

Narrative and Interactive Fiction

Turkey Street

Parser Based Short Comedic Detective Story

Introduction

Turkey Street is a short piece of parser-based interactive fiction created in Inform 7 that follows the story of Detective Fowl Feathers as he tries to solve the crime of why the chicken died while crossing Turkey Street. It's meant to be a fun take on crime stories, an opportunity for poultry puns, and a constrained take on parser fiction in the vein of "The Wizard Sniffer" by limiting the amount of available actions the player has.

Development

Turkey Street is also my first experience with writing a piece with someone collaboratively, which was a challenge that I was really excited to learn more about. Delivering a consistent voice for the text is difficult in scriptwriting, let alone in a parser world, and as the order and structure of creating the game requires careful consideration of how and when you introduce items into the text, we needed to delegate unique tasks between the two of us.

After brainstorming what we wanted the game to be, I set off to create the basic structure for the Inform source environment by creating a series of Volumes, Books, and Chapters so that it could be well commented as we share the project between us. I also researched and set up the extensions for the Title Page and the Exit Lister as they provide a better play experience by making things clearer to the player. We collaborated on deciding how many rooms would be present in the world, and Raymond helped create an introductory sequence with one-way passages to give the player an opening sequence and teach them how to play.

For the remainder of development, Raymond primarily was focusing on writing the background text and descriptions for the rooms, items, characters, interactions and more (and with the inclusion of the Introductions extension, extra text that set the stage in each

new environment) while I focused on creating the items, puzzles, characters and interactions in each location as well as modifying or adding new rules and mechanics like the “gobble” verb, a limited inventory system (because you are a turkey with no pockets), and what happens when you perform turkey-like behaviors. Raymond and I collaborated on creating flavor text (to make sure that it was sufficiently noir) for the aforementioned additions to the game.

We worked together to decide on how the player solves the case. While we had hoped to include the option to falsely accuse characters with evidence, it made more sense within a piece of this size to make it so that the player can “solve” the case once they have collected all of the evidence. For the detail oriented, a complete list of commits by person can be found on our github page for Turkey Street (<https://github.com/aradicaldreamer/turkeystreet>).

Further Development

While I’m quite happy with the current state of Turkey Street, I could imagine a much further expanded game with more cases, NPC behaviors, additional scenes, clearer goals to solve puzzles, a way to track seen evidence in inventory while keeping its limited functionality, and multiple possible culprits and endings. Have fun!