NEWSLETTER 3

Shadows of Occupation – A Journey Through History and Digital Innovation

PROJECT NUMBER: 101174535

Building the Historical and Conceptual Foundations of the Game

We are thrilled to announce the successful completion of Work Package 2 (WP2) of the Shadows of Occupation project! This crucial phase laid the foundation for the historically immersive, educational, and inclusive video game that will bring WWII-era Europe to life through interactive storytelling and ethical design.

🎉 WP2 Completed: Building the Historical and Conceptual Foundations of the Game

In short, WP2 aimed to transform raw historical material into the foundation of a compelling, educational, and inclusive digital experience—ready to be turned into game design and development in the next phases of the project.

🎯 Main Objectives of WP2

Work Package 2 (WP2) in the Shadows of Occupation project focused on research and conceptual groundwork to ensure that the video game would be:

1. Historically accurate
2. Culturally sensitive
3. Pedagogically meaningful
4. Inclusive and engaging for youth audiences

📘 Deliverable D2.1

Synthesis Report on Historical and Cultural Elements of 20th Century Europe

This report explored the socio-political, cultural, and historical landscape of occupied Europe in the 1940s, with a focus on marginalized communities, daily life under occupation, and resistance movements. Drawing from memoirs, historical archives, and testimonies—including those of Jewish, Roma, and civilian voices—the report informed the cultural and narrative accuracy of the game.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Report

This report aims to synthesize research on the historical and cultural aspects of occupied Europe during the 20th century, particularly within the context of World War II. The study delves into the impact of occupation on various European nations, examining the mechanisms of control, oppression, and resistance that defined this era. Additionally, it highlights the role of literature, art, and collective memory in shaping contemporary understanding of these historical events.

📰 Deliverable D2.2

Game Theoretical Framework: Mission, Vision, Key Features, and Mentoring Elements

This document defines the core identity of the game, outlining its vision as an empathy-driven historical adventure set in a fictionalized 1942 European town. Key features include:

- 🧠 Educational gameplay mechanics (puzzles, decision-making, investigation)
- 📚 Historical storytelling inspired by Primo Levi
- 🤝 Mentoring systems and inclusive design
- 🎭 Playable perspectives from different minority groups
- 🎓 Integrated learning objectives (aligned with curriculum outcomes)

Key Features Defining the Game's Identity

The identity of Shadows of Occupation is defined by several key features that together shape it as an engaging educational game. These include its core gameplay mechanics, its narrative structure, and the integration of learning objectives into the gameplay. Each of these dimensions draws on examples from similar educational or historical games and on established design principles:

Gameplay Mechanics in Educational/Historical Games

📂 **You can access both deliverables online at:**
👉 https://shadowsofoccupation.eu/project-activities/

Capital Youth Association

ASEID

fifty-fifty
Social Innovation
& Cohesion Institute

PYLON ONE

📖 Deliverable D2.3

Cultural Digitization Manual – A Reusable Framework

Deliverable 2.3 includes a replicable manual for the digitization of cultural heritage materials for use in interactive media. It covers:

- Ethical data collection & narrative curation
- Tools for scanning, metadata, and long-term archiving
- Guidelines for representing trauma and underrepresented voices

Key Gameplay Features

The gameplay features of Shadows of Occupation are deliberately crafted to function as both engaging interactive mechanics and vehicles for historical and cultural education. Each element is grounded in pedagogical theory, game-based learning practices, and historical authenticity. The prototype emphasizes a narrative adventure format, structured around core gameplay systems that support its educational mission. These systems are not isolated modules but interdependent components that work together to build immersion, foster empathy, and facilitate critical engagement with the past.

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💡 Why WP2 Matters

By completing WP2, the project has ensured that its game is grounded in:

✅ Historical accuracy

✅ Pedagogical integrity

✅ Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity

This phase also paves the way for the next development stages (WP3 and beyond), where narrative prototyping, visual production, and coding will begin.

➡️ What's Next?

With WP2 complete, the project moves into WP4 – Playtesting & Feedback. Young players from Greece, Spain, and Liechtenstein will test the prototype and help refine the game's emotional, historical, and educational impact.

Stay tuned as we continue our journey in developing this innovative historical gaming experience!

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