

# Game Concept Document

EGD 220-05 Team 2 Sprint 1

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## Intent

Explore the islands of Hawai'i and the indigenous cultures that call it home! **Mapmaker's Guide to Hawai'i** is an educational map-making game for students from 1st to 3rd grade. Students will play as a cartographer studying the archipelago of Hawai'i through the lens of the people who live there, working hard to get a better understanding of native Hawaiian culture from the ground up.

Players will map out one island at a time, selecting pieces of the island from a box at the side of the screen and dragging them into place in a silhouette of the island. Each time the player fits a piece of the map in the right place, they'll be rewarded with a bit of information about the people who live there!

When they've finished an island, the information from all the groups will be summarized, and the island will be put on the overall map! Once the player has mapped out all of the Hawaiian islands, the game is over and the player can explore the map as much as they want.

## Potential Audience

### Quantic Foundry

While Quantic Foundry has not done research on children specifically, its categories are still a useful tool. For these purposes, we will be aiming for the **Discovery** and **Completion** motivations (Yee). While our game is meant to be used in the context of a classroom, we want to make it as easy as possible for students to discover at their own pace. The islands are complex, and breaking it down into smaller pieces will make it easier for younger students to learn and process the information. They will also get to feel like they are guiding their own learning, and giving more agency to students keeps them more engaged. There is also the completion element of filling in the whole map, and gaining an overview of everything the student already learned.

## Balancing Students, Parents and Teachers

Because this is a game for a classroom, we have three different audiences to consider: Students, Parents, and Teachers. For students, we need to ensure that the actual gameplay is enjoyable and that the information is presented in a way that young children can understand. For teachers, we need to be sure that all of our research is accurate and relevant to the types of lessons that a lower elementary school class would be having. For parents, we want to ensure that the information we are presenting is accurate and relatively unbiased in order to avoid irritating people with certain beliefs, particularly about Hawaiian colonization and the rights of indigenous people.

## Designing for the Audience

Because we are designing games for young children, we will have to put in additional effort to maintain their attention. We will address this by filling our game with tons of user feedback, so that even when we are teaching them, the students will never feel bored. We will present information in small, easy-to-process bites that are understandable even without context, so that students can guide their own learning process and build their understanding even if they started knowing nothing about the islands.

## Context/Environment

### Story

An ambitious cartographer is looking to map out the Hawaiian islands, but to do that they want to learn directly from the people who have lived there the longest. Put together the sections of the map that you've gathered from the indigenous people of the island, and put them together to get a stronger understanding of the island as a whole. Each piece comes with information about the people you gathered it from, so the cartographer will learn about both the physical and cultural landscape of the island as they put it together.

### Relation to Game Space

In the simplest sense, the game's story is about putting together a map. The cartographer has gathered all of the pieces from the various people on the island, and now they just have to put them together physically and conceptually. In the game, this is represented by physically clicking and dragging map pieces into an outline of the island, like you would do in a puzzle. The

information gained from the indigenous people is shown through short informational pop-ups that appear whenever the player successfully places a piece of the map. The entire game takes place inside the pages of the cartographer's atlas, which adds to the narrative sense of being the mapmaker putting the map together.

## **Gameplay**

### Gameplay Overview

Play is separated into each of the Islands of Hawai'i. For each island, the player will have to piece together a map of the island by placing pieces of the map into an outline. This will be done entirely with the mouse, and will be done by clicking and dragging pieces from a box on the side into the map outline. Each time the player successfully places a piece of map into the outline in the correct place, they are rewarded with a small (2-3 sentence) popup giving them a bit of information about the section of the map they just placed and the people who live there.

When they have finished the island, the player will be rewarded by watching the map fill with beautiful color! They will also get a final summary of the island as a whole. When they have done this for every island, they will get to see the archipelago in its entirety.

### Start, Middle and End States

To start each map, the player is presented with an empty outline of the island and a box of black and gray map pieces off to the side of the screen. As they drag map pieces into the right spot, they will stick in place and begin to take the shape of the island. After all map pieces have been placed correctly, the island will fill in with color and detail, changing from the dull colors that they had been before.

### Learning Outcomes

The educational goal of this game is to build a foundation for young students to understand the indigenous cultures of Hawai'i and how they connect. These should not be deeply in-depth, but should lay the groundwork for future, more complex lessons on the people of the Hawaiian islands.

## **Aesthetic Direction**

### **Aesthetics Overview**

Aesthetically, our game is built to embody the spirit of Hawaiian culture while still promoting a focus on learning. We want the game to be aesthetically pleasing, interesting, and fun, but not in a way that will distract or detract from the information that we are trying to convey. The game is about a cartographer putting together an atlas, so many of the visuals will revolve around these sorts of empty map drawings. The Hawaiian art style will be brought in at the end when the player has completed an island, in order to emphasize how the player now has a greater understanding of the culture.

### **Visual Direction**

The main goal of the visual direction is to make the player feel like they are the one mapping out the island. The game will be set in an in-progress book, with parts of the map being ink on scraps of paper that the cartographer needs to put together. After the player has completed an island, it will become filled with color and design reminiscent of traditional indigenous Hawaiian art, to show an appreciation for the culture and the people.

### **Audio Direction**

The audio of the direction will support the atmosphere of Hawaii and the concept of creating an atlas. We will have music inspired by traditional Hawaiian music for the background of the game, with sound effects of the book's pages turning and the breeze across the islands to add to the ambience. We will also have lots of sounds for user feedback, to encourage them to put the map together and be rewarded when it's completed.

## **Example**

Our player starts the game on the first level, a map of the island of O'ahu. They look at the map outline, and see that one of the coastline lines up perfectly with one of their box's map pieces.

They drag the piece in, and it snaps into place with a ding! A small text box pops up, telling the player about the area.

They then try to put a map piece next to that one, but it is in the wrong spot. A sad sound plays, and the map piece floats back down into the box.

The player repeats this process until finally, they've mapped out the whole island. As they place the last piece, it fills in with color and music plays in the background. As it finishes being colored in, a final text box pops up giving the player information about the island as a whole.

## **Works Cited**

Yee, Nick. Quantic Foundry – The Science of Gamer Motivation. <https://quanticfoundry.com/>. Accessed 13 Feb. 2023.