

IF notes

based on *The Craft of Adventure, 2nd ed.*, Graham Nelson
and *Twisty Little Passages*, Nick Montfort

Geoffrey Matthews

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History, 1972-1981

- ▶ Will Crowther
- ▶ Explorer, Mammoth Cave
- ▶ *Dungeons and Dragons* player
- ▶ About 1972, wrote ADVENT for his children

At End of Road

You are standing at the end of a road before a small brick building. Around you is a forest. A small stream flows out of the building and down a gulley.

Crowther was a caver

You are in a splendid chamber thirty feet high. The walls are frozen rivers of orange stone. An awkward canyon and a good passage exit from east and west sides of the chamber.

Parser Prehistory

- ▶ Hunt the Wumpus
- ▶ SHRDLU

History, 1972-1981

- ▶ About 1975, Don Woods gets ahold of Crowther's ADVENT
- ▶ Adds puzzles, pirates, vending machines *etc.*
- ▶ ADVENT circulates on the ARPANET
- ▶ *The Soul of a New Machine*, Tracy Kidder: ADVENT epitomizes the geek culture
- ▶ Scott Adams, many titles, simple games
- ▶ John Laird's 'Haunt'
- ▶ MUDs

Scott Adams



Adventureland 1978

I'm in a dismal swamp.

Obvious exits: North, South,
East, West, Up.

I can also see: cypress tree —
evil smelling mud — swamp gas
— floating patch of oily slime
— chiggers

1972-1981

Game assemblers

JUMPHOLE:

```
SKIP UNLESS R(CHAIR)R EQ HOLEROOM
```

```
SKIP UNLESS H CHAIR PLAYER
```

```
PRINTRET HOLEHIGH
```

```
MOVE PLAYER WITH TO UPROOM
```

```
PRINTRET CHAIRJUMP
```


1982-1986

- ▶ MIT students built Zork
- ▶ 1979, Started Infocom
- ▶ Huge commercial success by 1985
- ▶ Ran on over 20 different personal computer types
- ▶ Business software never successful
- ▶ Dozens of successful titles

Sierra Online



The Golden Age

- ▶ *Amazon*, Michael Crichton
- ▶ *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Douglas Adams
- ▶ *Mindwheel*, Robert Pinsky (US Poet Laureate)
- ▶ *I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream*, Harlan Ellison
- ▶ *Gateway*, Frederik Pohl

1985-1991

- ▶ Computer graphics improve
- ▶ Market dries up
- ▶ Infocom collapses, bought by Activision
- ▶ Community grows `ftp.gmd.de`

1992-1999

- ▶ TADS and Inform
- ▶ Activision releases **Lost Treasures of Infocom**
- ▶ Newsgroups and the web
- ▶ Annual contests:
 - ▶ GAGS (AGT) contest
 - ▶ XZZZY awards
 - ▶ SpeedIF (write a game in two hours)