Introduction

The Game Design Document (GDD) is the blueprint from which a video game is to be built. As such, every single detail necessary to build the game must be addressed in the document (or support documents). If it’s not in the document, then it shouldn’t be in the game.

Below you will find an outline for a **generic** Game Design Document. The problem is that no generic GDD will be able to address all the various genres for which a game may be created. For example, consider the games Among Us, Cyberpunk 2077 and Candycrush Saga. All three games required detailed design documents, but if you think about it, those documents would be entirely different! As such, when using the outline below you will find sections that will be totally meaningless to your game. But also, there will be sections that your GDD requires to describe the game. Just because it’s not in this outline, it doesn’t mean that it doesn’t belong.

A note on writing style: game design documents are technical documents. As such they should not be written in the first or second person, and they should not contain vague terms (e.g. “a head shot will result in ‘significant’ damage”). Aspirational writing should not be used (e.g. hopefully the drawbridge animation will point the player in the right direction). Write in a technical style, in other words be concise, precise, direct, and well organised.

1. Title Page

Game Name – Perhaps also add a subtitle or high concept sentence.
Evocative image such as a screen grab of a prototype or something thematically similar from Google Images
Your name, your course, date of submission

2. Table of Contents – Make sure this includes all the subsections to make finding material. If practical, hyperlinking the document will help here.

3. Game Overview
   - 3.1. Game Concept
   - 3.2. Feature Set
   - 3.3. Genre
   - 3.4. Target Audience
   - 3.5. Game Flow Summary – How does the player move through the game? Both through framing interface and the game itself.
   - 3.6. Look and Feel – What is the basic look and feel of the game? What is the visual style? Give examples
   - 3.7. Project Scope – A summary of the scope of the game.
     - 3.7.1. Number of locations
     - 3.7.2. Number of levels
     - 3.7.3. Number of NPC's
     - 3.7.4. Number of weapons
     - 3.7.5. Etc.

4. Gameplay and Mechanics
   - 4.1. Gameplay
     - 4.1.1. Game Progression
     - 4.1.2. Mission/challenge Structure
     - 4.1.3. Puzzle Structure
     - 4.1.4. Objectives – What are the objectives of the game?
     - 4.1.5. Play Flow – How does the game flow for the game player
   - 4.2. Mechanics – What are the rules to the game, both implicit and explicit? This is the model of the universe that the game works under. Think of it as a simulation of a world, how do all the pieces interact? This actually can be a very large section.
     - 4.2.1. Physics – How does the physical universe work?
     - 4.2.2. Movement
       - 4.2.2.1. General Movement
       - 4.2.2.2. Other Movement
     - 4.2.3. Objects
       - 4.2.3.1. Picking Up Objects
       - 4.2.3.2. Moving Objects
     - 4.2.4. Actions
       - 4.2.4.1. Switches and Buttons
       - 4.2.4.2. Picking Up, Carrying and Dropping
       - 4.2.4.3. Talking
       - 4.2.4.4. Reading

4.2.5. Combat – If there is combat or even conflict, how is this specifically modelled?

4.2.6. Economy – What is the economy of the game? How does it work?

4.3. Screen Flow

4.3.1. Screen Flow Chart – A graphical description of how each screen is related to every other

4.3.2. Screen Descriptions – What is the purpose of each screen?

4.3.2.1. Main Menu Screen

4.3.2.2. Options Screen

4.3.2.3. Etc.

4.4. Game Options – What are the options and how do they affect game play and mechanics?

4.5. Replaying and Saving

5. Story, Setting and Character

5.1. Story and Narrative

5.1.1. Back story

5.1.2. Plot Elements

5.1.3. Game Progression

5.1.4. Cut Scenes

5.1.4.1. Cut scene #1

5.1.4.1.1. Actors

5.1.4.1.2. Description

5.1.4.1.3. Storyboard

5.1.4.1.4. Script

5.1.4.2. Cut scene #2

5.1.4.3. etc.

5.2. Game World

5.2.1. General look and feel of world

5.2.2. Area #1

5.2.2.1. General Description

5.2.2.2. Physical Characteristics

5.2.2.3. Levels that use area

5.2.2.4. Connections to other areas

5.2.3. Area #2

5.2.3.1. etc.

5.3. Characters

5.3.1. Character #1

5.3.1.1. Back story

5.3.1.2. Personality

5.3.1.3. Look

5.3.1.3.1. Physical characteristics

5.3.1.3.2. Animations

5.3.1.4. Special Abilities

5.3.1.5. Relevance to game story

5.3.1.6. Relationship to other characters

5.3.1.7. Statistics

5.3.2. Character #2
5.3.3. etc.

6. Levels
6.1. Level #1
6.1.1. Synopsis
6.1.2. Introductory Material (Cut scene? Mission briefing?)
6.1.3. Objectives
6.1.4. Physical Description
6.1.5. Map
6.1.6. Critical Path
6.1.7. Encounters
6.1.8. Level Walkthrough
6.1.9. Closing Material
6.2. Level #2
6.3. etc.
6.4. Training Level

7. Interface
7.1. Visual System
7.1.1. HUD - What controls
7.1.2. Menus
7.1.3. Rendering System
7.1.4. Camera
7.1.5. Lighting Models
7.2. Control System – How does the game player control the game? What are the specific commands?
7.3. Audio
7.4. Music
7.5. Sound Effects
7.6. Help System

8. Artificial Intelligence
8.1. Opponent AI – The active opponent that plays against the game player and therefore requires strategic decision making (example, Civilization or Chess, how is it to be designed?
8.2. Enemy AI – Villains and Monsters
8.3. Non-combat Characters
8.4. Friendly Characters
8.5. Support AI
8.5.1. Player and Collision Detection
8.5.2. Pathfinding

9. Technical
9.1. Target Hardware
9.2. Development hardware and software
9.3. Development procedures and standards

- 9.4. Game Engine
- 9.5. Network
- 9.6. Scripting Language
- 9.7. etc.

10. Game Art
    - 10.1. Concept Art
    - 10.2. Style Guides
    - 10.3. Characters
    - 10.4. Environments
    - 10.5. Equipment
    - 10.6. Cut scenes
    - 10.7. Miscellaneous

11. Project Management
    - 11.1. Project Methodology: pick one, justify it, show how you plan to tailor it to your project. Do not write in generic terms.
    - 11.2. Detailed Schedule: include major project milestones and sprint deadlines if using an agile-type methodology.
    - 11.3. Schedule management. Select a tool (such as JIRA, Trello, etc.) and justify your selection)
    - 11.4. Version control. Select a tool (such as Git/GitHub, Unity Collaborate, etc.) and justify your selection)
    - 11.5. Risk Analysis
    - 11.6. Test Plan: how will you test your game? How will you *playtest* your game?

12. Appendices
    - 12.1.Credits: List ALL third-party assets used in your game. Group them according to type:
        - 12.1.1. Images
        - 12.1.2. Models
        - 12.1.3. Animations
        - 12.1.4. Audio
        - 12.1.5. Cameras
        - 12.1.6. Player controllers
        - 12.1.7. Etc.
    - 12.2. References. Use the Harvard method to format references for all in-text citations.
    - 12.3. Project logs. Weekly/fortnightly log, such as Sprint doc (if using Scrum), Trello charts, YouTube vlog, etc.