

## = Development of Red Dead Redemption =

The development of Red Dead Redemption began in 2005 . Rockstar Games published Red Dead Redemption on May 18 , 2010 for the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . One of their studios , Rockstar San Diego , oversaw the work , sharing it with other studios around the world . The development team considered the game a spiritual successor to Red Dead Revolver . Red Dead Redemption was delayed numerous times through its four @-@ year development , often attributed to technological problems . The working hours and managerial style of the studio during development was met with public complaints from staff members . Red Dead Redemption was officially announced in 2009 ; it was heavily promoted and widely anticipated .

Rockstar improved their proprietary Rockstar Advanced Game Engine ( RAGE ) to increase its animation and draw distance rendering capabilities . The game uses the Euphoria and Bullet engines for further animation and environment rendering tasks . The developers felt inspired to create the game after realising the potential power of both the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 , having exhausted the use of older hardware on previous projects . The development team conducted extensive research , visiting historical American landmarks and analyzing classic Western films , to achieve realism while creating the game . The game 's open world , set in New Austin , Nuevo Paraíso and West Elizabeth , represents iconic features of the American frontier , in which the game is set .

In Red Dead Redemption , players mainly control former outlaw John Marston as he sets out to bring his former gang to justice . The team used motion capture to record the body movements of the characters and hired professional actors to provide voices . Red Dead Redemption features an original score composed over fifteen months by two music producers . Collaboratively , the duo composed over fourteen hours of music , which scores the game 's missions .

## = = Production = =

Preliminary work on Red Dead Redemption began in 2005 ; full development commenced in 2006 , following the formation of a core development team . Rockstar San Diego co @-@ opted a number of other studios owned by parent company Rockstar Games to facilitate development between a full team of over 800 . Media analysts estimated the development budget for the game was between US \$ 80 million and US \$ 100 million , making Red Dead Redemption one of the most expensive video games ever made .

## = = = Story and setting = = =

Red Dead Redemption primarily takes place in 1911 . The team chose this time period as they felt that exploring the transformation from " the old West " into the modern world was intriguing . Taking inspiration from The Wild Bunch ( 1969 ) , High Plains Drifter ( 1973 ) Unforgiven ( 1992 ) and The Proposition ( 2005 ) , the team felt that most Western fiction takes place between 1840 and 1880 . Game designer and writer Christian Cantamessa explained that the " overarching theme is the ' Death of the West ' rather than the more conventional ' Myth of the West ' that is often seen in the classic John Wayne films " . The team felt that " a classic ' we are conquering this wilderness ' story " was not very interesting in itself , but adding the transformation of the world during the game 's time period sparked their interest . The allusions to politics throughout the narrative are supposed to represent the darker undertones surrounding the foundations of the American Dream . In addition , the game itself exhibits qualities relating to the movement from a " violent freedom " to a situation of " overt state control " , told through a story of innocence and freedom . Vice President for Creativity Dan Houser made parallels with this representation , and the more recent predicament of the modern society of America . Houser also expressed the difficulty in balancing the game 's narrative to avoid feeling both " camp " and " pompous " ; he explained that balancing the two while maintaining realism was where the difficulty spawned . With the story , Houser felt that it does not fully represent the racial attitudes commonly associated with the game 's era . He stated that this

was a choice made by the designers due to the unpleasantness of the attitudes . " [ T ] he language people use to describe other races is insanely offensive to modern ears and we hint at that but we maybe don 't do it with quite the vibrancy that people use in some of our research , " he explained . The team focused more on the combination of old and modern America , and the change that was experienced during this period . In terms of the violence depicted throughout the game , Houser spoke about the team 's need for it to feel " slightly raw and unpleasant " ; they tried to achieve realism without exaggerating . The team were hoping for players to display an " emotional response " from the game , and for them to feel immersed in the game world and time period .

When designing the game 's fictional locations , the team tried to represent iconic features of the American frontier ; New Austin features small towns and outposts , Nuevo Paraíso includes rebel outposts and Mexican army forts , and Port Elizabeth represents the civilized areas of the world . These three locations represent a developing nation , a province on the brink of war , and an advanced nation , respectively . The American frontier was extensively researched for the game . The team organized field trips to Washington , visited the Library of Congress , captured a multitude of photographs , and analyzed various classic Western films . A challenge that the team faced as a direct result of the world 's size was to include enough content to interest players . Using this challenge as a strength and a major part of the design process , the team tried to make the countryside wild , with a variety of potential events to occur . They initially believed that it was possible to use the formula of Grand Theft Auto IV ( 2008 ) ? a large variety of mission styles with different activities and objectives ? in Red Dead Redemption ; as development continued , they realized that the emptiness of the world resulted in the inability to use this formula .

= = = Character development = = =

Red Dead Redemption required a large amount of voice work in order to feel alive . The team felt that the amount of voice work required for Redemption had been previously achieved in Grand Theft Auto IV , with prior experience to such amounts dating back to Grand Theft Auto : San Andreas ( 2004 ) and Bully ( 2006 ) . To cast the characters , the team held auditions ; until actors were officially signed to the project , it was only known as an " untitled video game project " , for secrecy . In the game , Rob Wiethoff portrayed John Marston , Jim Bently portrayed Edgar Ross , Steve J. Palmer portrayed Bill Williamson , Benjamin Byron Davis portrayed Dutch van der Linde , Kimberly Irion portrayed Bonnie MacFarlane , and Josh Blaylock portrayed Jack Marston . Rockstar displayed care in the direction of the voice work for the game ; full @-@ time specialist directors were employed to ensure success in the game 's dialogue . The performances of the actors were mostly recorded using motion capture technology , with additional dialogue and sound effects recorded in a studio . In Red Dead Redemption , the team wanted to create a story that mixed with the game 's mechanics to result in a fun and organic experience . As the story developed , a range of characters were organically created based on the period . " The stories are there to serve the game , " Houser explained .

The character of John Marston was developed to be a " family man " . The team developed him as a nuanced character , as opposed to a straightforward hero or villain , in order to provide an interesting experience . Wiethoff considered Marston to be very determined about his goals . " He was a man about things , " Wiethoff remarked . Technical director Ted Carson felt that Marston became interesting due to the combination of cynicism and realism . Wiethoff felt that Marston was aware that his past actions were " wrong " , resulting in his attempt to abandon his former life . He stated that Marston 's early decisions in his life were a direct result of his need for acceptance . " I don 't know if he knew that what he was doing was wrong or not , " Wiethoff said .

Palmer felt that the characters of Marston and Williamson represented siblings in their former gang , while Dutch was more of a parental figure . He stated that Williamson is envious of Marston , despite Marston being his " moral anchor " . Palmer also felt that , after Marston left the gang , Williamson 's life began to " tailspin " uncontrollably . " [ A ] s John grew into a man who conquered by achieving , Bill fell into a man who achieved simply by conquering , " said Palmer . The character of Edgar Ross was partly inspired by lawyer and political activist Charles Joseph Bonaparte , while the in @-@

game Mexican Revolution of Nuevo Paraíso was somewhat based on the Plan de San Diego . When developing other characters , the team was inspired by various historical figures of the 20th century , including Frank James , Pearl Hart and Tom Horn . In terms of the random non @-@ player character ( NPC ) dialogue , Houser felt that Redemption sits between Bully , in which NPCs remember the protagonist , and Grand Theft Auto , in which NPCs are unaware of the protagonist 's identity . " [ T ] here are countryside environments and people are to some extent bored so they 're looking for thing [ s ] to talk about so your actions get spoken about and people are aware of you more , " said Houser .

= = = Technical and gameplay development = = =

Like other projects since Rockstar Games Presents Table Tennis ( 2006 ) , the game uses the proprietary Rockstar Advanced Game Engine ( RAGE ) to perform animation and rendering tasks , and the Euphoria and Bullet engines for further animation and environment rendering tasks . Carson said that Euphoria provides " a physically based character performance system " that is " tightly integrated into RAGE 's proprietary physics engine " . Though the scope of the open world was initially a large challenge from a technical viewpoint , the team used it to their advantage . Overhauling the potential processing power of RAGE allows the game to create a high level of detail , including realistic animations and detailed textures .

The technology that became available to Rockstar inspired them to begin development . The potential power of the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 experienced through the development kits motivated the team to create a game that could fully render the countryside , which was difficult to achieve on previous hardware . Houser felt that primitive technology prevented game developers to create a game that " really did justice " to the Wild West . As an example , he referred to the animation of a lasso . " [ I ] t seems easy but we 've only now got the power to do that kind of stuff , " he said . Houser felt that previous Western games represented one specific aspect of the period , while Redemption attempts to represent all features . In developing the objects and surfaces of the game 's world , the team utilized a variety of textures and lighting effects . They also found difficulty in creating a realistic representation of nature ; " [ computers ] don 't draw curves , but nature is all about curves " , Houser explained .

The game was envisioned to improve the core mechanics of Red Dead Revolver ( 2004 ) , to which Redemption is a spiritual successor , by scaling it up to the standard of other Rockstar games . The fundamental goal for the game was to maintain the shooting mechanic and expand on other game features ; like Revolver , the game 's weapons were inspired by real weaponry . Carson explained that the team attempted to achieve realism with every feature of the game , including the horses , lassos , animal ecosystem , and the open world . To assure that the horse movements were as realistic as possible , the team motion captured a stunt horse , recording all movement . This created various problems ; a gesture used by the stunt rider to communicate with the production team while on the horse was also the same command that made the horse rear . Furthermore , creating the horse 's skeletal and muscular systems also presented a problem , and took several years to overcome . In the early stages of development , Rockstar decided which elements from Red Dead Revolver could be carried over ; beyond the Dead Eye feature and the Western setting , very few other features remained . While Revolver represented many myths and iconic images of the American frontier , in Redemption the team tried to represent the reality of the time period . The tone of Redemption was aimed to be a combination of the primitive Wild West and early 20th century America ; with the latter , America was developing into a modern and contemporary society , which the team tried to portray . In addition , while they felt that Revolver was constrained by its level @-@ based structure , the team saw potential in creating a game similar to that of Rockstar 's Grand Theft Auto series , in terms of quality , scope and detail .

= = = Music production = = =

Red Dead Redemption is one of the first games by Rockstar to use an original score . Music

supervisor Ivan Pavlovich has cited the large scale of the game as one of the largest difficulties when producing the score . He said that , in order to achieve an effective gaming experience , the game could not solely feature licensed music , like previous Rockstar games . " We figured we 'd need to write an original score , " Pavlovich said . To work on the score , Rockstar engaged Bill Elm and Woody Jackson , member and former member of Friends of Dean Martinez , respectively . In collaboration with each other , the duo composed over fourteen hours of music , which scores the game 's missions , across fifteen months . The original score and subsequent album were both recorded and mixed at Jackson 's personal recording studio in Los Angeles , and mastered at Capitol Studios . Following the recording , Irish producer and composer David Holmes listened to the original score , and subsequently spent three weeks compiling fifteen instrumental tracks that could be used as standalone songs for the game 's official soundtrack . Holmes attempted to make the soundtrack representative of the variety of sounds and moods in the game . Four vocal performances were also recorded for use in the soundtrack .

Recorded at 130 beats per minute in A minor , most of songs featured are constructed from stems in the game 's dynamic soundtrack . A mix of modern instruments and those featured in traditional Western films , such as the jaw harp , were used . Creative uses of instruments were used to bring unique sounds , such as playing a trumpet onto the surface of a timpani drum . Rockstar also consulted musicians who played traditional Western instruments ; harmonica player Tommy Morgan , who had been featured on several films over his 60 @-@ year career , provided traditional harmonica segments for the game . Beyond trumpets , nylon guitars and accordions , the composers incorporated other instruments , such as flutes and ocarinas . When researching music for inspiration , Jackson found that there was no " Western sound " in 1911 ; he felt that the soundtracks of 1960s Western films , such as Ennio Morricone 's work on the Dollars Trilogy , was more representative of Western music . In appropriating the score to the game 's setting , Elm commented that the process was initially " daunting " , taking a long time to discover how the music was to work in an interactive way .

From the beginning of development , the sound development team wished to achieve authenticity in the game 's sounds . After the art department sent artwork to the sound department , the latter were inspired to achieve realism , researching all sounds that were to be used in the game . Throughout development , sound editors often presented ideas , which would then be effortlessly achieved by the audio programmers . In the three main areas of the game world , there are unique ambiances ; these are broken down into smaller sounds , such as bugs and animals , which are further refined to reflect the weather and time . The sound department was given specific instructions for the tone of game locations ; for example , Thieves ' Landing was to feel " creepy " and " off @-@ putting " . The sounds of the game 's weapons were also intricately developed ; in order to feel as realistic as possible , each weapon has a variety of similar firing sounds . The development of the game 's Foley began with a week @-@ long session , where two Foley artists from Los Angeles were sent to record thousands of sounds relating to the game 's setting . The sound department also spent time on specific gameplay elements ; Dead Eye was meant to sound " organic " as opposed to " sci @-@ fi or electronic " , while animals ? a feature that the team found challenging ? was to immerse players in the experience . For the final sound mix , audio director Jeffrey Whitcher and lead sound designer Matthew Smith worked together to balance and blend the three main aspects of the soundtrack : dialogue , sound effects , and music . Smith coded systems to blend the three aspects , in order to keep the mix " dynamic " .

= = Business = =

= = = Announcement = = =

An early trailer for Red Dead Redemption was sent to a select number of people at a Sony conference in 2005 , promoting the release of the PlayStation 3 . The trailer was a technology demonstration of the Rockstar Advanced Game Engine ( RAGE ) . It was referred to as " Old West

Project " , and a sequel to Red Dead Revolver . The trailer circulated throughout the Internet .

On February 3 , 2009 , Rockstar Games officially announced Red Dead Redemption . The April 2009 edition of Game Informer confirmed that the game would be released for the PlayStation 3 , Xbox 360 , and Microsoft Windows ; Rockstar later confirmed that this listing was a mistake , and that the game would not be released for Windows . On November 25 , 2009 , Rockstar confirmed Red Dead Redemption would be released in April 2010 . On March 4 , 2010 , Rockstar pushed the release date back to May 2010 , citing the " optimal time frame " for release .

= = = Promotion = = =

The game was extensively marketed through video trailers and press demonstrations . On December 1 , 2009 , the debut trailer , titled " My Name is John Marston " , was released . It depicted several scenes from the game , introducing main protagonist John Marston ( Rob Wiethoff ) . On December 15 , 2009 , the first in a series of gameplay videos , titled " Introduction " , was released . It was the first footage to showcase the gameplay of Red Dead Redemption . The second in this series , titled " Weapons & Death " , was released on January 28 , 2010 , particularly focusing on the game 's weapons .

On February 11 , 2010 , a new trailer was released . Titled " The Law " , the trailer introduced the characters who are a part of the law , including Marshal Leigh Johnson and Edgar Ross . This was followed by a new video on February 24 , 2010 , titled " The Women : Sinners , Saints & Survivors " , which focused on the female characters of the game . A trailer for the game 's exclusive pre @-@ order content was released on March 16 , 2010 . The third in the series of gameplay videos , titled " Life in the West " , was released on March 19 , 2010 . It focused on the activities available for players in the game .

The game 's cover art was revealed on March 22 , 2010 , followed by a video titled " Gentlemen & Vagabonds " on March 24 , focusing on some of the male characters of the game . The game was exhibited at PAX in March 2010 . An exclusive gameplay demonstration was available at the Red Dead Redemption booth . The fourth gameplay video , titled " Life in the West Part II " , was released on April 2 , 2010 . It further showcased the activities available in the game . This was followed by " Multiplayer Free Roam " on April 8 , 2010 and " Multiplayer Competitive Modes " on April 22 , 2010 , both of which displayed exclusive footage from the online multiplayer mode of the game . From April 27 , 2010 , a trailer for the game was aired as a television commercial in the United States . A further video for the game , titled " Revolution " , was released on May 7 , 2010 . It focused on the Mexican characters of the game . Red Dead Redemption was the focus of the May 7 , 2010 episode of GameTrailers TV with Geoff Keighley , featuring exclusive gameplay footage of the game . The final pre @-@ launch trailer was released on May 13 , 2010 .

Viral marketing strategies were used to market the game . The official Red Dead Redemption website was redesigned on March 16 , April 14 , April 21 , April 26 , May 10 , and May 12 , 2010 . To encourage pre @-@ order sales , Rockstar collaborated with several retail outlets to provide pre @-@ order bonuses . These included an exclusive outfit , weapon and horse for players to use in the game . The game 's official soundtrack was also offered as a pre @-@ order bonus .

To promote the game , some pieces of artwork depicting the characters were painted as murals in some cities . Art depicting the game was featured on NASCAR driver Joey Logano 's car in April and June 2010 . A machinima short film , titled Red Dead Redemption : The Man from Blackwater , aired on the television network Fox on May 29 , 2010 . Directed by John Hillcoat , the film retells several of the game 's earlier missions in which Marston attempts to find and kill Bill Williamson . Rockstar also developed a Facebook application based on the game , titled Red Dead Redemption : Gunslingers . Released on April 12 , 2010 , the game was a role @-@ playing social game that allowed players to duel their friends ; it is no longer available , due to updates on the Facebook platform .

= = = Staff complaints = = =

In January 2010 , Gamasutra published a blog post written by an individual using the name " Rockstar Spouse " . The post outlined the unethical working practices in place at Rockstar San Diego during the game 's developing , including twelve @-@ hour work days and six @-@ day weeks , with lower @-@ than @-@ the @-@ industry @-@ average salary increase . Other former Rockstar San Diego employees described the project as " an organic disaster of the most epic proportions " , that the game had been in development for over four years , and that game developers from Rockstar Toronto , Vancouver , Leeds , New England , and the Midnight Club team at San Diego had been transferred over to work on the game . Rockstar responded in a statement , claiming " this is a case of people taking the opinions of a few anonymous posters on message boards as fact " .

In April 2010 , an email sent by Rockstar 's public relations department to a journalist of the magazine Zoo was published online . The email reported that Rockstar was requesting Zoo 's review of the game should reflect " the huge achievement " of Red Dead Redemption . Subsequently , Zoo fired the journalist , reiterating that " at no time has Rockstar ever sought a preferential review in return for advertising " .