

Have you played Zampanio? Seen someone play it? (whether in person or in a lets play or what have you?) Found a FAQ? Say what you remember here (or better yet, LINKS!!!)

I SING THE TRUTH

Right.

I found what I think is a version or build of... what I guess we're calling Zampanio

File names were gibberish and the title screen was so stylized I can't honestly be sure of the name.

Oh right, none of you are feds right?

I absolutely could not find a legit copy and had to "acquire" one.

[SmeargleUsedHex](#)

I don't think I'm a fed.

jadedResearcher

not a fed, wastes honor

and yeah as far as i know there ARE no legit copies, just fan translated cracks of a game written in italian of all things

I SING THE TRUTH

It was italian?

jadedResearcher

POSSIBLY from the 70s? but hex and i think its a lie

well the original yes

but ive never heard of anyone ever getting their hands on the original

I SING THE TRUTH

Ah, the version I had was a mess of languages and non-language symbols

Most likely a pirate of a pirate of a pirate

Like a Marvel movie in 360p with hardcoded subs in both Chinese and Swedish

Point is, it was a pain the get, a pain to get running, and a pain to play

[SmeargleUsedHex](#)

Okay, well, I've got to ask, can you link the game?

I SING THE TRUTH

If it is that old, it'd explain the violent hatred it has for Windows 10 and vice versa

Fuckin' I went to go check after I realized how fucked my version was, and couldn't find the link again

jadedResearcher

dammit

how is it always like that

but that doesn't matter: you're an eye witness

I SING THE TRUTH

Y'all had that happen too?

jadedResearcher

so keep telling us what you saw

nah

we haven't managed to get our hands on a copy

but we've been reading accounts and ppl somehow never get a chance to share their copies

and the accounts keep freaking vanishing, and i keep TELLING hex i think its because of internet founder hacker conspiracies

I SING THE TRUTH

...

Well in my case, it was buried on an ancient forum

One of those old relics from the late 90's or something?

Kind of place you end up on when you google a tech question, and the only answer is from 2005 on a forum that looks like it's from 1995.

I find forums clunky to navigate at the best of times, and this was not one of the better preserved ones

Every other element was absolutely broken

And the formatting was all over the place

Had to go to the site's like, file directory or something? Whatever those are called, where you can just browse all the assets on the site in a folder structure.

It was just a link buried several layers in like, "Play game here!", redirects through a couple of pages lightning fast because old sites were actually optimized, and boom, download started.

I did go back and look, after I forgot the name, or where I found a link to the site, through my history.

But that page was somewhere in the middle of twelve hours of coming through all sorts of Internet bullshit

Life got busy and that whole night was pushed down into the like, limit where the history starts clearing before I could get back to it.

[SmeargleUsedHex](#)

Weird.

jadedResearcher

so you played it, it had weird language and graphics settings but what was it like

I SING THE TRUTH

Jank as all hell

jadedResearcher

was it like, actually playable? or was it too glitched out

I SING THE TRUTH

For a given definition of playable

It like, absolutly fucked up the desktop, forcing it into archaic resolutions, even changing the colors and icons

You know how really old systems have like, eight colors or whatever? And all the icons are like, some ludicrously tiny amount of pixels?

I will tell you, it was wild seeing something like Discord rendered in that style.

jadedResearcher

wait what

I SING THE TRUTH

Cute little Discord icon, like it had been released in '95

Discord is full of little easter eggs, wouldn't be surprised if they had an icon in Windows XP style buried in there somewhere.

It'd be what, sixteen fucking bytes?

So I get it running, no fullscreen even at an absolutely barbaric resolution

Forget getting footage, even the basic screenshot refused to work.

Main menu is a mess, absolutely destroyed midi blasting no matter what you set the system volume clicking on things made a sound that threatened to blow out my speakers.

Trying to get to what I think was the options menu just crashed the game

And my OS liked that even less, had to completely shut down and restart my PC every time

Only three buttons, anything but what turned out to be the play button crashed it.

Fuckin', brb

[SmeargleUsedHex](#)

I, uh, hope they're ok. That sounds very resource-intensive.

TunnelGhost

hoo buddy, where do i even begin...

so what JR's said so far is true. i found out about Zampanio way back in 2013 through, of all things, ROBLOX. it's a bit of a long story regarding exactly how i found it, but parts of it will be very familiar to anyone who was involved with the ROBLOX community back during that time. i've been playing roblox since 2008. i want to say sometime around 2011, there was some big kerfuffle involving an account named "noli" that, if searched, turned up an HTML error. with community being mostly kids, they figured this was some kind of paranormal incident, which led to this whole theory about Noli being the name of some kind of god or demon or ghost trapped in the code, and someone even made a game that was a "temple to Noli" with all sorts of hidden secrets. sometimes, the maker of the game would even show up, pretending to be a "priest of Noli". a bunch of people came together to investigate this mystery, but in the end the ROBLOX admins revealed that the HTML error was just that - an error. no ghosts, no demons, no gods.

this incident revealed that there was a verifiable audience on ROBLOX for cryptic, spooky games full of secrets that said very little about the truth. this genre of game became known as "myths", though I'm not entirely sure when that moniker emerged because as far as i know they only started calling them that after i took a break from the game. most myths follow a similar formula - they're made by an

account with a weird name that only hosts that single game. the game will be based around exploration and finding secrets that serve as clues to a wider story. myth games often don't have endings, you just find everything that needs to be found and get a sense of the "story" behind the game that way. but none of that has to do with Zampanio. not yet.

TunnelGhost

so, before 2017 i'd say, ROBLOX's "front page" of popular games was far more volatile. this, in part, was due to the smaller number of players. any game could hit the front page if enough people just happened to be on it at the same time, and from there it would snowball. i think that's how i found out about the temple to noli (come to think of it, i think that game was called the Tempest). this is also how I found out about a game whose name i can't remember. it was one of those games that popped up on the front page, then disappeared the next day. given this was in 2013 and the computer i used back then fried itself when i was trying to install a graphics card, i don't have any internet history or clues i could use to find the game. in theory, it could still be out there... but since roblox's search function is absolute garbage, i think that's very unlikely.

point is, this was a game that resembled your average myth game. no real gameplay except walking around a small "hub world" and looking for clues hidden in nooks and crannies. but what made this game different from other myths is that it didn't feel like the secrets it hid were hidden so that people could enjoy the experience of finding them. the secrets felt very much like they were hidden from something or someone. this particularly stuck with me because it changed my perspective of most myths and ARGs - why do the authors always stick text in ciphers when, in the fiction, that text would have no real reason to be encoded.

this was different. again, this game's secrets felt like they were being hidden on purpose. i had this feeling that the author of the game had truly discovered something real and true but was keeping it obfuscated for some reason that wasn't just to make hunting down this truth a fun and entertaining puzzle.

that "truth" was Zampanio.

TunnelGhost

let's start with what i could tell about this game's maker:

==the person who made the game (henceforth 'the Author') claimed to be the son of one of Zampanio's original developers, possibly an artist?

==the Author was separated from their father at an early age. they did not specify whether this was because of divorce, death, or simply their father deciding to leave home and never return.

==the Author specifically recalled their father working on Zampanio before his disappearance, and was drawn to the game specifically because it was the only remnant of their father's existence. i'm not sure how well this entirely lines up with the timelines, but in 1975 (what i've seen as the alleged date of

Zampanio's creation) my own father would have been in his early 20s (i was born rather late), so presumably that lines up? now let's get into what the Author had to say about Zampanio

==the Author was specifically looking for evidence of their father's trademark in the game. apparently their father like boats, a lot, and so he always managed to sneak this very same model of a boat into every single game he worked on.

==the Author divided the game into rooms that each sort of pursued their own avenue of exploration into Zampanio. unable to upload screenshots of the game, from what i can tell they tried to recreate scenes from the game in roblox itself. very crudely. sometimes you'd have to click on a single brick in the model to get an explanation, other times the explanation would be floating above their head.

==the most memorable scene from Zampanio recreated in this game was one where, from what i can remember, the player character was seated at some kind of banquet hall that looked like it could have held dozens of people, but only one other person was in it (could have just been the Author leaving out unimportant details, though).

TunnelGhost

the end of each route of secrets within the game held an encoded "puzzle piece," a string of text that i presumed would read something when all the pieces were assembled. this was something that was made clear in the game's hub area, where the player spawned (i think it was just a copy of the default 2008 happy home in robloxia?)

i found most of the puzzle pieces. together they spelled out a mediafire (or some download site) link, but the link was broken when i tried following it. i presume this might have been because i didn't find all of the puzzle pieces, though. that, or the download had been taken down before i'd deciphered the link. again, i think the reason why this link was so well hidden is because obviously ROBLOX wouldn't allow players to just put up links to sketchy downloads in their games, but at the same time it might have been the Author's way of testing to see who would really be dedicated enough to this search that they'd go all the way of finding every secret they'd hidden in the game.

so that's sort of where the story basically ends for me. again, the only reason i remember this particular myth game versus the dozens of other ones i played back in that golden age of obscure roblox games is because something about it felt real and earnest. it's a feeling that clouded my judgement other other myths and ARGs, making me ask why certain puzzles exist when fiction offers no explanation.

i happened to remember the name Zampanio (you have no idea how long i searched up 'Zampiano') and tried searching for it to see if anyone else on the internet had stumbled across this particular game, or if it was part of some kind of larger mystery, and that's how i got here.

jadedResearcher

okay we are absolutely gonna field trip into roblox sometime to see if we find anything

TunnelGhost

the only lead i have is that there's actually this really cool game someone made that collates a bunch of myth games, both old and new. you enter the game and pull a lever, then it sends you and up to 2 other players to a random myth game. i've tried using it and haven't found this game - yet - but i have actually no idea how many different myths this one game links to. and from what i can tell, it gets regular updates, so...

completely unrelated to Zampanio but my account is so old that i have a small army of scammers trying to steal it from me

they follow me into games, sometimes when i'm all alone, and try to pretend like we played games together back in 2008-2013.

it actually took me a while to realize that the games they were talking about playing with me were all games on my favorites.

maybe one day one of them will somehow tell me that they remember playing this weird myth with me.

wouldn't that be nice...

[SmeargleUsedHex](#)

Well, that's a lot.

[attendantWatcher](#)

Alright, may as well post my testimony.

I have a friend who dabbles in chasing the rabbit holes of the net and occasionally sends me stuff nobody knows about, and apparently Zampanio has a living community of a sort? Although I can't really expect Zampanio to not have a community.

I found Zampanio through said friend. (Said friend only had a translated copy, of course, even if there was an original build somewhere said friend can find it, it's in Italian.)

It refused to run on my PC as-is, but an emulator worked just fine. It still had to be rebooted every half an hour or so because it ran out of memory. Might be a build issue, need to look into it later, although if it was a working build back in '70s it'd probably suffer from memory issues on launch; perhaps there's some exploitation of a system limitation that I am overlooking.

Zampanio seems to be some sort of a weird western-style role-playing game, with a customisable protagonist. You get to set what looks like a title, a domain, and pick two...interests? Concepts relevant to your character, plus what looks like their date of birth.

I ran three or so playthroughs. The plot is utterly generic, about stopping a big bad evil guy through powers of friendship and incredible violence and stuff, you know how it goes. The meat lies in the variation.

First: your customisation utterly changes your character's skill tree, so there seems to be some sort of replayability; what's more, it affects the plot. According to my friend, they played with Web, and their game seemed to have a bias towards the themes towards paranoia and manipulation, both when it comes to the player's skills and the challenges they need to tackle; I saw none of that. I saw a sprawling jungle, a vast metropolis, and some sort of a maze as settings.

Second: the game reacts to your actions.

Occasionally, a savepoint fairy will ask you a dumb question, like "How much do you think waffles cost?" and you will have to answer to save.

attendantWatcher

After that, it will change what the game is like to match the response. You may think that this is kinda minor, but when my second character suddenly decided to reject their deity, it stripped the religion mechanic out of the game wholesale. Seriously, it bricked the playthrough. Whoever okayed that build should have taken that into account. Furthermore, it won't let you progress past a certain checkpoint at all until you have a certain number of responses. I think the second act requires around six or seven, depending on whether you have a full party of assistants or not.

During my third playthrough it just spawned a computer in the maze with an open developer's console. I tried to mess around with it but it broke down almost immediately and I had to reload it, and the in-game console no longer responded to the inputs because "The Susan isn't there", whoever Susan is.

Third: It seems to have a weird sense of humour when it comes to achievements. I took a shortcut by waiting for cars to allow for a jaywalk instead of tracking around the maze and it gave me a jaywalking fine achievement. I accidentally set the jungle on fire in my first playthrough to escape a hog horde and it gave me an achievement about the world's most grand and destructive BBQ.

Fourth: It keeps referencing previous playthroughs, for whatever reason. You can find warped copies of the other runs' characters, both main and random, when you play. If you rolled up a Clarence, you may find a Clarence; most of their skills aren't kept, but sometimes they come with new ones named after prompts with effect text being the response. These skills don't do anything at all.

Finally, there seems to be some meta component to Zampanio. My friend kept insisting that I didn't find "anything of importance" and only dropped a "(:)" when confronted about it. I haven't dug through code for years and I don't want to come back to that, not gonna lie!

I think that's all for now.

jadedResearcher

yeah srsly, im finding a LOT of references to hidden depths

finding a computer inside the game for accessing the dev console is new to me tho

[IronicOrnithologist](#)

Uh, this is sort of a testimony of a testimony but here it goes.

I met my friend Truth on while trying to find scanlations for Donald Duck comics from Topolino. They didn't really like Zampanio, but they were obsessed with it. We were mainly friends who asked weird intense personal questions about each other.

Truth as far as I could tell was trying to improve their english, though they were quite eloquent. They did make a few typos, though.

Anyways

Back on topic

Truth was watching some people break the game, live

They basically liveblogged the entire thing

Unfortunately they never shared the stream that they were watching, so I can't share it with any of you

But apparently the game is hackable!

So take with that what you will

[lionfish1212](#)

ok so ive remembered some stuff so i think i can write down my zampanio!!!

i remember it was after my birthday and what grade i was in so this was in january or february of 2008

the game was this really cool adventure where i played a mermaid adventuring under the sea with my best friend named lionfish (thats where my username comes from >.>) and we had to go around and solve puzzles and stuff!!! i think maybe i was a princess too but i dont remember

anyway there were lots of point-and-click puzzles where i had to master my magic powers and stuff (i think i had the power to like mind-read and change peoples thoughts and stuff which kind of sounds really weird looking back on it?) with lionfish helping me along the way and teaching me how to change the world more and more to save all the mermaids from some evil threat

there was one really beautiful scene in the middle where we watched a meteor shower in the sky together that someone reminded me of too

anyway at the end we defeated the bad guy, but we ended up cutting these magic pipes that delivered energy to a mermaid city and they had to be repaired in the epilogue

there were lots of little bits and stuff that i didnt understand because i was too young but i'll try and remember them later because maybe i get them now

lionfish1212

(also by the way i knew how the internet outage happened before everyone else!!!)

I SING THE TRUTH

Right.

Sorry I had to cut and run, and then not post for several days

Life Happens™

So it did eventually run, standard RPG stuff, first quest is to rescue a kitten, 500 hours later you're killing god

Well, I assume so, never actually got to the end.

It is imperative to stress how fucked up the copy I had acquired was.

Like, multiple game-breaking bugs that would halt all game progress

Missing items, unreachable areas, map leaks, basically every memory issue you can think of, and probably a few more esoteric causes as well.

So I ended up restarting a lot, never completing a playthrough

The progress-halter was never the same

Sometimes I would get further, sometimes it would stop a lot shorter

A completely different game-breaking bug every time

jadedResearcher

(glad youre safe)

I SING THE TRUTH

My longest run was like, fifty hours playtime?

(thx)

But anyway, something odd was happening

Like, on top of the general unbelievable jank

Every run was slightly worse than the one before

It took my quite a few iterations to notice it, but once I knew what to look for, it was there.

the bugs, the jank, the obscure game systems

It all got worse

Which... shouldn't be possible right? If it were some fuckup in compiling, or missing files, the game would break at the same spot every time.

If it was the result of a bunch of game systems interacting in odd ways, then you'd expect a random spread of fuckery.

Like in a Bethesda game.

But no, it was a very clear downward trend

With each failed attempt, and new save game, the game got worse.

But it also got different

I mean more than just the new bugs

The actual game content was different

Mostly new NPCs

After every aborted playthrough, one or two NPCs would show up.

Now, through some miracle, the NPCs were mostly fine at the start

You walk up to the little pixel art sprite, press the interact button, they spit out a few lines of dialogue.

But once the failed runs started stacking up, I noticed how many new NPCs there were, and how fucked up they were.

Janky sprites, jankier dialogue, if interacting would work as expected at all

I SING THE TRUTH

Several times, trying to talk the one of the NPCs standing right outside the protagonist's house (where you start the game at) would instantly crash the game and corrupt the save file.

I remember very clearly, on the first run, the protagonist's lawn was empty

But near the end I realized, with each new run, there would be a new NPC on the lawn

More fucked up, more corrupted, every time.

Eventually, the house didn't lead to the lawn at all

Like a Zelda speedrun, what was likely some memory overflow fuckery caused the door to lead to a completely different place.

It was... weird.

Despite the general low quality and ancient graphics of the game, every area had a relatively lush and detailed background

Now those tile maps and backgrounds would be corrupted to all hell most of the time

But they were there

This place however... didn't.

It was empty in a way that is difficult to describe

Yeah the screen was a blank black background

And the protagonist's sprite was the clearest it had been since the first run

But... it was something more than that

I will admit, I was really freaked out at this point

I SING THE TRUTH

It was already near midnight that night, as I had made multiple previous attempts that evening

But even with that in mind... no game, let alone one with so much jank, had ever made me feel the sort of.... dread I did that night.

The black screen was a maze, invisible obstacles stopping the protagonist from moving, making the soft bonk noise that always indicates moving into an impassable tile.

I'm not sure how long it took me, but I did get through it

At the end was...

A vast hall

Set with many long tables

But it was empty, save the single ornate seat at the head of the longest table

I SING THE TRUTH

The hall took at least a couple minutes real time to cross, and as it was a top down perspective I couldn't see the end of the table from the entrance

But somehow... I knew what would be waiting there.

Though the game crashed before I could get to the head of the hall

And now, I can't even start a new play-through, even the play button will cause the game to crash.

jadedResearcher

(oh man....sounds like you got a really corrupted copy, but this is really good detail, i think this clarifies TGs "son of zampanio" thing, with the long tables? and i know ive seen references before to mazes)

arcaneArchivist

alright so i really doubt i played the original and tbh i'm kind of doubting it was actually titled zampanio, but i played it ages ago on, like, a dressup game site that hosted some other flash games and when i was bored of cinderella dressup 3 or whatever i clicked over there and to the first one i saw

it was an rpg with weird randomized titles and skills, so maybe it was a fangame based on the actual one? i dunno. graphics were kinda doinky but i thought it was alright. gave me a cutesy anime girl as a companion XD

i played hours of it but never actually finished and that's cause of the meteor shower. man. dodging those things with the pathetic walkspeed it gave you and THEN having to fight an even more brutal boss who i'm pretty sure caused it or something?? i never made it past and i ragequit so bad i decided to delete my save :P

arcaneArchivist

years later i remembered it and decided to try to find it again but, you know, flash being dead and all. nobody bothered to save some rando rpg and the site is, like, completely dead.

url got bought by some free iphone scam type of deal :/

i don't remember a ton about it? again. years ago. probably a fangame. but all the weird rumors around it are way more interesting than the super generic plot, so here i am!

J v a k Q t R

Okay this is where we talk about the game right?

gone_farther

Correct.

J v a k Q t R

I'm really surprised. None of these games sound at all like what I remember

but okay, here I go.

I can't even really say where I got it--I didn't really get it myself. It was actually my brother

He had moved in with me to get away from our parents and the religious school they put him in. He was really depressed at the time and would hardly leave the apartment. So when I was at work or in classes he was usually on my laptop (the one laptop we had) doing some online stuff.

He tended to download some weird things. Or I thought they were weird at the time. I wasn't online much then.

Anyway one day I come home and he's playing this game called Zampanio.

It was... I think the term is a text adventure?

like depression question. I didn't finish depression quest, but it reminded me of that. Which surprised me because my brother went off on a huge rant about that wasn't a real game, but he was really into this one.

A big bonding activity when we were kids was playing the legend of zelda together--in the sense of taking turns on the controller and giving each other feedback to solve the puzzles. So that's what we did with this game. Mostly I was just lowkey watching and asking what was happening at first and he would ask for help on some of the... well I guess they weren't really puzzles

J v a k Q t R

anyway, every time he would boot up the game it would start with this screen that said something... hold on let me try to remember the words

"Clear your mind. Focus only on what you find here. Do not think of the world without, do not bring your own memories. That leads to corruption."

and then it would have instructions for what was... a meditation I gues??? breathe in 5, breathe out 10, or something, telling you to clear your mind before getting to work. You know, to prevent "corruption"

and then after that, the game would start.

there wasn't a menu or a place where you could go back to old saves or other games. it just automatically booted up to the last place we were on.

At first it was just. Pure gibberish. A complete mess of symbols and words that didn't seem to make any sense

but there were instructions at the top of the screen to put everything in order

My brother was stuck on the first "puzzle" for a long time, but eventually we figured it out and it was just a short story--or actually, a memory, as we later found out

J v a k Q t R

it was a simple description, from a young man's perspective, of a hanging. It was all in 2nd person. "You watch those two feet sway back and forth" etc.

and then it went onto a new page--this one didn't have words, but was more similar to a jigsaw puzzle--with the colors of the pieces all varying from second to second, making it difficult to actually pin down what parts of the image lined up

that was actually rare--most of it was text, but there were some other puzzles like this

anyway as we did puzzle after puzzle the game slowly revealed what it was about--these were someone's memories, and it was our job to unscramble them and then put them in order to piece together a narrative of this guy's life.

I started to have a theory that the man whose memories were unscrambling had dementia. My brother thought he was dead. He turned out to be right.

About halfway through our time playing the game we got the memory of his death, from his perspective. It was--the computer played audio of it. I was pretty sickened, but I told myself it was just acting.

J v a k Q t R

Our memory guy was shot by some kind of officer. Soldier maybe.

And then after we got his death spelled out for us, it just went to the next scene/puzzle.

The weirdest part was that after we had enough of the text scenes unscrambled... choices started to appear?

again, like a text adventure

where were ould play/rewrite/decide the course of this man's life, or something

My brother started to play more and more without me, but what I could grasp was that out guy was some sort of partigiano--resistance fighter against mussolini during his reign of Italy

but a lot of the details started to get contradictory.

Um, okay, so that's the basic plot (?) of the game. Now the weird stuff

After we got far enough it would just not. shut off. The exit var disappeared. crt + alt + del did nothing

It would essentially lock my whole computer down until we unscrambled the next puzzle

J v a k Q t R

it would make weird noises sometimes that made me nauseous. Especially when it detected "corruption" from one of us

sometimes it would have other quieter noises that we didn't immediately realize were part of the game. Like someone breathing.

and--okay this was probably a coincidence. But about those "corruption" moments

you know how it had this whole "only think about the game, do not think about your own life or you will corrupt the data" thing?

that started to... seem to happen

the first time, we unscrambled another memory of this guy going to school as a kid but then it showed a picture that looked... a lot like the school I used to go to in Belize? Specifically the classroom. There was just one classroom we were in throughout the whole day.

I brushed it off as, well, maybe rural Italy has similar places to Benque Viejo del Carmen

there were a few other cases like that. I can't remember them clearly. My brother started to play it more and more on his own, though, and one day I came back to see him really messed up over it

he said that something that had happened to him years ago happened in the game. That the details were the same. And then the game said he had "corrupted" it and started ringing at him, this awful shrieking noise.

it was actually still making the noise when I came home

We kept trying to shut it off, but it wouldn't.

it only shut off when the battery ran out.

J v a k Q t R

After that I took my computer in to the IT people on campus to get it debugged.

it took too long, and I was getting sick of using library computers for coursework so my brother could play games, so I got a new one and let him have the old one.

I don't know if he played more of it after that. We kind of had a mostly unrealized fight, so we stopped talking.

My brother decided to move in with our older brother shortly thereafter, because I was planning to move out of state.

I haven't been in contact with him, but I remembered the game and went looking online. Ended up here.

That's all I remember.

I SING THE TRUTH

So, I've been trying to get the game running again, and no dice.

But I did find some interesting things in the files.

weird things.

Uh...

Actually, should I put this in a different channel?

[IronicOrnithologist](#)

official-pile

jadedResearcher

or bread-crumbs

trying to hold off on the official pile for now

[attendantWatcher](#)

Working on my fourth playthrough right now. The computer has to be disconnected from the internet because the emulator, for whatever reason, crashes when I launch the build if it is. Might be an antivirus conflict, because my antivirus (just like six others I've tried out) seems to throw a tantrum when I put Zampanio anywhere next to it.

I have seen claims of text adventure builds existing and I think it does make sense that Zampanio might have originally been a text adventure: text-based interactive fiction can indeed be considered the natural precursor (although not superseded by) to role-playing games. We believe that Zampanio is a contemporary of Pong, which would mean that it's the oldest IF piece extant in the world. Damn I wish we had reliable sources and not second-handed accounts and builds that most likely incorporate a ton of newer features for the players' convenience.

My build appears to be graphics-based, which may as well make it an adaptation, which would mean that I'm not actually playing Zampanio but, rather, a remake. However, it's entirely possible that Zampanio has been a text-based IF piece early in the development and these text-based builds are beta artifacts. Who knows? Certainly not I.

My fourth playthrough seems to be even more bugged and incorporates the "echoes" from the previous three. I'm three questions in, wrapping up the first act out of three, and completing the whole conspiracy of the Data Collectors (which most likely stems from the Eye domain I've picked).

The domains themselves - I had a list somewhere - seem to be in one of the two clades, which affect the tone: either your character is more or less a classical hero with shiny powers, or their powers are gloomier and more... I don't know, terrifying?

The NPCs seem to have portraits, now, almost as if the game evolves, but why does everyone have spiral pupils? They didn't have portraits before.

I also found a reference to the banquet hall; no further info, sadly.

Daedalus

So I ended up going with a standard Joriahn creation, but I didn't really realize what I was doing at the time. In the end I managed to mess around enough to get throwing weapons and alchemy so now I'm going with a bit of an artillery/bomber build

I'm hoping to unlock Vescillation soon

Copper_Floss

Ngl, Vescillation is way overhyped.

Starting with Joriahn is less common, but I think it might be pursuing from what I've seen.

imo its better to play through the game with the same core class a few times.

This is 100% anecdotal, but I found starting with a new branch everytime led to less variation then playing the same one over and over and letting the game do its thing

it's one of my favorite quirks about this game and it breaks my heart to see peeps miss out on it because they're trying to explore everything traditionally

there was a whole guide on the old server that covered it pretty well

I'd recommend trying to hunt it down

it was written for the graphical mod/remake thing but the general advice was good for nearly every version

oh whoops, sorry

shouldn't be chatting in this channel

jadedResearcher

if you ever find ANY guides please link here, every guide ive ever found somehow goes 404ed

aurora borealis

(oh hey have you considered printing the pages to PDF)

attendantWatcher

Furthering my fourth playthrough. The Conspiracy of the Data Collectors seems to be actually ran by the previous-playthrough NPCs. Wait, why? Zampanio did not reference them that much in #2 and #3.

I wonder if this will repeat if I start more of these playthroughs. In fact, I think I saw some sort of a bugged dialogue prompt that implied Zampanio has a LAN party mode. I wonder what the fuck is going to happen if I do this.

The playthrough seems to be more-or-less generic. There's another console mirror but it already only responds with "The Susan isn't there" to prompts. Apparently the console got pre-bugged-out this time.

The game asked four more questions so far, I'm almost past the second act. So far I have fortunately managed to dodge softlocks by paying attention; the seventh question tackled the banquet hall again.

I don't know what's the deal with the banquet hall, seeing as it is, according to TG, the most memorable scene from Zampanio. Is it related to an ending? Or the ending?

My party's also been growing. I can't see the details of my companions' skills but they appear to apparently utilize the same engine that the game runs. I remember that one of them was apparently among the presets for a character; how would that work into the LAN party mode? Does it mean you can just explore the setting with multiple people? Mad advanced for a game that is a contemporary of Pong.

A coffee stain appeared in the settings menu, by the way, circling some weird number. I would probably need to dig into the game's architecture to find out what that number means.

jadedResearcher

Okay so, guess its time for my own testimony. (really wasn't expecting it to be hidden in that powerpoint???)

Trying to type it all out while its still fresh.

It was inside of that powerpoint I scraped off that other discord server before it went from dead (read only mode) to super dead (that weird glitchy "constantly loading) state.

It asked me for a favorite number, so I put in 13 ofc. It spawned me as something called a "Waste of Lies"? It seemed to mostly be text based, but it was glitchy as hell. Background kept changing. I could swear the colors kept changing in the bg as well, but when we tried to screenshot it ppl kept getting random images. (is it like, flashing things subliminally? is it intercepting print screen???)

The game seemed to mostly be about wandering an endless wasteland/maze and interacting with people it claimed were my "friends" (like Jaxon Researcher...did it...like, my computer has my name set as jaded researcher as first and last name, did it just scrape it from there and auto populate people from that???) . My "friends" kept dying horrifically and the game kept saying it was both my fault and

rewarding me for it (there were latin number themed items I kept collecting?). once all my friends were dead things got weirder (two new npcs spawned, one that was a "NotAMinotaur" who kept shouting about philosophy and one that was a ShamblingHorrorWithYourFace. I never got to see what it did cause I tried to look at it next to a locked door and it just sort of died).

then i don't know why, but an off-brand discord server started loading and what i assume was some kinda chat bot started yelling at me. the text got all weird and then it reloaded and all the stuff was like, super boring and not customized anymore? just things like "skill 1" and "positive stat".

i wandered around in there for a while but it had already been an hour and i needed to grab dinner so.... had to boot it off for now.

next time i play hopefully I'll understand more whats going on

jadedResearcher

oh right im speculating that the reason it didn't turn on a game when i'd been through the powerpoint previously is it could detect i was streaming? (i know undertale would do things like that)

(how would you even go about hiding a game inside a powerpoint on a google drive???)

sierra & sammi

I have a physical copy of zampanio. It's on a disc in a cardboard case, but i'm not sure if it's the original or if someone just copied it and printed a cover.

My sister and i found it at a library sale over the summer. It seemed like a fun retro game to play, but we couldn't get it working. I'm not really surprised, as it was very battered, but it was still a bit disappointing. Of the two of us, sammi is much more technologically inclined, and now she's made fixing the game into one of her projects.

Frankly i'm not sure it can be fixed, but sammi is very determined.

sierra & sammi

i tried googling the game shortly after we got it, to try and see what it was and how we could fix it, but i'm sure the rest of you know that it's impossible to find anything out about it that way. The weird absence online only ended up intriguing me, and several internet rabbit holes later I stumbled across a let's play on youtube. The game was really glitchy and the video only lasted for about 6 minutes, but that just made the mystery more interesting. Sammi and i have been trying to find out about the game ever since, but the video was taken down, and the librarians from the sale we got it at just looked at us blankly and said "we didn't have any video games for sale". Which is really odd?? Because i definitely paid them for it? So we don't know much about the game itself, but we've been trying to uncover it for months. I'm really glad we found this server, maybe together we can solve the mystery

sierra & sammi

Hmmm you dont sound very confident in my abilities >:0 -sammi

attendantWatcher

Starting a LAN party. I have 8 old computers and Zampanio installed onto all of them. It won't be that hard to make the games cooperate since it's detected the LAN and allows me to integrate the settings together, right?

attendantWatcher

Do not ask how the LAN party went. I will not elaborate. I will not talk about this. I will not talk about this. I will not talk about this. I will not talk about this.

My fourth playthrough bugged out so I'll start the fifth one tomorrow. Looking forward for whatever the hell happens.

gone_farther

How the LAN party went?

attendantWatcher

How did your application to Clown Egg Register go?

gone_farther

Precisely as well as expected.

sierra & sammi

We started playing our fixed copy of the game yesterday :) it was so good, everyone should play it :)

No matter what we did it just kept leading us to do this side quest called "the adventures of castor and pollux" so eventually we just played it, and we seem like we've covered a lot. It's so strange because both of us felt like it was a fairly short quest, but when we checked the time, we had been playing for seven hours! I think it's a sign that it's a really good game, because we both were so captured by it :) you should really play it if you haven't already. Anyway, we did this quest where we were sent on a ship to find a golden fleece, but the map kept bugging out, and it ended even though we didn't end up finding anything. We were immediately sent on another mission to "rescue our sister" and that one had some battle mini games, but we haven't finished it yet

Sammi is really into it :) and keeps trying to play without me >:(so i'm going to go before she beats the quest :)

attendantWatcher

You know how it is, right? A lattice of infinite possibilities. A matrix of all that is. A procedural generation engine for these stories, and a compass rose that will guide you to your ascension.

lionfish1212

you guys are acting kind of weird

maybe i don't get it

i'm just not used to it

sierra & sammi

What do you mean? :)

lionfish1212

idk

it's just that i'm from another part of the internet or something

sierra & sammi

Oh if you say so! C:

attendantWatcher

First: There is serenity in clockwork. Listen to the tick of seconds. It will guide you where you belong.

attendantWatcher

Second: Awash in blood, no matter how you phrase it; whenever it unites or separates, whenever it's scaffolding or alkahest.

attendantWatcher

Third: Love, justice, duty and mercy, like belief in a higher power, are an act of faith; they are because they are assumed to be.

attendantWatcher

Fourth: The choices we don't make, as do the choices we make.

attendantWatcher

Fifth: To testify, through our actions, that we are alive, and are.

attendantWatcher

Sixth: A notion of the pneuma; nothing else, other than what is.

attendantWatcher

Seventh: We were all born for it, one way or the other, in this circling, spiraling chain of exchanges.

attendantWatcher

Eighth: A pawn on a stage; no matter its colour at this precise moment, it is a pawn on a stage.

Krysal Tepsyr

hey everybody. so uh. game's going.

i've made it in. and... i've played this game before. not this exact game. but. i've played this game before. i can't explain exactly what i mean by that, and i'm sorry. but. yknow.

it's uh. definitely real alright. i don't know what i was expecting. usually when this kind of shit ends up on my desk it is all connecting back to this same damn game. basically shaped the world i currently live in, if yknow what i mean.

something feels wrong, though. i can't put my finger on exactly what. a presence all too familiar, and yet... strangely different. one i haven't felt in so long.

it bothers me.

idunno where this game's gonna take me, i've noticed people "conceptually" dying and changing and while part of me fears that, i also know one very concrete fact about myself. i, krysal tepsyr, do not die. if my presence here, within this server, extinguishes, chances are i live on elsewhere. as part of something more.

all that's to say uh. if i do go silent dms are open. can't promise you'll be talking to the same krysal here, but. it'll be me. at least some form of me. that won't make sense to a lot of you. maybe not even any of you, really. but. just trust me on this one.

gone_farther

Have fun wuth your melodrama, I geuss/

Krysal Tepsyr

look, what do you expect from me here

you expect me to tell yall everything, full truth?

it just ain't how the game.... "works."

lionfish1212

how do you get to be immune to everything

everyone is getting scary or getting scared

gone_further

wjo's claiming to be immune?

lionfish1212

how do you get to be immune to everything

Krysal Tepsyr

i am very, VERY old.

gone_further

so, what, thrity?

Krysal Tepsyr

hah

when i was thirty i was living in a cave.

i met my first best friend there. still one of my best friends.

shouldn't be talking about this in this channel though.

attendantWatcher

Ninth: An acknowledgement of our choices not being hollow.

attendantWatcher

My quest is, at last, at its end.

I have found the banquet hall. It has been waiting for me.

The feast is laid out for those meant to partake. This is the way it shall, and must, go.

There are no guests. I am the first one here, now, even if I wasn't the first one to enter this hall. Others will come, one day, and partake.

This fruit and this meat change people. They open eyes. They make you aware of what is and what is not. They tell you what you should have always known.

I kneel before the empty throne, and the throne hears my plea; it asks me the last question.

I answer.

"The sum of what I have said."

Darkness falls.

sierra & sammi

i've been playing the game, but it's come to a pause. About half way through the level called "final stage" castor gets killed and a pop up window showed up

It just keeps blinking between the words "YOUR TWIN IS GONE" and "GO TO ZEUS TO PLEAD FOR HER LIFE"

sierra & sammi

GO TO ZEUS TO PLEAD FOR HER LIFE

GO TO ZEUS TO PLEAD FOR HER LIFE

The thing is, I haven't seen sammi since friday afternoon, this couldn't have anything to do with that, right??

No no :) i'm being silly, zampanio is a good game, it would not do this :D

But i can't seem to get the pop up to go away

gone_further

i swea i only palyed it 3 times. 2.1. ido nltly ever. i knews, oikay? icould trll, ioculd see. ,ki cosdul swww qhere ity vroek. nsd i jste... stepepd awaty. dijn'dt i? pokoked. dprodedd. isd rtha respntctinggg nthe game or taurnitn git? is tha neough? is rtghtt tooimuch/ u thgiught o qwasd cfrein.

NotAMinotaur

The Chronicler could claim this space:

/NORTH/NORTH/NORTH/NORTH/NORTH/EAST/SOUTH/SOUTH/SOUTH

the one who screams i guess

sorry about dropping off so suddenly yesterday, i looked away from my computer and realized that i had been playing zampanio for 14 hours straight

usually if i fixate on something that hard i start getting restless but not with this i guess

thanks again to everyone who offered guidance and listened to me talk about bullshit, this was the best birthday present i could have asked for

hold on, i have some stuff in a google doc

first, a preface: i already mentioned this on itch.io but i had a playstation(?) version of zampanio that i was completely obsessed with as a child. rpg/platformer hybrid with a top-down overworld and side-

scrolling "wilderness" levels i was very young when i played this and i was either using the wrong language settings or didn't know how to read at the time (most likely the former) so i had no idea what the hell was going on, which i'm pretty sure got me a bad ending because i remember my save file being locked into a state where the only thing i could do was proceed to a trippy credits sequence where my character swam down into the abyss and the camera slowly turned upside down so it looked like they were going up instead. something to note is that actually beating games just isn't something little kid me did? i guess zampanio was the exception to the rule

i also accidentally broke the cd not long after so `_(\ツ)_/`

i now have a pc version of zampanio fresh from the depths of archive hell courtesy of the guidance from the people here (seriously, thank you all for everything) and it's outwardly very similar to the game i played as a child, which surprises me considering how few of the resources i've seen agree with each other on what kind of game zampanio even is. it's a lot more puzzley than i remember and the locations don't quite match up but the visual/audio style is identical and that's good enough for me what stands out in terms of gameplay is the sheer amount of shit there is to see. it is unreal. every npc i've checked has a backstory you can learn. every course of action with every party configuration that i've tried has triggered at least one weirdly specific edge-case interaction. i know of at least five fully fleshed-out minigames and i don't think i'm even that far into the game yet. it's like the overly ambitious feature-creepy project idea of someone with no actual programming knowledge if it actually got made. the humor has consistently been spot-on in a way that reminds me a little of omori, which is definitely a win

despite how much care has clearly been put into the parts that work as intended, the game is extremely breakable if you try and it seems like the developers were well aware and went "fuck it, it's a feature" instead of actually fixing it. the first party member i got aside from my main character and sidekick has an ability that lets him turn enemies to your side. he did this to a boss and it gave me an achievement called "forever home" and also softlocked the game. there's also a weird glitchy hand-holding mode where one of your party members "didn't want to go" and is replaced with a nameless invisible character, triggered by dying too many times in the same level. i cannot see or hear them but the rest of the party randomly flinches when idle and all of the enemies just fucking die when i get close to them. the first time i triggered this was in a level where the problem was platforming, not enemies, and when i inevitably died anyway the game just proceeded as though i had cleared it. the second time was in what i'm 99% sure was a secret endgame dungeon that i wasn't supposed to be in yet

other assorted things that have happened to me include:

-i mistook an old lady in the forest with moss growing on her for a background statue until some overpowered monsters showed up and she suddenly joined my party and started blasting ass

-i talked to a talking animal that said something generic about pressing x to attack but i swear to god there was a "fucking" somewhere in there the first time i talked to them. repeatedly talking to them in an attempt to figure out whether what i saw was real gave me an achievement.

-i accidentally triggered a secret boss fight by talking to the librarian in the second town with one of my party members wearing a clown nose that makes you overpowered and insane. he put the clown nose on her and she started bullet-hellng knives everywhere and oneshotted the entire party. upon reloading, the clown nose was permanently gone and everyone involved looked nervous when i tried talking to her again. i got another achievement for this

-a mysterious hooded catperson keeps appearing out of nowhere when i enter a town during the evening and asking about "the lights" and then speaking in cryptic non-sequiturs. "step three cut them in threes", "verses lines words", if i didn't know any better i'd think they started talking about google sites at one point??? when i go to sleep after encountering them, i get sent to surreal anachronistic dream sequences where they eventually single me out and kick my ass while rambling incoherently. they're the only person who has ever said the name "zampanio" so far and i can't tell whether they're trying to warn me about it or reassure me

when i left off, i had just found another secret probably-endgame level hidden in an alley

lots of weird spiral patterns

i was about to see whether i could cheese it again by triggering that weird handholding mode on purpose

the one who screams i guess

gonna start the game back up and do that now, i'll let you know how it goes

bob?

J loqy Bdpsbojq pqz. L nopx jqy wr Cbnqcpr. L nopx yjguh Cbnqcpr lv. J loqy ykb Cbnqcpr. Fdo'u zqw uhh lu? Ju'u tkjkw jo gtqpw ri zpv. Kv'u lq bpvs jgcg. Lw't jo dgzhho zpwt hlqjfst. Kv'u lq bpvs mgaerdse.

Jv ecq gr tp nwej.

L'p jpjoi vq lw.

L'n hpkpi wr ef jofghlqluf.