Violence will be realistic but not overly gory.

Gameplay:

   This game will consist of a variety of challenges. The bulk of these challenges are as follows: setting up traps, stealing enemy intelligence, navigating the city, building new machines, capturing enemy machines, defending positions, and taking enemy positions. The first stage of the game is mostly guerrilla warfare against The Marquis; it requires the player to fight from the shadows. Troops and automata will be coming through the streets and across bridges, so it will be up to the player to somehow stop this flow of traffic. Bombs can be made; bridges can be sabotaged, etc. Stealing intelligence involves a stealth aspect. The player may have to infiltrate an enemy location, which is very risky during the first stage of the game. The player would be apt, however, to try to intercept communications, a small feat given the tools at the player's disposal.

Navigation will be aided through the use of maps and captured intelligence. The player will have to skillfully balance movement throughout the light and dark cycle in order to effectively move through the city unseen. The city is so vast that actually moving from point A to point B may take hours. With such a large crawl ahead of the player, he would be apt to take advantage of various environmental and temporal features in order to advance across the city with as little conflict as possible. Building new items/machines is a challenge that will remain constant. The more battles the player wins, the more loot he will gain. New inventions can be created from loot; this is the primary gameplay mechanic. These inventions will be invaluable when defending/taking positions.

Types of possible inventions (which will be suggested to the player during the prologue) are cannons, catapults, walls, movable walls, powered armor, armored automata, walking bridges, etc. If the player can build something he can more or less attach it to some sort of vehicle, either one that has been found or created, to create a new invention. There is no limit on how massive a machine can be. Certain missions will require the player to somehow single-handedly break through a massive enemy line; this can be accomplished by building an enormous floating battering ram. The actions the player takes are only limited by imagination and hardware constraints. Although physics are very important to the gameplay, a mediocre understanding of physics will not be to the player's detriment. Logical thinking will be rewarded with impressive results, however.

Objective:

The main objective of *Automaton* is to do whatever it takes to stop the enemy from advancing. As the plot unfolds and the player learns more about what's actually happening, the game morphs into a more personal quest for justice against The Marquis. By the final act of the game, the player will want nothing more than for The Marquis to answer for all the death and destruction he has caused under the false banner of justice. This quest will take the player from his humble home in the city to its edges, center, and everything in between.

Characters:

THE DOCTOR

The Doctor is the brilliant hero of *Automaton*, and the avatar of the player. Since *Automaton* strives to be an immersive first-person experience, the player will impose his own personality upon The Doctor. The Doctor will never be seen by the player because the player *is* The Doctor; the player would only see his own appearance in an in-game mirror. The Doctor is intended as a tabula rasa type character that allows the player to be fully immersed in the role of the hero, allowing him to develop his own interpretation of exactly what constitutes his in-game identity.
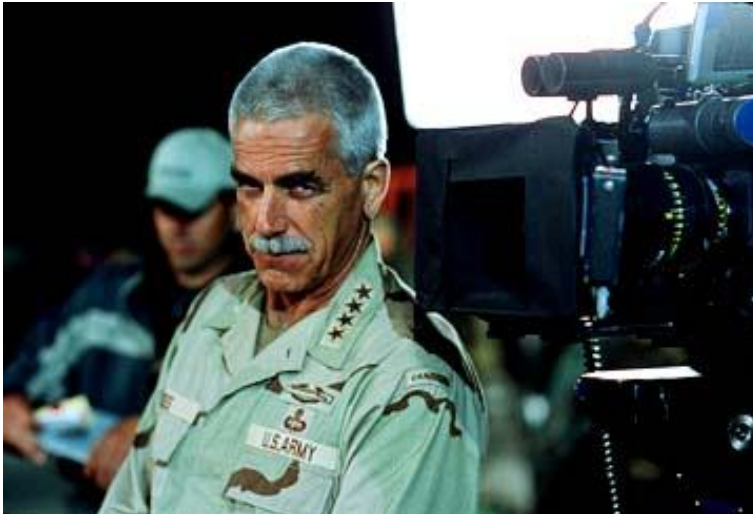
THE MARQUIS

The Marquis is the main villain of *Automaton*. He is cunning, intelligent, and absolutely ruthless. This is a character that is designed to not only be reviled by whoever chooses to play this game

but also respected as perhaps an even more capable man than The Doctor. The Marquis is the arrogant, sociopathic foil to the heroic Doctor; the Moriarty to his Sherlock. The conflict between The Doctor and The Marquis is a classic battle of good and evil. A brilliant yet ineffectual man, The Marquis is driven by unimaginable trauma and a history stained with blood.

THE GENERAL

General Moravec is one of the last remaining good men in the city. He is leading the fight against The Marquis and he is losing. It's only a matter of days before the resistance is crushed. The general, an honest man who has led an honest life, is initially skeptical of The Doctor and regards him as a nuisance. However, the general sees the how great of an asset The Doctor is and takes him in, giving him equipment and missions so that the two of them can succeed in stopping The Marquis. The actions of The Doctor give the resistance a fighting chance.

Mission and Story Progression:

The story opens with the aftermath of The Marquis's bloody push for control of the European Continent. The surrounding countries have fallen to The Marquis's technological might, while Prague is in the midst of civil war. The Marquis turns against his own homeland, seeing it as nothing more than an obstacle in the way of his quest for vengeance upon an imperfect world. At this stage The Doctor is acting as an insurgent, doing everything he can to defend his home turf. His main objective is to use his intellect to cause as much trouble for the invading army as he can, becoming swept up by the resistance in the process. The first stage consists mainly of guerrilla warfare, disrupting communications, harassing with traps, and frustrating the enemy; the main goal of this section is to introduce the player to the game's mechanics.

The game changes once the player has caused enough trouble for The Marquis. The enemy was at first striving to restore order for The Marquis and crush dissidence; they now see The Doctor, a mere civilian , as the enemy and the killing and/or capturing of him and General Moravec is priority one. This phase opens with an unwinnable situation. The player only survives due to the timely intervention of a resistance vehicle that takes the player to the general.

During this phase the player aids the general in direct confrontation with The Marquis's forces, with the goal being to recapture key points throughout the city. These battles open up new areas of the city and make available new loot. Heavy item creation will be encouraged in this phase and vehicles will be introduced. This stage of the story will up the stakes for the player. Phase one introduced the player to the world on the eve of the invasion and gave him enough time to develop a degree of attachment to the supporting characters. The player's love interest, family, and the general will be threatened, forcing The Doctor to become the hero the city needs. In keeping with this, phase two will also build relationships between the protagonist and the supporting characters, endearing them to the player and making them worth fighting for.

Phase three initiates a meaningful study of The Marquis's motives. Until now, the motives of the enemy have been chalked up to simple megalomania. The military will become more of a burden and the connection between The Doctor and The Marquis will slowly come to light. Freeform gameplay will end and the primary goal will now be to stop The Marquis and end the war. The final battle will be between The Doctor and The Marquis's chief lieutenant. Upon defeat there will be an exchange of words between the player and The Marquis, revealing the tragic past of The Marquis, his motivation for waging war, and the familial connection between him and the player.

The narrative will consist of freeform side missions, as well as main story missions that advance the plot. The opening prologue and scripted conversations throughout the game will be the primary source of exposition for the player.