arpGamer

Quarterly Gaming Magazine
Proposal

Written By:
Ryan Goodrich
Fall 2012

Executive Summary

The following proposal outlines my MPC graduate studies field project and all details that will contribute to its development and success. Over the course of spring 2013, I will research, develop, and design a magazine prototype.

Deliverables

For the purposes of this field project, I want to develop a quarterly magazine which readers will subscribe to, read, and discuss online. Due to the time constraints surrounding this project, I seek to only deliver a prototype of the magazine by semester's end. The prototype will include fully-edited content, paid illustrations, in-game screenshots, and advertisement placeholders.

I will act as project manager, editor, and designer for the magazine prototype. To that end, I will coordinate with the contributing writers and illustrators I've recruited to ensure a satisfactory end product. I will make assignments for content and likewise perform all editing for any content found lacking. I will also write some of the content, namely the feature article, one main article, and three filler content articles. All design and layout work for the magazine prototype will be performed by me, using InDesign CS6.

Overall, I expect this project to cost no more than $750. The bulk of costs associated will be made up of paying my contributing writers and illustrators for content. All other costs will be printing fees for delivering a final hard copy of the magazine to MPC faculty.

Upon completion, I will provide the following deliverables:

- Research memo comparing EPUB magazines for length, format, and design *(2 pages)*
- Needs-assessment results determining audience game preferences and subscription pricing *(2 pages)*
- Reflective essay of the concept work*(2 pages)*
- Mock-ups of magazine page spreads*(3 pages)*
    - Cover sketch
    - Template spread
- Summary of article topics and teasers of content as written by the contributors *(5 pages)*
- Content style guide establishing writing styles, design and layout elements, and image usage *(10 pages)*
- Process guide outlining the standards for content reviewing, proofing, and editing *(5 pages)*
- Finalized articles and drafts of content with edits
- Images to be associated with content
- Contract for image usage (signed where necessary)
    - List of gaming studios the contract was submitted to
- Prototype magazine layout and design with finalized content included
- Reflective paper on the work that went into designing and editing the magazine*(2 pages)*
- Signed contracts with companies purchasing ad space
    - List of interested vendors pending approval

Project Plan

While it is my desire to use this project as an opportunity to launch a magazine over a single semester, such a scope may not be possible. Instead, I will create a working prototype of the magazine which can then be finalized after my completion of the MPC program. The magazine prototype will showcase a polished design and professional content, though the in-game screenshots and paid advertising space may not be available for legal distribution.

Methodology

This proposal will effectively outline not only the deliverables I will complete as part of my graduate field project, but also the specific steps and phases which will be involved in its development and final creation. Creating a magazine will be a massive undertaking, though with the contributors I have recruited the project will be much more manageable.

It is my hope to effectively illustrate the breadth of work involved in this effort and establish confidence in my ability as an organizer, designer, and writer in seeing this project through to its successful completion on time. The sections contained within this proposal should provide an idea of all aspects involved with creating this magazine specifically for the purpose of showcasing it as a portfolio piece of my MPC degree.

Timeline

Due to the fact I am creating a prototype of ARPGamer's first magazine issue, I propose to complete the project within the timeframe of a single four-month semester. This will accommodate the processes for researching, conceptualizing, developing, and designing the magazine, in addition to performing multiple edits on the magazine as a whole. All other work such as obtaining copyright clearance for using in-game screenshots as well as securing paid advertising will be performed after the proposed timeline. Removing these two features from the project scope will help ensure that the timeline is more feasible.

Resources

Rulon Wood will be acting as my project advisor throughout the phases of developing the magazine prototype. His experience in using new media will play strongly to the benefit of how this project evolves. Blair Johnson will be acting as my field supervisor due to his experience as a marketing manager as well as his experience in the gaming industry. He will give invaluable feedback on the magazine in its entirety and will also help me cultivate a network of relationships with gaming developers for future advertising opportunities.

As noted above, I've recruited a team of creative collaborators for ARPGamer, all of whom are writers and illustrators in one form or another. In total, I have recruited six (6) contributors who, while they may not be established professional writers, are still passionate gamers. Writing may be a lifelong skill, but a passion for ARPGs is imperative to offer an insightful outlook on this unique gaming genre. I've also recruited two (2) experienced concept artists who have worked in the gaming industry for several years, which will help give the magazine more credibility to prospective readers.

Qualifications

I possess an extensive background in content development for web media, which will lend toward ARPGamer's success with the magazine. While I have not created or published content for magazines before, the digital age has bridged many of the previous difficulties associated with creating such media and delivering it to the public. I believe I possess that knowledge and proclivity for magazine writing given my propensity for web content writing.

For the last few years I have worked as a web content writer, which means I am familiar with writing for a web-based audience. The magazine will be rather content-heavy in scope, which means I will need to be in a position to write content quickly to meet the deadlines set. My experience will play strongly to my advantage in orchestrating and ensuring content is written in a timely fashion.

My overall goal behind this project is to better showcase my skills as a designer and project manager, as I've had few opportunities to cultivate these traits professionally. Overall, I feel that this project will be an

exceptional test of my education at Westminster College in the MPC program as well as a culmination of my experience professionally.

Table of Contents

Introduction

To date, I have focused my career in the area of writing and I want to break into other communication forms. While writing is and will always be a passion to me, I want to develop additional skills in other areas, like design. My aptitude for design has been left largely by the wayside (as most every company I've worked for already has a graphic designer and thus wishes to keep me focused solely on writing). I would like to create an opportunity in which I can further showcase my design and layout skills, which is ultimately where the ARPGamer magazine comes into play.

I was approached in July 2012 by a former colleague with the idea of starting up a niche-audience gaming news magazine which we called ARPGamer. I had already been writing content in a professional capacity for several years, so I was eager for the opportunity to extend my writing background further into an industry I enjoy, namely gaming. When the team realized that my knowledge of content development greatly exceeded that of everyone else already on the team, the group consensus was to make me editor-in-chief of the magazine.

Problem Definition

Gaming news sources like Official Xbox Magazine and PC Gamer report general gaming news, but ARPGs arenot often discussed unless a monumental release is coming up, as with Torchlight 2 or Diablo 3. This is due largely to the numerous other genres that are perceived as more interesting and entertaining.

Current gaming magazines focus exclusively on covering big game titles, leaving the countless other games by the wayside. The popularity of the ARPG genre, while due to Diablo and Torchlight, is made up of the efforts of countless more gaming studios. These indie studios make significant contributions to furthering the gaming genre, but do not gain significant exposure beyond the one-time mention in gaming news websites. ARPGamer's e-magazine will give added coverage to these small-time studios while also helping further define the unique genre that is ARPG.

ARPGamer, an up-and-coming gaming news source, seeks to rectify this problem by creating a quarterly e-magazine targeting the ARPG community. We have a dedicated staff of six (6) writers and two (2) illustrators who will be contributing to the project's success. This medium will focus not only on gaming reviews and news, but also provide tips and delve into the ARPG genre's history to help demonstrate the depth and personality of the ARPG genre.

The following sections outline how I intend to produce a prototype magazine that I can pursue to completion outside of the MPC program.

Objectives and Deliverables

While the ARPG e-zine prototype makes up the bulk of the objectives and deliverables for this project, the magazine will not be the only item I will deliver. In this section I will identify the specific elements which will make up the finished prototype including how ARPG will become a solution in the gaming news industry, the content that will be included in the magazine prototype, and what work I will be performing specifically.

ARPGamer as a Solution

The end deliverable from this proposal will be a prototype of the first issue of ARPGamer's quarterly e-magazine. This magazine will help establish design strategies that ARPGamer's staff will use to streamline the production process for future issues of the magazine.

The magazine is intended to offer value to readers in another medium than traditional web content. The magazine will provide a less cluttered version of content with a strong aesthetic and academic appeal. Whereas a daily news website would simply cover game developments as they unfold, the magazine will focus more on the psychological subtleties and historical evolution that contributes to the game mechanics of today and tomorrow.

While ARPGamer's daily news counterpart will provide recent coverage of the latest gaming developments, the content will by default be brief and cater to the ever-shortening attention span of online readers. Magazines, however, will provide more of a lifeline to readers who want a reading resource bursting at the seams with information, each page jammed with posters, previews, and reviews all following a common theme or overarching element that makes the content enjoyable and desirable.

The magazine's quarterly nature restricts the immediacy of the news it is able to share with readers. As such, the focus of its content will be more academic in focus, describing how games have evolved recently.

To help illustrate the depth and scope of this project, I will first outline the individual elements which will make up the main magazine prototype deliverable. The end deliverable magazine will include the following constructs:

- **30-40 pages of magazine-quality content.** Gaming magazines traditionally lean heavily on aesthetic elements, which means the images and artwork will take up approximately two-thirds of each page. Content will still play a critical role throughout the magazine, but it will not be an exhaustive amount of text so as to make this page target unobtainable. The specifics as to what content topics will be discussed are provided on the following page.
- **EPUB & PDF formats.** PDF is the most predominant of e-reader magazine formats available on the market, yet I would also like to expand that level of availability to iOS devices with the use of the EPUB format. This will allow me to include interactive multimedia such as game trailers and page hotspots.
- **Multimedia capable with embedded pre-made videos and hotspots.** By using the EPUB format, I will be able to embed videos and other interactive imagery throughout the magazine. The e-magazine format needs to be highly interactive to set it apart further from competing magazines.

In addition to the magazine itself, I will provide the following deliverables (discussed in further length within the Methodology section):

- Contributing-writer contracts
- Artwork contracts with contributing artists
- Research memos including
    a. a comparative analysis of other gaming e-zines

    b. an analysis of my target audience
    c. Selected article topics and delegated them to contributing writers
    d. Contracted contributing writers and paid for their efforts
    e. Designed and formatted the magazine in InDesign

The ARPGamer prototype magazine will follow the same structure and presentation as other gaming news magazines, only with an emphasis placed on ARPGs. Each subsequent issue will include articles covering topics like in-depth game reviews, ideal class builds, tips and tricks, and less time-sensitive news (as a quarterly release schedule would be dependent on events happening in the distant future rather than imminently). The content that will specifically be included in this magazine is outlined below.

Content

The following section outlines the planned content which will be used in ARPGamer's prototype magazine. Some articles will not have a specific topic or emphasis selected as this may be subject to change. The reason behind this is the gaming industry is in a constant state of almost daily change. By the time the project has begun, a new gaming development may occur which will be better suited to the needs of the magazine.

Based on the communications I've had with prospective readers and gamers on forums, these topics felt like an excellent start to ARPGamer by defining the direction of future issues and the reader's understanding of ARPGs in general. While the article topics may seem quite basic, ARPGamer's intent is to revisit the rich heritage of gaming that has contributed to the modern ARPGs.

Many gamers don't know how earlier games contributed to the ARPG genre, just like they may only think of ARPGs as games like Diablo and Torchlight. Many gamers don't know what specific elements make up an ARPG.

In a way, the overall theme of this first magazine issue could simply be about understanding the "history" of the ARPG, and what elements make a game into an ARPG;both important topics to cover for a website focusing on a genre of gaming that has had little-to-no coverage in gaming news.

Articles
Pending any new game releases or critical news, the main magazine articles for the prototype issue of ARPGamer's e-zine will utilize the following topics:

- *Feature Article:* **Exclusive Interview with Brandon Sanderson.** *Expected length: 2500 words.* A recent development has occurred in which best-selling fantasy author Brandon Sanderson announced he has teamed up with a gaming studio to create an ARPG. I have scheduled an interview with him to discuss the decision to turn his famous *Mistborn* trilogy into an ARPG. **I will write this exclusive article.**
- **ARPG Heritage.** *Expected length: 1500 words.*Each game studio makes a conscientious decision to style their game as an RPG or ARPG. The reasoning behind their decision in genre varies, which would be a boon to the gaming community and other indie game studios to better understand. We will interview with an ARPG game designer to understand what led them to the decision to create an ARPG game title and how the genre of gaming influenced the end experience. Potential game studios the contributor will interview could include the following companies:
    - Runic Games
    - Blizzard
    - Gearbox Software
    - Gringing Gear Games
- **Is It ARPG?** *Expected Length: 1500 words.* This article will examine a specific, popular game title that could be perceived as an ARPG, but the contributor will break down the elements of the game to

determine whether it is or not. The ARPG genre is still quite young and not as fully defined as other genres, so we will use this as an educational opportunity to get the gamer community to question what really makes an ARPG. This article will use one of the following games as its topic:
- o Borderlands 2
- o Darksiders 2
- o Dragon Age: Origins

The Rumor Mill. *Expected Length: 1000 words.* News is always more interesting when the game in question is shrouded in mystery. This article will focus on upcoming games and rumors surrounding the playstyle. The Rumor Mill will be highly dependent on upcoming game releases and will thus be highly subject to change when the magazine's content begins development next year. This article will use one of the following ideas as its topic:
- o Delay reasons for Grim Dawn's release date
- o The complexity of the skill trees in Path of Exile and what it means for gamers
- o What the sneak peak trailer for Lineage Eternal means for revolutionizing the graphics engines for ARPGs

Hack Factor. *Expected Length: 1500 words.* A specific game will be reviewed for the amount of action it provides to players when balanced against other elements such as plot, crafting, and equipment (i.e., loot). The game will be graded on a scale which will indicate how much hack 'n slash can be found in it. This article will use one of the following games as its topic:
- o Path of Exile
- o Dungeonland
- o SaltyPepper

Tavern Brawl. *Expected Length: 1000 words.* This article will cover potentially controversial topics to help spark reader discussions on ARPGamer.com and drive up readership as well as subscriptions for ARPGamer. The articles will generally remain open-ended to get feedback from readers and will cover one of the following topics:
- o Progression obsession and why gamers are willing to play the same game over and over when nothing changes in the experience
- o The "holy trinity" (warrior, rogue, wizard) and how some games break the traditional class-based labels

ARPG Secrets. *Expected Length: 2000 words.* This article will focus on interview responses from game developers and how they've attempted to differentiate the playstyle of their game from others. Based on the feedback of developers, the article will examine the changing trends of ARPGs and how successful a game is at changing the player experience. This article will use the following idea as its topic:
- o How combat has evolved from early ARPGs

ARPG: The Marriage of Action & Storytelling. *Expected Length: 1500 words.* This article will act as a history lesson for readers and will describe how the ARPG genre came into existence and what games influenced particular aspects of the player experience. **I will write this article.**

The Evolution of Isometric ARPGs. *Expected Length: 1500 words.* This will be an additional history lesson emphasizing how the isometric (aerial view) ARPG has evolved and how it is so important to the genre. The article will highlight games that have contributed to the success of the viewpoint, why it is such a preferred angle among gamers, and how other games have attempted to add variety to this view style.

Game Dev Grab Bag. *Expected Length: 1000 words.* Gamers love hearing from the developers of the games they play, so this article will act as a Q&A for readers. We will interview the developer of an upcoming or new game and ask them questions many players want answered.

Filler Content

In addition to the main articles, which will make up the bulk of the content, I will also include "filler content," which will consist of short text blurbs. These will be such items as top 10 lists, quick gaming tips,

and other facts or information we think readers would benefit from. This issue of the magazine will use the following topics as filler content:

- **Top 10 ARPGs of 2012.** *Expected Length: 600 words.* A highlight of the most popular ARPGs released in 2012 and why they're so popular.
- **ARPG Roadmap.** *Expected Length: Full-page spread infographic.* This roadmap will be presented in a flowchart and will ask questions of players regarding the type of games they enjoy playing. Based on their responses, readers will ultimately be lead to game titles we believe coincide with their preferences. **I will write this article.**
- **ARPG Infographic.** *Expected Length: Full-page spread infographic.* The infographic will display statistics regarding some aspect of the ARPG genre in an entertaining and interesting fashion. Ideas for infographics:
    - Comparison between Torchlight 1 and 2 content
    - Comparison between Torchlight 2 and Diablo 3
    - Popularity of ARPGs over RPGs
- **Tales From the Tavern.** *Expected Length: 200 words.* I want to encourage reader participation on our magazine, so we will be performing a call for player stories as the magazine is developed. We will then pick humorous or ridiculous stories and showcase them in the magazine, giving credit to the player who provided the tale. **I will coordinate this article's completion with a reader.**
- **Character Builds for Path of Exile.** *Expected Length: 300 words.* While the specific character build hasn't been decided yet, this short filler content will provide a quick list of skills to specialize in and a summary of pros and cons to the build.
- **5 Upcoming ARPGs.** *Expected Length: 500 words.* A quick summary of five upcoming game titles and the type of experience they promise to bring to the gaming industry.
- **10 Signs You Play Too Many ARPGs.** *Expected Length: 100 words.* A list of 10 behaviors players may display that would indicate they game too much and must seek psychological help (note the sarcasm).
- **10 Signs You Don't Play Enough ARPGs.** *Expected Length: 100 words.* A list of 10 common things ARPG gamers should know that you likely wouldn't know if you don't play many in the first place. **I will write this article.**
- **10 Signs You Need a Bathroom Break.** *Expected Length: 100 words.* This is another attempt at humor and will provide a simple and short list of biological signs your body is screaming for a break from the gaming and needs maintenance.
- **What ARPG Are You? Survey.** *Expected Length: 100 words.* A short survey with point values associated with each response. Once the reader has completed the survey, they can tally the points to discover what type of ARPG a player "is."The survey will combine humor with common ARPG scenarios.

Obviously, this would be a lot of content to write and design by myself, so I will not perform all writing independently. The extent of the work I will perform and delegate to contributing writers will be discussed in the following section.

Scope of Work

In the previous section, I outlined the article topics which would be covered for the first issue of ARPGamer's magazine. Below is a breakdown of what content will be developed specifically for this magazine so as to understand the complexity of the project.

- 1 feature article
- 9main articles
- 10 filler content articles
- 5 player-contributed pictures
- 15drawings by artists

- In-game screenshots as needed

I will not be writing and researching all of the content listed above. While I will indeed perform the majority of the design and editing tasks, I have a team of six(6) contributing writers and two (2) illustrators who will be assisting in the success of this project. Of the content listed above, I will specifically perform the following tasks for the magazine itself:

- Write 1 feature and 1 main articles (3 weeks)
- Write 3 filler content articles (3 weeks, overlapping the previous bullet)
- Perform all design and layout in InDesign (12 weeks)
- Write the basic framework style guides for all content written as well as contracts for legally obtaining images (2 weeks)
- Edit all articles written by contributing writers (2 weeks)
- Coordinate obtaining and using images legally with Blair for magazine content (2 months)

The following section will better break down what phases of project development each task above will fall under, as well as the specific deliverables it will entail.

Methodology

The following section will outline how I will break the project up into phases and what tasks will be associated with each phase. The methodology of this project will act as a roadmap for all timelines associated, indicating all milestones and objectives.

Project Phases

The development of ARPGamer's prototype magazine will follow the standard phases of magazine development. I have divided this project into four (4) specific phases (minus proofing and production) as outlined below:

1. Research

This phase will involve research not only for the content of the magazine, but also for best practices associated with developing a magazine. I will examine other popular e-zines, as well as research gaming literature, to better understand how they integrate content into a format ideal for online readers. Doing so will help me determine what standards are already in place so that they can be replicated across ARPGamer's magazine.

As part of the research phase, I will also be conducting a needs assessment with prospective readers. This will involve a simple survey where I'll identify specific information readers most want to have. The needs assessment will help further identify the games we focus on throughout ARPGamer's magazine. The survey will be performed using SurveyMonkey, a free online survey tool, and will consist of 3-5 questions.

Several contributing writers have been building the hype for ARPGamer, which gives us access to a potential immediate audience of more than 200 gamers. While this is trivial in comparison to the hundreds of thousands of followers for other news magazines, the current prospective reader base is still a reasonable demographic to draw upon for a needs assessment. We will perform a survey of these individuals to determine what specific needs can be addressed through an e-zine.

Obtaining legal, in-game screenshots for use throughout the magazine will likely prove beyond the scope and timeline available for this project, thus why the magazine will be presented as a prototype. I will communicate with major game developers like Blizzard, Runic Games, and Grinding Gear to follow their policies and procedures for image fair use, though we may not receive copyright clearance before the prototype is completed. To successfully obtain and use these images after project completion, I will have stringent guidelines in place for using copyright-protected images. For paid or permission-based images, I will develop a usage contract to be agreed upon by artists or game developers paid for work done.

Deliverables:

- Research memo comparing EPUB magazines for length, format, and design *(2 pages)*
- Needs-assessment results determining audience game preferences and subscription pricing *(2 pages)*

2. Concept

The initial idea for the magazine prototype will be developed. At this point, the general editorial direction will be established and ideas for content will begin to emerge. I have already determined the general scope of each article, but at this point I will identify the gaming focus for each article and assignments will be made to all contributing writers. Writers will be expected to begin researching article content and write short "teasers" for each article to help determine the direction of each article. To prepare for the review process once articles

have been written, I will also create an editing process guide that will determine standards for content review, peer editing, and revisions.

During this phase I will begin identifying early elements of the magazine that will affect the final direction of the main deliverable. I will establish a style guide which will standardize the artistic and content direction of future magazine issues as well as proper image usage and attaining. While it will not be a full style guide, it will establish a framework from which future additions can be made. In addition, I will begin sketching out the layout and design of the magazine.

Deliverables:

- Reflective essay of the concept work *(2 pages)*
- Mock-ups of magazine page spreads *(3 pages)*
  - Cover sketch
  - Template spread
- Summary of article topics and teasers of content as written by the contributors *(5 pages)*
- Content style guide establishing writing styles, design and layout elements, and image usage *(10 pages)*
- Process guide outlining the standards for content reviewing, proofing, and editing *(5 pages)*

3. Content Development

The editorial content and graphical elements (e.g., illustrations, screenshots, and photographs) will be gathered by me and Blair, my project supervisor. I will construct an image usage contract to be signed by any artists whose illustrations are used as well as any game studios whose in-game footage is used. Some game studios may take longer to respond or sign any contracts than is available for a single semester timeline, so I will deliver a list of gaming studios with image contracts pending approval.

Stories will be fully committed at this point, whereupon they will be written and edited. The processes for editing and revisions will follow the aforementioned process guide developed during the concept phase and will follow aggressive deadlines. Contributing writers will create content based on their own experiences in playing the games in question as well as through any interviews with game developers that may occur. Writing will be submitted to me for review as it is completed. At this point, stories will undergo a series of edits through an editorial board, the process of which should have been defined in the previous phase.

Deliverables:

- Finalized articles and drafts of content with edits
- Images to be associated with content
- Contract for image usage (signed where necessary)
  - List of gaming studios the contract was submitted to

4. Design and Layout

The design and layout phase will take place in tandem the content development phase as articles are finalized. Each full-page spread will be laid out with all content, graphics, and advertising. A rough page order will be established, though this will not be finalized until every page has been fully designed.

ARPGamer's prototype magazine will be designed using Adobe CS6. I will use InDesign to create the magazine layout complete with graphical and content placement. Using InDesign CS6 will allow me to make use of multimedia embedding as well as the EPUB export functionality. As content reaches final completion, I will place the content into each finished spread until the magazine is fully complete.

Throughout this phase of the project, I will solicit feedback from Rulon and Blair regarding the layout of content and illustrations. The magazine in its entirety will undergo multiple revisions as an effective prototype evolves.

Due to the scope of this magazine prototype, in place of finalized paid advertisements, placeholders will be used throughout the magazine. As my project supervisor, Blair Johnson, has already been in communication with several vendors regarding advertising space, some advertisements may be available for display in the prototype upon completion. For those advertisement transactions that have not been completed, I will provide a list of the vendors we have been in communication with, along with all communication made with them.

The prototype will be considered completed when it meets the following criteria:
- The written content has undergone multiple edits to reach a desired level of professionalism.
- The design of the magazine has been approved by Rulon.
- Places have been found for all written content, illustrations, in-game screenshots, and paid advertisement space (though paid advertisement space may display as placeholders).
- The magazine fulfills all intended goals of a prototype magazine, which is to provide a working example of a near-completed product.

The completion of copyright clearances for all in-game screenshots and advertising contracts will not be considered within the scope of this project and will be completed after the included timeline.

Deliverables

- Prototype magazine layout and design with finalized content included
- Reflective paper on the work that went into designing and editing the magazine *(2 pages)*
- Signed contracts with companies purchasing ad space
    - List of interested vendors pending approval

Coordinating each of these phases to work in tandem with one another will require an in-depth timeline, which is outlined in the next section.

Timeline

The following table outlines the weekly tasks which will be completed as the project unfolds.

Date	Description	Deliverables
January – Week 1	The project will start with preliminary research not only to gauge the best practices of other magazines, but also to identify key talking points of interest to our readers.	☼ E-zine comparison analysis ☼ Needs assessment poll results ☼ Contract for image usage
January – Week 2	At this point I will begin to establish standards of quality for the content included in the magazine while also concluding any preliminary research regarding the magazine.	☼ Basic content style guide establishing the writing styles, design and layout elements, and image usage ☼ Research memo comparing EPUB magazines for length, format, and design
January – Week 3	Contributors will be given assignments, and article drafting will begin. I will likewise begin drafting my own articles.	☼ Article topic assignments ☼ Contingency plan for content development in the event of unexpected impediments with game developer response times
January – Week 4	Prior to completed drafts being submitted, I will establish a process through which content will be reviewed and redrafted. In addition, I will begin creating quick thumbnail sketches of each magazine page.	☼ Process guide outlining the standards for content reviewing, proofing, and editing
January – Week 5	Article revisions will commence. Contributors will identify the images they want to include in the magazine. I will then correspond with game developers to obtain permission to use these images.	☼ First draft of all articles& filler content ☼ Proposals for images
February – Week 1	The contributors will revise their articles based on my edits (and I based on my editor's), and the magazine layout and design will commence based on the thumbnails.	☼ Reflective essay of the concept work ☼ Sketches of magazine page spreads
February – Week 2	I will continue to edit content and communicate changes with contributors (as well as with the editor of my writing). I will also continue to work	☼ Second draft of all articles& filler content

	on the design of the magazine.	
February – Week 3	Contributors will select images for content so image placeholders can be adjusted for page spreads. I will likewise identify my own images for use.	☀ Final images
February – Week 4	As article revisions are completed, I will use the finalized content to complete the layout and design.	☀ Finalized articles& filler content ☀ Signed contracts for illustration usage
March – Week 1	I'll continue to finalize the design and layout of the magazine with the finished content included. I'll solicit Blair and Ru for feedback throughout.	☀ Reflective paper on content development
March – Week 2	I'll continue to finalize the design and layout of the magazine with the finished content included. I'll solicit Blair and Ru for feedback throughout. As the project is close to finalized, I'll reflect on the design phase in its entirety.	☀ Reflective paper on the designing phase
March – Week 3	I'll continue to finalize the design and layout of the magazine with the finished content included. I'll solicit Blair and Ru for feedback throughout.	
March – Week 4	Final tweaks will be performed to accommodate magazine content and design. I'll then provide Ru and Blair with a completed draft of the magazine for a full review.	☀ Magazine layout and design with finalized content included
April – Week 1	Edits will be made as requested by Ru and Blair to the magazine.	
April – Week 2	Edits will be made as requested by Ru and Blair to the magazine.	
April – Week 3	Magazine changes will continue as the design phase will come to a conclusion. Edits will be gathered and included in the end portfolio	

	to demonstrate the work performed throughout the project.	
April – Week 4	A finalized copy of ARPGamer prototype magazine will be provided as proof of my work. In addition, I will compile the documents written throughout the project duration into a single CD. I'll also print paper copies of the magazine for MPC faculty use.	• Finalized prototype magazine • Project portfolio including all documents throughout the project's duration

Budget

The following table outlines all anticipated expenses that will be involved with creating ARPGamer magazine.

Projected Man-hours:

Item	Per Item Cost	Quantity	Total
Article Contributions	$20	15	$300
Artwork Contributions	$20	20	$400
Printing (for final deliverable)	$10	4	$40
Binding (for final deliverable)	$2	4	$8
CD (for final deliverable to Ru)	$1	4	$4
		Total Cost	$752

I have designated a quantity of four (4) for the printing, binding, and CD of the final deliverable so that the MPC program can have three (3) copies and I may one (1) for personal record. Printing will be done through HP MagCloud.

Personnel

Throughout this proposal I have made references to my contributing writers and illustrators. This section will shed light on those individuals who will be contributing to ARPGamer's success. I have known each of these individuals for several years and I am as confident in their abilities as writers as I am in their dedication to the project's success. While such confidence does not guarantee against issues or obligations that might take away resources from the magazine, I have a pool of more than five (5) additional contributors, two (2) illustrators, and one (1) marketing liaison who can assist in writing and designing for the magazine. The individuals below were chosen due to their skill and experience in their own respective discipline.

Each individual will be paid on a piecemeal basis per article or illustration required for the magazine.

Rulon Wood, Faculty Advisor

Ru has graciously consented to being my field project advisor for its duration. He has extensive experience in the various media outlets that relate to ARPGamer and will be a boon to its success. He also has ties in the gaming and game development industry which will aid us in getting additional feedback on our target audience.

Blair Johnson, Developer Liaison, "Marketeer," & Project Supervisor

With experience as a marketing andquality assurance(QA) manager, Blair is an excellent resource to ARPGamer from an external relations standpoint. He is adept at interfacing with gaming developers as well as recruiting professionals to our efforts. From a project management standpoint, he is adept at creating a vision and ensuring that all deadlines are met in a timely fashion. He will offer significant insight as project supervisor in giving me constructive criticism and direction throughout the project's duration.

Michael A. Johnson, Contributing Writer & Assistant Editor

Michael is currently an English student at the College of Western Idaho, though he has been writing fiction and reviewing games for years. He offers a very objective and oftentimes ridiculously opinionated view on the gaming industry, an attribute which will lend toward more audience discussion due to his controversial standpoints.

Damien Guibbal, Contributing Writer

Of French nationality, Damien offers a unique and interesting point of view as a foreign gamer. He currently works as a French-English translator for a Canadian-based translation company, which means he has extensive experience in writing. In his free time, he has dedicated the last quarter of a century to gaming and has an exhaustive arsenal of gaming titles to his credit.

Nathan Major, Contributing Writer

Nathan is your typical aspiring author who works a job that has nothing to do with writing, and yet he is ridiculously good at what he does. He has published several of his own books as well as that of his friends' books online, and he also has a passion for gaming. He keeps a gaming review blog which covers incredibly old games I never knew existed. His quirky, humorous writing style will contribute toward a more interesting end product with ARPGamer's magazine.

Dean Arias, Contributing Writer

Dean is a veritable jack-of-all-trades, though he particularly excels as an online writer. He has written for several online toy manufacturers before and, due to his comical writing style, is an ideal fit for ARPGamer.

The magazine would benefit greatly from his humor and Dean will doubtless add greater character to his articles.

Colton Goodrich, Contributing Writer

A Chevron petroleum geologist by day and author by night, Colton Goodrich is a unique addition to the ARPGamer team. He has worked as an aspiring author for countless years with a gaming addiction he can't quite shake. He has agreed to join ARPGamer and lend his refined writing style and love for gaming to the project's success.

Steven Raaymakers, Illustrator

Steven is a New Zealander by nationality and a gamer by trade. He has worked as a freelance concept artist for various indie game studios in developing environmental illustrations. ARPGamer will benefit greatly from his expertise as he will help create many of the illustrations that will be used in the magazine to depict gaming likenesses.

Ash Jamieson, Illustrator

Ash is a fellow concept artist of Steven's who has also offered her services to ARPGamer. She specializes in character concepts, which will complement Steven's illustrations throughout the magazine. Ash has worked on countless indie gaming studio projects and specializes in ARPG-themed illustrations.

Software Resources

In order to successfully complete this prototype, I will need access to a number of software resources in addition to personnel. These resources were not factored into the budget as I already own all necessary software. I have access to and plan on using the following software applications:

- Microsoft Word for article writing
- InDesign for layout and design
- Photoshop for image editing
- Illustrator for full spread mock-ups

Qualifications

While I've never written for a magazine before (beyond class projects in my undergraduate program), I do have a sizeable amount of experience in writing web content. Writing, when paired with my passion for video games, should prove this is a match made in heaven. The following subsections will demonstrate my specific qualifications as a writer and designer.

For a copy of my resume, see Appendix A.

Content Writing

For the last two years I have worked as a content writer for several websites (e.g., TopTenREVIEWS, TechNewsDaily, Laptop Magazine) on topics ranging from technology news to technology trends. This involves writing more than 5000 words a week in a part-time (5 hours a week) capacity, which has allowed me to develop certain "skills" in speed writing and content development. This will contribute largely to my ability to turn out all the content expected of me with this project.

As simple as it may seem to play a game, we will be catering largely to hardcore gamers, individuals who spend a great deal of time figuring out the subtleties to a game and its play styles. I will use my technical background to understand the minds of our readers and deliver content that is both technical and enjoyable for gamers to read.

I've also kept a personal blog and portfolio to showcase my versatility and skill as a writer. For the last few months, I've made a point of writing weekly creative writing, technology, and marketing blog posts not only to build my credibility as a writer, but also increase my own knowledge and understanding of each industry.

Specific highlights of my writing experience include:

- I write multiple web content articles weekly for major Utah-based website companies owned by TechMediaNetwork
- I have more than four (4) years' experience writing professionally
- I contribute weekly to my personal blog, Left Hand Writer

Design Work

Amidst my work in marketing, my professional experience has focused largely on creative writing over design. I have sought out opportunities on the side and in my schooling to expand on my design work, though in a professional capacity my job description has been rooted firmly in writing despite my best efforts. I will use this magazine to demonstrate my abilities with magazine layout as well as image manipulation using the well-loved Adobe Creative Suite products.

Specific highlights of my design experience include:

- Using InDesign, I have designed:
  - A college textbook, special interests magazine, and professional journal as part of my undergraduate degree
  - An employee handbook for Parlant Technology, Inc.
  - World gazette for a fictional setting
  - My resume and cover letter(see Appendix A)
- Using Photoshop, I have designed:
  - A front and back book cover
  - A movie poster

- o A website home page
- o A logo
- o Various photo editing projects as part of my graduate degree

Video Gaming

As laughable as it may seem to have video gaming as a qualification for this project, it is actually quite important. Gamers want to read content written by individuals who share their passion and history in gaming. They're a very shrewd crowd who will easily pick up on content that sounds like the writer never really played the game.

To that end, I have been an avid gamer since my early childhood. It was not until high school that my gaming obsession began to peak, and to my parents' dismay I fell into the world of massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) like World of Warcraft (WoW). I played many other MMOs before WoW, all the way back to the first MMO, Ultima Online. MMOs have generally been my passion, but nowadays all such games are simply clones of WoW, which gets old fast. So now I find myself playing any type of fantasy game, which ARPGs tend to use as settings.

One experience I believe truly differentiates me from others is the fact that I am building first-hand knowledge of what goes into developing a video game. I am part of an up-and-coming gaming studio, Dynimix Studios, which is currently developing a new intellectual property for the Ouya gaming console. The game will be Android-based, but will set itself apart from other ARPGs with innovative user experience elements, an in-depth story, a complex and engaging combat system, and an ever-growing setting which will be developed by fiction contributions as well as future downloadable content (DLC) that will act as additional expansions to the original game.

Specific highlights:

- Operating as Content Manager for an Android-based ARPG video game under development (slated for aFall2013 release for the upcoming Ouya gaming console)
- 20+ years of playing video games (from King's Quest to Baldur's Gate to Ultima Online to Halo)
- Invited to and participated in beta phases for such games as:
  - o World of Warcraft
  - o Bloodline Champions
  - o Warhammer Online
  - o Star Wars: The Old Republic
  - o Diablo III

Conclusion

Developing a prototype of ARPGamer's first magazine is certain to be a project that will stretch my limits as a student and professional. In addition to the fast-paced deadlines of content development and design, I will also be able to prove my aptitude for planning and executing a large project over a team of contributors. Developing and launching a magazine is a complex and lengthy process, which I am excited to tackle.

Breathing Life into a Dream

Gaming has ever been a passion of mine and I am excited for the opportunity this gives me to grow as a professional in an industry I truly love. While I can't rightly say that my dream has always been to launch a gaming magazine, I have always wanted to write for the gaming industry. This may not pave the way toward a career exclusively in gaming writing, but it is yet another opportunity for me to find ways to combine my passion for writing with my passion for gaming.

Ambition is the Soul of Success

This e-magazine prototype will obviously be an uphill struggle in terms of meeting all of the deliverables. My experience in turning out content quickly, in addition to my desire to create a project that will test my limits and capacities as a professional, will ultimately push the boundaries for what a student can do in a single semester. Due to the fact I have chosen to create a prototype magazine rather than a fully-completed magazine will lend itself toward my project's completion in a single semester.

I am confident in my ability to meet all of the aforementioned deadlines with the outlined deliverables, and with time to spare. As demonstrated by the numerous projects I occupy my time with, I am a workaholic, an attribute which will play very much to my advantage in remaining focused and productive in developing this prototype magazine.

Appendix A: Resume

Communication Specialist

Education

Westminster College
Salt Lake City, UT
Master of Professional Communication
- Projected Spring 2013
- **GPA:** 3.63
- **Relevant Classes:** Publication Design, Writing for New Media, Digital Image Editing, Web Design & Production, Advanced Web Design, Managing Issues & Crises

Brigham Young University Idaho
Rexburg, ID
B.S. in English
- Graduated July 2008
- **GPA:** 3.74

Professional Associations

- National Career Development Association (NCDA)
- Society for Technical Communication (STC)

Applications Used

goodrichryan@gmail.com
www.lefthandwriter.net

Clyde Companies, Orem, UT - Sept. 2012 to Present

Communication Specialist, Sept. 2012 to Present
- Monitor and coordinate marketing communications and brands between parent company and its five daughter companies: Geneva Rock, Sunroc, Sunroc Building Materials, W.W. Clyde & Co., and Beehive Insurance.

TechMediaNetwork, Ogden, UT - July 2010 to Present

Freelance Content Writer, Aug. 2011 to Present
Content Writer, July 2010 to July 2011
- Create keyword-rich content to help drive traffic and increase site SEO rankings for websites like Space.com, TechNewsDaily, BusinessNewsDaily, TopTenREVIEWS, and Laptop Magazine.
- Write 10 articles a week (in a part-time capacity), each ranging from 500-1,200 words in length.
- Perform SEO research to identify relevant primary, secondary, and tertiary keywords for targeting market searching habits.
- Examine statistical keyword analysis through SEO web analytics tools like Adobe SiteCatalyst.
- Contribute and adhere to online content style guide for content writing and SEO "best practices" which involves: HTML coding, content copywriting, keyword research (density, relevance, weight, etc.), and meta tage guidelines.

Parlant Technology, Inc., Provo, UT - Sept. 2008 to July 2010

Communications Specialist, June 2009 to July 2010
Technical Writer, Sept. 2008 to June 2009
- Edited and wrote all marketing materials (direct mailers, slicks, white papers, and success stories) totaling more than 3,000 pages of completed technical and marketing copy.
- Performed layout and edits to documents with InDesign and interfaced with graphic and creative designers as well as subject matter experts (SMEs) for projects.
- Launched quarterly client newsletter and coordinated marketing employees in the researching, writing, designing, and delivery of documents.
- Managed and executed company social media efforts (Facebook, Twitter, and WordPress).

Additional Experience

Dynimix Studios, Aug. 2012 to Present
Creative Design Lead
ADP AdvancedMD, Aug. 2011 to Aug. 2012
Technical Writer
Lefty Resume, June 2009 to Present
Professional Resume Writer & Consultant
EmploymentScape, Aug. 2008 to June 2009
Resume Writer

RYAN GOODRICH

3375 W. 7800 S., #1512 - West Jordan, UT 84088 - (801) 668-5522

Communications Specialist

About Ryan

Typing Speed:
106 WPM

Programming Experience:
- HTML/XHTML
- PHP
- CSS
- MySQL

Marketing Tools:
- Adobe SiteCatalyst
- Google Analytics
- Wordpress, Joomla!
- Adobe Creative Suite 5.5
- Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn

Keyword Competencies:
- SEO research & analysis
- Web content strategies
- Copywriting & business communication

goodrichryan@gmail.com
www.lefthandwriter.net

July 16, 2012

Clyde Companies
730 N 1500 W
Orem, UT 84057

RE: Marketing Communications Specialist Job Listing

To whom it may concern,

Several weeks ago I acted as a reference for David G. Przybyla, who is now the new marketing manager at Clyde Companies, Inc. When he told me that a communications specialist position was available, I knew this was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

It was David who first got me into marketing communications. He had become keenly aware of my creative talents as a writer at Parlant Technology and demanded that I be transferred under his management. Since that time, I have learned to love copywriting, content writing, SEO, and all other aspects of marketing. When I finally departed from Parlant Technology, I took on employment as a content writer for TechMediaNetwork, which has helped develop my understanding of SEO strategies and online content development and how it relates to marketing.

- As a content writer I have written more than 400 SEO articles for websites like Space.com, TopTenREVIEWS, TechNewsDaily, BusinessNewsDaily, and Laptop Magazine.
- I am experienced in all forms of online content strategies from statistical keyword analysis in SEO to content development and publishing across a wide range of devices and platforms.
- I've developed marketing slicks, white papers, case studies, news releases, newsletters, product descriptions, and success stories.

I encourage you to visit my portfolio online at the link provided in the bottom-left corner of my cover letter as this will give further evidence of my previous accomplishments in all areas relating to marketing communications. Please call me at your convenience to schedule an interview.

As I know David would gladly attest, I would be a strong asset to the marketing efforts of Clyde Companies, Inc. and its subsidiaries. Thank you for your time and consideration; I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ryan Goodrich

RYAN GOODRICH
3375 W. 7800 S., #1512 - West Jordan, UT 84088 - (801) 668-5522