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About This Game

A game about Censorship, Corruption and Newspapers

The Westport Independent is a censorship simulator taking place in a post-war country, governed by the recently elected Loyalist Party. As the editor of one of the last independent newspapers in the country, your job is to remove and edit the content of your paper, affecting the people's opinion of both the rebels and the Loyalist government. With an increase of rebel activity and an ever watching government breathing down your neck, whose truth will you print?

Features

- Change the content and meaning of your articles by censoring them to your liking. While you can't lie, you don't have to tell the whole truth either.
- Employees with fleshed out character, who will not only react to your actions, but also discuss them with other colleagues.
- Receive letters and messages from public figures, rebel leaders, employees and other characters affected by your actions.
- Adaptive stories where your actions affect the opinions of the people, which affects what happens in the city, which in turn affects the stories you receive.

Awards and recognition

- - Biggest surprise at The MIX GDC 2015, IGN
- - Part of "Three Cool Surprises From PAX 2015", from Kotaku
- - Part of "The Very Best Indie Games of GDC 2015", from Gameinformer
- - The Best of GDC 2015, 148 apps

Title: The Westport Independent
Genre: Indie, Simulation
Developer:
Double Zero One Zero
Publisher:
Coffee Stain Publishing
Release Date: 21 Jan, 2016

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English

The screenshot shows a digital layout editor for a newspaper. On the left is the masthead for 'The Westport Independent' with a compass rose logo and the tagline 'EVERYTHING BETWEEN THE West East RNC'. Below the masthead is a sidebar with four category sliders: 'Celebrity', 'Industrial', 'Crime', and 'Societal'. The main content area features four horizontal panels, each representing a different neighborhood:

- Northern Suburbs:** Represented by a large letter 'N'. It shows a popularity of 23% and an opinion gauge.
- Western Districts:** Represented by a large letter 'W'. It shows a popularity of 39% and an opinion gauge.
- Eastern Factories:** Represented by a large letter 'E'. It shows a popularity of 38% and an opinion gauge.
- Southern Docks:** Represented by a large 'DS' logo. It shows a popularity gauge and an opinion gauge.

At the bottom of the editor are two buttons: 'LAYOUT' with a left-pointing arrow and 'PUBLISH' with a right-pointing arrow.





Frank: You see all this shit happening around the world, while
we sit around an write about some popstar's new love affair.

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For the 10 EUR I paid for this game I could have gotten a kebab, fries, and a coke. And consuming those would probably have taken me longer than it did to play this game.

There's some potential here, but it falls horribly short. The game lasts only for 12 turns, which is nowhere near long enough to make you give a damn about the four people in your editorial team or the gameworld that you inhabit. The game just feels empty and entirely forgettable.

The game is visually appealing, so it does have that going for it. But it still feels like a demo, not an actual game.

If you can pick this up at a heavy discount, its a fun little game to try, but at full price its robbery in broad daylight.. It's a good game, I would definitely reccomend it, however make no mistake it is not even close to papers please.

Pros:

- High replay value
- some headlines are pretty funny
- moral choices
- good ui
interesting gameplay

cons:

-
- rebel ending is very difficult to achieve, 3 of my 4 playthroughs have been unsuccessful rebel runs.
 - need to go through tutorial every playthrough

. This game makes me feel like a complete scumbag. Unlike in Papers Please, its really easy to make mistakes, and its not told where you make mistakes, and its hard to figure, "if I was a soul-sucking 1985 monolithic government, what wouldn't I want to see in the paper," because half the time I feel like the game doesn't know either.

I also wish it was longer. the 45 mins it took me to run through it is about all the time you'll need since from there, you can only go and try other things, and its kind of a shame. Make a sequel where what I say in the paper actually makes a difference to world at large.

If I write something awful about that idiot of a president, have riots form on the spot. Blame me. Make me panic.

Have me panic-censor an article to make the suits happy. I wanna feel that tension. Cuz I didn't here.

6/10. Some of my thoughts after about 40 minutes of playing:

- The game is buggy, It has crashed a few times, and I have experienced glitches in the game forcing me to relaunch it.
- Music is repetitive uninspiring.
- This game needs more depth. A good example is a budget option for running your newspaper that rewards you for selling more newspapers.
- Choices are extremely limited for editing articles and layout.

The first 10 minutes were fun, but quickly got repetitive. This game has so much potential, it just needs the core concepts to be fleshed out more.. The Westport Independent is a great example of a good tiny game. It can hold your attention for a night or two. You won't regret your playtime. Regardless of fact that this is very small it has freedom of choice, quite rich branched storyline and colourful characters. Yes colorful, even if in the game you see only one or two text lines and silhouettes in cutscenes between turns. Many games with big budgets for dialogues and storylines by renowned authors couldn't give me comparable good experience. Despite the fact that questions brought up by game designers are not currently important for me because of a different attitude toward media in my country and in the western world, I am glad to see that game developers bring up questions that are important for them, I believe. Thank you guys! I don't regret spending money on it and I recommend this pretty game to everyone who reads or watches news.

If you expect an ambitious game in the league of "Papers, Please", you will be highly disappointed. This game takes less than thirty minutes to complete. Most people think it's too short, but personally it allowed me to do a few runs, whereas I did one game and a half of "Papers, Please". This way, you can try many things.

In my first run, I aligned with the government, which was very easy. In my following runs, I tried to make each district revolt. The South and East are easy to "win"; the West and, above all, the North are super hard to turn around (they are lawful Loyalists in the beginning). This was where the game became challenging. I find it amusing to think that one of my hardest challenge in video games was to inform rich people through newspapers that their government is evil and that they should work against it. Who knew we would someday live in such a time...

However, I'm still unsure if the challenge is either very tough and complex or just plain unfair. I feel like you don't know enough about the mechanics. It seems like it's not any articles speaking against the government that will get to the North folks. What makes it even harder is that you have to avoid making the government suspicious; to influence the North, you will almost inevitably bust your limit. How do you find the balance? Lucas Pope, the creator of "Papers, Please", created a free game with a similar concept to The Westport Independent called Republica Times (it was released before). It wasn't divided into districts, and the outcome of everything you did was obvious. Also, the gameplay consisted only of choosing which articles to publish, and how big they would be on the front page; you couldn't modify the titles or the content, and you didn't have to assign them to a specific journalist. Finally, there wasn't all the marketing side of the game; your articles were either political (which are not popular but are influential) or about celebrities or entertainment (which have the opposite effect). So it was simpler and more straightforward, but at the same time isn't it a bit boring if you're sure of the outcome, and if there's no challenge?

The community is so inactive that you can't expect to find a guide on the web. You can't even find a clear description of the achievements.

So yeah, I'm a bit mixed about all of this, but overall I had a great time and it was very compelling to try to make rebels out of the North folks (in which I succeeded! Yay for me :D).. If you like games with a slower pace and no combat then this should be the game for you. Also its hard to actual get the "best" ending.. Ok so let s jump right in this review all i have to say is i love this game it s political setting and how much power press could have in the wrong hands this game is mainly around it s story and doesn t really have a sandbox as of now is the gameplay good?yes actualy very good the game has great potential with it taking place in a dictatorship wich is split between the Rebels and the Loyalist Government.If you re like me you would just side with the loyalists in the first playthrough for me it was opinion howver it s also simpler for new players.SO the game s "map" is set in a big city wich is separeted into three reigions of interest.The North West,South,and East with the main diffrence being welth and what the region likes to read like per say the righ like to read about Famous people and the low class citizens like hearing about crime.Your staff are four writers two of them are neutral in political opinion meanwhile Phill-Loyalist and Frank-Rebel are very loyal to there side of politics and they would refuse something wich talks in favour of the opposition like per say Frank will refuse to write loyalist propaganda however you can force them even tough it s risky ultimetyly you get around five stories and you get to change their title and censor parts of the story in the end the game has a ending about each region and character wich melt toghther as an ending

In the end the game s certainly fun however it gets repetitive quick as one playthrough can be done in a day and in the end i felt like it had amazing world and events so i really believe i d call this around 5/10 what it has is good but there s just not inuff of it.I ll upvote mainly because i had alot of fun at first but like i said be careful about this one you re not relly getting your money s worth. As much as I'd like to upvote this game, I can't.

Not for this price.

It is indeed a pretty interesting game about newspaper, corruption and censorship and has many different aspects to consider, such as the governmental suspicion of you and your workers, the comfort of your writers, the populations opinion, distribution, content etc.

And it's really fun to read through all the articles, deciding over the title and what parts to cut out and seeing how it affects the population of Westport.

But once you've got through the game once, wich was done in 100 minutes by me, it's just repeating itself. The story is and stays the same.

The replay value only consits of getting different endings for different districts and for the workers, but that's about it.

It is a good game, but you most likely will only play it once for 1-2 hours or so and for that, the price is too high. I'm glad I've

bought it on a sale so i only paid a fifth of the price, and for this price it would be ok for every one, but not for 10 bucks.. The Westport Independent cannot help the comparison to 'Papers Please'. If the idea of a slightly grim game about working under an oppressive totalitarian regime doesn't make you think of 'Papers Please' then the art style certainly will. Lucas Pope (creator of the afore mentioned game) is even credited in the Special Thanks. But with papers please being one of the most critically acclaimed indies of all time it's a hard act to follow.

You take on the role of editor of an independent newspaper under the particularly ruthless 'National Government'. Each week you must sort through a number potential articles, changing the title and censoring the content to fill your aims. On my first play through I whole heartedly took on the role of a nationalist. My paper oozed fascism with every article making the government into saviours of the people and the rebels into the scum of the earth. Whilst one of my employees, Frank, was taken away for 'correction' (as you'll see this is something of a habit of his) it was largely uneventful. At the end of the game almost everyone was completely in favour of the government with the air full of music and laughter and only the occasional dissenter being bundled into a van.

The second time round I went full rebel! Calling out the government every chance I had and painting the rebels in a sympathetic light. This time lots of threatening messages from the government landed on my desk and before long Frank had been dragged away in the back of a van. Keeping up my anti-government sentiments the paper was soon after shut down and I was thrown back to the main menu without even an achievement.

For a final run through I decided to become a tabloid. Stay as neutral as possible, publish mostly celebrity gossip and local news stories. Despite my best efforts however my paper came under suspicion from the government and, you guessed it, Frank was escorted out of the building by some men in suits. At the end the richer area of Westport remained under state control as did the Middle class area (with some protest) but the poorer regions were in full riot.

Despite the clear impact of my reporting on the world around me The Westport Independent doesn't lend any weight to its actions. The censoring and headline changing feels like ticking boxes and the other options you get are sliders for slider sake. It feels all too easy to just choose your outcome. Your employees have lives, you hear them talk about current events and their opinions on the work they've produced but I'm simply not invested in them.

So the question perhaps is what did 'Paper Please' do that The Westport Independent doesn't. In my opinion it comes down to two main things. Firstly making a choice is too easy. 'Papers Please' builds investment in characters leading to difficult decisions where you need to decide if you obey the government and let an innocent girl die or let her live but leave your own family without food. Westport has what feels like no or little consequences and the stories you deal with are out of your control and you're disconnected. Secondly is the time pressure. Mechanics as storytelling is a huge part of video games and is what sets it apart from other media. In 'Paper's Please' time is constantly ticking down making you feel pressured and with constant changes you need to learn and keep track of there is a real feeling of oppression. Westpost again has none of this, you are free to look through the articles deciding what will affect what value in your own time and with the exception of losing a journalist or so there's no change.

Perhaps it's overly mean of me to compare this game to one of the most renowned games of its type. But it's worth noting that Lucas Pope himself once created a very similar game 'The Republica Times' for Ludum Dare. Ultimately The Westport Independent isn't a bad game, it just suffers from the fact that it is both a game that sacrifices fun for impact but fall flat and that it is unavoidably held to 'Paper Please'. For most people this is a game to be missed but I think there are some out there who would appreciate the experience this game offers. Even if it falls a bit short.

Disclaimer: The review key for this product was provided by the developer free of charge.
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