

# Postmortems

## Game Development Foundations

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# Contents

- What is a Postmortem
- Why should we do them?
- Why should we read them?
- Postmortem Format

# What is a Postmortem

- A document created after a video game is made
- Is written by the game developer(s)
- A postmortem documents what went right and what went wrong during development
- It serves as a tool for reflection and learning

# Why Do A Postmortem?

- A postmortem should be done after every game – whether it was a success or failure
- Writing something down will make you think more deeply about what happened, and the reasons it happened
- Allows for greater communication among team members
- With enough experience, you can catch problems before they happen

# Why Read Postmortems?

- Postmortems are the next best thing to actual game development experience
- They share information about our successes and failures to help us make better games
- They give us a behind-the-scenes look at how some of our favourite (or least favourite) games were made

# Postmortem Format

- There is no strict format, but some structure is useful:
  - Write down how the game got made
    - Start from the initial vision and starting goals
    - What kind of company/project team was involved
    - What tools were used
    - Include any major events along the way
  - List 5 successes (what went right) and 5 failures/misjudgments/missed opportunities (what went wrong)

# Summary

- Postmortems document the game development process
- They are a useful tool to reflect on the successes and failures of a project
- Reading postmortems can give us an insight into the development process – the next best thing to experience
- Postmortems should list what went right as well as what went wrong

# Further Reading

- The Big List of Postmortems:  
<http://www.pixelprospector.com/the-big-list-of-postmortems/>
- Postmortems from Game Developer: Insights from the Developers of Unreal Tournament, Black and White, Age of Empires, and Other Top-Selling Games  
[http://www.amazon.com/Postmortems-Game-Developer-Developers-Top-Selling/dp/1578202140/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1452204629&sr=8-5&keywords=game+postmortem](http://www.amazon.com/Postmortems-Game-Developer-Developers-Top-Selling/dp/1578202140/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1452204629&sr=8-5&keywords=game+postmortem)



# References

- Jeff Atwood. 2016. *Game Development Postmortems*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://blog.codinghorror.com/game-development-postmortems/>. [Accessed 07 January 2016].
- Austin Grossman, 2003. *Postmortems from Game Developer: Insights from the Developers of Unreal Tournament, Black and White, Age of Empires, and Other Top-Selling Games*. 1 Edition. Focal Press.