

# Game Design Document (GDD)

# Motivation

- Describes how a game works from a business value but not technical
- Is related to the functional requirement (engl. Lastenheft) in strong contrast to the technical requirement (engl. Pflichtenheft)
  - Tells WHAT is to do but not HOW
- Think of the design document as an architect's blueprint
- Is about to change in all project phases
- Usually takes several months to write

# Benefits of a GDD

- Reduces confusion, eliminates vagueness
- People can comment on them to exchange ideas
- Ideas become explicit (leave a conceper's head) and must be expressed and formulated which unveils shortcomings and false assumptions
- Synchronizes all stake holder
  - Art / interaction designer, developer, publisher, investor
- Tell the work-team what to do

# The next steps

- We perform tasks to fill the GDD
  - Core sentence & Features
  - Actors, Activities and Objects
  - User stories, Use cases
  - Activity models, market reasearch & challenges
- Hint: dont be too vague, "the player may ..." is wrong; better use "if <condition> the player will do this and that"

# Task 1 the core

- Is a sentence that tells the reader the setting / environment
- make sure that all features that you will design, all levels etc will support the core and makes it stronger
- remove features and stuff that doesnt fit to the core

# Task 1 the core

- e.g. develop a character, survive on a battlefield, the player must find the way out, etc
  - This game is about being a/an...
  - This game simulates...
  - This game lets you play...
- or core inspired by genre:
  - RPGs are about character development
  - RTS are about resource capture
  - Simulations are about building
  - FPSs are about survival
  - Racing games are about being the first to the finish line

# Task 2 Features

- create a list of features that support the core of your game,
- chose 10 features (from your document) that are mostly related to the core or are somehow unique which would make your game special
- e.g. with the core “want to be a pirate” features are
  - a ship
  - the ocean
  - a combat system that allows to attack and defend

# Task 3 Actors, Objects & Activities

- Actors / Subjects are
  - Personas, roles which the human user can play
  - Non-Player-Characters
- Actions
  - What actors do, engage, acquire or interact
  - shoot, command, run, purchase, build, and look, select, move
- Objects
  - Which things are used by the actors (weapons, buildings, switches, elevators, traps, items, spells, power-ups)
- From your document and features write down / mark all actors , actions and objects



# Task 4 User stories

- what should happen if the user does this and that being in a specific role for which purpose
- Roles may be a pilot or a merchant, an attacker or defender
- Write down all user stories that are related to your game
  - For each role separately
- user stories will have an important role in the scrum process

# Task 5 Use Cases

- Describe how the game works from a user's perspective (no technical description)
- What should happen with the system if the user interacts with it?
  - Interaction between the system and
    - Actors
    - Non-player -characters
    - Automatic tasks in the game
- Formulate use cases for 3-4 user stories

# Task 6 Level Creation

- Sketch your playfield and levels
  - Use symbols for re-occurring elements like barriers or power-ups etc.
  - Use a orthogonal 2D-birds view (without perspective)
  - It can be ugly it can be dirty, but it will help you with the next task
- Create different levels with increasing difficulty
- Variate areas that are challenging and require high user concentration with easy areas

# Task 7 Activities & Order

- Bird's view: Use activities to advance the story, which levels go after another etc
- In game view: describe the steps the player must go through each level via an activity diagram
- Think about parallel routes or alternative routes
- GUI view: Also create an activity diagram for the game options menu

# Task 8 Market research

- Identify successful games in your genre
- Find out the reason of success of those games and their market numbers (sold copies)
  - [www.gamestats.com](http://www.gamestats.com)
- Identify your target market using criteria as
  - age, gender, other key characteristics, where to market them, describe a typical player (properties habits)

# Task 9 Challenges

- identify your unique selling property, what makes you different from games in task 8
- mark those features in the feature list from above
  - that are new to the market
  - that are new to your developer team
- You will built a prototype later to examine one of those challenges

## The State of the Video Game Industry

Summed Up in Three Images:



Three separate games,  
from three separate developers.

(Killzone 3, Medal of Honor, Modern Warfare 2)

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