Adventure Games

- Looking for ways to get players into a digital worlds
- **Key Game: Adventure**
  - 1975, Will Crowther, PDP10, USA
  - Based on underground cave system in Kentucky
  - Made for daughters to show in the cave
    - Colossal Cave
  - Text based game
  - This is the first digital game that uses the term "inventory"
  - Uses a "parser"
    - It knows a bunch of commands but not everything
  - Adventure games are a lot about exploring
  - Common practice to draw maps
  - **Xyzzy is a famous incantation**
  - Don Wood expanded on the original game
    - He made the game much more fantastic, like the wand, the dwarves, snakes, and other elements from the fantasy genre.
  - The game gets you lost, passages bend and twist
  - After Crowther got divorced from wife, he wanted to share the Colossal Cave with daughters and founded the adventure game genre.
  - All created on the PDP-10
    - It was only accessible at his job, for research
    - People using this were researchers or students
    - Text was printed out typically, so all input and output was actual textual
  - **WHY**
    - **First game in the genre**
    - **Where the name of the genre comes from**
    - **Also originated interactive fiction**
    - **Was adapted in the first well known adventure game: Zork**
- Narrative and Games: Antecedents
  - **Riddles**
    - Nick Monfort calls riddles a direct precedent to interactive fiction because it requires direct interaction.
  - **Mystery novels**
    - Teases the reader with a "who-done-it"
  - **Table-Top Roleplaying Games**
    - D&D
    - When playing D&D, rather than having a computer, you respond to a person

    Choose-Your-Own-Adventures
    - First appeared in 1970
    - Cave of Time, 1979 was first big hit.
    - Books can't keep track of complex game state

- - - Eliza
    - The first "chat-bot"
    - Created in response to the "truing test"
    - You can type words in and talk to it
    - Wiezenbaum created this to tackle the challenge of presenting an interactive system that an everyday user can use, not just the niche audience.
      - They would have to enter something close to natural language
- Narrative in Videogames
  - A genre where story is inextricable from gameplay
  - One of the oldest game genres that tie these together
  - We look at the world around us and construct stories, we are story telling creatures
  - Creating an interactive story that is rich and full of meaning but also lets the players interact and feel like they have a meaningful impact
    - THE HOLY GRAIL
      - These are two great things, narratives and ludology
- Fictional Worlds
  - Stories tend to take place in fictional worlds
  - There are often people in the stories that we can interact with
  - They seem rich and expansive because we don't know all the details
  - The incompleteness also makes it more alive
- PacMan has a story, but it tells it in a MUCH simpler way.
  - Not a STRONG sense of a fictional world
  - But it's there
- **Adventure games are tying FICTIONAL WORLDS, INTERACTIONS, AND STORY**
  - On a computer
- **Fictional Worlds and Rules**
  - **The part of the game's rules that interact with the fictional world results in simulation.**
- extra-diagetic rules belong to the game and not the world.
- Narratives lie in the story of the world and the story of the player
- **What is an adventure game?**
  - **A transportation into a fictional world where you are the main charac**ter
  - "Story driven, exploration and puzzle solving, player character…"
- Evolution of Adventure Games
  - In 1977 a group of students at MIT made "Dungeon"
  - They got a copyright violation from D&D
  - Any unfinished program on the system was called Zork.
  - Infocom was developed from this
- **ADVENTURE GAMES ARE SIMULATIONS**
- Constantly taking in input and creating output and keeping track of this
- **Key Game: Zork has a large area of simulation**
- 1982, genre expansions and "feelies"

- - A police folder, a white plastic bag with three pills, evidence
  - Served as a form of early copy-protection, and if you wanted to give a friend the game you had to also copy ALL the "feelies"
- 1989, further experiments in IF
  - Suspended
  - A Mind Forever Voyaging
  - Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy
  - The Lurking Horror
- **Key Game: Plundered Hearts**
  - 1987, Amy Briggs, PC, USA
  - An intense romance on the high seas in the 17th century
  - Text adventure
  - You play as a heroine
  - Amy Briggs started in the mid 80's at Infocom
  - She learned to program ad write this game
  - A lot of these circumstances are out of your control, you're stuck in both though genre AND the situation.
  - She made this because it was a game, a type of game, that didn't exist yet
  - The protag is distanced from you as the player
  - There is an undercutting of romance novel stereotypes that deal with issues of simulation
    - You're a heroin, solving puzzles and fighting alligators and all this cool shit that romance herons aren't able to do
  - WHY
    - Created at the height of **infocoms** popularity, a flourishing of experimentation
    - **Complex protag with a personality and history**
    - The first videogame to explore the romance genre (as opposed to just sex) and play with the tropes of the genre
    - One of the first games made for women and by women
    - Multiple good endings
- The rise of graphics lead the death of text adventures
- Mystery House, visual output
- **Key Game: Kings Quest (Series)**
  - 1983-2015
  - Sierra Ent/Roberta Williams
  - PC
  - USA

  - Point and click interface
  - No place to enter text, just clicking
  - I can talk, examine, and walk through right clicking and clicking
  - There are many ways you can die

- - **The game expects you to explore, check paths, and muddle your way around, dying multiple times**
    - Known for being punishing
    - **WHY**
        - **The most popular and longest running series in the genre by Sierra OnLine**
        - **Different titles exemplify how adventure games tried to optimize the point and click**
        - **Turned dying into an art**
    - When creating new game, the focus was the story and the characters and the quest. She wanted those conce
    - Point and click

- **Key Game: The Secret of Monkey Island**
    - 1990-2009, Lucas Arts (Ron Gilbert et al), PC, USA
    - **There's a world map**
    - The game fights using comebacks
    - WHY
        - Most popular series by LucasArts
        - First game that opted to avoid game over states
        - Model for contemporary point and click adventure games, often imitated and quoted in later works
        - Excellent comedy writing
- SCUMM
    - (Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion)
    - A game engine to script rooms and code pieces
    - Infocom as Z-Machine similar to this
- Exploration is the key
- In Indiana Jones there are three paths, teamwork, wits, and fists.
- Day of the Tentacle had three characters in different time periods
- Grim Fandango
    - Visually stylish
    - At the dusk of adventure games as a mainstream genre

- **Key Game: Myst**
    - 1993, Cyan/Rand & Robin Miller, PC, USA
    - Developed on Macintosh, a series of cards
    - Create a 3d world that players could explore
    - A number of to dimension scenes that the game flips between
    - You can click on hotspots and it'll move you
    - WHY
        - **Became the top selling game of all time until 1998**
        - **Best demonstration of how CD-ROM and larger storage could change adventure games**

- - - Created a new paradigm of adventure games: verbs and menus were substituted by minimalistic point and click
        - Introduced 3D graphics into adventure games
        - 2.5D 3D modeling that turns into flat images
        - Because of the limitations of the system, they created the island as an empty lonely place that has a lot to discover
        - Very atmospheric
        - There's no clear arc or plot, you're just left to figure it all out
        - There is a larger fictional world, but the rules take point
        - You can solve the puzzles in slightly different orders
        - This opened up adventure games to a larger audience
        - **The "casual" was created**
- Personal Computers were much less prominent in Japan, so they had Family Computers (Famicom)
- Greater emphasis on character and dialogue greater in Japanese games
- **Grand strategy narrative in Japan**
- Ruby Party (an only woman team)
    - Created Angelique
    - You not only have to romance guys but manage a kingdom
    - Fantasy world with rival queens, but relationships with people, what the populace needs, and still try to be queen.
- **Angelique and Dating Sims, more overlap between rules and fictional world**
    - Managing resources and still trying to manage the world
    - Why?
        - **Launched the Otome Game market to create games for win**
        - **One of the first dating sims for a wider audience**
        - **Hybrid gameplay managing relationships and resources**
        - **Helped lead the way for the visual novel**
- Barbie Fashion Designer (1996) popular game
- Purple Moon made by Brenda Laurel
    - Rockett's New School, look at key games list
    - This game is all about being a middle school student
    - Visual novels as simulation, the rules are kept at a minimum and it's all the fictional world
    - Why?
        - First title for Purple Moon a company for girls
        - Similar to japanese visual novel
        - Target marketing in action, do girls need a dif game?
        - Everyday setting, relatively rare in american games
        - Episodic format similar to a tv series.
        - Interesting mechanic to let you deeply delve into her life by exploring items
        - Phoenix Wright!
- **Key Game: The Walking Dead**

- 2012, Telltale games, Sean Vanaman & Jake Rodkin, PC, USA
- A story set in the world
- Tran-media storytelling
- Parts of action gameplay
- Dialogue choices
- Walking dead as simulation has a narrow margin of simulation, but a great storytelling, not always meaningful interaction
- Maybe not all the choices matter in the game, but they matter to the player
- Why?
    - Revival of adventure games
    - A new model of adventure games
    - Transmedia
    - Interesting questions of choice and outcome
    - **Brought adventure games back to the mainstream;**
    - **Shifted the emphasis from puzzle-solving and exploration to making meaningful choices that change the events;**
    - **Proved the importance of good dramatic writing as part of the game design;**