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WHAT DID WE DO?

Through a series of ongoing projects, we have explored the qualities of games as methods to support learning. For example, Orla Walsh's PhD research examines how playing table-top role-playing games like Dungeons and Dragons can support social skills development. Cian O'Mahony and Aaron Bolger developed *Nashville PI*, a video game that encourages players to engage in digital literacy and critical thinking skills upon encountering online conspiracy theories. Conor Linehan designed a series of games that provoke critical reflection on the privacy implications of new geo-location - based technologies.

Whereas other methods merely describe how .. logical concepts function, games explain why they work in the way they do” (Pietarinen, 2003).

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Many of the challenges facing us today, from climate change to the proliferation of AI systems, are complex in nature. They defy explanation through simple metaphor or diagram. Games seem well suited as methods for explaining how complex systems work. They encourage active, embodied, experiential and reflective learning processes, where people can interact with the system, watch how different actions produce different results, form hypotheses and strategies, to try those strategies out, and examine the consequences. We are excited to push forward the psychological understanding of how games function as explanations.

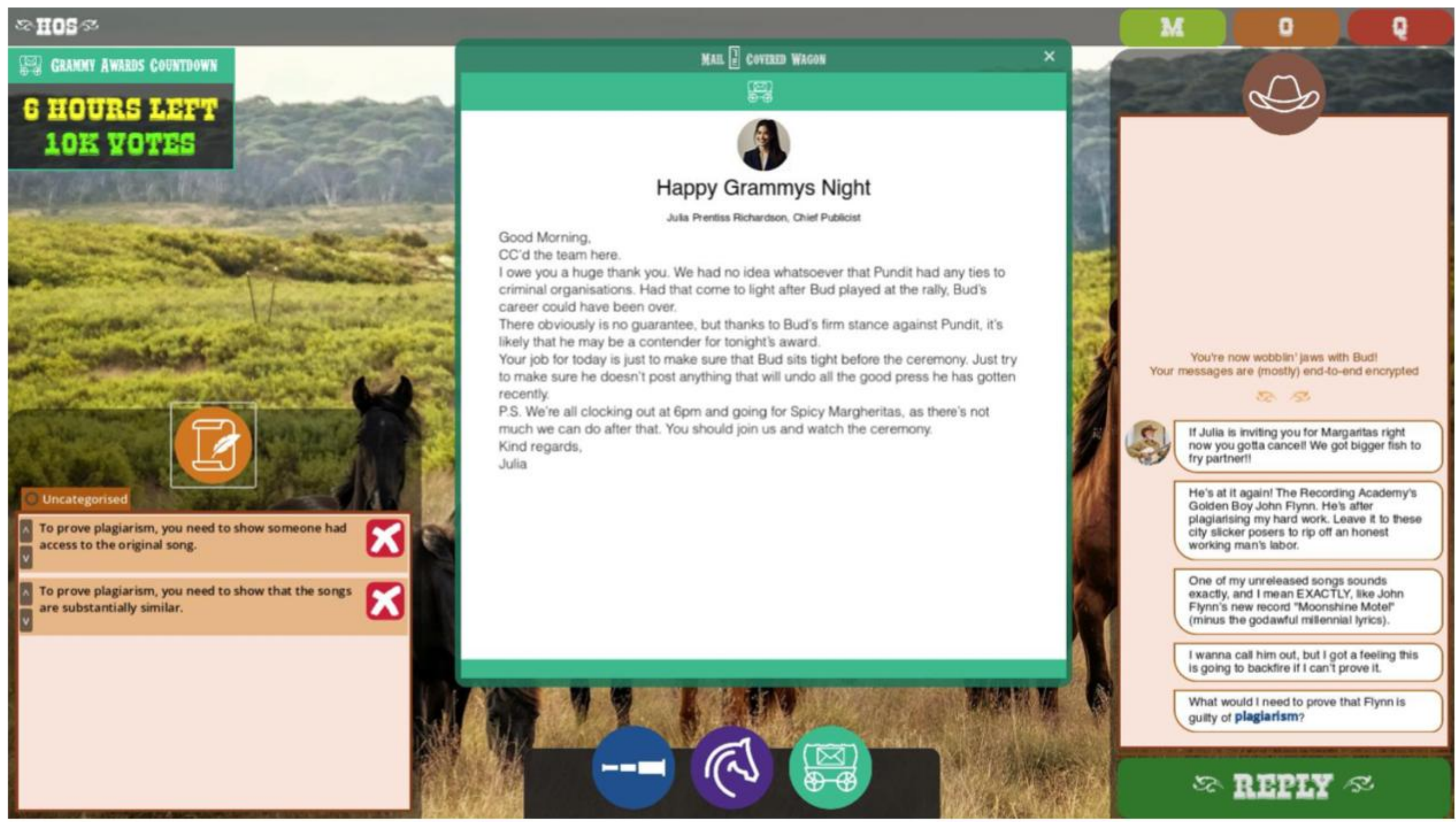


Figure 5.8: Screenshot of Nashville PI Interface