

ALLYSHIP

Developed by A2J2 Game Co.



Game Design Proposal

Rethink disability: an exploration of ableism set in space

Aiann Oishi, Aidin Niavarani, Joe Kwan, Joyce Lo
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Game Overview and Description

Name of Game

Allyship

Game Creators

Meet the development team behind A2J2 Game Co.:

Aiann Oishi, Designer/Artist

Aiann is the Senior Digital Communications Associate at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. In her role, she oversees the design, development and technical operation of Holland Bloorview's digital presence, from the corporate website to advocacy campaigns. As the web accessibility lead, she works to improve the user experience for staff, donors, clients and families. She has been a past speaker at the Annual Accessibility Conference at the University of Guelph, and at OCADU's Inclusive Design Research Centre. Aiann is completing a Master of Educational Technology (MET) with the University of British Columbia. Her interests include merging inclusive design practices with online learning, to support student well-being.

Aidin Niavarani, Programmer

Aidin manages several software development projects in the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia. He has been building teaching and learning applications that cater to UBC students and also people with ASD and other disabilities. Aidin is currently a graduate student in the Master of Educational Technology program at the University of British Columbia. He has a keen interest in games as a way to introduce fun and play in learning and believes traditional learning models need to evolve based on continued research.

Joe Kwan, Tester

Joe works for a First Nations organization and is a strong advocate for the disability community. He is the father of two beautiful boys, one of whom has special needs and uses assistive technology for communication. Joe is currently studying his Master of Educational Technology program at UBC and is involved with several organizations serving the disability community. He is currently a Board Director at Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion and works to ensure the voices of the disability community are heard. Joe loves spending time with his family and enjoys seeing the beauty of simplicity in life.

Joyce Lo, Story Writer

Joyce is a K-12 educator and also a mother to two boys, one of whom has special needs. Joyce has a passion to advocate for and work with children with disabilities. She is interested in sharing with others about ableism, disability, and the use of technology. Joyce is in the midst of



her Master of Educational Technology program at the University of British Columbia. Joyce believes that digital games and play can motivate and engage learners with all abilities. She aspires to make learning fun for everyone.

Elevator Pitch

It is the year 2121 and you play Captain Phoenix, a space pilot who crash lands onto an alien planet full of unknown dangers and challenges. In your mission to repair the ship and get back home to Earth, you learn to rethink what disability means in a new environment.

Characters

Protagonist: Captain Phoenix, Space Pilot



The protagonist and main character is Phoenix Orion, a young, resourceful space pilot on their first solo flight through the galaxy. Phoenix was born in 2100 and enrolled in the *New Frontiers Space Program* at the age of 14, becoming the youngest Earth-born cadet to be accepted for pilot training. After seven years of hard work and dedication, Phoenix was made Captain of the S.S. Allyship.

Eager to prove themselves, Captain Phoenix is not happy with the unexpected crash landing, and wants to return to Earth and prove to their superiors that the mission wasn't a failure. Captain Phoenix needs to rely on communication, creativity, and perseverance to overcome the challenges presented.

The player hopes to repair Allyship, and begins to navigate the planet through the perspective of Captain Phoenix, discovering both frustrations and delights when communicating with the planet's inhabitants. Along with being in a foreign place, the planet hosts many dangers such as hostile terrain and inclement weather. The player must overcome their fears of the unknown to effectively embrace being Captain Phoenix.

Non-Playable Characters

Cornelius the Allyship AI

Captain Phoenix has a digital friend named Cornelius that is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) system built into their ship. Cornelius is not functional at the beginning of the game and the player needs to complete the objectives in Chapter 1 to fix this AI. Cornelius is an important part

of the game, providing the player with vital information and acting as the intermediary for the ship's communications and safety monitoring systems. Cornelius considers itself fully loyal to Captain Phoenix and will do anything to help its Captain out.

Planet Inhabitants

Throughout their journey, the player will meet and interact with various inhabitants of the planet. These inhabitants have abilities that are different to those of the space pilot. For example, the inhabitants are able to:

- jump and fly long distances (physical movement)
- speak at superspeed and thereby making conversation incomprehensible to humans (speech)
- hear extremely high- and low-pitched frequencies with their hypersensitive ears (hearing)
- are all colour blind and use contrasts for distinguishing shapes (vision)



The player needs to interact and converse with the NPCs in order to progress throughout chapters two and three in the game. The NPCs provide clues and items needed for the player to overcome challenges and achieve objectives.

At the outset, the inhabitants perceive themselves as superior and more advanced in comparison to the “alien” (our human space pilot). The inhabitants view the “alien” as impaired or less able compared to themselves. As a result, they believe that the “alien” is incompetent and inferior. Eventually, through communication and understanding, the inhabitants learn the space pilot’s strengths, and the two become allies.

Story and Premise

It is the year 2121, and space travel has become popular. One day while Captain Phoenix is travelling back to Earth, their spaceship “Allyship” gets caught in a solar windstorm. They crash land onto an unknown planet blanketed in darkness. The story starts with them needing to fix Cornelius the AI system, but as soon as it is fixed, Cornelius advises that the spaceship has landed near a sinkhole and will completely eat up the spaceship within a few hours. Captain Phoenix needs to hurry in figuring out how to tow their ship away from the sinkhole (so they don’t get eaten up) and fix Allyship to fly back home to Earth.

As the player works to repair the ship to get back home, they experience barriers and challenges along the way. As they go through the game, they learn about various disabilities through practical puzzles and challenges, and learn how environmental and societal barriers, and not disabilities, are what creates challenges for people.



Allyship allows players to experience a number of different abilities, including:

- Physical (Mobility)
- Visual (Low Vision, Blindness, Colour Blindness)
- Communication (Non-Verbal/Minimally Verbal)
- Hearing (Hearing Loss)
- Behavioural/Developmental (ASD)
- Acquired (Age, Acquired, Trauma-related)
- Cognitive (ADHD, Dyslexia)

Story Progression

The game starts with a short intro scene where the space pilot is returning home to Earth. The pilot crash lands close to a sinkhole and the first chapter begins. Game mechanics are introduced in Chapter 1, which deals with the pilot's landing and initial exploration of the planet.

Allyship will consist of **three episodic chapters** that will be released weeks apart. Each chapter deals with different abilities across multiple challenges.

- Chapter 1 covers physical mobility, loss of sight, and colour blindness
- Chapter 2 covers hearing loss and non-verbal communication
- Chapter 3 covers newly acquired behavioural/cognitive abilities - from being exposed to the planet's atmosphere and the rigors of space travel.

Gameplay (Mechanics)

Overall

Objectives

As an adventure-solution game, the main objective of Allyship is to rebuild the spaceship, and return back to Earth. The player does this by completing all three chapters of the game, each of which has its own mini-objectives. The player must complete all challenges by properly using their *limited* resources, otherwise they will lose the game or have to restart their missions.

Chapter objectives:

- Chapter 1: Repair the Cornelius AI system as part of rebuilding the overall spaceship.
- Chapter 2: Explore the planet and learn to communicate with the inhabitants so that they can find and collect the items needed to repair their spaceship and tow it away from the sinkhole.
- Chapter 3: With the help of the planet's inhabitants, rebuild the spaceship and safely return back home to Earth.

Procedures

Starting action

This is a game played on the computer using a keyboard and a mouse.

- Use the mouse to point and click to select the start button. During gameplay, the mouse is used to make selections of their choices and move items around.
- Start button: Press this button to start the game.
- Arrow keys are used to move the character in the game.
 - Left arrow: Move to the left.
 - Right arrow: Move to the right.
 - Up arrow: Move forward and to pump helium.
 - Down arrow: Move backward.
 - Space bar: Jump
- QWERTY Keyboard: The player can type questions and responses using the keyboard when they communicate with Cornelius in Chapter 1 and the planet's inhabitants in Chapters 2 and 3.

Core Loop

This game consists of 3 chapters. The player has to complete all of a chapter's challenges to win the chapter and starts each chapter with exactly 3 lives. If the player fails to complete a challenge within a given chapter, they lose a life and have to restart that challenge. If the player loses all of their lives, they lose the chapter and will have to restart that chapter. Once a player completes a chapter successfully, they will always restart at the beginning of that chapter if they lose all their lives in the future.

The game auto-saves after significant events such as the winning or losing of challenges and the gaining or losing of resources. The state of the game is loaded back to the last auto-save whenever the player quits and comes back to the game.



Chapter Progression

In Chapter 1, the player completes Challenges 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 in order. This helps orient the player with the game's concept, controls, and resources.

In Chapter 2, the player is free to roam and explore the planet, however, they need to be aware of the amount of time they spend since they are racing against time to save their spaceship - they have 1 hour before

the ship gets eaten up by the sinkhole. Interacting and communicating with the planet's



inhabitants is a vital component of this chapter. The player needs to communicate and problem solve with the inhabitants in order to retrieve what they need and tow their spaceship out of the sinkhole in time.

In Chapter 3, the player will collect the remaining items that they need for rebuilding their spaceship and get the help of the inhabitants. They have to complete their mission and fly back to earth in 1 hour in order for the space agency to call the mission a success. They will be challenged through a series of puzzles to rebuild their spaceship. When the player successfully rebuilds their spaceship, they need to reprogram it to guide their spaceship safely back to Earth.

Rules

Rules Defining Objects and Concepts

1. Resources such as lives, health, and time are finite.
2. Objects are challenge-specific and cannot be carried over to the next challenge. For example, the wheelchair in Challenge 1.2 cannot be stored in inventory or used in later challenges or chapters. This does not apply to power-ups.
3. The player can restart a chapter at any time, but will forfeit all progress made to that point in gameplay.
4. Power ups can be stored in inventory for future use. Once used, their effects (i.e. health recharge, time increase) are immediate.

Rules Restricting Actions

5. Once the player enters into a challenge, they must complete it before moving further in the chapter.
6. Single-player mode only; the player cannot invite other players to join the game.

Rules Determining Effects

7. While in a challenge, if the player runs out of health, time, or objects needed to complete that challenge, they will lose a life if they have 2 or more lives.
8. Losing all lives will reset the game back to the beginning of the chapter, the player will lose anything they earned in that chapter, and will start again with 3 lives.

Resources

Lives

The player has 3 lives at the beginning of the game that gets reset at the beginning of each chapter. They lose lives if they fail to complete challenges or if their health bar gets to 0.

Health

The player has limited health that is indicated visually on the health bar. The player loses their health if they hit sharp objects, hurt themselves, or get attacked. Losing all their health will cause the player to lose 1 life.

Time

In Chapters 2 and 3, the player will have limited time to finish the chapter. There will be a countdown timer to show how much time the player has left.

Items & Power Ups

Bonus items (power ups)

Type	Power and Background
 Energy Snack Bar	The energy bars from the ship have spilled out during the crash. As a result of exposure to the planetary rays, they now glow in the dark. Don't worry, these bars are still safe to consume! The player first encounters these bars at the start of Challenge 1.1, right before they set out to reach the light source. The bars continue to be found throughout the landscape. The player can consume to use its effects immediately, or choose to save them in their inventory for later. Effect: Increases health by +10 percent Availability: Chapter 1, Challenge 1.1
 Time Capsule	Time capsules appear after you repair Cornelius the AI. As a thank you, Cornelius generates a small number of capsules for you to use; you can: • Add 5 x capsules to your inventory OR • Allow Cornelius to scatter 15 at random locations for you to find Effect: Increases time by +1 minute Availability: Chapter 2, Chapter 3

Inventory

The player's inventory will hold a maximum of 12 items, and can be accessed at any time from the game menu.

- Items will appear in the order they are added, with most recent at the top.
- When the inventory reaches the maximum limit, the player will not be able to add items.
- Multiple items can be used at once, to free up space.
- Items can be dropped (released) from the inventory to free up space.



Conflict

Obstacles:

- 1.1: The main obstacle in Challenge 1.1 is the lack of light. The player needs to travel in the dark while encountering dangerous terrain (spiky cacti, quicksand, volcanoes or craters) and unpredictable weather (high wind, freezing rain, fireballs) in order to reach the light source.
- 1.2 The main obstacle in Challenge 1.2 is the finite amount of helium gas. The player needs this helium gas to steer their wheelchair through a windstorm in order to activate the light switch.
- 1.3 The main obstacle in Challenge 1.3 is the lack of vision. The player needs to use a pair of space glasses to accurately identify color-coded parts to repair the AI system.

Dilemma:

- 1.1: The main dilemma in Challenge 1.1 is for the player, when experiencing a negative experience in the dark and dangerous terrain, to continue venturing forward or to explore/find an alternative route to the light source.
- 1.2 The main dilemma in Challenge 1.2 is for the player to decide how much helium gas to put into the wheelchair wheels. There is a recommended psi and the player will have to decide whether or not to follow the recommended psi.
- 1.3 The main dilemma in Challenge 1.3 is for the player to use their pair of space glasses to assist them in correctly identifying colors on this unknown planet.

Boundaries

Physical

The physical boundaries of the game are defined in the game. During challenges, boundaries are defined to constrict the user to stay within the space where the challenge is occurring. Outside of challenges, the boundaries are those defined in the game to keep the player within the realm of where the game is happening. Although the player can wander off, there will be limits such as cliffs or off-limit areas that the user cannot access. These will set the general boundaries for the game.

Conceptual

The player enters the game using their web browser by navigating to the URL of the game. At any point, the player can exit the game by navigating away or closing their browser. The player can also pause the game at any point by pressing the ESC key. These define the conceptual parts of the game. We are hoping the players will learn a few things that they will take with them to the real world, although these are learning from the game, not the game itself.



Outcome

Allyship is a single player versus game where the player may either win or lose. This is a “zero-sum” game where one player wins (+1), and one player loses (-1). The sum is always zero no matter if it is the player or game system that wins. The outcome of winning or losing is based on meeting the main objective, repairing the spaceship and returning back to Earth.

Through playing this game, the player learns how environmental and societal barriers, and not disabilities, are what creates challenges for people.

User Skills

Physical mobility (dexterity) and comfort with using the mouse and keyboard arrow keys.

- Challenge 1.1: The player needs to be able to identify dangerous obstacles by trial and error and to change course (as needed) in order to successfully reach the light source.
- Challenge 1.2: The player needs to make use of available tools (i.e. wheelchair and helium gas) and follow instructions in order to successfully activate the light switch.
- Challenge 1.3: The player needs to use available tools (i.e. space glasses) in order to successfully and accurately identify the color-coded parts needed to repair the AI system.

Losing

The following are the losing conditions for a chapter. The player loses a chapter when they:

1. **Lose all their lives.** This happens when they player:
 - a. **Runs out of objects:** challenge objects are finite - the player uses up the resources available and cannot complete the challenge without it. For example, in Challenge 1.2, the player will lose a life if they fully use the helium tank before they can get to the light switch.
 - b. **Runs out of health:** if the player’s health bar reaches 0, they will lose a life
2. **Run out of time in Chapters 2-3.** If the timer countdown is at 00:00 and the player has not completed the chapter, they will lose the chapter, even if they have lives left.

The player starts each chapter with 3 lives. If the player loses either of the above, they lose a life and restart the challenge. If all lives are lost, the player loses the chapter and has to restart the chapter, starting with 3 lives again. The player can lose the chapter infinitely.

When the player loses the chapter, an image appears showing the gameplay countdown ending and the player’s ship has been sucked into the sinkhole and destroyed.

Chapter 1: The Landing

Goal

Goal for Chapter 1: Repair Cornelius the AI system as part of rebuilding the overall spaceship.

Challenge 1.1: Visual (Blindness)

Objective: Captain Phoenix crash lands in total darkness and needs light! As the captain climbs out of the spaceship, they see a dim light from faraway. The player must navigate Captain Phoenix through the dark and dangerous terrain to reach the light source.

Procedures:

The player uses arrow keys to move Captain Phoenix safely from the spaceship landing site to the light source. The player will encounter a range of obstacles from:

- **Terrain:** spiky cacti, quicksand, volcanoes, and craters
- **Air:** high wind, freezing rain, fireballs

The obstacles will impact the player's ability to meet the objective in the following ways:

Level/Type of Obstacle	Level 1 (Reduced Health)	Level 2 (Half-Life)	Level 3 (Knockout/Death)
Terrain	Bump into spiky cacti (-20 health)	Caught in quicksand (-50 health)	Fall in volcano/crater (-100 health)
Air	Face high wind (-20 health)	Hit by freezing rain (-50 health)	Hit by fireball (-100 health)

Audio cues (i.e. "Ow, Yikes!") will notify the player if they have encountered a barrier.

Rules:

1. The player must only use the keyboard arrow keys to move Captain Phoenix
2. The player cannot block the obstacles, only avoid them by trial and error

Resources:

- The player's health is the primary resource.
- The energy snack bar power up is available to increase health. See [Items & Power Ups](#) section for details on usage.
- The player can access their inventory.

Outcome:

While navigating in the dark, the player will bump into unseen and dangerous obstacles that impact their health. The darkness affords a sudden loss of visibility, creating frustration for the player who must deal with uncertainty and changes to their environment. While the player's



health represents the player's progress, no score is tallied. As a zero-sum game, the outcome of this challenge is determined when the player either fails or succeeds at reaching the light source.

Progression & Challenge:

The player progresses closer to the light source and the challenge is to reach the light source without losing all health.

Challenge 1.2: Physical (Mobility)

Objective: Turn on the light switch.

At the end of Challenge 1.1, the player finds that the light source they saw is a dimmed set of powerful lights in a nearby research station. Upon finding the very dim light source, they see a light switch 20 meters above their head that will fully turn on those powerful lights. They need to find a way to get to this light switch to turn on the lights that will help them see what's around them.

Procedures:

The player finds a partially broken rocket wheelchair and one tank of helium nearby. They must sit in the wheelchair and guide it towards the light source which is above them and to the right. The helium will be used to drive the wheelchair up, while the rocket is used to push it to the right.

The way to make the wheelchair float up is to pump the right amount of helium into the wheels. There will be a gauge showing how much pressure is in the wheels. A minimum amount of pressure is needed to get the wheelchair to go up. Adding too much helium can burst the wheel and cause a challenge failure. There is a hole in the wheel that causes a small amount of helium to escape as they pump it, so the player needs to keep pumping a steady amount of helium to keep it floating up. Pumping is done using the UP key.

There is a steady wind coming in causing the wheelchair to be pushed to the right. The player can press the LEFT key to push the wheelchair to the left to counteract the wind.

By using the UP and LEFT keys, the player will need to guide the wheelchair to where the lightswitch is located and getting to the lightswitch will activate it, turning the powerful lights on.

Rules:

- Use the UP key for helium and the LEFT key for the rocket.
- There is a maximum of 50 helium pumps and rocket fuel.
- Each pump decreases the amount of helium they have in the tank.
- If the helium in the tank runs out, they lose.
- The player must try to keep the pressure gauge in the green zone to float up.
- If the pressure gauge goes into the red zone, the wheels burst and the challenge is lost.

- There is a wind with a constant stream of westward pressure blowing at 20km/hr.
- The player can use the rocket a maximum of 20 times before it runs out of fuel.
- Each time the player presses the LEFT button 1/20th of the rocket fuel is used.
- If the player goes past the light switch instead of reaching it, they must guide the wheelchair back to the lightswitch in order to win.

Resources:

A rocket wheelchair with inflatable wheels, one tank of helium, and one tank of rocket fuel.

Outcome:

This challenge allows the player to (1) recognize the usefulness of physical aid tools to increase one's ability, and (2) the extra efforts required for people with physical disabilities to achieve similar goals and objectives.

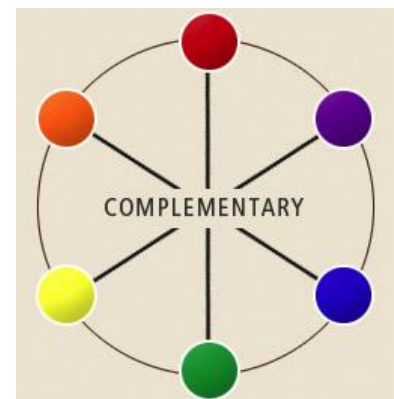
Progression & Challenge:

The player turns on the light switch to see what's around them so they can fix their ship. The challenge is to reach the lightswitch using limited helium, fuel, and without bursting the wheels.

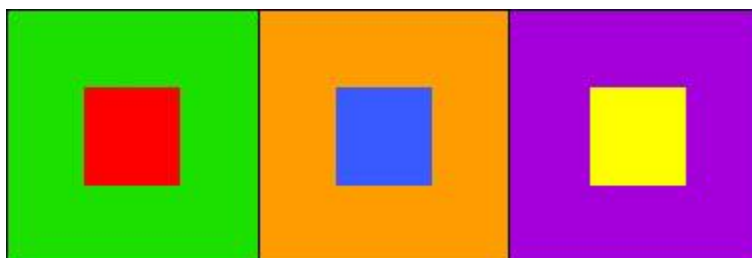
Challenge 1.3: Visual (Colour Blindness)

Objective: Identifying all the supplies they need to repair Cornelius, the Allyship AI (Artificial Intelligence) system.

The player now has light that is shining on the area and can see their surroundings, including their spaceship. Their spaceship is still broken and they need to repair Cornelius. They look around and realize that the supplies they need are in a big mess on the floor. Even though they have light now, the planetary rays are causing everything from Earth to appear as bright white in colour and therefore hard to distinguish items from each other.



They remember they have a pair of space glasses. By wearing space glasses, they can change the colour settings so that the supplies stand out (in high contrast). When the colour settings on the space glasses are changed to one of six colours (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, or purple), they can see the supplies that are the opposite colour on the colour wheel.



Changing the colour settings on their space glasses help the supplies stand out in high contrast.



Procedures: They open the console next to their pilot seat and take out a pair of space glasses. They put on the space glasses and turn on the power. There is a power bar that shows the amount of battery power available in the space glasses. They start to look for the supplies that are on the list of items that they need to fix Cornelius. For example, they need to find a red wire. They click the green button to change the colour setting on their space glasses and all the supplies that are red will stand out in high contrast, making it easier for them to find the red wire. They continue looking for the supplies until everything on their list is found.

Rules:

- In order for them to successfully complete all the tasks required within this Challenge, they will need to wear the space glasses.
- There are 10 minutes of battery power in the space glasses. They need to find all the supplies that are on the list of items before the power runs out on their space glasses.

Resources:

- The supplies that they need to find and collect in order to complete this challenge.
- Space glasses

Outcome:

In this single player versus game, the player may either win or lose. The outcome of winning or losing Chapter 1 is based on meeting the objective, which is to repair Cornelius.

This challenge allows the player to experience visual colour blindness, and the importance of tools (i.e. space glasses) to help with colour contrasts.

Progression & Challenge:

The player progresses by collecting all the supplies needed to repair the spaceship and the challenge is to find all the hidden objects in a sea of visual clutter before the battery power runs out on the space glasses.

Chapter 2

Details coming soon...

Chapter 3

Details coming soon...

Game Assets

Art Style

Using a vector-based, flat illustration style, Allyship will have a modern aesthetic with bright and playful color combinations. Inspired by [retro space posters](#) and [line art](#), the game will be kid-friendly and appeal to adults looking to reinvent childhood memories through nostalgia.

Colour scheme (see RGB and HEX codes on [Coolors App](#))



Music & Sounds

Sound will be used to provide immediate feedback to the player. In challenges, the use of sound is important as it guides the player in progression. For example, if the player is running out of time, an ominous alert will be heard.

We want to convey that the planet has unknown dangers, and it's critical to get to the task at hand of repairing the ship. In Challenge 1.1, the player will make different sounds depending on how close they are to the light source - the closer they are, a cheerful chirp will sound. The farther they get, darker rumbles will be heard signifying potential danger.

Given the short production timelines, the team will leverage stock image banks and free assets (backgrounds, kits, UI elements, sound effects) whenever possible. Key assets such as characters and objects will be hand-drawn for a custom look.

Stock libraries to explore:

- [Kenney Assets](#)
- [Pixabay: Free Space & Galaxy Illustrations](#)
- [OpenGameArt.org](#)
- [Free Game Assets - Itch.io](#)

Technical Description/Software

This game uses Construct 3 (C3) as its engine. Using C3, various elements of the game are created (characters, objects, resources, etc.) are defined. When defining each element, we



specify their properties, their behaviors (if they are movable, can change properties of the game, etc.) and how they interact with other elements in the game. Using these tools and techniques, and by uploading our assets, we create a visually compelling storyline and play elements to forge a fun learning journey for the player.

This is a web-based game that will be accessible through a URL (link to be determined). This is an open game and anyone can play it if they have a computer with an active internet connection and a modern browser. This game is not designed for mobile devices.

Marketing & Funding

Demographics

The content of Allyship is generally suitable for ages 10 and up based on the ESRB rating. The design of the game is made to appeal to children 10 to 16 years old. Allyship has bright colours and a range of amusing characters. Its mechanics are simple, its challenges are relatively straightforward, and the consequences of losing are minimal.

Platforms & Monetization

We developed Chapter 1 as a demo prototype, with the intent to develop the remaining chapters when funding becomes available. The demo will be featured on KickStarter, as an early release game for fans of our work, to generate interest and secure funding. We will take advantage of [professionals programs offered by Games for Change](#) to solicit expert feedback, network with the game developer community and promote Allyship. In addition to KickStarter funds, we will apply for government grants that fund projects supporting inclusion for people with disabilities such as the [Enabling Accessibility Fund](#).

Localization

The initial build will be in English, with plans to translate gameplay in French for bilingual access in Canada after the English release. We will refer to player usage data, to determine the other languages that the game can be played in. To save on costs, we'll utilize a combination of AI-powered translation services, crowdsourcing and human translation.

References

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