Game Design Document:

Happy Home

Perhaps also add a subtitle or high concept sentence. (Game slogan)

Copyright Information

Version Number, author, date

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# Design History

This is a change listing quickly describing each major version and changes.

In this paragraph describe to the reader what you are trying to achieve with the design history. It is possible that they don’t know what this is for and you need to explain it to them.

## Version 0.1

First version of the document containing almost everything I could think of game industry areas.

Risto Koskenkorva 24.11.2013

Included in the changes are:

1. First version of the design document
2. Descriptions of the sections

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# Game Overview

Happy Home is a text-based, narrative-focused 2-dimensional horror-adventure game with puzzle elements. It follows the story of a young girl, who starts to experience supernatural phenomenon’s as she grows older and faces various traumatic events.

## Game concept

Tells the basic concept of the game and is usually about 1-2 pages long.

Targeted for: new members

In one sentence, try to describe the game in an excited manner.

### Philosophy and goals

Philosophical point (Goal) #0

When you create some of these overarching philosophical points about your design, say whatever you want. Also, feel free to change it to “My game design goals” or whatever you like to call it.

Philosophical point (Goal) #1

What kind of moods, experiences and strong emotions is the game supposed to create?

Philosophical point (Goal) #2

What is the game supposed to achieve?

### What is the game?

Happy Home is a text-based, narrative-focused 2-dimensional horror-adventure game with puzzle elements.

### Genre(s)

Single-player, Horror, Adventure.

### Multiplayer vs single-player

Single-player experience focused on the game’s story.

### Why create this game?

Why are you creating this game? Do you love 2D action adventure? Do you think there is a hole in the market for hack-n-slash 2D coma patients?

### Where does the game take place?

The story takes place in a rather average American home in the early 2000s. This is the home of the main character (MC), and it is the only place that can be visually seen on screen. Other places will be mentioned in the text-based sections, like the new school the MC will go to once they grow up a bit.

### What do I control?

The player will control the movement, interactions and narrative choices of the main character.

### How many characters I control?

Only the main character.

### What is the main focus?

Everyone is more or less just trying to live their lives as happily as possible, but certain circumstances make it impossible. The spiders have some bigger motive behind their actions, but the exact motive is still TBA, but bad things and sorrow follow wherever they go, and they are essentially the antagonists of the game.

### What's different? (Common problems for games)

Tell them what is different from the games that are attempting this in the market right now.

### Fun and feelings

Color of fun

What is meant by 'fun' in this game? (For example quality of humour in the game, fun events in the game). What makes playing the game fun?

Failing to fun

How can failing be fun too?

Fun, but what is fun?

Unless the game isn't constantly interesting and fun, the player will not play it for long. Playing must be fun even when the game content is serious. But how?

Immersion (really nice word isn’t it)

How to make the player immerse into the game? How to keep the player's attention in the game?

The feels

How does the game stimulate player's feelings (adrenalin, laughter)?

The center of the game

What is central in the game (winning, successfulness, experiences in the gameworld...)?

A required taste

What do the players expect and want from the game?

### Hook(s)

Next described is the element(s) which attract the player to play the game and keep playing it.

## Feature Set

This section will describe the central game features and which of them give the game leverage over other games in the industry? (Interactivity, immersiveness, ease of gameplay, replayability, story...) Several sub-sections will explain these things in more detail.

### General features

These are features which are obviously required before the actual game or game specific features can be introduced. These features give the feeling of a playable game and allow further testing of the game concept.

Features that are usual for a game from this genre but still relevant for the game. Mutant fiddle players

* 2D graphics
* Menu system
* Camera system (side-scrolling)
* Movement system
* Scene transition system

### Key features

Most important features for the game (and player). The main features of the game. (Like freedom of action, replay value...).

* Puzzle mechanics
* Narrative-Choice system
* Interaction system
* Non-Player Characters (NPC’s)
* Engaging narrative

### Coherent features

Features that complement the key features. (Like character creation)

* Object mechanics (Flashlight)

### Edge features

More specific features that can give the game an edge on the market. (Like player community or physics...)

### Online / Multiplayer features

* None

### Gameplay features

List stuff here that is key to the gameplay experience (can be same with key features, but usually have more to do with the actual game flow). Explain in simple terms and short what is it that player does IN the game.

* Puzzles
* Narrative-Choice system
* Interactions
* Engaging narrative

### Feature requirements

Technical requirements for the implementation of the features:

* Design Document(s) detailing the feature/system designs
* Base narrative structure
* Animation system
* UI system
* Camera system (side-scrolling)
* Movement system
* Scene transition system
* Puzzle mechanics
* Narrative-Choice system
* Interaction system

## Game Flow Summary

The player moves in a side-scrolling 2-dimensional environment, interacting with different objects and characters in the world and they can travel to different locations (rooms) by interacting with certain pathways (doors). The story will progress through in-game dialogue and visualized scene-transitions (either animated or still-images).

## Look and Feel

What is the basic look and feel of the game? What is the visual style?

## Project Scope

A summary of the scope of the game.

### Sufficient ingame content

It's easier to manage game content and game project if amount of needed content is known from the beginning: how many 3D-models, textures, music tracks, levels... are needed for the game? (This section depends on the selected scale of the game).

* What different types of objects are found in the game?
* Which content types are needed for a finished game?
* Does the game have priority content? What is it and why is it important

Number of locations

Number of levels

Number of NPC’s

Number of weapons

Number of objects

Etc.

# Marketing the game

All about the money. Or at least some bits of it.

## The name of the Game

Remember to choose well since it’s a big part of the image players are gonna have.

Powerful names

What is the name of the game? Next are some suggestions for the game.

How does the game name stand out from others?

Remember that kid named pooh

Is there a connection between the game name and the game? If there is what kind is it?

Designers designers

Possible logo designers? And possible logo designs?

Why would I need those?

Are several different versions of the logo needed and for which purposes? (2D, 3D, 2-color, 4-color, animated...)

Breaking borders

Is the logo easily readable (understandable) and pronounceable to foreigners too?

Is the logo a curse word or insulting saying somewhere around the world?

I think I remember that one game studio...

Examples of great game logos?

...which had really horrible log (so I didn’t play any of their games)

Examples of bad or horrible logos? Ideas that should be avoided?

## Unique selling proposition (USP)

What makes your game unique? Key features are important: What are the most important features that will set this game apart from others and provide goals to which the subsequent documentation and implementation should reach for.

### Description

Why is the game easy to sell, keeps players playing, very virulent and creates money easily?

### Key features

Just a short list what features sell best.

### Player motivation

This section describes in-game motivations which will drive the player (social interaction, physical seclusion, competition, knowledge, mastery, escapism, addiction,...). As for detailed explanations, sub-sections are a good way to do that:

Main motivators

The things that keep player near the game (long times or short times but many times)

Psychological motivators

What is the thing that binds players emotions to this game

Development motivators

Is there something that gives the player a feeling of development (self development or ingame development)?

Meaningful actions to do

What meaningful things there are to be done in the game?

Social motivators

Are there some social motivations for the payer (such as hunger for fame and recognition or social interaction and cooperation)?

## Marketing strategy

Marketing strategies in a short and compact way.

Channeling and virulence

Possible marketing channels and gaining communities?

How and which way can customers be reached?

How can viral marketing and word of mouth be utilized?

Through which websites would you get information about similar projects and games (what about your friends)?

Retention

What kind of game would you suggest to your friends?

How does the game keep players attached?

Monetization

What does player pay for? Possible earning logics (free-to-play vs pay-to-play, monthly fee, virtual currency...)

How to get players spend money fast?

Comparison of potential competitors. What makes the game most playable (interesting) for the gamer? What does the gamer get out of playing the game?

## Target Audience (Target market and rating)

This section is supposed to provide a short description about target audiences (demographics, psychographics and geographics) and provided ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) as well as PEGI (Pan European Game Information).

## Market analysis

Contains target market, top performers and feature comparison. For this product the market analysis won't be of regular format because the game is designed specifically for certain control method and fairly new gameplay.

### Product-customer matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Customer | Game+content | Ingame currencies | Collectibles | Ad space |
| Player (casual) |  |  |  |  |
| Player (actual) |  |  |  |  |
| Enthusiast |  |  |  |  |
| Advertiser |  |  |  |  |

Example description of the previous matrix.

Product goals meaning what is needed to be done in what order for successful game marketing implementation. (Something for everyone to buy.)

* Example.

Validity

Explain validity of every product possibility: for example ”Product is easy and fast to produce but has low income rate.” or ”Product implementation takes a lot of time and resources but income expectancy is high.” Preferably production details and marketing details separately and in detail.

How big?

Market size (persons) for the whole market area (possible customers in suggested area)

How much?

Market size in product units and euros

Resources

How was information (marketing research) gathered/produced

You really didn’t think you needed math in real life

Customer percentage distribution of the whole market size

I see the future

Market development from last two years and prediction for the next two years

Take my money

Typical buying process for every customer type

# Game functionality aka Gameplay and Mechanics

## Gameplay

This section describes the game from players point of view. ("What you do IN the game").

Several sub-sections are in order:

### Game Progression

Describe in a simple fashion how the game progresses. From start to end (or save and exit or whatnot).

What is playing the game like, from the player's point of view? What can you do in the game? What kind of choices can be made? How do you control the game? In what kind of different ways can the player control/use avatar and character? Also including point of view description. Some keywords are:

* Game actions
* Menu controlling
* Game selection

### Avatar creation, development, modification and actions (representation of the player)

How does player create the thing that affects the gameplay (flow) of the game? And what is the thing? What statistics or characteristics does avatar have? What kind of modifications can player do to avatar and how? What kind of actions will players be able to do with avatar?

Player character creation, development, modification and actions

How does player create and personalize the thing he/she is about to play? And what is the thing? What info and data does the character have? What kind of modifications can player do to character and how? What kind of actions will player be able to do with character?

Keywords include:

* Virtues and flaws
* Traits
* Gained special objects
* Masteries
* Proficiencies
* Powers
* Abilities
* Ability combining
* Specialties
* Skills
* Inventory

### Mission/challenge structure

How does a simple mission/challenge work? Where does it start and how does it end?

Can they be started without npc interaction? How they check criteria?

### Puzzle structure

How will players get information about puzzles and how can they solve the puzzle? What does the puzzle consists of?

### Story advancements and gameworld activity

Story told

How will the story advance and what kind of information will players gain during the gaming (or afterwards)?

Did you see that?

Is there any activity independent of the player character in the gameworld? How much/often?

### Controls and control types

How is the game controlled? How will different areas/modes/menus/screens influence the controls? What kind of different input systems must be supported? And how does the player play the game (what the player does in the REAL WORLD)?

### Objectives

What are the objectives of the game?

### Play Flow

How does the game flow for the game player? Tell it in a simple way:

Difference between me and you

How should the game progress for different players?

Gap closer

How can the game be adapted to different skill levels?

Roses are red, violets...

If different areas are needed what kind are they? (For example different areas for beginners and advanced players, adventurers and fighters...)

Ima going home

What is the initial setting of the game? Are there other possibilities and can the player choose it?

The biggest loser

Do the rules of the game stand modification, breaking or twisting? For example: Can a loser be made the winner without everyone else losing interest?

Neverending story

Does the game have a specified ending?

If the game has an ending, what is it like? Can it vary between game sessions?

Wait what?

How to hold players' attention?

### Player skill

How much effect do player's skills have on the game progress? Are player skills and character skills independent of each other?

### Limitations

What kind of limitations will the game and game environment have? (For example movement, camera, areas/levels...)

### Goals, trophies and game modes

Achieved!

What kinds of achievements can the player reach?

How is the player rewarded for reaching goals/achievements?

To be or not to be

Can the player decide what goals to aim for in the game?

Let me count the ways

Are there different ways of achieving a goal?

Bound to you

Are goals bound to anything? (Time, place, avatar, character...)

Are game achievements/goals connected to real world goals?

Evil you say?

Is it possible to play an evil character?

The real world

Are there trophies in the game or outside it? What kind of? How do you earn them? What are they good for? (for example reputation, usability, money)

### Balancing the gameplay

Disturbance in the Force

What kind of factors can cause an imbalance in the game?

Learn from their mistakes

What mistakes have been made in other similar games that we can learn from?

### Ranking system(s)

Rank them I shall

Is it meaningful to rank players? Based on what?

Can you challenge other players?

Score so high

Is the high score table inside the game or outside it?

Is the list accessible from everywhere?

Information is the key

What kind of information about the players/avatars is given?

Are achievements player- or account bound?

Come to the dark side

What good/bad sides are there to ranking players?

Does it have to be ranking? Can it be done by using honorary titles instead?

Rank / title / achievement hunting

Are players rewarded/punished for certain titles/rankings?

## Mechanics

What are the rules to the game, both implicit and explicit. This is the model of the universe that the game works under. Think of it as a simulation of a world, how do all the pieces interact? This actually can be a very large section.

### Physics – How does the physical universe work?

Descriptions of all possible ways the character(s) and the gameworld can interact.

### Movement

General movement

Other movement

### Objects

Picking up objects

Interacting with objects

Moving objects

Changing objects

### Actions

Switches and Buttons

Picking Up, Carrying and Dropping

Talking

Reading

### Combat

What does the combat system contain in the game? How does it portray game violence versus actual violence? How does the player perceive the combat situation?

Do I really want to do this?

Is violence and fighting necessary in the game or can it be replaced?

That wasn’t supposed to happen

How does the game's inner reality handle death?

Bloody mess

How bloody is violence within the game?

Goblin blood is green

If there is combat or even conflict, how is this specifically modeled?

### Avatar game mechanics

What is an avatar in your game or is there even one? Just to remind: Avatar is not usually the player character but something more incorporeal. Describe how the avatar works in your game? This section is about the mechanics, but there is more crucial information about avatars in character section.

Avatar development

Does the avatar develop during the game? How does it work?

Special features

What attributes of the avatar are central in the game meaning what kind of things does the avatar consist of? Are there such things? If there are, describe them and how they work:

* experience
* titles
* spells
* etc.

(Inter)actions with what?

What kind of actions can the avatar perform in the game? Or does it interact with the game outside the physical world? Which actions are absolutely needed for the game to function?

Descriptions of all possible ways the avatar(s) and the game can interact.

* Character select
* Title selection
* etc.

Every time

What and how often?

With beauty

How detailed are the actions?

Bound to reality

Are the available actions bound to avatar features or are they independent? If they are bound, what are they bound to and how much this affects avatar actions?

### Player character game mechanics

Player character is basic entity for a game and provide a way for the player to interact with the game. It’s rather crucial to define how the entities work in the game specifically. This section is about the mechanics, but there is more crucial information about characters in another character section.

Character development

Is there character development during the game? How does it work?

Special features

What attributes of the character are central in the game meaning what kind of things do the character consist of? Are there such things? If there are, describe them and how they work:

* skills
* abilities
* characteristics
* feelings
* moods
* groups
* etc.

(Inter)actions talk...

What kind of actions can the character perform in the game? Apart from actions the game world already incorporates.

Which actions are absolutely needed for the game to function?

...only when needed...

What and how often?

...and well

How detailed are the actions?

Bound to reality

Are the available actions bound to character skills/abilities/attributes or are they independent? If they are bound, what are they bound to and how much this affects avatar actions?

### Economy – What is the economy of the game? How does it work?

Describe any buying/selling systems the game might have.

Does it revolve around certain npc or is it accessible from everywhere?

### Social engineering

What kinds of possibilities does the game offer for social interaction? How can the player interact with other players?

Communication

What forms of communication does the game support?

Is interaction between players a requisite for game progress?

What languages are used?

Communities

Are there possibilities to provide player community with a way to use external system for accessing ingame information or statistics?

## Screen Flow

### Screen Flow Chart

A graphical description of how each screen is related to every other

### Screen Descriptions

What is the purpose of each screen?

Main Menu Screen

Options Screen

Etc.

## Game Options

What are the options and how do they affect gameplay and mechanics?

## Replaying and Saving

Is the game replayable with something different?

Can player save and load the game? How will it affect area settings?

## Cheats and Easter Eggs

Any cheat codes? (Actually useful for game production team for testing the impossible)

What things would you want the player to find that’s not actually related to your game?

# Game mode(s)

This section is reserved for different kinds of game modes so don’t just use the preset single- and multiplayer modes but invent new ways to play your game (if you want).

## Single-player game

Describe your game mode idea here and then refer them to an appendix or separate document which provides all the details on the idea if it is really big.

### Overview

Describe the single-player game experience in a few sentences.

### Details

Here is a breakdown of the key components of the single player game.

Single Player Game Detail #1

Single Player Game Detail #2

### Game length

Talk about how long the single-player game experience is supposed to last or what your thoughts are at this point.

### Victory conditions

How does the player wins the single-player game?

## Multiplayer game

Describe your game mode idea here and then refer them to an appendix or separate document which provides all the details on the idea if it is really big.

### Overview

Describe how the multiplayer game will work in a few sentences and then go into details below.

### Details

Here is a breakdown of the key components of the multiplayer game.

Multiplayer Game Detail #1

What makes the game different from single player?

Player amount

Describe how many players can play at once or whatever.

Customization

Describe how the players can customize the multiplayer experience.

Persistence (game world)

Describe if your world is persistent or not.

Saving and loading

Explain how you can save a multiplayer game and then reload it. If you can or why this is not possible.

### Connectivity

Servers

Is your game client-server or peer-to-peer or whatever.

Internet

Describe how your game will work over the internet.

Gaming sites

Describe what gaming sites you want to support and what technology you intend to use to achieve this. Perhaps Dplay or TCP/IP or whatever. It is probably a good idea to break the tech stuff out into a separate area, you decide.

### Game length

Talk about how long the multiplayer game experience is supposed to last or what your thoughts are at this point.

### Victory conditions

How does the player win the multiplayer game?

# Story, Setting and Characters

## Story and Narrative

Specific details like scripts and cut scenes may not be in this document but be in the Story Bible.

### Backstory

Every game has a backstory (even if not written). It helps the production team to have a vision of the place.

Story told...

Is a written storyline central element of the game?

Does the gameworld need a written history?

…long ago...

Are the gameworld history and starting setting static? If so, what are they like?

...until the end

Does the game end and does it have static ending(s)? What kind(s) of ending(s)?

### Plot Elements

Game story might be really simple but even more simple if it’s constructed from tiny elements. Describe those elements if the game has any.

Elements of a story

Example approaches for actual storyline:

* Actors
* Places
* Dialogs
* Triggers
* Narrative
* Basic story elements (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiction>)

### Game Progression

Description of game progress. Simply said how will player continue to the next “level”.

Know your limits...

How much freedom does the game allow? How much limits are there?

Is the gameplay experience divided into sections or is it one unified whole?

...and grow

How do the player and the avatar/character developed during the game?

### License Considerations

Keep in mind that some stories are still under copyright license. So contact the owner or make it different enough.

### Cut scenes

Or something like that. Doesn’t have to be 3D and animated but can actually be layered 2D comics or even stills with text or narration.

Cut scene #1

Cut scene definitions:

* Actors
* Description
* Storyboard
* Script

Cut scene #2

Cut scene definitions:

## Game World

Describe an overview of the physical world. Then start talking about the components of the physical world below in each paragraph. The following describes the key components of the physical world.

### Ingame internal logic

It's important for the game to be coherent and maintain an internal logic. Players will usually consider it a flaw if the game logic is contradictory.

What are the most central issues?

* Example.

Are there things that support ingame reality, but are not necessary for the game idea?

* Example.

### General look and feel of world (ingame mood and atmosphere)

Big bad atmosphere

How big a part does atmosphere play in the game?

How does it feel?

What is the atmosphere like? What does it consist of?

What kinds of feelings should the atmosphere/mood awaken in the player?

Is it scary or weird?

Does the atmosphere exclude some player groups?

### Travel

escribe how the player moves characters around in the world.

### Scale

Describe the scale that you will use to represent the world. Scale is important!

### Weather

Describe what sort of weather will be found in the world, if any. Otherwise omit this section. Add sections that apply to your game design.

### Day and night

Does your game have a day and night mode? If so, describe it here.

### Time

Describe the way time will work in your game or whatever will be used.

### Objects

Describe the different objects that can be found in the world.

### Materials

Describe the materials that can be found in the world.

### Key locations

Describe the key locations in the world here.

Location #1

* General Description
* Physical Characteristics
* Levels that use area
* Connections to other areas

Location #2

* etc.

# Characters

This chapter is reserved for avatars, characters, NPCs, enemies, monsters and other game entities. You should describe them well enough to make them more memorable.

## Avatar

Avatars aren’t usually portrayed in visual form or don’t affect the gameworld directly. Players still want to keep it meaningful to themselves if it is implemented in the game. Better describe what it consists of:

### Avatar #1

Say hello to the incorporeal element of your game.

Backstory

Background of the player avatar? (History, background, immediate past, goals...)

Personality

How should the character feel like? How to convey the personalities exactly?

Look

What does the avatar look to the player?

* Pictures / models
* Animations

Relevance to game story

Does the avatar affect the gameworld?

Is the existence of the avatar meaningful?

Statistics (skills, abilities, characteristics, feelings, moods, groups,...)

Detailed information about numeric values of the avatar special features.

## Player characters

Player characters are usually central elements of a game. This section contains questions on the (most important) player characters and description of them.

What kinds of characters are there in the game? (Good, bad, neutral, passive, active,...)

Does the player get to choose/create his/her character? What kinds of customization options are available?

### PC #1

Say hello to your primary element of your game.

Backstory

Background of the player character? (History, background, immediate past, goals...)

Personality

How should the character feel like? How to convey the personalities exactly?

Look

* Physical characteristics
* Animations

Relevance to game story

How does the character affect the game world?

Is the existence of the character meaningful?

Relationship to other characters

Does the player character have someone to interact with? Or does it even matter in the game?

Statistics (skills, abilities, characteristics, feelings, moods, groups,...)

Detailed information about numeric values of the character special features.

## Non-player characters

Characters that are usually intelligent and not aggressive. Like shopkeepers, smiths, cleaners,... Your game might not have them in plenty, but better think it through since they are a powerful way to convey story and game mechanics.

### NPC #1

Say hi to your friendly shopkeeper from the deep.

Backstory

Background of the character? (History, background, immediate past, goals...)

Personality

How should the character feel like? How to convey the personalities exactly?

Look

* Physical characteristics
* Animations

Relevance to game story

How does the character affect the game world?

Is the existence of the character meaningful?

Relationship to other characters

Does the character have someone to interact with? Or does it even matter in the game?

Statistics (skills, abilities, characteristics, feelings, moods, groups,...)

Detailed information about numeric values of the character special features.

## Enemies and monsters

Describe enemies or monsters in the world or whomever the player is trying to defeat. Naturally this depends heavily on your game idea but generally games are about trying to kill something.

### Creature #1

Single creature or creature type.

Backstory

Background of the creature? (History, background, immediate past, goals...)

Personality

How should the creature feel like? How to convey the personalities exactly?

Look

* Physical characteristics
* Animations

Special features

* Skills
* Abilities
* Actions
* Weaknesses
* etc.

Relevance to game story

How does the creature affect the game world?

Is the existence of the creature meaningful?

Relationship to other characters

Does the creature have someone to interact with? Or does it even matter in the game?

Statistics (skills, abilities, characteristics, feelings, moods, groups,...)

Detailed information about numeric values of the creature special features.

etc.

# Items and objects

Describe in detail what the gameworld is made of. This section helps graphics and code groups to implement more coherent gameworld and gives a glimpse into the game.

## Static objects (area backgrounds, ground, sky,...)

Things that make up the gameworld.

## Props (world objects: immovable and movable)

Things that fill the gameworld.

## Equipment

Things that player can interact with or use and carry.

## Weapons

Thinks that player can use as a weapon.

Overview

Overview of weapons used in game.

Weapons Details #1

Weapons Details #2

# Areas (levels)

Description of the game world and especially the playable area. This description will help the developers create diverse and coherent levels for the game.

* What size are the gameworld and the playable area?
* What kinds of and how many different areas does the game have?
* Do playable areas change between game instances / during gameplay? How?
* In what different ways can the playable area be divided into sections?

## Area #1

The first area necessary for the game. Should be breathtakingly awesome.

Synopsis

Short description of the game area (history, description,...)

Introductory Material

Cut scene? Mission briefing?

Objectives

What does the player have to do?

Physical Description

Size, color, smell,...

Map

Picture of the place.

Critical Path

Shortest way to “win”.

Encounters

Mandatory encounters for the player.

Area Walkthrough

How to get from “start” to “end”. Meaning player shouldn’t be able to get stuck.

Closing Material

Another cut scene or rather opened information section? You decide.

## Training Area

If players actually need training for the game, you should provide an area to do that.

# User Interface

## Overview

Provide some sort of an overview to your interface and same as all the previous sections, break down the components of the UI below.

## Visual System

HUD - What controls

Menus

Rendering System

* Overview
* 2D / 3D rendering

Camera

Lighting Models

## Control System

How does the game player control the game? What are the specific commands?

## Audio

Music

Speech (Voice-overs)

Ambient

Sound Effects

## Help System

# Artificial Intelligence

What kind of Artificial Intelligence is needed in the game?

## Opponent AI

The active opponent that plays against the game player and therefore requires strategic decision making (example, Civilization or Chess, how is it to be designed?

## Enemy AI

Villains and Monsters

## Non-combat Characters

## Friendly Characters

## Support AI

### Player and Collision Detection

### Pathfinding

# Technical design

This may be abbreviated with most in the Technical encyclopedia.

**Purpose:** This is how it's done. Technical master plan. Tells how the features and functions described in game design document are implemented. Serial and parallel workflow for all groups. Implementation, methods and tools for all groups.

**Targeted for:** Implementers.

## Target Hardware

List of the target platform(s) and HW requirements.

## Game technical specifications

Just your basic questions that need answering to help coders do a better (faster) job. Remember to add more questions (and answers).

What is the average duration of a game session?

How much visible loading breaks are allowed? How long can they be?

How long visible distances does the game require?

What are the minimum system requirements of the game?

Is the game VR / AR / mobile / PC / etc.?

Etc.

## Development hardware and software

Things developer are gonna use as tools.

## Development procedures and standards (Tech policies)

Technology production path. Transition from concept to software. Things to read through and rules to follow.

## Game Engine

What features of the game engine make it a good choice for this particular game? (Graphics, optimization, ease of use, quickness, variability, simplicity...)

Engine specifics

Describe what is needed from the engine.

Engine comparison

Simple comparison of possible game engines.

Overview

Describe the game engine in general.

Game Engine Detail #1

The game engine will keep track of everything in the world… or be awesome too because we don’t have to make it ourselves.

## Physics

What kind of physics does the game require? Role of physics in the game?

* Example.

How realistic physics would fit in the game?

* Example.

How realistically injuries are modeled? How is damage to the character and to enemies shown?

* Example.

## Network

## Scripting Language

## Collision detection

Our game engine should handle collision detection really well. (Since fighting will be real-time). Really, this is just a placeholder text right here.

## Lighting models

Overview

Describe the lighting model you are going to use and then go into the different aspects of it below.

Lighting Model Detail #1

We are using… to light our world.

## Rendering system

Overview

Give an overview of how your game will be rendered and then go into detail in the following paragraphs.

2D/3D Rendering

Describe what sort of 2D/3D rendering engine will be used.

Character Rendering

Provide an overview as to how your characters will be rendered. You may have decided to include this elsewhere or break it out to provide more detail to a specific reader.

Character Rendering Detail #1

Parts of the character in different parts to make collision detection easier...

## Camera handling

Overview

Describe the way the camera will work and then go into details if the camera is very complicated in sub sections.

Camera Detail #1

The camera will move around like...

Camera Detail #2

The camera will sometimes move like … in certain circumstances.

## Middleware

Possibly middleware that the game will use.

## Functionality priority list

Functionality is needed for a working game. Of course there are goals that are needed for successful selling game product. Here are some (most important) goals for this game production. Link to actual task list for more detailed information.

### Primary goals (priority)

Priority 1 list (things that make the game happen):

### Secondary goals

Things that make the game better than awesome

### Extra goals

Things that help you sell more

## Game mechanics

Game mechanics build to gameplay. All the mechanics (rules and methods of interaction) the game will provide (to the player). Basis for gameplay (used to build the gameplay)

## Other core mechanics

Rest of the mechanics of the features that are not gameplay related. (Menus, client applications,...)

## AI

Detailed information about the game AI and agent / npc AI

* Master AI
* Goal oriented action planning
* Behaviour trees
* Pathfinding

## Testing, group work and rubber ducky

Lists testers and test procedures needed for the game  
Names coding pairs (rubber ducky)  
Learn by teaching and do your own thinking by explaining the problem (forming the question usually helps to solve it)

## etc.

# Game Art

This may be abbreviated with most of the content in a Graphics encyclopedia. Unique art features and solutions of the game (enter pictures and audio for more information and feeling). Who do you want to hire to do these things?

## Graphics design

A little bit of art helps sell the idea and puts the reader in the right frame of mind. Use art to convey unique or complex ideas. Screen mock-ups go a long way to express your vision. This section can contain art and information like game atmosphere, concepts, textures, 3d models,...

Splendid...

How important is graphical splendour compared to the rest of the functionality?

...and animated...

Are there animations and/or cutscenes in the game? How many? Are they interactive?

...but limited

What kind of limitations exist for the graphical style?

## Concept Art

This is how it's supposed to look like. Well at least this is how the graphics department sees it.

## Style Guides

Things to follow when making graphics to the game.

References

Any examples that can be used as a reference of the graphical style?

Colors

What kinds of colours/shapes fit the game?

Choose one

Which is more important – good graphics or a lot of content?

Pick a style, any style

What in graphics and graphical style is essential in the game?

What aspects of the graphical style are similar to other games?

What aspects of the graphical style are different from other games?

Light and shadow

How light/shady/dark the style is?

Three pillars

Three basic rules of graphical style for this game?

## UX and game representation

Basically representation of different elements of the game. Compact and all answer a question.

GUI and menus

Graphical user interface concepts. Player's interaction with the game.

What elements does the GUI consist of?

In what form, how and where on the screen GUI elements are presented?

Can the graphical user interface be customized?

How many different menus and quick menus the game has and how they are used?

Camera

What is the camera angle of the game?

How far can the camera see in the gameworld? Can the player change camera angle / place / direction / distance? If so then how and how fast?

Is the game real time (like most shooters) or turn-based (like many strategy and board-games)?

Characters and avatars

Where does the player's attention focus on the screen?

How can character actions/special actions be controlled?

How can avatar actions/special actions be controlled?

What avatar properties are essential for gameplay and how are they presented?

What kind of control method is used? And does it have to be visualized?

Environments

In what different ways can the player get information about his/her avatar and the surrounding environment?

Equipment

When the character (or avatar) picks up game objects, how is it shown to the player and where are these objects stored? (Inventory?)

## Cut scenes

If any.

## Miscellaneous

Things not categorized or at least not yet.

# Audio design

Game atmosphere, soundscape, effects, music,... Take a shot at what you are going to do for sound design at this early stage. Hey, good to let your reader know what you are thinking. Better information in Audio encyclopedia.

## Sound API

Talk about what sort of sound APIs you are going to use or not use as the case may be.

## Sound Effects

Game usually has a lot of sounds on top of music and voice overs. Take time to define them carefully.

Environmental Sounds

Does the game have separate environmental sounds and if so what are they like?

Weapon Sounds

Weapons usually make a sound, but are these weapons different?

Interface Sounds

Interface sounds happen a lot so remember to keep them easy for the ears.

## Music and ambiance

Music is the core of the game. It has to be easy for the ears and at the same time it has to intrigue the players, keep them playing and still not annoy. Good descriptions are in order as well as several sub-sections (add more if needed).

Ambient or place bound

Area based or just one music for the game?

Action bound

Does actions need music or just effects?

Event bound

Remember final fantasy victory music?

Or the defeat music.

## Speech (voice overs)

Things that need people for recording.

Dialogs

Do the dialogs need to be spoken?

Narratives

Do we want the dark voiced man to talk about war?

# Secondary Software

Does the game provide other features?

## Editor

A tool for players to modify their favourite game.

## Installer

How to get the game to install on the chosen platforms?

## Update software

How to keep the software up to date? Can you use the updater as a marketing tool? (see. Riot entertainment)

# Production details (Project plan / Management)

This section is reserved for the detailed plan and situation update of the game production. The production includes details about current production status, immaterial rights, possible production process suggestions, team introduction, timetables, licenses, budget, rough overall costs estimate, income estimating, competitive analysis, technical analysis, proposed shipping date and legal analysis.

## Overview

Tech-demo XX months, starting date dd.mm.yyyy

Design documents are updated whenever necessary during these projects, more serious planning and work comes after Tech-demo is finished.

## Team (HR)

What resources are needed for the planning and implementation of the game?

What resources are in use and what resources are low?

What are the different roles through the whole process and how important they are?

How much resources are available weekly?

How are the resources managed?

What kind of challenges does the resource placement cause and how can they be solved? (Especially for communication)

Board (CEO + board + other leading personnel) and other key personnel?

Rest of the personnel?

Outside experts and other support personnel available? (Who and for what purpose)

Any plans to get more personnel? What timetable? (Take in account the recruiting time)

List why every person is chosen for their role. (Short background including job experience, special areas of expertise...)

**The Crew divided into groups**

* Staff
* Pr & marketing
* Audio
* Code
* Graphics (2D and 3D)
* Design & Plot
* Administrators

People and roles

* Example.

## Production process

How will the production be implemented? (Buying, production, delivery,...) What will be done by internal personnel and what will be outsourced?

Production frame? (Place, computers, equipment, software, quality system,...)

Specialist services and software businesses used?

How will the product(s) be implemented? (who, where,...)

Are markings, ratings or certificates needed? (CE, quality certificate,...)

Define ordering and delivery processes?

Is there anything new, advanced or abnormal about the know-how of the production crew compared to others? (Already existing commercial or possible future competitors)

## Detailed Schedule (timetable – roadmaps and milestones)

Current situation (where we are, what is ready, how close/far away are we from marketable product)

What kind of tasks and stages are needed to produce a marketable product?

How much time will it take to plan and produce every part of the product?

* Example.

What is the plan for the next three to six months?

* Example.

What are the backup plans in case of delayed production timetables?

* Example.

How much resources every area of the game demands? (Work years, weeks, hours, code lines, models, concepts...)

* Example.

Tech-demo XX months, starting date dd.mm.yyyy

* Example.

## Tasks

Most important tasks in the future? (if available)

* XX XX - level design and general matters
* Refer to group task documents
* Example.

## Tools

Used project tools and functions.

## Hardware and software

Special hardware (and software licenses) needed for the project.

## Licenses (if applicable), immaterial rights and secrets

If the game uses some old ideas or licensed materials from other sources, they can be written here.

The owner of immaterial rights can utilize them commercially and/or industrially. The rights have one or several protection possibilities including patent, utility model, trademark, protection of designs and copyright. The immaterial rights can be owned by the employer, employee or financiers.

The product basis? (What new technology, information or know-how is in the product)

Where and how did the product basis arise and was there any others involved? (Work, free time, studies, research, project...)

Your own perception about protection possibilities? (Patents etc.)

Does the product basis contain any business secrets that are confidential? (Patenting might make them usable for unwanted parties)

## Budget and income estimate

Contains resource cost, additional costs (if any), suggested retail price (SRP) and revenue projection. Eg. Direct costs, COGS (cost of goods sold), marketing, market development funds, income estimates, allowances, return on investment.

Contains resource cost, additional costs (if any), suggested retail price (SRP) and revenue projection.

### Business strategy

In the beginning other possible ways to have business: Game project, other possible projects/products, consulting...

* Example.

Possible earning logics:

* Example.

What is the promise to the player?

* Example.

After sales services? (Engine, community tools, game tools...)

* Example.

Exit possibilities? (Selling company, other products, continued products, consulting...)

* Example.

### Business models

Mobile game products for consumers:

* Example.

Publishers and distributors:

* Example.

In-Game-ads and Brand Placement:

Product possibilities for advertisers:

* Example.

Advergaming aka brand and ad products for consumer brands:

* Example.

### Earning models (detailed)

List and descriptions of different possible earning models (products per customer base and possible currency income).

Basic sales

* Example.

In-game sales (products)

* Example.

In-game ads and product/brand placement

* Example.

List of questions and answers concerning ways of selling, marketing and retail channels.

(Retailers, agents...)

* Example.

In what means are products marketed and sold?

* Example.

Describe the selling process step by step. How is the selling process scheduled?

* Example.

What is the estimated delay for sales? (Time from first customer contact to received customer payment)

* Example.

Pricing and estimated profit margin

Estimate the following product information:

* Production price (costs for producing)
* Selling price (own costs + profit)
* Retail price (Price for retailer)
* End user price (Price that the customer pays)
* Define different percentages of the different steps will have from final price.

Most important selling arguments

* Example.

After sales services for customers

* Example.

Marketing tools and resources

* Example.

Possible and current orders and offers

* Example.

Sales per product group

* Example.

Estimation about number of pieces sold and amount of euros in the following years

* Example.

Export (Estimation about numbers and euros for different areas)

* Example.

### Marketing

Link to previous marketing section.

### Financing

Key figures and sums in calculations. (What they consist of and estimated amounts) Short commentary about appendix documents including:

* Revenue
* Operating profit
* Result (ROI - Return on Investment etc.)
* Personnel amount (History and predictions as well as expenses)
* Financing needs
* Start-up initial capital
* Income statement and estimate for two years (estimates for best and worst case).
* Financial statement and estimate for two years (estimates for best and worst case).
* Budget estimate (First year per month + next year per half year period).
* When is the break even?

Costs and income (detailed)

* Example.

Financing plan / timetable

Game demo (tech / content-demo) (mm/yyyy)

* Example.

Financier and / or publisher (mm/yyyy)

* Example.

Playable test version (alpha) publishing and game advertising (mm/yyyy)

* Example.

Playable test version (beta) publishing and game advertising (mm/yyyy)

* Example.

Publishing and game selling (mm/yyyy)

### Financing matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Financier | Eur (thousands) | Purpose | Date (usable) | Type |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Financing type examples: Share capital, investment, support, loan (r&d...), sponsoring, trade income...

Overall costs estimate

* Resource costs:
* Marketing:
* SRP (suggested retail price):
* Revenue:

## Competitive analysis

Top performers and feature comparison. Why does this game effectively compete with each competitors game?

This section will describe top performers and feature comparison. It will also tell why does Star Arcade effectively compete with each competitors game.

### About game market

In depth information about the appropriate game industry area (mobile gaming for example).

### Player amounts

Example game and some statistics about it.

* Example.

### Business potentials

Current situation of appropriate game market segment(s).

* Example.

### Pursued market share

Short description of goals and pursued market for the designed product.

* Per product / product family:
* Define accurately enough:
* Size of the market share pursued:
* How will the market share be achieved:
* Most important assets for achieving the market share:

### Genre(s)

How does the game genre(s) work on game market? (Saturated, relatively small amount ...)

* Example.

### Team lead to others

List of things that team has compared to other players in the game industry.

* Example.

### Competition (current and future)

This section analyzes the competitors. Source for the information should be appropriate site where competition and their information is sorted according the PLAYER opinions or marketing research.

Example: EVE Online

* Game: EVE Online,<http://www.eve-online.com/>
* Firm: CCP Games
* Genre: Sci-Fi, MMORPG
* About game: …
* Price: 20€/game, monthly fee 15€.
* Game specific know-how: Graphics, audio, implementation.
* Size of the competitor: …
* Backgrounds: …
* Feasibility: …

Key features comparison (added value for the customer)

* Example.

Other potential future competition

* Example.

## Technical analysis

The technical analysis should be written by a seasoned programmer, preferably the technical director or a lead programmer, and then edited and compiled into the proposal. Contains experimental features, major development tasks, alternatives (if any) for working around experimental or risky features, estimated resources and estimated schedule. Special software or hardware that are going to be included into the game.

## Risk Analysis

A sections reserved for analysing potential risks and how to avoid them or if problem happens, how to fix it. You could also do SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats).

For every risk there should be several things to write down:

* Risk
* Reasons
* Probability
* Impacts
* How to prevent
* How to solve

### Tech and design

The main challenges that could arise producing the game (from technological and design viewpoint).

### Common problems for games

What problems may be faced in game development?

The faulty ones

What existing games can be used as points of comparison and as examples of problems?

Realistic

Why wouldn't the player play the game?

Annoying

What could frustrate/irritate players?

Funny guys

What makes the game less fun?

Missing ear

What is lacking from the game (compared to similar games or games in general)?

Game balance

How to keep game well balanced for different player and not underestimate players?

Credibility

What kinds of things can break the credibility of the gameworld (aka player's suspension of disbelief)?

## Localization Plan

How to do localization? (if needed) Who to contact, how much, how fast,...?

## Test Plan

Really, you need to test the game even when it’s not ready yet. You’ll save some time in the end.

### Test cases

Example.

### Testing checklist

Example.

## Legal analysis (if applicable)

If the game involves copyrights, trademarks, licensing agreements, or other contracts that could incur some fees, litigation costs, acknowledgments, or restrictions, list them here. Also patents applicable here.

## Project exit (Proposed shipping date)

Based on Technical plan -section of the document.

# Current production status situation (development asset list)

Just a list of the situation of the production. Should actually be in a spreadsheet. Link to that task management file.

## Audio

Sound effects

* Environmental
* Weapons
* Interface

Music

* Ambient or place bound
* Action bound
* Event bound

Voice overs

* Dialogs
* Narratives

## Code

Graphics

* Maps
* Meshes
* Textures
* Shadows
* Lights
* Shaders

Animation

* Skeletal support
* Animation support
* Vertex morph
* Paths
* Algorithmic

AI

* Game
* NPC/agents
* Enemy AI

Physics

* Collision
* General

Effect support

Engine framework

Scripts

* Database
* Language

Network

* Servers
* Clients
* Clusters
* Data transfer and check
* Communication systems

Operating systems

* Hand-held
* PC
* Console OS

Editors and tools

Imports/exports

GUI

* Logic
* Embedded
* Editor
* Options and menus
* Website and community tools

Community tools

* Chat system
* Ingame tools
* Game editors
* Communication
* IRL tools
* IRL group/community site package and tools
* IRL fame and rating
* IRL character support

## Design & plot

Design documents

Avatars

* Creation
* Characters
* Character bound things
* Backgrounds
* Homes
* Development
* Development ways and depth levels

Characters

* Creation
* Characters
* Character bound things
* Backgrounds
* Homes
* Development
* Development ways and depth levels

Personalities

* Feelings
* Emotions
* Reactions
* Guidelines
* Action patterns

Exp, levels or hp

Plot pool

* Main storylines
* Quests
* Easter eggs

Game world

* History (backstory)
* Atmosphere and feel
* Events
* Content
* Creation
* Reactions
* Global variables
* Local variables

Cooperative playing

Scripting

Player community

* Development assisting
* Content creation
* Polls
* Community interaction

Combat and actions

## Graphics (art)

2D / 3D art

* Sketches
* Concepts
* Art
* GUI and misc
* Marketing
* PR (homepage etc.)
* Textures
* Maps
* Characters and avatars
* Perils
* Props
* Objects
* GUI and misc
* Unwrapping and texturing

Animations

* Rigs
* Rig animations
* Object animations
* Camera animations
* “Cut scene” animations

Style

* GUInterface
* Atmosphere
* Colors

Effects

Materials

Cut scenes

Exporting

Quality control

Fine tuning

## Implementation

Basic game structure

Basic game demo

Basic game

Extra game content

## Staff (management)

Organization

* Tasking
* Timetables
* Content managing
* Documentation

Tools

* svn
* content management
* communication system

Financing

Recruiting and HR

PR and adv

Publishing and distribution

Basic structure

# Appendices

If any, here is the place to link them and talk about them in detail. That way you can use this design document as a tool to make everyone read all the documents!