# DIGITAL GHOST

In this AR mobile experience you are invited to communicate with the supernatural forces that otherwise go unseen in our world. While the moment-to-moment gameplay is based on finding and collecting spirit photos, there is always a sense of something darker in the clues they leave behind. Each of the paranormal entities you encounter has a story to tell. Are you ready to hear it?

This is a game about curiosity, mystery, empathy, and our fear and fascination with death and the unknown.

SYNOPSIS

Only the blue glow of your screen illuminates the corner of your room while you wait for the app to load. You are more aware than ever of the creaking noises and sudden chills that accompany you each night, but instead of fear you feel...resolve. Watching videos about ghost hunters online and scouring through forums about exorcisms has led you to the "Search for Evidence of Paranormal Activity", an online community that uses technology to communicate with spirits. You select the "Open" button on your screen see a notice from user xx_thehauntedman_xx, the developer of the app. It reminds you that   Any and all interaction with "Digital-Ghost" are at your own risk."
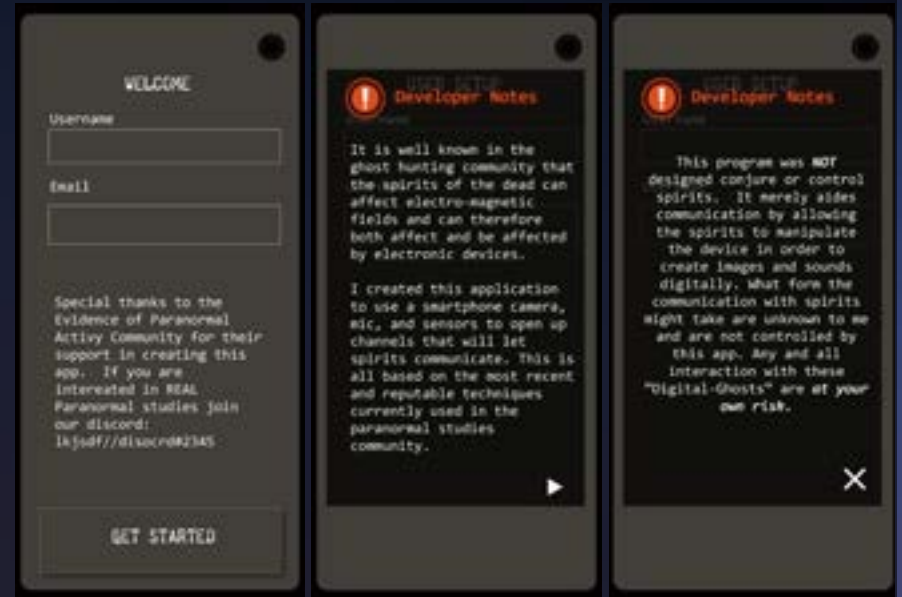
The EMF reader brings you to your living room. You open the Kirlianograph. It supposedly reads the waves and energy that cellphones can pick up and displays it in the camera mode. An ominous glow fills your screen and you discover your first "aura".   With each photo of an aura you take. you have the chance to unveil bizarre moving spirit images called "sprites". With all the energy you're detecting it's likely you'll have the most to offer the group! But it seems the more you search, the more eager they are to find you.

Bvvvvvvvvvt...bvvvvvvvvvvt.... The sudden blue glow from the screen as it vibrates is now startling. You lift up your scanner to see a fully formed sprite directly in front of you, only it's different from before. There's no aura, it's bigger now, and has what you could call... a smile?   It's a bit anxiety-producing... but this is what this app was designed to do! Help you form a visual connection with the spirit world! However, as the developer warns in his next update...they are not all friendly.

Soon other full-blown spirits are coming into view. But as always, xx_ hauntedman_xx is one step ahead and a new update arrives that allows you to communicate with these spirits using your voice and EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomenon). The paranormal activity begins to escalate. You meet spirits that are very different from the friendly spirit. Other users of the app are reporting intense experiences and are even dropping out of the group and deleting the app from their phones. Some have attempted to turn off the notifications in the menu only to find the option removed. The developer reaches out to you directly. You are asked to install and exclusive update that he believes will open up spirit communication to the next level...whatever that means.

The next update comes but there are no developer notes.

You open your EMF meter, and there is nothing.

You call out on the EVP device and at first, there is nothing.

Until the friendly, smiling spirit from before appears suddenly in front of you! An explosion of static in your headphones comes with him. He trying to talk but it is indecipherable...and a darker aura is starting to fill the screen. He's moving about the room and it's clear the aura, invisible to your naked eye, is everywhere. In a sudden moment of calm the increasing glitching and static stops. The spirit image of the friendly spirit is suddenly clear, and it seems to the actual image of a real boy. This must've been what he looked like...
For just a moment he stands still, opens his mouth... but the darker aura surrounds him. The only clear sound you hear through the returning static in your headphones is the faint voice of a young boy gasping "help".

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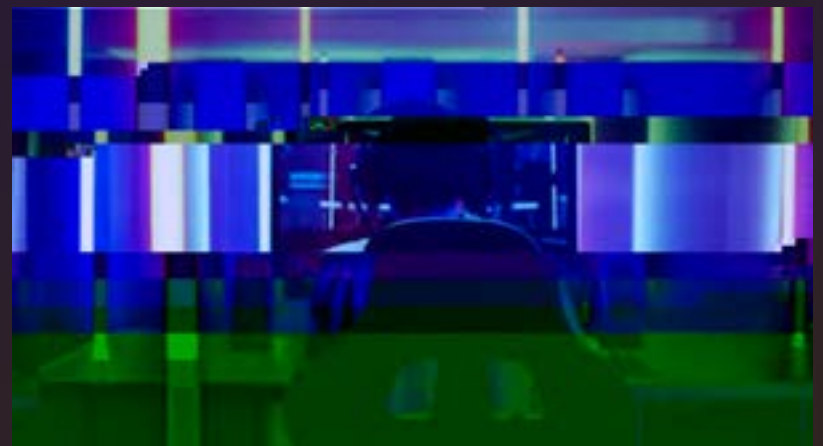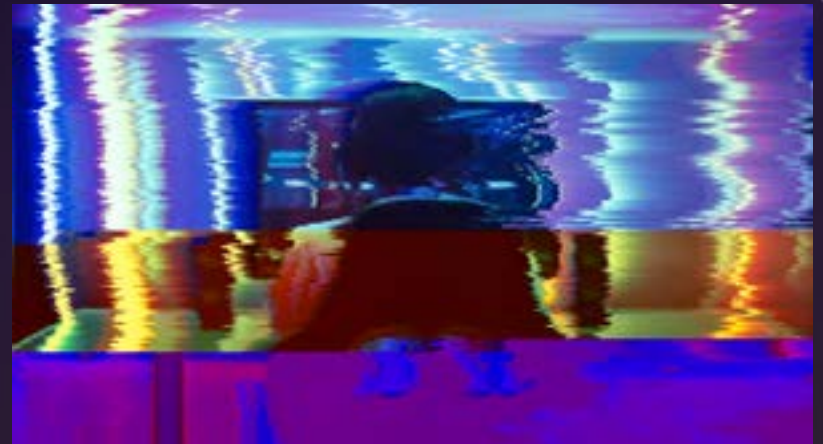
The Stories

THE FRIENDLY SPIRIT

This child was cherished and well cared for. He died trying to jump their bike off a roof and he has no regrets about that. He had a younger brother he felt protective over and does feel guilty for leaving him. He lingered around the house to look after his younger brother as he grew up but now he just enjoys hanging out and helping anyone else he happens to haunt.

This spirit is friendly, loyal, and playful. A strengthened bond him will mean he will help dispel negative sprites and spirits. and help you identify good auras

THE ANGRY TWINS

The twins were born small and weak, and were quite sickly in their early childhood. They were born into a fairly well off family so they had the best of care, but in the end it was not enough. It's unknown what exactly ended their lives (medical technology wasn't so far along then) but pneumonia seems to have delivered the final blow. They may not have lived a very long life, but despite their weak bodies, they were full of personality, and were quite a handful for their nurses. This may be the reason that these tired, annoyed nurses might have missed the moment when the younger of the twins lips became tinted blue, and in the night, was no longer breathing. The older twin passed soon after, despite not showing the more severe symptoms of the other younger sibling.

Simplistic and mischievous in nature, these spirits show up in pairs. They can corrupt data on other spirits. They don't seem to know their dead. Communicating with them can be confusing. They make a lot of noise but there are not very many coherent messages. If ignored, they get more disruptive..

THE COLD WET SPIRIT

This child had the worse death. She was drowned in a tub by her unstable mother. The girl was bold and adventurous and loved going outside. Her mother (having been abandoned by her own father, and then the father of the girl) saw her daughter's wanderlust as a threat to being abandoned again. Over time she became convinced that something horrible would happen to her daughter if she got away. She kept her daughter closer and closer. Eventually, her mental health deteriorated to the point where she felt some evil force was going to take her daughter, and sending her daughter to the afterlife was the only way to protect her.

This spirit is the hardest to discover. She is shy at first and will vanish after a short number of miscommunications. However, once materialized she is the most active. You will find her moving to other rooms and making the most noise.

THE LOST IN THE DARK SPIRIT

This child was neglected often. It builds up so much resentment it is hardly recognized as human. It can be dangerous, and might not be able to be saved. Once discovered its behavior is unpredictable and disruptive. Very little is known about this one, but this entity has been spotted by other users most often. Some say it is attached to the app itself and can travel wherever its users are. It may be connected to the disappearance of the apps creator...

This spirit can send push notifications, corrupt data in the app making it near impossible to save screenshots of it. It becomes more prevalent in later portion of the game, as you discover more about the other spirits. It acts as a "boss" in that you have to defeat it in order to return all the data lost and stop the extra messages.

The Gameplay

or

How to Talk to Spirits, Specters and the Not-So-Recently Deceased

The core gameplay involves searching for and collecting clues by interacting with the ghosts using sound, light, and interactive AR elements. Interacting with the creatures in the right way will unlock new information that will allow you to find and interact with newer, more powerful ghosts.   Certain events will trigger "cut scenes" which will be more elaborate ghost projection that show more detailed and realistic images relating to the story. While mechanically, the gameplay is similar to a creature collector like pokemon or tamagotchi, the tone and spirit of the game is similar to story driven indie-horror games where the ultimate reward for the players is uncovering the narrative and discovering secret meanings.

*There are several ways that the app can be used to find ghosts.
(The Game can use one or all of these elements depending on the scale of the game and technical limitations.)

Developer Note

The easiest way to find a spirit is to search in areas with an aura. Otherwise, you're wasting a lot of time trying to attract them. Auras are just collections of negative or positive energy. There may be one or several sprites attached to them.

Digital Kirlianograph

The actual AR element of the game, basically referring to the screen or camera view.. This is where we see our little ghost holograms. Named after Kirlian photography (a technique for creating contact print photographs using high voltage popular in ghost/aura photography). The in-game explanation is that the app is software that interprets changes in electromagnetic fields other things the phone can sense and displays them in camera mode, there for allowing these 'auras' to be seen by users. This is a modern version of the faux-science used to explain early spirit photos.

-The ghosts 'form' and 'dissolve''onto screen as if pixels are coming together to manifest a shape. Stronger ghosts form more elaborate images.
- Ghosts can also create drawings on walls/surfaces that fade after a predetermined amount of time.
- The player can take a photo of these images to save to their journal and send them to the forum.

EMF (electro-magnetic field) Detector

-Senses increases and shifts in the electromagnetic field that indicate a spirit may be near.
- Can be used to find a good area to use one of the other tools
- The higher the rating, the more likely a more powerful spirit can be found.
- At the highest levels the screen will produce glitch effects for the player.

EVP (electronic voice phenomena) Scanner

-White noise plays from the phone that increases in energy and volume when approaching ghost.
-Uses binaural sound for effect so headphones are recommended.
-Actual words heard when near more evolved ghosts can be saved to hear again later
-Speech recognition feature. Players can speak into the mic and ask questions. Specific words and phrases will have an affect ghosts
- Very loud noises can scare ghosts away
- repeating words you've heard ghosts say will please them.
-This feature can also be text only,

The Flash/External lighting

-Certain ghosts are more likely to appear in the dark. This requires the player to play in a dark/room house on occasion.
-Suddenly turning on the lights or using the camera flash can scare small ghosts away

The Creatures

Sprites

Spirits are materialized Auras. They have intent and can now respond to light and sound. They will remain in the room but may not return when you leave the room. They can't yet communicate with words buy can hint that the things they are drawn to.

Spirits

Spirits are advanced Sprites who can interact with images and words. They will communicate back to you after more interactions. Their communications are simple but a story can be pieced together.

Negative Sprites/Spirits

Spirits that are continuously interacted with, but in the wrong way, can and will turn into negative forces that glitch photos, and interrupt communication. When the player begins to communicate with the Game Developer and this phenomenon happens, they will know something is off.

Non-Corporeal Entity

or

"GHOST"

These spirits are fully formed personalities, with a past and memories. The can recal their original selves so they appear close to their human form. They can respond to commands and can follow you into other rooms.

They are aware of other spirits, and can even have an effect on the game when not playing.

How to Collect Them

The Activiy Log:

Inventory management and collecting information is a part of the core gameplay and involves collecting the clues that will create the stories of the main characters. Whenever a new ghost is discovered it is saved in the Activity Log. Selecting that sprite in the file menu will open a report on the ghost. Interactions with this ghost including clues to it's story will be saved there.

The Spirits name
EMF Readings (strength level of the ghost)

Images created by ghosts
saved if player takes photo

Communication Log
A history of words found in EVP mode.

These act as clues for what to say to the ghost next, what images to use with the ghosts, and what questions to ask it in order to progress through the story.

ACTIVITY LOG

Spirit # 001

Name: Unknown

EMF Readings: 267.9

Communication HIstory

HELLO	01/23/20 11:00
COLD	01/23/20 11:00
COLD HERE...	01/23/20 11:00

INFO

Developer Notes
(Updates)

The Evidence of Paranormal
Activity (EPA)

Paranormal Studies

Tools

Activity Log

Developer Notes
(Updates)

Paranormal Studies

Tools

The Evidence of Paranormal
Activity (EPA)

The menu gives player access to information needed for the game, and settings for their gameplay and account

Developer Notes
An important element to the game narrative, and a way to teach and inform the player.

Paranormal Studies
Explains certain terms and theories that players who are not familiar with ghost hunting or spiritualism may not know.

The Search for Evidence of Paranormal Activites (S.E.P.A.)
A forum where members of the group can communicate. The experiences posted by other members can offer clues.

Tools:

Discriptions of the Tools and their Icons are also in the information menu.

TOOLS

KIRLIANOGRAPH
(Spirit Photos)
Allows spirits with enough energy to manipulate images in real time

EMF Detector
Sudden spikes in the electromagnetic field can be a sign of paranormal activity

EVP Detector
Can pick up Electronic Voice Phenomenon by scanning quickly through radio waves. This version includes captioning.

Flash
Bright lights can both scare off spirits or be affected by them.

Who is this for?

The internet is full of tiny communities of intensely dedicated internet sleuths and creatives. The framework of Digital Ghosts plays out as one of these communities to both feel familiar to its audience and to signal to them that the narrative of this game is full of secrets, red herrings, and multiple instances of a narrative that exists outside of the app itself.

while this framing device is written to immerse the player in the world of the story, the AR element is designed to bring the story to the world of the player. The creepy yet whimsical designs of the characters aren't meant to horrify, but intrigue. To be just unsettling enough to inspire curiosity, and just quirky enough to keep them from being unrelatable. They may appear almost 2D or cartoony in nature, even when modeled in 3D to invoke a child's drawings.

This is a game for anyone who is a fan of mysteries and collecting. The type of person to ruin their sleep with one more creepy-pasta video before bed.   And for the players who want a game experiences that plays out slowly in the peripheral hours of their life, like ghost stories often do