

# Summary

*Trust Agency* is a narrative-driven strategy game where players take on the role of the head editor of a newspaper in a surveillance-heavy state. Inspired by titles like *Papers, Please*, the game challenges players to balance truth, reputation, and political pressure as they grow their outlet into the most trusted news source in the country.

Players review incoming article drafts and compare their attached photos to real-time government camera feeds monitoring the outside world. This verification process becomes the basis for deciding which stories to publish and which to reject. Each decision impacts both the newspaper's credibility and its visibility in the public eye.

As the outlet gains prominence, players begin to face pressure from the government, which starts to dictate specific narratives — not all of them true. The player must then navigate the tension between maintaining journalistic integrity and complying with authority to stay in power.

## What Makes *Truth Agency* Unique

*Truth Agency* turns journalism into hands-on gameplay. Instead of passively choosing headlines, players actively verify stories by comparing article photos with live government camera feeds and even checking the view outside their office window.

What sets the game apart is its focus on **truth as a mechanic** — not just a narrative theme. Every decision affects the paper's credibility and visibility, and as the outlet grows, so does the pressure to publish state-approved propaganda. Players must constantly weigh influence against integrity, in a world where seeing everything doesn't mean always doing the right thing.

# Design pillars

## **Careful Observation**

Correct choices come from paying close attention to the details and interpreting information with intent.

## **Uncertainty of Behavior**

Even with full visibility, people's actions remain unpredictable — just when you think you understand what to do, the public proves you wrong.

## **Integrity Under Pressure**

Every decision is a balancing act between telling the truth, maintaining influence, and surviving authority.

# Core game loop

## **Study Article**

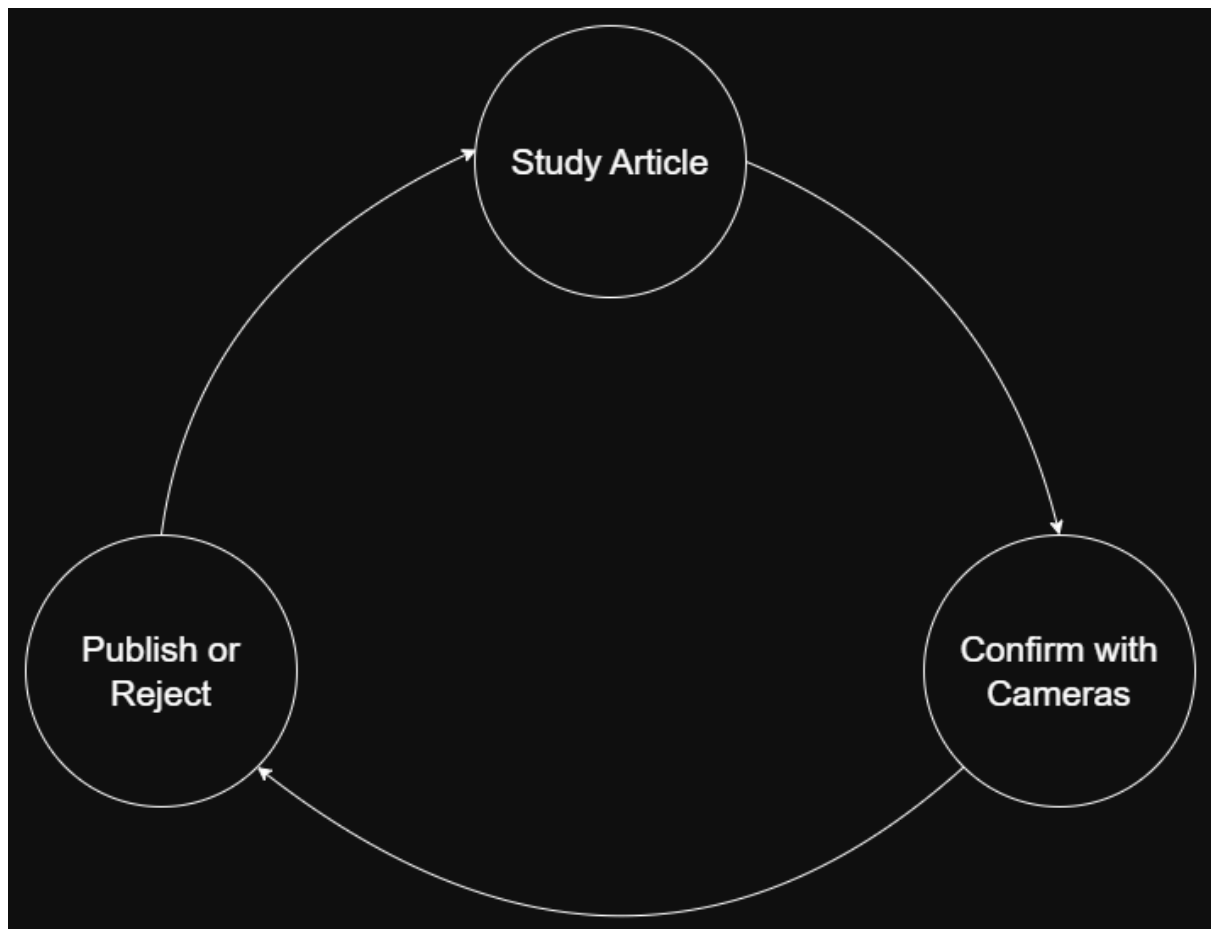
Look at the picture attached to an article, making note of anything strange or out of place.

## **Confirm with camera feeds**

Look through the camera feeds, searching corresponding feeds to the article at hand.

## **Publish or Reject**

Make the decision by putting the article in either the publish or reject pile.



# Player motivation and progression

## Motivations

### Primary Motivation

- Guiding their newspaper to great recognizability and credibility.

### Secondary Motivations

- Getting proficient with determining good and bad articles.
- Surviving being between hammer and an anvil (government and public).

## Progression

Find one or two false articles → Build reputation of fairly trustworthy and recognisable newspaper → Find more false or misleading articles → Become the best newspaper → Do work for government → Figure out how to stay alive

## Gameplay POV

It's Monday — the start of a busy week, and there's a whole stack of articles to review. As the newly appointed **chief editor** of an up-and-coming (if somewhat questionable) newspaper, it's your job to decide what makes it to print.

You sit down at your desk, where a pile of freshly drafted articles awaits. You power up the **government-issued camera feeds** — surveillance provided to all media outlets — and begin your work.

The first article describes a somewhat comical incident: a fox wandered into a local grocery store, presumably in search of snacks. But something feels off. The attached photo shows the fox standing in the middle of the store... with a **cigarette in its mouth**? That doesn't look right.

You cycle through the camera feeds to verify the story. It takes some time — the feeds are slow to rotate, and when idle, they blur to conserve power and maintain confidentiality. Eventually, you find the right location. After waiting for the camera to pan back to the center of the store, you spot the fox. No cigarette. A clear fabrication.

This article should be rejected. But... it's catchy. It'll get attention. And the paper *could* use some traction before worrying too much about credibility, right?

You decide to let this small exaggeration slide — and move the article to the **publish** pile.

The next article reports a **rare car model** being spotted on the outskirts of a rural village. If true, it could boost your paper's recognition significantly. You dig into the feeds again, flipping through locations until you find the right spot. Sure enough, there it is — the car, parked in plain sight. This one's a definite **yes**. You publish it.

You glance back at your desk. A dozen more articles are waiting — each with its own half-truths, buried facts, and tempting headlines. Your day is just beginning.

# Game Systems and Mechanics

*Truth Agency* puts players in the role of a **chief editor** at a rising newspaper in a surveillance-heavy state. Players interact with the world primarily through **mouse-based controls**, enabling them to click, drag, and drop articles, as well as focus on specific camera feeds.

## Core Mechanics

### Article & Camera Interaction

- **Article Verification**

Clicking on an article and then selecting a camera feed initiates a **visual match check** between the article's photo and the selected feed. Similar to *Papers, Please*, the game indicates whether a match is found — but it does **not confirm the authenticity** of the image in the articles.

This leaves the final judgment to the player: **Is the photo trustworthy? Should this article be published or rejected?**

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### Desk & Decision Flow

- **Dragging Articles**

Players can freely drag articles around the desk to organize or inspect them.

- **Publishing or Discarding**

Dragging an article over either the **publish pile** or the **discard pile** locks in the decision. Once placed, the article cannot be moved or undone.

This mechanic emphasizes **deliberate decision-making** and forces players to weigh the potential benefits and risks of each article.

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### Camera Feeds

- **Camera Interaction**

All government camera feeds appear **blurred by default**.

Players can **hover over a specific feed** to unblur it temporarily and inspect the footage. Only one feed can be viewed clearly at a time.

## Credibility & Recognizability System

Each article has two core attributes:

- **Credibility** (ranging from **5 to +3**) — how truthful or accurate the article is.
- **Recognizability** (ranging from **0 to +5**) — how attention-grabbing or shareable it is.

Each in-game day, players must publish a selection of articles that help meet **minimum thresholds** for both **credibility** and **recognizability**. These scores are tracked and displayed during the day to help guide the player's editorial strategy.

At the end of the day:

- If the combined totals fail to meet the required minimums, the game ends.
- If both metrics are met, the paper survives another day — and possibly gains more influence... or unwanted attention.

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## Reality Check

Players have the ability to perform a **Reality Check** by **literally looking out the office window**. This allows them to directly observe global or public events — such as the weather, major fires, public gatherings, or riots — and compare them to the claims made in submitted articles.

This mechanic becomes increasingly important as the game progresses. Once the government begins exerting pressure on the agency to publish **state-approved stories**, which may not reflect the truth, the window becomes one of the last reliable ways for players to **verify reality**.

The **Reality Check** reinforces the game's core themes: limited control, information bias, and the blurred line between observation and truth.