Video Game Design & Development Methodologies

Studio Vision Canvas

This is the version we used in the studio and I have removed areas that don't apply:
Video about why we decided to go with this tool: http://www.gdcvault.com/play/1020384/Volition-s-Challenge-Defining-Project

Project Culture

- What elements do we need to strengthen

Studio Strategy

- Special Sauce and why

Franchise Strategy

- Long term product/design plan
- Missions vs. activities vs. diversions

Verboten

- What are the things you must not do?

Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

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The layout is important
- App/Game Name, Platform
- Descriptors
  - Genre
  - IP/World
- Targets
  - User Types
  - User Experience
- Inspirations (for all categories)
- Core Pillars
- Systems
  - Core Systems
  - Required/Hidden Systems

High Level Vision Canvas			
Game Code Name: Target Platform(s):			
1. Genre (1st person shooter, Puzzle, Sidescroller, etc.)	**3. Player Types** (ranked by importance)	**6. Core Pillars** (in the form "User can...")	**7. Core System Breakdown** (ex: Combat has Melee/Range)
2. IP/World/Environment (high level of environment, characters, style, history, etc.)	**4. Player Experience** (in the form "User will feel... when they ...")		
			8. Required Hidden Systems (ex: AI, Save/Load, Navmesh)
5. Inspirations (Use movies, games, comics, etc. to describe key elements of the game, remember to include what is targeted - ex: UI inspired by LoZ: Breath of the Wild)			

Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Process for Completion:

- Come up with an IDEA
- Give it a code name
- Determine the Target Platform

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Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Determine the Descriptors

- **Define the Genre**
  - 2D/3D side scroller/action game/shooter
  - Don't include info about the world
  - Expectation is for standard Genre vernacular

- **Describe the World or IP**
  - Information about the background of the world
    - Post Apocalyptic, Sci Fi, Horror, etc.
  - Licensed Intellectual Properties, etc.
  - Concepts
  - Narrative
  - Source

These define the physical world, supplying context, interactions and connections. It describes how the player interacts (camera view) and relates (especially for a existing IP).

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Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Target Information

Player Types
- Self defined
- Should be descriptive
- Should represent the key player/purchasers
  - In descending order
- Don't go too broad
- Make up your own descriptors

Player Experience
- The emotional experience the player is having
- Can come from core game play and features
- Should relate to core pillars

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Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Inspirations

- Can inspire any area above
- Therefore inspirations are foundational to a game
- Should describe what it inspires
- Get specific
  - UI
  - Game play features
  - Tone (Tone Targets)
  - Style (Graphic look)
    - Art Spectrums
      - Vehicle/Weapon/Character
  - Lighting

Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Core Pillars

- Features that drive the Player Experience
- The Key focus of the game
- Elements that, if removed, would change the game
- In the form: *"The player can ….."*

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Vision Canvas – Single Project/Level Version

Systems

Core Systems
- Systems that need to be built to support core pillars
- There should be more detail here
  - Combat might need both melee and ranged
  - Traversal might include special modes
  - Special lighting might be needed
  - AI, if it's a core pillar
  - Narrative methods might need special systems

Hidden Systems
- AI (if not a core pillar)
- Audio
- Cinematics
- Save/Load
- Etc.

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Vision Canvas: Foundational Elements (Red Alert 2 as an example)

Genre: RTS

Setting: Alternate history, the Cold War in a world without Hitler

Core Pillar examples:

- Building Units, Buildings
- Mining resources (ore & gems)
- A crazy storyline supported B movie actors cinematics

Game play system examples:

- Animation for units & buildings
- Resource collection & spending
- Campaign System
- Cinematic player

Hidden Systems examples:

- Multiplayer
- Load/Save
- AI
- Audio/UI/etc.

Emotional Tone

- Serious World, characters, and situations
- Skilled character makes light of the world at times
- Characters do not take their responsibilities lightly
- Punctuated with high action sequences

Post-Apocalypse Genre Comparison

WE ARE HERE
- Accomplished, proactive protagonist
- Resources must be sought, but are available
- Organized, dangerous society
- Sense of discovery, and potentially hope
- Toys and tools for the player

ACTION

COLORFUL

DEPRESSING

COMEDIC

- Little hope for the world or characters
- Scarcity of resources and companionship
- Societal norms crumbling\crumbled
- Unclear path forward\out of the issues

- Main characters take action
- Resources limited, but resourceful character
- Character has ability to influence world
- Semblance of societies\reconstruction
- There may be a path forward

- Colorful cast of characters, factions
- Situations\locations may be outrageous
- Hyper skilled and notorious main characters
- Lots of tools and toys for the characters

- World state may be dire, but characters\factions\situations are comedic
- Characters do not necessarily act as if they are realistically presented with the events they are involved with
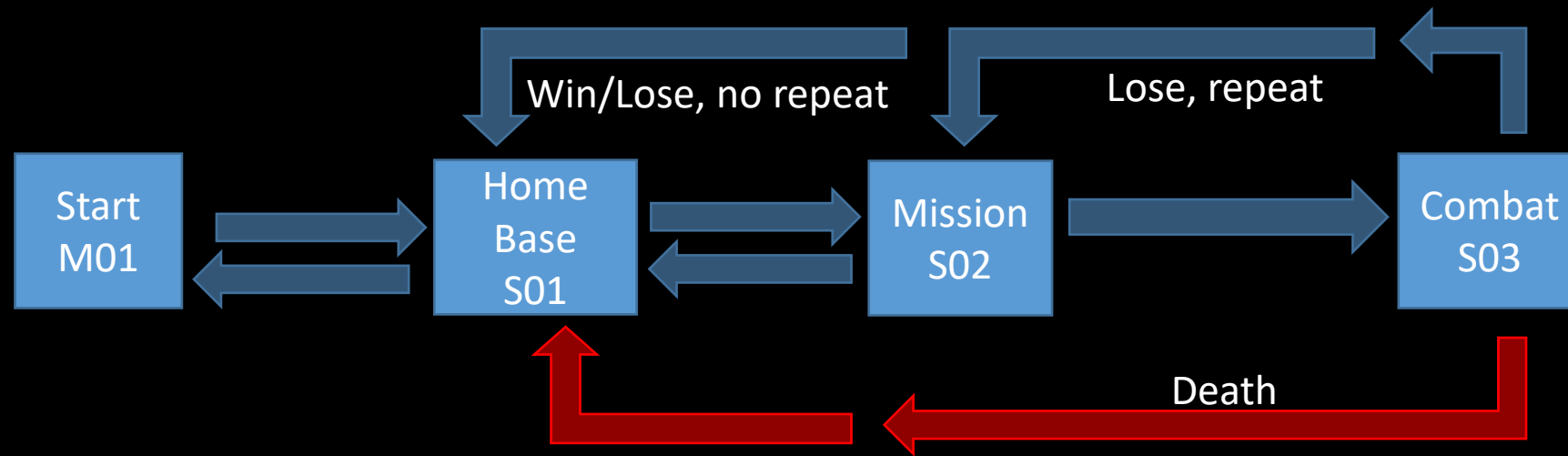
Vehicle Art Style (implied game play)

WE ARE HERE

ZEUS AMBIENT VEHICLE SPECTRUM

Design Docs Process: Simple High-Level Game Loop

Conclusion