

Game Development Practice: From Game Concepts to Prototyping and Commercial Enterprise

Introduction

This worksheet, which forms part of your supervised studio practice, will again emphasise ideation alongside the need to consider the commercial aspects of your game development practice. Specifically, the need to identify a clear target market which will assure the commercial viability of your efforts.

You will, at first, reconvene with your teams to generate and receive feedback on the design document, handout, and slideshow that you prepared. However, unlike the previous supervised studio practice session, where you worked collaboratively with your peers, you will then embark on an individual endeavour to create your own game concept, design, and business case that you will pitch to your peers.

These pitches will form the basis of an investment exercise that will determine the game designs and team allocations to take forward to the prototyping stage, which will in turn be demonstrated towards the end of the study block.

Activity #1: Self-Assessment of the Design

Organise yourselves into the same teams that you were together with in the previous session. Ensure that **EACH** member of the team is conferred access to the latest:

- Design Document
- Handout
- Pitch Slideshow

ONE person from the team should **upload EACH** of these documents to the LearningSpace into the "Pre-Production Task" area in COMP150.

Then, adopting the style of a sprint retrospective meeting, **discuss** the qualities of **EACH** of the three documents whereby **EACH** member of the team on the discussion board: (i) **explicitly notes** those elements that went well; (ii) **explicitly notes** those elements that went poorly; and (iii) **suggests** at least **ONE** thing to do differently.

This should require 10-20 minutes.

Activity #2: Peer-Assessment of the Design

Re-organise into teams of **FOUR** people, such that each member of the new team came from a different team (i.e., one from iron bull; one from ghostly spymaster; one from atoning monk; and one from forgetful spirit).

EACH member of these new teams should **outline** the games described by the design document, handout, and pitch slide-show **and explain** its commercial prospects. Care should be taken to emphasise the commercial viability of the game. Then, others members of the team should **identify** at least **ONE** question that a potential investor may ask based on the information presented – post it to the discussion forum (there is no need to provide an answer).

This should require 10-20 minutes.

Then, **re-organise** back into your original teams.

Activity #3a: Setting Up Trello

While you await, or after you have received your feedback, you should **watch** the video on “Setting Up a Scrum-style Task Board using Trello”:

<http://learningspace.falmouth.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=80034>

After which you should **research and debate** with your peers, the most appropriate way to manage a task board:

<https://www.mountangoatsoftware.com/agile/scrum/scrum-tools/task-boards>

<https://manifesto.co.uk/agile-concepts-scrum-task-board/>

<http://agileforall.com/building-a-useful-task-board/>

Once you are satisfied, **setup** a Trello board and **populate** the first sprint of your Trello board with user stories; as if, you were planning your first sprint.

Activity #3b: Tutor Feedback on the Design

While you complete Activity #3a, your tutor will come around to **EACH** team to provide further feedback.

Note this feedback.

Approximately 10 minutes will be required for **EACH** team.

Note: Remixing the Team Dynamic

Please note that in Week 3, you will be re-allocated into new teams. This will be done by means of an “investment exercise”. In this exercise **EACH** of you will **individually** pitch your own game concept and business case. You will “invest” in the games of your peers, while you will receive “investments” from your peers.

The pitches receiving the most investment will be taken forward, with that becoming the “product owner” of the team.

A pseudo-random allocation of students to teams, based on these investments and data collected by your other tutors, will try to produce balanced teams consisting of two or three programming pairs.

Activity #4: Ideation

The publisher has rescinded their previous call for funding! However, in its place, they have released an open-call that invites proposals for an experimental 2D game. It may be of any genre and of any theme; however, the publisher wants something small in scope and is particularly interested in proposals that will make use of procedurally generated graphics and audio in line with the recent trend in indie game development.

As **individuals**, **ideate** suitable high-concepts **and**, then, **conduct** 30-second elevator pitches to your pair programming partner and/or other peers.

Select ONE concept to take forward to the market research stage.

If you are having trouble with ideation, your tutor can provide some VNA cards.

This should require 20-30 minutes.

Activity #5: Market Research

The publisher is still targeting the PC platform, using Steam and Itch.io. **Review** these markets **and identify** the opportunities within them. **Conduct** desk-research and make use of the data publicly available on SteamSpy and other sale analytics websites to conduct your survey.

Carefully **define** the target player for your game.

Propose at least **THREE** unique selling points that will appeal to the target audience.

Identify and describe at least **FOUR** similar games that you could be competing with and **clearly state** their sales figures. **Normalise** these with respect to release date.

This should require 10-20 minutes.

Activity #6: Pitching to Investors

Just as before, you will **prepare** a 5-minute pitch of your game to a potential audience of investors---they are the publishers that released the call for funding! You must condense your game design into a form that can be easily understood by these investors.

You must include:

- A slideshow
- A single A4 sheet (double-sided) handout

In your pitch, ensure that you cover:

1. Introduction
2. High Concept of the Game
3. Target Audience
4. Core Game Mechanics
5. Unique Selling Points
6. Platform
7. Competition
8. Development Costs
9. Business Model
10. Preliminary Income Projection
11. An estimate of the break-even point
12. Estimate of the Return-on-Investment (RoI) at 1-year after release

This should require the remaining time (and more).

In next week's workshop, you will pitch your game concept and business case. Use your self-directed practice time over the week to develop the pitch.

You should **not** prepare a design document. You will, instead, prepare it once the team is allocated.