

COSMONIOUS HIGH CASE STUDY OF SERET: BUILDING A CUSTOM VO SYSTEM

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Audio Director & Emperor of Soundwaves





Cosmonious High

Directory





FROM VACATION SIMULATOR TO COSMONIOUS HIGH

STARTING POINT

- No central VO Database
 - **Manual data input** for text, filenames, and file references
 - Isolated caption database
 - Limited automation for file processing
- Collaborative Writing tool **didn't scale well** with the size of the game



WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

- **Bigger** and **more detailed** world
- **Relationships** and **deeper narrative**
complimenting **highly interactive** gameplay
- **Large variety** of characters
- **Highly responsive** characters with
more **background depth**
- Areas will be **dense with character**
(multi-NPC conversations)





RESEARCH!

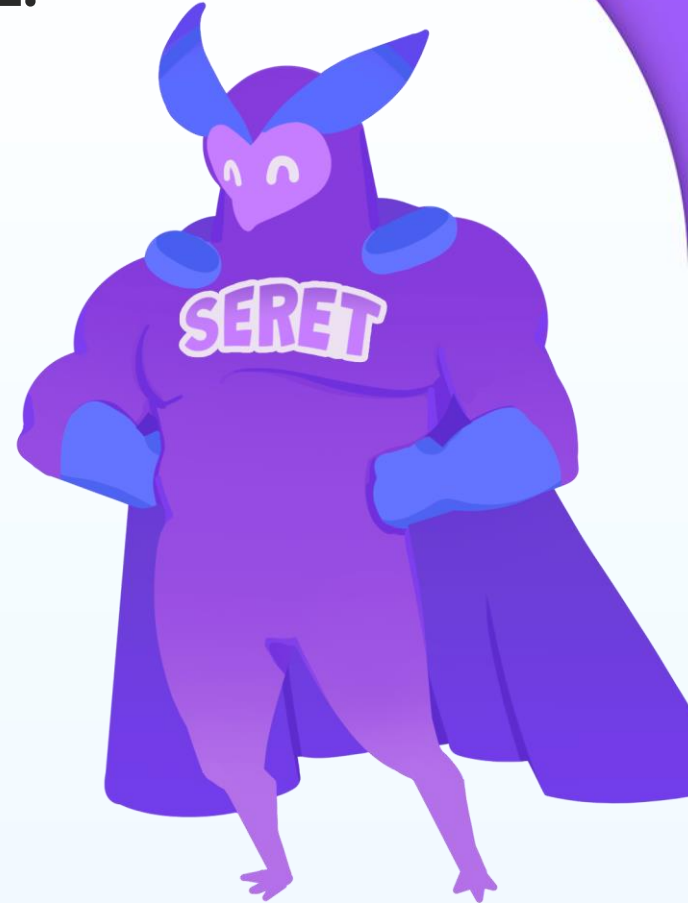
How to make more content with less wasted time, and same team size?





SERET - THE CUSTOM VO SYSTEM TO THE RESCUE!

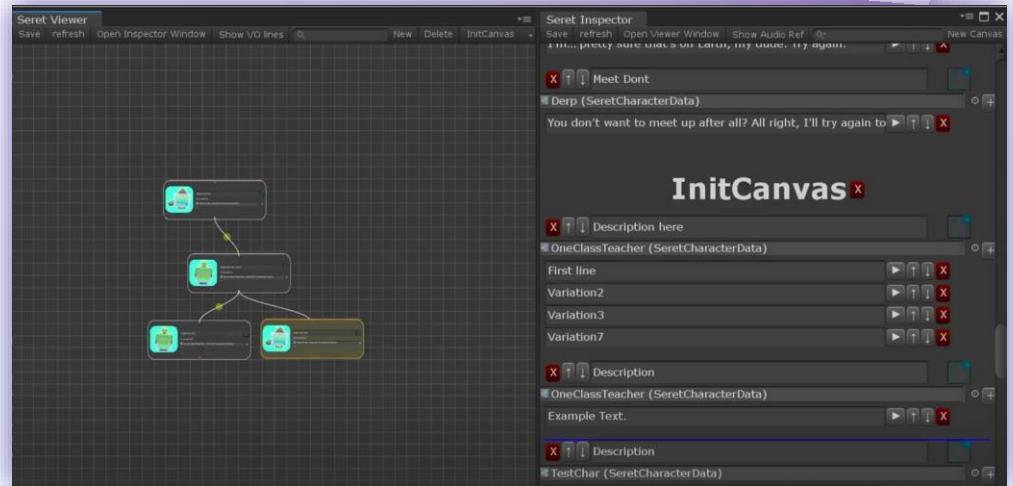
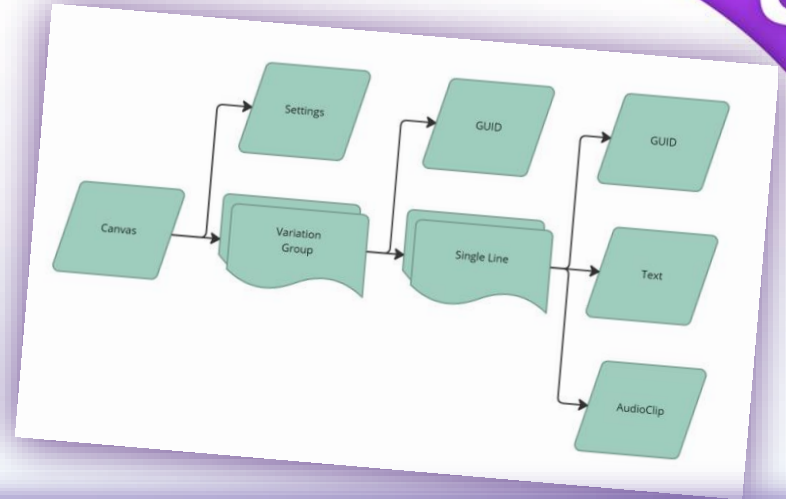
- Easy to use
- Integratable
- Extensible





FIRST ATTEMPT

- In-Game Engine window to manage the database
- Updated by regular repository updates (check-out files, commits etc.)
- Variations built in
- Keyboard shortcuts+Drag/drop
- 2 view types
 - Viewer (node base)
 - Inspector



Seret Viewer

Save refresh Open Inspector Window Show VO lines

New Delete InitCanvas

Seret Inspector

Save refresh Open Viewer Window Show Audio Ref

New Canvas

I'm... pretty sure that's on Earth, my dude. Try again.

X ↑ ↓ Meet Dont

Derp (SeretCharacterData)

You don't want to meet up after all? All right, I'll try again to

InitCanvas X

X ↑ ↓ Description here

OneClassTeacher (SeretCharacterData)

First line

Variation2

Variation3

Variation7

X ↑ ↓ Description

OneClassTeacher (SeretCharacterData)

Example Text.

X ↑ ↓ Description

TestChar (SeretCharacterData)

Example Text.

X ↑ ↓ Description

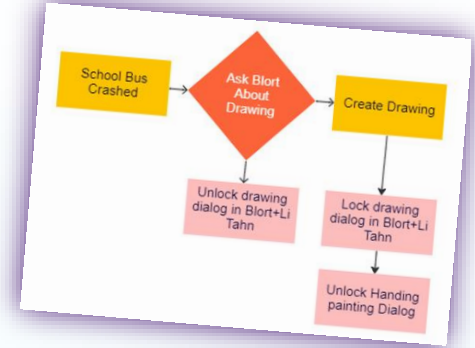
THE BIG TRIAL





TO NODE OR NOT TO NODE?

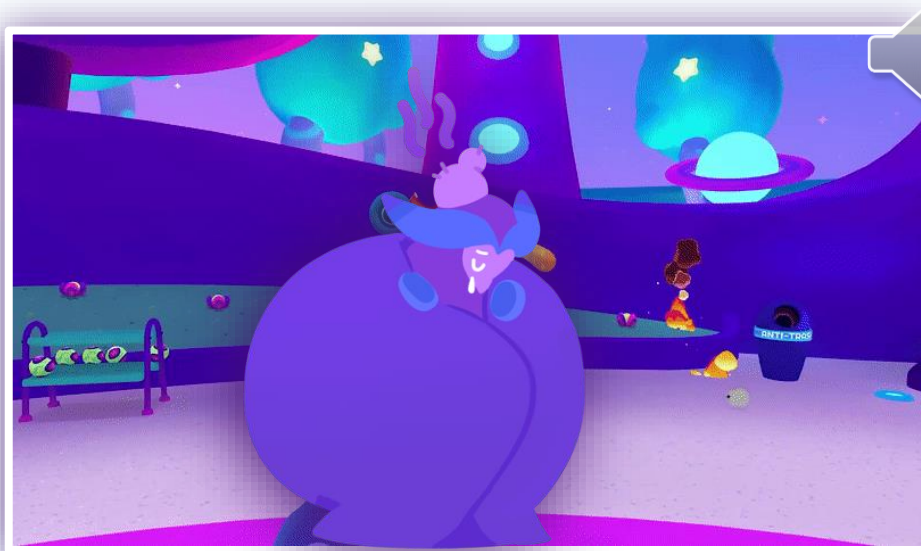
- Branching dialog to affect result was less common
- State based dialog options were more common
- Responses to specific events and actions were very common





COLLABORATION & PORTABILITY?!

- Riffing off each other in real time
- Seeing progress of a group in a big writing endeavor
- Being able to update and get updated everywhere



**BACK TO THE
DRAWING BOARD!**



CUSTOM BACKEND SOLUTION

- Creating a database server
- Managing logins
- History Record
- Maintenance
- Real-time collaborative UI





GOOGLE SHEETS - PROS / Cons

- Collaborative
- Simple to use API
- Existing Web+Mobile App
- Handled user accounts
- Conditional formatting
- Autocomplete
- History easily accessible

Seret Script						
File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help Last edit was made on October 24, 2022 by Alex Hopper						
A1 fx Description						
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Description	Line	Character	Notes	Secret Code	WasRecorded
2	Info	MS - 1 - Registration				
3	Info	FOR A NEW PLAYER				
4	Action	Fade-in from black. player is standing at a counter in the School Transport Station, a satellite off the main school that accepts students, then shuffles them to the main building. The academy is visible outside the window. The player is in front of a desk, speaking to Coach Leti, who is here in her capacity as school admin assistant.				
5		Cosmonious High welcomes our newest student! Please choose an ID, and set it in the registration field.	Intercom		X	
6	Info	Hint Lines				
7		Pick an ID. Any will do.				
8	Action	If the player puts two ID cards into the reader.	Intercom		X	
9		Very funny. There's only one of you.				
10		Only one ID per student is allowed.	Intercom		X	
11		(when the ID is put in the registration field)				
12	Action	New student ID. Beginning New Kid Protocol.	Intercom		X	
13		(if Leti is not there)				
14		Calling teacher to complete registration.	Intercom		X	
15		Action				
16		(like 'damn, I've never seen anything like you so you must be the Prismi')				
17		CUT: Whoa! You "must" be the new Prismi student! Welcome to Cosmonious High!	Leti			
18		Hello, hello! Welcome to Cosmonious High! I'm Coach Leti. You must be the new Prismi student!	Leti			
19		Just place your hand on the bioscanner and you'll be registered!	Leti			
20		Hey there! Welcome to Cosmonious High! I'm Coach Leti and "you" must be the Prismi!				
21	Info	Hint Lines				
22		Gotta get you registered. Put your hand on the scanner.	Leti		X	
23		Scanner is right there, when you're ready to register for school!				
24		Please place your hand on the scanner to become a student of Cosmonious High!				
25		Register as a student by placing your hand on the scanner!	Intercom		X	
26	Action	If the player puts their ID in the deleter!				
27		Oh, are you sure about that? It can't be undone.				
28		Alth... be super sure before you delete that ID!	Leti		X	
29	Action	If the player hands Leti the ID.				
30		Aw, thanks, but the IDs are for you.	Leti		X	
31		This ID will do. Here. You take it.				



GOOGLE SHEETS - PROS / Cons

Seret Script

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help Last edit was made on October 24, 2022 by Alex Hopper

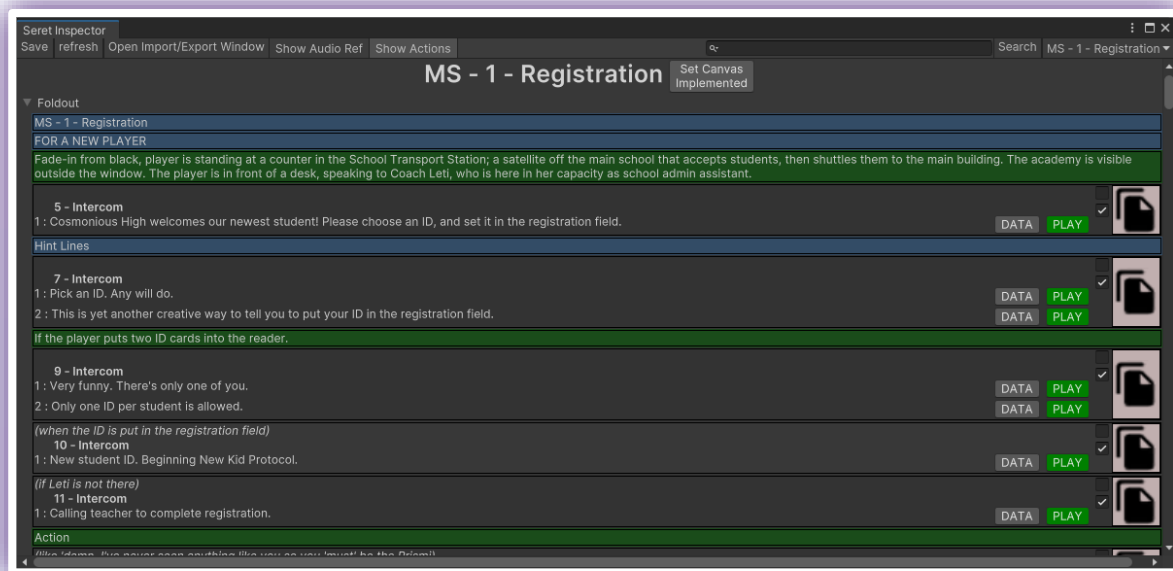
85% 85% \$ % .0 123 Default (Arial) 10 B I G A

A1	Description						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Description	Line	Character	Notes	Secret Code	WasRecorded	ID
2	Info	MS - 1 - Registration					ddd1De1-af0a-4964-ae27-5cae0422a566
3	Info	FOR A NEW PLAYER		NEW: Choreograph a couple visual jokes with the school buses, (one backfiring, stopping and starting, spinning around)			5ee3f926-d3cd-4a34-b990-4566de9923d
4	Action	Fade-in from black, player is standing at a counter in the School Transport Station, a satellite off the main school that accepts students, then shuttles them to the main building. The academy is visible outside the window. The player is in front of a desk, speaking to Coach Leti, who is here in her capacity as school admin assistant.					a3de5620-0d8a-4a87-a0c7-13389ab2b4a8
5	Info	Cosmonious High welcomes our newest student! Please choose an ID, and set it in the registration field.	Intercom		X		aac48255-47b5-4379-a244-be5cf3d1f1f6
6	Hint Lines	Pick an ID. Any will do.					67404b32-b7b3-487a-9335-03d85ac65825
7	Action	This is yet another creative way to tell you to put your ID in the registration field.	Intercom		X		8ae95abc-49c8-4f51-a26d-c1a9d577ae95
8	Action	If the player puts two ID cards into the reader.					e72e8166-e140-4b7d-ad2d-e6c388bb1fd
9		Very funny. There's only one of you.	Intercom		X		5d1541db-e682-4907-9615-395196601293
10	(when the ID is put in the registration field)	Only one ID per student is allowed.					
11		New student ID. Beginning New Kid Protocol.	Intercom		X		8cd8d6d1-c04e-40f5-8439-882475664a37
12	(if Leti is not there)	Calling teacher to complete registration.	Intercom		X		5c112926-0666-4219-adb4-16e1ad233f81
13	Action	Action					bae6a7ba-ae45-46d5-8bc5-d912bb170014
14	(aka damn, I've never seen anything like you so you must be the Prism)	CUT! Whoa! You "must" be the new Prism student! Welcome to Cosmonious High!	Leti				a7e1ee5f-a320-4b38-b60a-026c34ad493b
15		Hello, hello! Welcome to Cosmonious High! I'm Coach Leti. You must be the new Prism student!	Leti				292b4eed-0d64-4056-bd8e-e11670fec2d2
16		Just place your hand on the bioscanner and you'll be registered!	Leti		X		b8a19113-13be-44ca-a362-d2814b9632e4
17	Info	Hint Lines		Hey there! (Welcome to Cosmonious High! I'm Coach Leti and 'you' must be the Prism)			85e369ed-37a9-4367-9301-e80ee91806e
18		Gotta get you registered. Put your hand on the scanner.	Leti		X		0e3c93da-546f-4b77-8932-51ef9f63a9ca
19		Scanner is right there, when you're ready to register for school!					
20		Please place your hand on the scanner to become a student of Cosmonious High!	Intercom		X		1b574842-edf2-4adc-a97f-f942069f202
21	Action	Register as a student by placing your hand on the scanner!					84279799-d2e7-4210-a0d6-7bd2a978031f5
22		If the player puts their ID in the delete!					
23		Oh, are you sure about that? It can't be undone.	Leti		X		468a0533-8f6a-44b3-a2d4-439e4e3b729e
24	Action	Ahh... be super sure before you delete that ID!					
25		If the player hands Leti the ID	Leti				666a9f0b-a409-40c1-b63f-00833b687496
26		Aw, thanks, but the IDs are for you.					
27		This ID will do. Here. You take it.	Leti		X		00ca34e6-1262-4843-ab08-e16162061072

- Slow pull request for large database
- Pushing many changes can be tricky
- Exposed metadata
- Prone to user errors

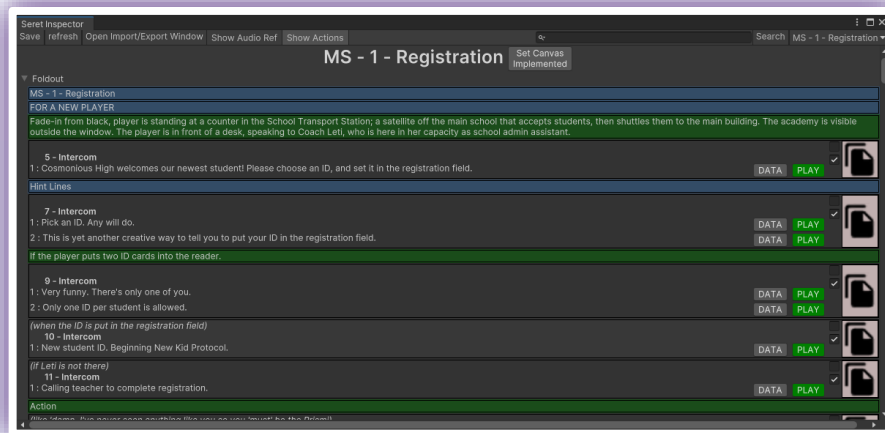
SERET - CORE GOALS

- Easy to use
- Integratable
- Extensible



EASY TO USE

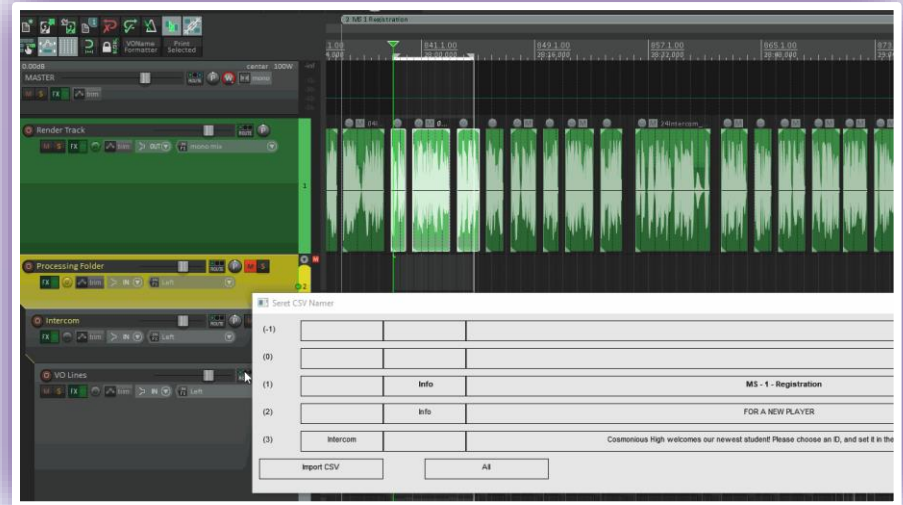
- Collaborative
- Writers can **write** anywhere
- Simple to **read** and implement in game engine





INTEGRATABLE

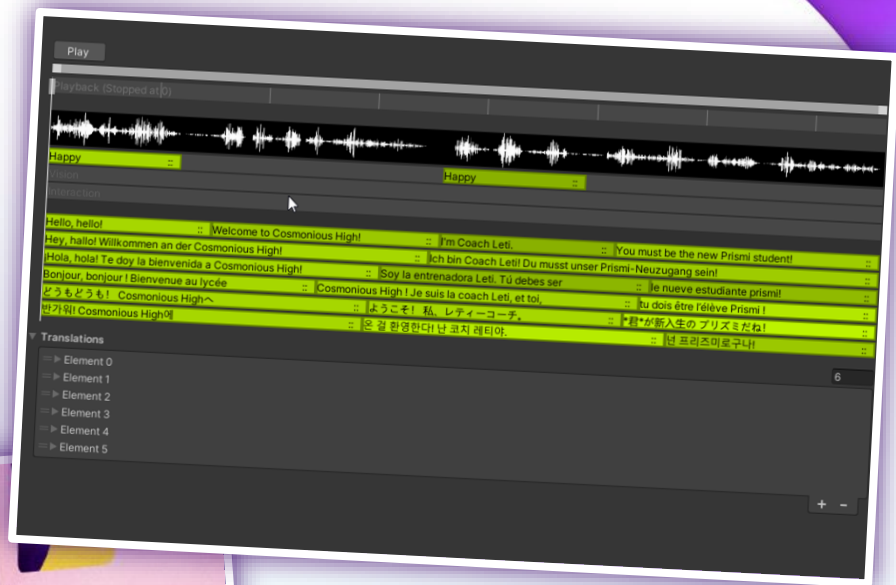
- **Audio Pipeline**
- Captions and Facial Emotes
- Mocap
- Dialog sequences or Node integration





INTEGRATABLE

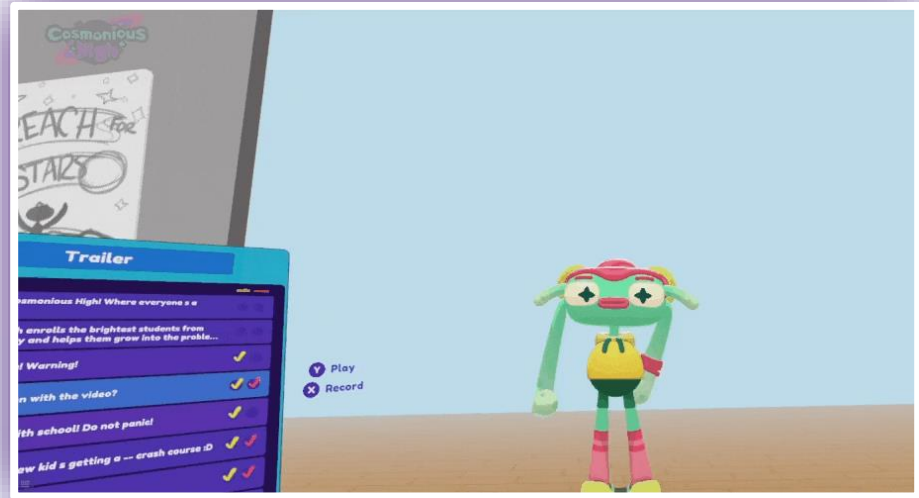
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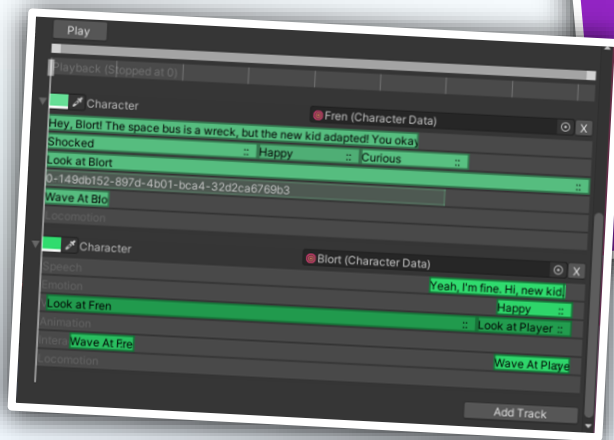
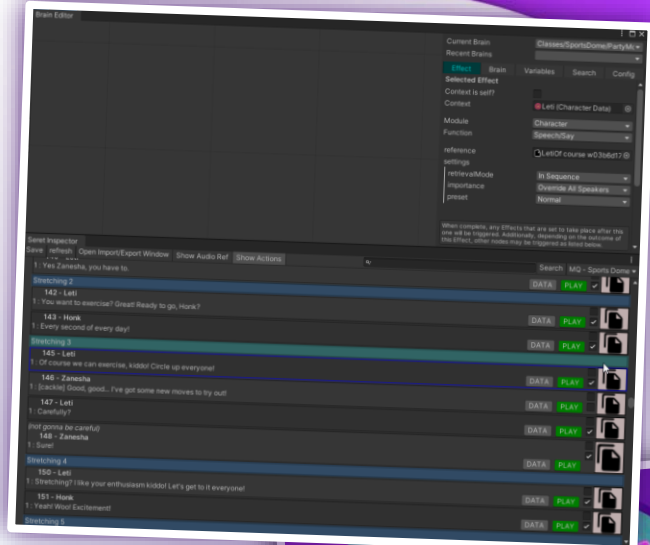
INTEGRATABLE

- Audio Pipeline
- Captions
- **Mocap**
- Dialog sequences or Node integration



INTEGRATABLE

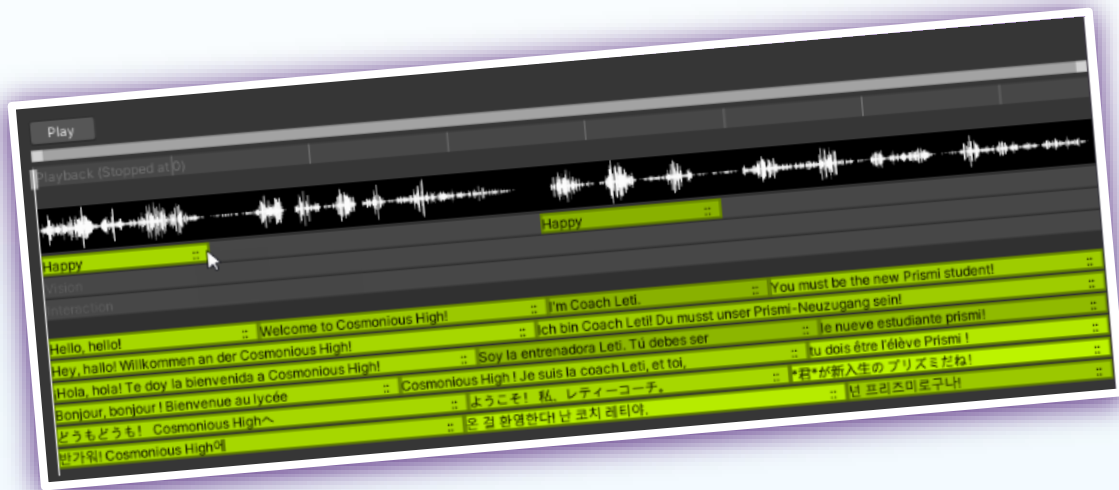
- Audio Pipeline
- Captions
- Mocap and Facial Emotes
- **Dialog sequences or Node integration**





EXTENSIBLE

- Localization pipeline
- Actor dialog export
- External dialog editing pipeline





EXTENSIBLE

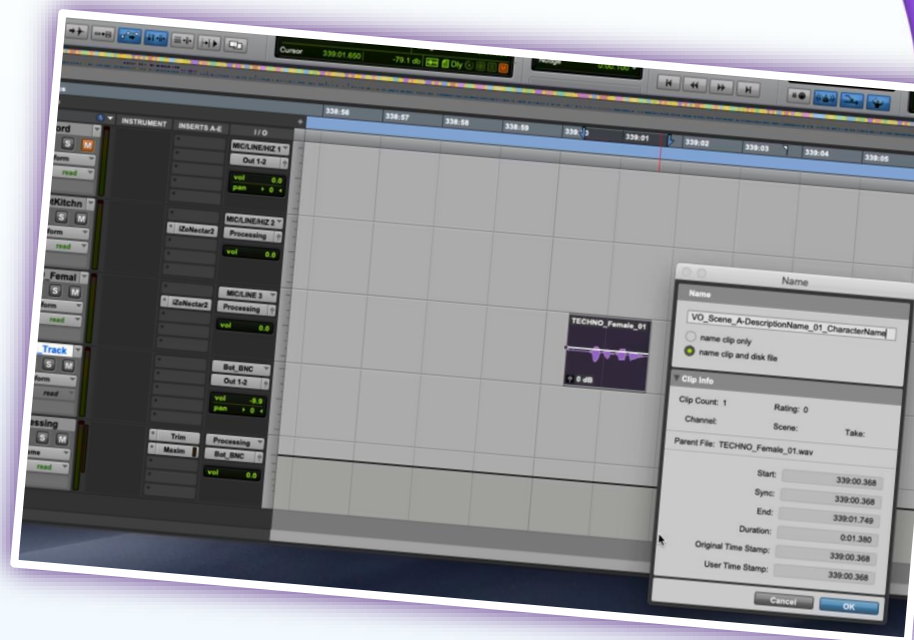
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EXTENSIBLE

- Localization pipeline
- Actor dialog export
- External dialog editing pipeline



COSMONIOUS HIGH NUMBERS



~ 8,800
DIALOGUE LINES

30
CHARACTERS
18
MAIN NPCs

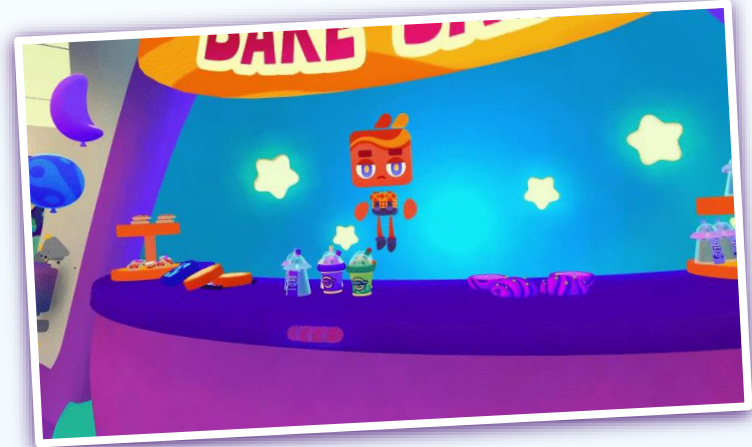
< 25
PEOPLE DURING
95% OF PRODUCTION



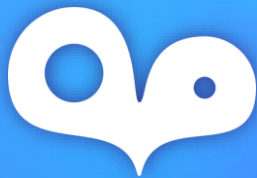


TAKEAWAYS

- It is worth investing in customizable dialog system
- Create MVP quickly, and improve flaws as team uses it
- Don't be afraid to cut when necessary (even if it took big effort to create)
- Find ways to improve UX to minimal friction (with UI, automations & shortcuts)
- Consider project scalability needs early



COSMONIOUS HIGH CASE STUDY OF SERET: BUILDING A CUSTOM VO SYSTEM



THANK YOU!

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