



Partial Control

Partial Control

Live the adventure with a hacked brain.

Computer, Strategy, Simulation Game

Introduction

In a distant future you incarnate one of the many cybernetic human crew members of the Kularkamis, a respected military spaceship. Suddenly, as you're travelling between two stars, an unknown signal manages to hack the brain of every single crew member causing them to turn against each other - it's havoc! Your goal is to save the ship and disable this devastating hack. This will be tough considering your brain has also been affected. As a consequence of the damage to your brain, you can only make limited choices at specific moments, the rest of the time it's the hack that's in control of your body, whether you like it or not!

Story line

When the game starts the player's character doesn't know anything. The brain hack has affected his memory, he can't remember why he's on this massive ship, not even who the hell he is. His first objective is therefore to remember who he is. To do that he has to reach the control room where he will be able to access the central memory unit of the ship.

This task is not going to be easy. The hack that affected him hit the rest of the crew a lot worse. They are all killing each other. The main protagonist must survive the trip to the control room without getting killed by his own crew. The task won't be easy considering his weakened mental state.



An interesting part about this adventure is the effect of the hack on the protagonist's brain. Just like the other crew members the hack is forcing him to kill the others. Which is actually exactly what he needs to do if he is to have a chance at survival, but he needs to do it smartly. If he just lets the hack control his brain, it would be like playing the lottery - a near certain failure. But thanks to the character's unique cerebral ability to counter the hack he is able at key moments to make real conscious decisions although confined within the malicious programme that has entered his brain.

Another consequence of the hack is to limit his choices. For example, even if his normal self may have run for his life, that's not an available choice. Therefore the protagonist needs to ensure to make the most of his lucid moments and make the right choices - after that, his body is just on automatic mode.

Philosophy

'Partial Control' is a video game where there is no fake smart A.I. Everything that is dumb is meant to be dumb, the only possibly smart guy out there is the player. You don't encounter any sheep in Partial Control beacuse even sheep are smarter and more complex than any artificial intelligence made in this day and age. Most of today's realistic games are acceptably unrealistic. For example, in shooter games you usually can't scratch your head and if you can scratch your head you probably can't decide the scratch angle.

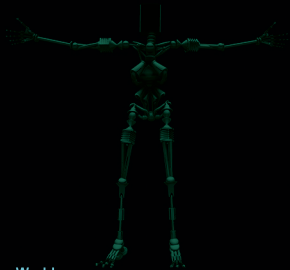
In 'Partial Control' the plot explains why you can't scratch your head, it's because your brain has been reprogrammed by a hack. So your choices are limited. To help visualise this concept consider what your choices are right now. What can you do with your body?

Well, you can control fairly precisely how each of your muscles contracts.

But you can also make choices like walk, swim, run which sort of launches an automatic sequence of muscle contractions.

So one could reprogramme your brain so that you can't make precise muscle choices, you can only choose from a series of actions that involve a sequence of muscle movements. This is the choice limitation that exists in nearly every game. It's just that in this game it's not something that doesn't fit in perfectly with the storyline.

Imagine how it would feel if all of a sudden you lost control of your body and you ended with the same control of it that you would have in a video game. So for example, you would be able to jump but only with a default jump impulse. You would perhaps be able to grab objects but you wouldn't be able to decide how you grab them.



World

'Partial Control' depicts a chaotic world in which technology has complexified things beyond what we could have expected. Humans are now able to transfer their brain into computers and live forever. They now use robotic bodies that have allowed them to handle long trips in space lasting billions of years. In this way they have colonised the universe and met other cyborgs - born from other intelligent extraterrestrials species.

The story of the game is about one of the numerous space ships - the Kularkamis - that is filled with cyborg humans. In the story the Kularkamis gets attacked by a hack that affects everyones' brains.

Gameplay

The most unique aspect of 'Partial Control' is the gameplay. The situation of having had your brain hacked and having to survive despite the handicap gives way to interesting mechanics. To understand it let's go through the player experiences. The game is a top view rts camera style game. The image below is what the player sees at the beginning of a level:



He can see himself and the other crew members: the cyborgs that have become his enemies.

For the moment time is paused. The player's main objective is to just analyse the situation. He must try to predict what's going to happen because when time is unpaused he will no longer have control over anything. There is a lot of useful information available to the player that will help him predict what will happen.

For instance, the player can see objects and their properties. In this image, for example, you can see a gun with 3 bullets.



The player can also see coloured lines that show the object each cyborg wants to go get. In this image you can see that the green cyborg and the blue cyborg both want to get the same gun.



On top of every cyborg, there are icons with specific info:



Name
Number of lives
Target

The **Target** shown above is extremely important. Every cyborg will try to kill their target as main priority. So the player must look to see if the other cyborgs have his character as their target: identifying imminent danger is a key strategy for survival.

Once the player has finished observing and understands the situation, it's time to take the decisions that will allow him to survive the battle. The player has two types of decisions to make. The first is to decide which object his/her cyborg will try to use.

Available Objects

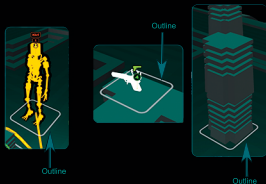


In this picture you can see that there are three available objects, all guns. The player can choose to go pick any of them up. By right clicking the object or via the object menu the player can order his character to go grab the object. But the character won't do it until time is unpaused.

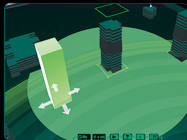
The second type of decision is linked to the ship's environment controls. But for this he/she needs energy - the player starts with a finite amount of energy. And he must use it wisely.



With ship environment controls the player can modify anything in the ship that has this white outline around it:



The player will encounter many things he/she can modify. These are some of the ways the player can modify the environment with energy.



If the player left clicks a modifiable structure the player can move it. This will cost 1 or 2 energy units.



By left clicking a modifiable gun the player changes the quantity of bullets the gun has. It costs 1 energy for every bullet added or removed.



The player can paralyze a cyborg during 1.5 seconds for 1 energy or he/she can extesise a cyborg for 5 seconds.

When a cyborg is extesised he is paralyzied but invulnerable.

Finally when the player finishes his/her actions and he/she thinks that everything will go well for his/her character, then the player can click play to unpause time.



Now the player can watch the action and hope that his/her character survives.

The fight between the cyborgs gets really messy, the player's character can be easily hit by a bullet and die instantly. Making wise choices during the paused moment before the fight starts is therefore essential.

Time will pause automatically every time the player's character has a specific type of choice to make. Here are some examples. Every time the character finishes using an object, time will pause so the player decides what object the character will use next. Time will also pause if someone grabbed the object the character wanted to get. Or if the character is using a weapon and the target he/she wanted to kill just died. In this case time will pause so the player decides what the next target will be.

In total there are 81 rooms, the player must pass through all of these to reach the control room where hopefully he/she will manage to save the ship.

This game might be considered like a puzzle game but in general predicting the future may be so hard that it's better to just rely on intuition and strategy rather than attempting to predict the exact future.

Game modes

Campaign mode

The campaign mode is the default game mode where the player gets to enjoy the story line. This is the first mode the player should try. Here the player has to battle his/her way through the levels until he/she reaches the control room. In every level the layout of the objects is always the same giving the player a stable environment to learn the game.

Chaotic Universes mode

In this mode the player can't save his progress. He must beat the 25 levels in one game session. Every time the player dies he will lose a life. At zero lives he will have to restart from the beginning. Through the course of the levels the player may receive extra lives. All the levels will always have a random object layout, so each attempt to beat the chaotic universe mode will be a different experience. The player will also have to conserve his energy throughout the levels and will only receive energy every time he kills another cyborg. If the player feels a level can't be won, he will have the possibility to scramble the object layout with chaotic triggers but he may only do this a limited amount of times.

SandBox / Editor Mode

In sandbox mode the player can view replays, he/she can retry levels he/she played in the campaign. The player can also create or edit levels with determined element setups or random element setups. The player can immediately test the levels he/she created.

Hacked Cyborg Behaviour

For the player it's important to understand the exact behaviour of the hacked cyborg. They all have the exact same behaviour pattern including the player's cyborg. The only difference between the player cyborg and the others is that the player cyborg can make some conscious decisions at specific moments.

At the start when cyborgs have no weapons they choose amongst any of the available useful items. Items can either be buffs that help the cyborg, weapons, or just effects that change the situation in the room.

When the cyborg finishes using the item he chose he will then look for another item. At this moment the player controlled cyborgs may choose any items available. But totally A.I. controlled cyborgs will always choose the item available that's closest to where they are.

Most items are quickly used, for example plugs just need to be equipped, trigger panels just need to be activated, the duplication chambers just need to be programmed once and for the cloning device the cyborg just quickly clones himself.



Orange cyborg cloning him self with cloning device

Then there are the weapons that involve a bit more commitment from the cyborg when using them. Cyborgs always use their weapons against their designated target. If their target happens to die they will have to choose a new target. Player controlled cyborgs may choose any other cyborg as their target. A.I. controlled cyborgs always choose the closest target they can see as the new target.



Cyborg Shooting gaia blaster

Once a cyborg starts shooting a range weapon he will not stop until he runs out of ammo. When that happens the player controlled cyborgs can choose to either reload the range weapon with ammunition or to go get a totally different item. A.I. controlled cyborgs will always try to reload the weapon first if there is ammo available but if there is none, they will choose to go get something new, the closest thing available to them.

When using melee weapons cyborgs won't ever finish using them until all their targets are dead or the melee weapons ammunition is finished. A weapon could also be destroyed, in that case the cyborg would need to choose a new item.

A cyborg could also end up choosing a new item to go get if before he reaches the item it's destroyed or another cyborg picked it up.



Green cyborg using a knife

Range Weapons

Range weapons are items that can shoot projectiles. Robots use them and shoot at their targets until they have wasted all their ammo or all other enemy robots are dead. When they run out of ammo robots will typically attempt to use standard ammo that can reload all range weapons except for the hinge gun which is a special case.

With environment controls the player can add and remove bullets to range weapons.

Grabber Gun

This is the most basic range weapon in the game, its projectiles are also the fastest in the game and do 1 damage. Rate of fire is medium. It has a maximum of 6 bullets.



This weapon shoots a blast that deals 1 damage to everything in its path. The blast can only be stopped if the core of the blast hits a structure or a wall. Any structure hit by the core of the blast is entirely destroyed regardless of its structural integrity.

Blasts from this gun travel at average speed.

This weapon has the slowest rate of fire and has a maximum of 3 bullets.



Beam Flipper

This weapon has the highest rate of fire and shoots projectiles that travel at an average speed. It has a maximum of 9 bullets. Projectiles shot from this gun can be affected by the beam converger.



Hinge Gun

Instead of shooting ordinary projectiles it actually shoots missiles propelled plugs that help the target of the robot using the hinge gun. This weapon only has one shot and can not be reloaded.

The player can use environment controls to modify the missile propelled plug type. It can either be a speed plug or a defence plug.



Ammo

Can be used to reload bullets for any of the three types of range weapons, Grabber gun, Gaia blast or Beam flipper.



Melee Weapons

Melee weapons are used at close range. When a robot is using a melee weapon he will not stop until he loses his melee weapon, it becomes useless with no energy or all the other enemy robots are dead.

Spectral knife.

This is the weakest weapon in the game, every other weapon in the game does 1 dmg but this weapon does 0,2 dmg. One can slash relatively fast with this weapon but killing generally takes a lot longer than with the other melee weapons.

The player can use psychic powers to make this weapon hidden.



Hephaestus

This is probably the strongest weapon in the game. It's a massive hammer that deals 1 dmg when it hits. Simple but very efficient.

The player can use psychic powers to make anyone who decides to grab the hephaestus become everyone's target.



Electric stick

This weapon damages using electric charges, it's similar to the haphastus, it deals 1 dmg every hit but it has a limited amount of hits it can do.



blue was just electrocuted by the electric stick.



Orange is about to be bashed by the hephaestus, it's going to be quick death.

Missiles

Missiles are items. To use missiles robots need to lock the missile onto their target meaning they must have a line of sight free of walls. When the missile is launched it will follow the target but if it collides with a robot on its way, it will explode, unless it's a surgical missile. Surgical missiles only affect the target they were locked at. When a missile explodes it covers a zone with an effect.

The player can use psychic powers to modify missiles. He/she can change their mode from surgical, small blast, medium blast to massive blast. The only special case is the surgical missile that can only hit the target it was locked at. The others have an area of effect of a size corresponding to the mode.

Explosion missile

Deals 1 damage to all robots hit in the area of effect zone.
Can also break Structures.



Destroy plug Missile

Destroys all plugs on robots hit in the area of effect.



Paralyze Missile

Paralyzes all robots hit for 4 seconds in area of effect.



Neural disrupt Missile

Neural disrupts all robots hit in area of effect.



Orange and yellow have been neural disrupted.

**Neural disrupt*

When robots are neural disrupted they become crazy, they let go of their weapons and the only thing will do is try to find a *neleptic relaxer* to heal themselves.

Plugs

Plugs are items that robots attach to themselves to make themselves stronger. There are currently no psychic modifications on this.

Speed Plug

Makes a robot equipped with this 2 times faster.



Green is equipped with a speed plug.



Melee Defence

Any melee weapon that is used against the robot is destroyed and the robot equipped with it suffers no dmg. This only works 2 times.



Bounce Plug

Bounces bullets from grabber gun and beam flipper. This only works 2 times. Usually kills the attacker.



Defence Plug

Defends against 2 dmg blows, it can be anything.



Optic Plug

Robots equipped with this can now see *hidden items*.



**Hidden: item property*

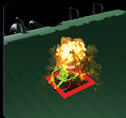
The item is invisible to all robots. Robots will just ignore the item. Unless they have an optic plug.

Traps

When a robot steps on a trap he triggers the effect of the trap on himself only. The trap only activates once, after that it's wasted.

Explosion trap.

Explosion deals 1 normal dmg.
Can be blocked by general defence plug.



explosion trap triggered.

Destroy Weapon trap

If a robot steps on this trap with a weapon it activates and destroys his weapon. If he is not carrying a weapon the trap does not activate.



Make all target victim trap

All robots in the field will make the robot that just stepped on the trap their target.



Slow down trap

Slows down the robots that stepped on it at half speed amount for 10 seconds



Neural disruption trap

Makes the robot that stepped on the trap neural disrupted.



Trigger Panel.

These are all fixed structures. Robots can activate the trigger panel by pressing on the buttons.

When the buttons are pressed it triggers an effect that applies to the whole room. A trigger panel can only be used once.

There is no environment control modifications on any of them.



Extesise all Trigger Panel

All robots are extesised except the robot that triggerred the effect.

Extesion paralyzes robots for 4 seconds but also make them imortal during that time.



Give energy TriggerPanel

Gives energy to the robot that uses the trigger panel. The energy is only useful to the cyborg with conscience.



Reveal hidden Trigger Panel

When an item is hidden it's no longer considered by robots as a possible item they can get, they will just ignore it. When this trigger panel is activated all hidden items will un hide and will no longer be ignored by robots.



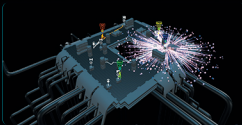
Attract all Items Trigger Panel

Attracts all items in the field towards it when triggered.



Neural disruption Trigger Panel

Makes all robots neural disturbed. When a robot is neural disturbed he is incapacitated and can't do much until he manages to use a neural relaxer and heals himself.



Neural Disrupt Trigger Panel Activated

Specials.

These elements have very varied functionalities.

Zotek Gates

Fixed structure.

When a robot enters a zotek gate he will be teleported to the linked gate.

No environment control modifications available on this.



Beam Converger.

Fixed structure.

Bullets from beam flipper converge towards the Beam converger after they have hit a first structure or robot in their initial trajectory.

No environment control modifications available on this.



Neleptic Relaxer

Item.

Robots need to inject themselves with this to heal from neural disruption.

Using environment controls the player may modify the amount of doses contained in the neleptic relaxer.



Pure Energy.

Item.

Can potentially transform into any item.

Using environment controls the player may transform pure energy into any of 4 different items proposed by the specific pure energy.



Portable Cloning Device

Item.

When a robot uses this he may clone himself once.

Using environment controls the player may modify if the newly spawned clone will be enemy or ally.



Duplication Chamber

Fixed structure.

When a robot activates a duplication chamber, then maximum 4 clones will spawn one after the other.

With environment controls the player can modify the amount of clones spawned from the duplication chamber. The player may also modify the weapon the newly spawned clones will come equipped with.



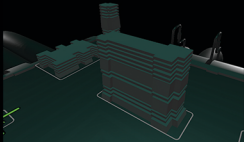
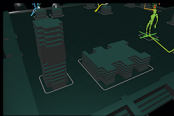
Game art

The art of the game is supposed to give a dark science fiction feeling.

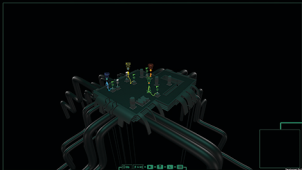
Every level emerges from the the empty darkness and is surrounded by a complexity of tubes. However, to make the game clearer and to add an original twist there are no textures in any of the three 3d models. From up close the models are unrealistically simplified.

The structures in every level remain the same. They have been specifically designed to give a generic futuristic interior feeling.

The game is divided into 5 zones. The levels of every zone vary mainly by the colour of the lighting.



Zone1, level 0, Handlangon



Zone1, level 2, Stickboxoid

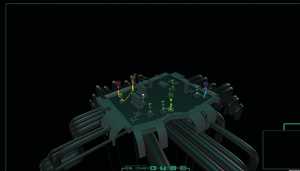


Small box holding
information, can be moved
into and out of the scene.

Zone1, level 1, Trirectarchy



Zone1, level 3, Trapezogoid

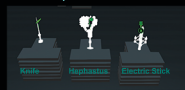


Game Elements

Range Weapons



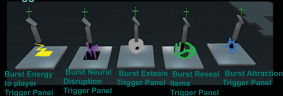
Melee Weapons



Missiles



Trigger Panels



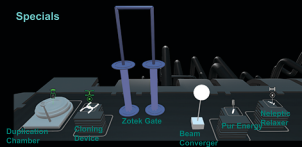
Plugs



Cyborgs



Specials



Traps

