

QUEST - GAMING

Introduction to Game Development

GAME CONCEPT

When figuring out how to come up with a game idea, you can iterate on an already-popular game, incorporate innovative technology into old games (AI, VR, etc.), or come up with an idea from scratch (observe and brainstorm).

Once you have figured out your video game idea, it's time to put together a game concept that acts as a kind of instruction book for each of the departments involved (Designing, Art, Management, etc). It's also where they are able to lend their own thoughts and express their concerns.



What is a Game Concept?

There are a lot of things that go into creating a great game, but the first and perhaps most important one is the “game concept” (also called game documentation). A game concept, in its simplest form, is the easy-to-understand vision you have for your game.

Your game concept should include exactly what the game is and what creating it involves. This includes the story, the art, and how you’re going to make money with the game. A written game concept puts everyone on the same page, knowing the expectations right from the get-go.

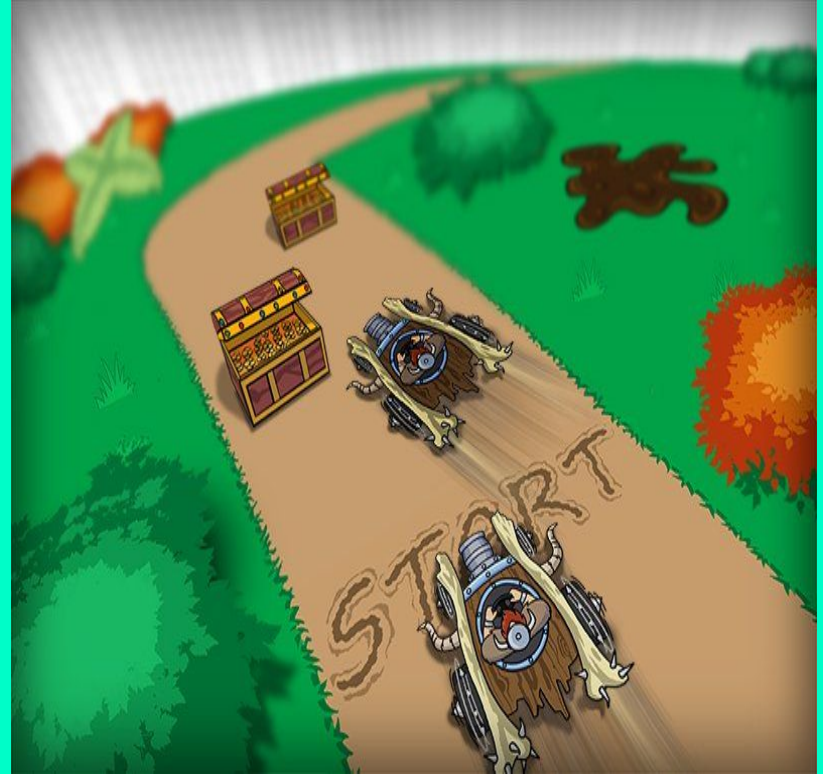
By everyone, we mean the:

- Investors
- Publisher
- Art team
- Developers
- Marketers
- Managers

You need to convince all the other people involved in the game’s development of your brilliant idea. Then you need to show them a road map for how to go about getting the game off the ground and into the hands of thousands of happy players.

PARTS OF A GAME CONCEPT

There are a few parts involved when coming up with your game concept. If you don't fully form each of them, you're likely to get your concept rejected by one or more departments. Take your time and come to the table with relevant facts and statistics, a unique and fully-formed story, some interesting details, and realistic financial goals.



The Core Idea

The core idea is at the beginning of the game concept. It presents the game idea in just a few paragraphs and gets the people involved excited about working on the game.

The core idea should include:

- A description of your game
- The game's style
- The game's setting
- The different types of characters
- An overview of the story
- Any key elements
- How to play
- What sets it apart from other games

The complexity of the game will determine how in-depth this area of the documentation is going to be. By the time they've read your core idea, the reader should have a clear vision that aligns with your own.

The Financials !

Unless you're funding this project yourself, you must get investors and/or a publisher to give you the money for game development. Even with a brilliant game concept, no one will help unless they know it's a solid investment that can provide good returns. So, incorporating monetizing methods into your game proposal will help you secure funding.

For this section, you should have an outlined plan of how you anticipate making money off your game.

Profits may come from:

- Initial purchase price
- Monetizing ads
- In-app purchases (powerups, decorative items, etc.)
- Selling additional levels or features
- A combination of methods
- Game Website

The next part of the financials is the amount of money you need to make the game a reality. Don't go overboard here. Make it a realistic amount. If you're a first-timer, people will probably be reluctant to throw money at you. Level your expectations on the budget that is offered and do what you can to work around the hurdles. To do this, find ways you can cut costs. This could be as simple as using a free 3D application like **Blender** or **Maya LT** to save money on expensive license fees.

The ART

The art team needs to know what type of game they're going to be designing. This is why it never hurts to include some concept designs for the direction you want to take the game, so the art team will get an idea of what they can expect. They'll also be able to identify any hiccups that might occur or the things that will be difficult to accomplish either with the time allotted, or the budget given. This way They will also be able to provide their own input on areas that might need adjusting in order to meet the deadline or the budget. Describing the target audience to your art team is also a big help. That way they know what they've to do to get those key elements in their work to attract the desired audience.



The Extent of Development

Developers want a clear understanding of what is expected of them. By mentioning the extent of the development required, it will help them identify things that might be difficult to accomplish. Getting involved in the development early on also allows them to find things that can be improved upon or added to enhance the gameplay.

Include the platforms you want to launch the game on. This will give an idea for what they'll need to create a cross-platform game that can easily be ported over to any device or system.

The complexity of the gameplay mechanics relies on knowing this bit of info is to know your target audience.



The Marketing Plan

In short, a marketing plan describes how you want to get your game to your players. The ins and outs of any marketing plan for your game is best left up to the experts, but your ideas might have some bits that always sell!

The contents you should include are:

- Goals : How much profit do you want to make?
- Distribution : Are you selling from a direct website store, portal, retail store, etc.?
- Product : Why would people want to buy your game?
- Promotion : How will your target audience know your game exists?
- Website : How will it get people to download a demo of your game?
- Demo : How can your demo close the deal?
- Measurement : How does each game or price modification affect your plan?
- Maintenance : How will you build a long-term relationship with your customers?
- Refinement : Are there ways you can optimize your plan?

Game Concept Mistakes to Avoid

When coming up with a game development idea, there are a few do's and don'ts.

1. Don't make the mistake of having a too-short game concept that isn't detailed enough. It will discourage and confuse every department involved. You need a game concept that the artists and developers can refer back to whenever they need answers regarding the project.
2. Don't make the mistake of putting together the game concept in a rush. This will make it feel jumbled instead of professional, deterring investors, publishers, artists, and developers from wanting to be involved.
3. Don't make the mistake of not putting your game concept on paper. It will help create a road map for your game and make the creation process, from beginning to end, much quicker.

Finally, ensure that you've got a killer game idea to set you apart from the competition. Include every aspect of your game that's different from the existing games. These strategies will also help you with the marketing plans.

Video Game Ideas

There are dozens of ways to come up with new and exciting video game ideas.

One of the most popular is to take an already-developed idea and tweak the details enough for it to feel both familiar but also **new and exciting**. The problem with this approach is that other developers have the same idea; there ends up being hundreds of different iterations from the same idea and yours may be challenged to find a large following.

Another way to come up with a game idea is to figure out what types of things make other new, innovative games a hit and then incorporate those same principles into a fresh concept.

Otherwise, if you want to be totally original and come up with a brand-new, innovative game concept, you must start from scratch.

Let's go over each of these three ways to develop a game concept. But first, here are a few things your game should be, no matter the concept:

- Easily learned with little instruction
- Adaptable for players to perform unique moves in different ways
- Fun to watch for non-players

1. ITERATE ON AN

ALREADY-POPULAR GAME

Iterating on entire concepts or even just unique details is a relatively quick, easy, and secure way to come up with a video game idea. Isolating what works and using that in a fresh way often gives satisfactory results.

For information's sake, here's a breakdown of the **most popular video game genres** for 2018 in the United States:

- Action = 26.9%
- Shooter = 20.9%
- Role-playing = 11.3%
- Sport = 11.1%
- Adventure = 7.9%
- Fighting = 7.8%
- Racing = 5.8%
- Strategy = 3.7%
- Other = 4.6%

When deciding which genre to go after, you can think in two ways:

1. Choose a high-ranking genre because that's what people want (Action, Thriller, etc)
2. Choose a less popular genre because there is less competition.

Either way works as long as you offer something that no one else does. However, there are a millions of similar gaming approaches, so what might be even better is combining two or more genres into one great game. Take for instance Grand Theft Auto uses a **combination of action, shooter, racing, and strategy** all wrapped up into one fantastic combination of game play.

2. INCORPORATE

INNOVATIVE PRINCIPLES

The capacity for replayability is really what pushes a game to success.

- **A linear narrative with multiple endings** : Adding a few potential endings encourages players to play out the narrative differently each time, thus extending the perceived value of gameplay.
- **Open worlds** : Yes, open worlds have become overused design tropes because they tend to be full of repetitive filler content and annoying taskmasters. Instead, truly open the world to players by encouraging exploration and taking away the guide (in portions, at least). Focus on moment-to-moment experiences and a world full of discovery.
- **Destination gaming**: Designing a map for your players adds a thrilling form of entertainment that gamers enjoy. A destination can be a real location (Pokémon Go) or it can be exclusive access to an online meeting time with other specific players.
- **Up-to-the-minute technology**: Taking advantage of technological progress and incorporating it into play has a way of bringing an audience out of the woodwork since it brings new relevance to old ideas. The tech could be as simple as featuring new textures and as advanced as designing a game for a brand new platform.

3. COME UP WITH AN IDEA
FROM SCRATCH

If you're intent on coming up with a brand new game concept, here are 7 ways to get your brain cells working :

1. Hone in on a particular genre (action, simulation, sport, etc.) and dial into an opportunity (fantasy, detective, comedy, etc.)
2. Observe everything going on around you, paying attention to different types of interactions.
3. Ask others what they'd like to play (and what they don't want to play).
4. Think about your favorite movies, books, and video games. What elements do you love? Is it the graphics, story arc, dialogue, or acting?
5. Brainstorm for 15 minutes and write down every idea that pops into your head.
6. Just go for it. Start conceiving the biggest elements of the game and work backward.
7. Last but not the least, go with the flow and ask yourself, what world would you play in?

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