

It Will Find You – Phone Systems:

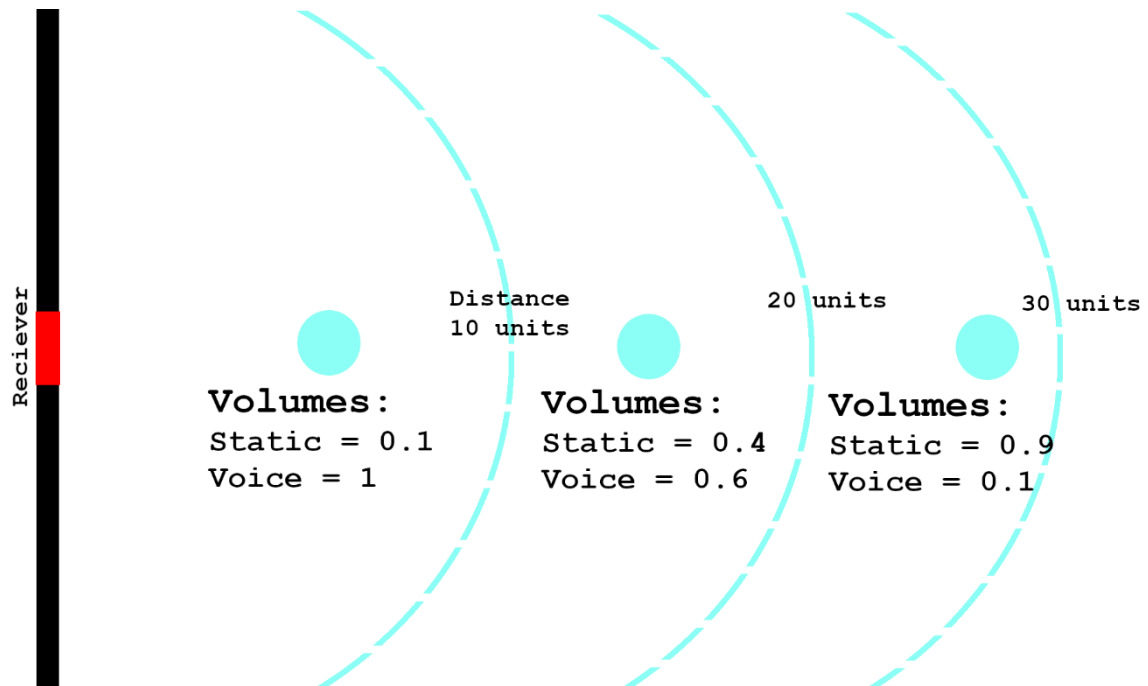
One of the core narrative tools in It Will Find you is the use of phones to receive calls, and it was important to create a realistic yet simple system for their operation. The first step was to create a script with an array of audio clips that could be played based on specific events as dictated by the Master Event System (MES). This was relatively easy to set up, with a lot of the work being done by the MES and an internal timer dictating specific clips and settings.

Most phones don't automatically answer calls, and so the system was then expanded to include a ringing period prior to each call, which had 2 outcomes, either the call was declined/missed or answered. If the call was declined it would unload the audio clip and mark it as missed on the MES, whereas if the player chose to answer the call the ringing would cease, and the appropriate audio clip would play, triggering a similar clip on the player to allow for both parts to speak naturally.

With this system functional it was then time to manipulate the visuals of the phone to correspond with the choices. I was using an emissive texture for the phone screen, with its emission levels varying based on the actions that were taken and the state of the phone, e.g. low emission for idle, bright for an active or incoming call. I then created multiple textures to overlay on the emissive material to represent the various phone calls, using standard android phones as a template for what the screen should look like, and then swapping between active, idle, and incoming call versions as was necessary. Textures were then made for each of the phones and the various calls they could receive, ensuring that each call had a distinct i.d. and visual prompt via the lighting and colour of the phone screen.



Whilst the initial phone players interacted with was situated in the car, and therefore fairly basic in regard to its environmental interactions, I wanted to make the house phone more of a risk reward scenario like the generator. To accomplish this I decided to create a reception mechanic that would make the call less audible the further the player moved from the base unit, preventing the player from carrying the phone around the entire map and forcing them to stay relatively static within the house if they wanted to hear the content of the calls. This was done with a Vector3.Distance reading the distance between the phone and the receiver, then Lerp'ing the volume values of two audio sources attached to the phones, one for static noise, and the other for the dialogue.



Conclusion:

I found this to be an effective mechanic overall that made the player think tactically about when and how to answer the phone, though the distance over which reception is lost still requires adjustment based on testing feedback.

Side Note:

This mechanic was then utilised again for the police car radio, but this time in reverse. Once the player had acquired the radio they could use it to play a game of hot and cold with a hidden location within the game, which was obscured by a masking dome making it invisible. The closer the player got to the dome, the clearer audio coming through the radio would be, creating a fun, if rather difficult mini game to acquire more narrative information and hints, whilst also allowing access to an otherwise difficult to locate area. A colour system was later added to the radio screen as a visual representation of the players distance to make locating the camp easier.