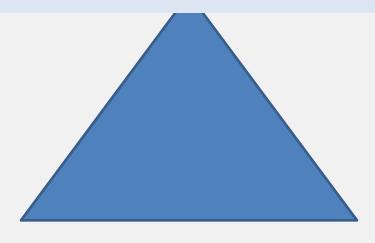
# Early Design Process



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See also references at end of slides (if any)

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## Designing a Game

- Process of Game Design can be described as
  - the successive layering of constraints

## Open World

- Even Open World Games have constraints
  - May believe you can do anything
- But
  - Do not have complete freedom
    - Only certain ways players can move
    - A defined set of objects they can interact with
    - Al controlled agents move accordingly to specific algorithms
  - Player does have relatively open set of goals and decisions
    - But there are constraints that create this illusion of "able to do anything"

#### **Constraints**

- Constraints anchor your ideas
  - Give a place to begin

- Real World projects
  - Starting place is usually given to you
    - Can be good
    - Provides "initial design" so less "design work" to do
- Here you get to a little more freedom
  - So you have more work to do than typical =)

## Starting From Scratch

- Limit the amount of time
  - say 48 hours

- Choose subject matter that interests you
  - a theme

- Choose a core mechanic to explore
  - Make a choice = add a constraint
  - Iterations may change it later as needed
  - Do not get stalled in the details

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics

#### Aesthetics

- what do you want the players to feel
- how should they react
- what should the play experience be like
- now work backwards player experience description
  - what rules will achieve the desired experience/aesthetic

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System

#### Rule or System of Rules

- What rules exist around you
- Can they be made into a game
- Can the be changed to become a game

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design

#### Existing Design

- Use what others have done
- Adapt and Improve
- Alter things here and there
- Re-implement in a different setting
- Re-implement with a different rule system
- Re-implement with a different view/perspective
- Fix what was "wrong"
- **–** ...
- Make it uniquely different and better

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design
  - Technology

#### Technology

- Make use of something new
- But Not just "new" tech
  - Use something old in a new way
- Look around
  - What could be used in game
  - What hasn't been used in a game

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design
  - Technology
  - Existing Materials

#### Existing Materials

- Use materials from other sources
- Existing Game Art
- Existing Game Mechanics
- Work done by other before you
- Use unfinished stuff
- Use parts of parts
- Check public domain sets
- Build from what is there

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design
  - Technology
  - Existing Materials
  - Narrative

#### Narrative

- Start with a "story"
- Design rules to fit
- Many, many stories already written
  - Remember to consider the classics

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design
  - Technology
  - Existing Materials
  - Narrative
  - Market Research

#### Market Research

- Find a demographic that could use a game
  - Educational often fits here
- Pick a topic/genre/something the is "hot pop" right now
- Look for a "new" hot interface
  - VR, touch screens, holo...
- Look for opportunities for easy sells

- Need a "core idea"
- Start with
  - Aesthetics
  - Rule System
  - Existing/Proven Design
  - Technology
  - Existing Materials
  - Narrative
  - Market Research
  - Combinations

#### Combinations

- Start with several of these
- Aesthetics and Narrative often go hand in hand

## Along the Way

- From your start, remember
  - You are adding constraints
  - Shaving off the excess
  - Narrowing down to the essence of your game idea
  - Defining and clarifying the idea
  - Chipping off the stone to reveal the statue
  - This is art
  - Removing/Controlling the noise
     to present the picture to your audience

## Next Step: Try it out

- Iterate the Design
  - Prototypes and Mockups
    - Will discuss more on this later

- For now
  - Test your ideas as quickly as possible
  - Play through your game
  - Modify as necessary

## Mockups: Quick Prototypes

- Use Mockups, aka
  - Paper, cardboard, non-digital, analog
  - Little to no programming
  - Prototypes

- Make your idea playable and testable
  - as fast as possible
  - as little programming as possible
  - easy to change

## Why Mockup

- Making something playable
  - Forces you to actually DESIGN the SYSTEM

- Removes the hand-waving and pretending
  - e.g. this game will have 50 cards
    - the cards will be determined later, but will definitely work with the idea
      - ... honest

## **Paper Limitations**

- Some things can be difficult to test on paper
  - dexterity of players (twitch mechanics)
  - complex calculations
    - and stat tracking
  - animation/eye-candy
    - this should not be "required"
    - just bonus to an already good game
  - computer user interface
    - But can do a pretend interface layout
      - Human just responds as computer should

## **Benefits Outweigh Limits**

- Benefits
  - Testing the game idea quickly
  - Updating/adapting/improving it quickly

- Strengthens the idea
  - sets a solid core foundation
  - well worth the investment

## **End Summary**

- Use the above to produce an early Design Document
  - Define the "core" game idea
  - Provide the rules
  - Provide examples of desired art/feel/aesthetics/interface
  - State the desired player experience
  - Setup the narrative/story/theme
- Then reduce to an Inception Document
  - A pitch of the game
  - Short, simple, to the point
    - Done with a deeper understanding of how and what and why the game will be a good game
    - With a useable mockup/prototype for further illustration

#### Reminders

- Next Class (Friday)
  - You will be giving a presentation on YOURSELF!

- In two classes (Monday)
  - Pitch-It Assignment due
    - Pitch/Inception Documents

### Questions?

- Beyond D2L
  - Examples and information can be found online at:
    - http://docdingle.com/teaching/gdd450/

Continue to more stuff as needed

### References

- Some material in these slides was derived/based on material from:
  - Ian Schreiber, Game Design Concepts
  - https://gamedesignconcepts.wordpress.com/
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