

# How to Build a Game in 48 Hours

- Or "How to Survive a Game Jam"



# Game Jam vs. Game Production

- Game Jams explore ideas, concepts
- Game Jams don't necessarily have an audience
- Game Jams usually are vertical slices
- Game Jams are about learning too



# Typical Game Jam

Stage	When
Ideation	Day 1 Evening, Day 2 Morning
Prototyping	Day 2 Morning
Prioritization	Day 2 Morning
Pre-Production	Day 2 Late Morning
Production	Day 2 Midday - Day 3 Morning
Finishing	Day 3 Afternoon
Presenting	Late Afternoon



# Ideation Tips

- Theme exploration
- Asking "what if..."
- One-liner pitch
- Try to pick at least 2 ideas
  - Comparison always easier than analysis



# Prototyping Tips

- Use paper if you can, it's easier and faster!
- For each idea:
  - Choose a "Creative Atom" or question
  - Extract nouns and verbs
  - Estimate difficulty & time
- Choose one idea or back to Ideation



# Prioritization Tips

- Must-have, should-have, nice-to-have
- Assume only must-haves will be completed
  - Time pressure, changes, new ideas limit scope
  - What one thing will you do well?
- Cut until comfortable completion by noon on last day
- Bass Ackwards planning



# Pre-Production Tips

- Organize the project structure
  - Favor separateness to reduce dependencies
- Create placeholders for everything
- Reorganize until balance between breadth and depth achieved



# Production Tips

Phase	Activity
Divide	Split up the work
Conquer	Do the work in passes
Test	Check Creative Atom and One-Liner What works? What doesn't?
Refactor	Eliminate bottlenecks, split-up long methods
Iterate	Todo list, consider pace At least once per hour





# Finishing Tips

- Attack the middle
  - Focus on the core idea
  - Work out from there
  - Satisfying end if possible
- Creative Atom consistency
- Polish "the one thing"



# Presenting Tips

- Keep it brief
- Show the game, not the menus
- Showcase the "one thing"
- Put in cheats or saved points to be sure you can show everything



# Survival Tips

- Frequent breaks
- Drink lots of water
  - Careful of caffeine, diuretic drinks
- Rest
- Don't disturb others, don't be disturbed by others
- It's a journey, not a destination
- Have fun!



# Observations

- Most people won't intentionally follow the tips
  - But most of the best games intuitively do
- The “late bloomers” tend to do better
  - So don't be in too much of a rush initially
- The professionals tend to take fewer risks

