

Game Design II.

09 | we play + first batch of tasks

5 weeks left

assignment team - (less soft but still soft deadline 18. 4. 2022):

write down (2 weeks)

- game design pillars (text 500 words max)
- game design loops (text 500 words max + diagram/visualization)
- game design hook & anchor (text 500 words max)
- => IS VAULT

~~Design pillars~~

~~Core gameplay loop~~

~~Game design hooks & anchors~~

Design principle explanation

Game design unit

Prototype units

High level game design

Design principle explanation (solo) (deadline 20. 4. 2022):

Pick a favourite game design principle (any) and explain it in the most common language you are able to do so. Provide a strong and a weak example.

max 500 words + screenshots
=> IS VAULT

08 | Talk With A Game Designer - Jan Zelený (6. 4. 2023)
- *thoughts?*

+ Brno Game Jam (Friday to Sunday)

<https://www.kumstbrno.cz/akce/brno-game-jam-2023/>

10 | Talk With A Game Designer - Vladimir Kudelka (20. 4. 2023)

== Sid Meier's == **MEMOIR!**

By the Creator of *Civilization!*



A Life in
Computer Games



...niced this was a good idea. Like I said, the actual game that we had created was great, and I was happy to put my name on it, which Brian was again in favor of. But this idea of handing everything over to the players was just baffling. They would probably be terrible at it, I thought, and blame us for their uninspired creations. And if by chance they did happen to be good at it, then all we were doing was putting ourselves out of a job. Either way, I knew that modding was a great way to ensure that *Civilization* never saw a third installment

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I was so wrong, on all counts. The strength of the modding community is, instead, the very reason the series survived at all. Our audience had been

biting replies for every mocking parry. The result was indeed hilarious, and *The Secret of Monkey Island's* "insult sword fighting" ended up being one of the most celebrated features of the game.

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I found it especially ironic that Noah would cite Errol Flynn, since Flynn's movies had originally inspired me as well. Games may steal from games, but everything we do is stolen from non-game stuff to begin with. My inspirations were history, art, and science, and those guys stole from each other just like I stole from them. Do enough research, and you can always find an older version of any idea. We're occasionally credited, for example, with inventing the line

modding

stealing/originality

...ies of railway, the continuing sound effect of each square quickly escalated from helpful to annoying. So I replaced the ordinary clacking sound with the notes to a well-known Bach cantata called "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." (The title may be unfamiliar, but you've almost certainly heard it at a wedding or two.) With this tiny change, the most repetitive part of the game suddenly became one of the most endearing. Fans felt smart for recognizing the piece, amused by its presence, and subtly motivated to keep building so they could complete the tune. *SimGolf* wouldn't have been as good if I hadn't maintained an interest in music—and wouldn't have existed at all if I hadn't maintained an interest in golf. A designer who's only interested in games will find it very hard to bring anything original to the table, and I'm sure this is true in other fields, too. Whatever it is you want to be good

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at, you have to make sure you continue to read, and learn, and seek joy elsewhere, because you never know where inspiration will strike.

originality

significant to the outcome. If you present players with options A, B, and C, and 90 percent of them choose A, then it's not a well-balanced set—an interesting decision has no clear right or wrong answers. If players are evenly distributed among A, B, and C, but they all chose within three seconds, then it's not a very meaningful decision. Any answer would have worked. Ultimately, the most fundamental characteristic of an interesting decision is that it makes the player think, "I wonder what would happen next time, if I did it differently?" Of course, the best way for them to find out is to play your game again. But with enough reinforcement, players may even find

storm; Napoleon has to choose the right balance of horses, cannons, and soldiers—and each choice sends these guys careening down completely different paths. It's maybe even fair to say that games weren't the defining theme of my childhood after all.

Rather, it was their precursor: the interesting decision. I've always been fascinated by every type of interesting decision, and a game just happens to be a well-curated series of them.

I've been saying variations on this theme for my entire career, but I didn't realize I'd become famous for my definition of games until relatively recently. Sometimes, I'm quoted as saying "choices" instead of "decisions;" other times they're

game
=
choices

POZNÁMKY / SID MEIER'S MEMOIR!



Tužka

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Even talented people have mostly bad ideas, and it's critical in creative fields to let go of your ego and immediately bag anything that isn't pulling its weight

Tužka

11

We laughed at the absurd truth of the statement, but as soon as it was said out loud, I don't think either of us could have settled for anything less. We were not the type to turn down an interesting challenge. At the age of twenty-eight, I had declared in my very first instruction manual that I would one day "write the ultimate strategy game." Now, at thirty-six, I figured I

even though it was a grandiose, win-or-lose proposition with the potential to invalidate hours of successful gameplay. Generally speaking, I would never risk alienating the player to that degree. It was historically accurate, however, and Brian saw it as a satisfying boss battle rather than a last-minute bait and switch, so I deferred to him. Good games don't get made by committee.

The question of how much influence I'd really had on the game brought us to a major crossroads, both for MicroProse and the future of my career. I'm not sure if they'd planned it from the beginning, or held off until I

...some imaginary threshold of

ideas
ego
committee

...rather than wait around for an artist to become available, I installed a copy of our modeling software on my computer, and started learning how to use it. I'd mastered our 3D physics tools during *Pirates!*, but my early ship models had been swiped from somewhere—probably the *Civ IV* artists, now that I think about it—and I guess they didn't have any useful train graphics to steal. So I had to make my own.

Obviously, I didn't expect my art to stay in the final version of the game, but I made it anyway, because it's important as a designer to sit in all the chairs. Understanding the needs of each department and learning their requisite tools will improve your output, ease communication with your coworkers, and provide a critical perspective when it comes

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grays for an argyle vest, and my golfing prototype was halfway done.

The internet offers plenty of hijackable material these days, as well. John Williams unwittingly loaned me his *Jurassic Park* soundtrack for the dinosaur game, while the art came from a series of prehistoric-themed postage stamps. *Gettysburg!* used pictures from my own Civil War books until our artists could replace them. As long as you're talking about a temporary mockup that will never leave the office, anything is fair game. The point of a prototype is just to get across as quickly as possible what the experience could potentially feel like, if we spent the time on it.

"This feels like it could be part of the *Sims* universe," Bing Gordon told me when I got back from vacation and showed him my new

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experience
results in better
communication

prototype

valuable. When people used to ask me how to get into the industry, I'd say, "Get a copy of DPaint and a C++ compiler." These days it's more like, "Get a copy of Photoshop and a Unity tutorial," but the principle hasn't changed—there's no guarantee your talents will be discovered, but they certainly won't be if you never make anything. The best way to prove your idea is a good one is to prove it, not with words but with actions. Sit in the **programmer** chair until you have something playable, then sit in the artist chair until you have something crudely recognizable, then sit in the tester chair and be honest with yourself about what's fun and what's not. You don't need to be perfect at any one job, you just need to be good enough to prove your point, and inspire others to join you.

** Achievement Unlocked: This Belongs in a Museum—Go on a raid with Indiana Jones,*

videogames for as long as they can remember, and it's easy to get stuck in a cycle of remaking the same ideas over and over. "Find **the** fun" doesn't just mean take your topic and figure out what's fun about it; it also means go out into the world and find a topic that's never been turned into a game before. Then, once you find that topic, make sure you give it space to breathe, and keep an open mind about what gameplay style will highlight it best. You may end up hopping across Van Gogh's face, or impossibly hovering midair while another plane makes their move, only to discover that both experiences are loads more fun than anyone would have guessed.

** Achievement Unlocked: Share the Credit—Identify thirty-six other developers by name.*

idea

prototype

fun

... is value

time to admit you were wrong about an idea. But most importantly, it will make you more self-sufficient.

When I wanted to put a ballroom dancing minigame into the new *Pirates!*, for example, not everyone thought it sounded fun. I had to give them a demonstration, which meant creating, among other things, a tool to mark the beats of the music so the computer would know whether the player had nailed the rhythm. If I'd had to rely on someone else to put that together, it likely never would have happened—some still wished it hadn't, but that was mostly due to a bug that made the timing harder than it was supposed to be. I still maintain the dancing was one of the neatest innovations in the remake.

Likewise, I doubt I could have sold a publisher on the idea of a golfing strategy game without a functioning prototype, and you can pretty much forget everything I made prior to 2000. Ideas are cheap; execution is

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let's play!

Thank you for your
time.