**Spring 2013**

***“Fallen Star, Fallen Empire”***

***Project Design Proposal***

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| **Date Submitted: April 15, 2013** |  |

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**Abstract:**

The goal of the project is to create the foundational layer for a long term RPG setting that could be used to create a working, publishable title given proper resources and an adequate amount of time. By the conclusion of this project two notable achievements should have been accomplished - a fully working vertical slice which should represent, as accurately as possible given time limitations, what the final project would be capable of looking like as well as a novella giving enough weight and details to the world and some principle characters that would give a sense of what issues the final game could tackle in this world. The project should begin on April 15th, 2013, and conclude on June 28th, 2013, and will likely require at least 3 full time days a week to finish.

# Introduction

The “Fallen Star, Fallen Empire” project is the realization of a campaign setting developed in 2006 by Tomas Rodriguez (then called Legends of Barbaria, Blackwater Chronicles, and The Outstriders depending on the version) in which a crew from a sci-fi universe crash lands on an unfamiliar planet in the middle of a war on technology. The project will be broken into two parts – a 30 page or more novella which details the crash itself and the impact it has on most of the crew who survive, and an RPG of the last survivor, who has woken up inside the crash site years after the event.

## Learning Objectives

### Managing a large software project

Up until this point, the team has solely been exposed to short term, solitary assignments that were independent of a larger goal. One of the goals of this assignment, then, is to familiarize the team with the costs and procedures of a larger project that extends over the course of weeks toward a desired goal.

### Editing Process for long form narrative

While there is a familiarity with short form narrative such as narrative poetry and short stories on the project, long form narrative may potentially have different a different editing process which should come out of experimentation.

### Completion of a Unity 3D project

This will be the test of all previously acquired Unity3D knowledge, and it is anticipated even more will be learned before the project is completed. Experienced users of Unity3D will be on hand in Drexel’s lab on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to consult should any problems exist that are beyond the ability of the team to troubleshoot.

## Major Tasks

### Prewriting

For the Novella, a Character Description Sheet and a Plotline are needed before attempting to do anything longer than 10 pages. For the RPG the same must be provided as well as a Systems Design, a Software requirements document, and a list of all visual and audio assets that need to be generated.

### Paper Skill System prototype

Early in the process, the design document should be prototyped in some sort of paper and pencil form. Potentially, a grid should be created for combat testing, with something else for non-combat testing.

### Digital Prototypes

Individual Digital Systems need to be prototyped before a full prototype can be attempted. A series of these will be done and then integrated into a final build.

### Novella Drafts

At least 3 drafts should be done for the Novella before a final draft is agreed upon.

## Desired Outcomes

In the end, a full, 30+ page novella should be developed that incorporates characters from the RPG and the world that the RPG takes place in. In addition, one area of the RPG should be implemented to the point where the “Rest of the game” could be interpreted as an extended version of the final integrated prototype. Enough art and sound should be developed that the final protype represents a “vertical slice” of a complete RPG.

# Deliverables

## Character Description Sheet for Novella

A description of the characters that will be central to the plot of the Novella. Whatever plot is developed should be explained by character traits on this description sheet.

## Plot Diagram for Novella

A detailed plot diagram that establishes where the characters will go and what they will do.

## First Third of Initial Draft

The first 10 pages or so of the novella.

## Second Third of Initial Draft

The next 10 pages of the novella

## Final Third of Initial Draft

Conclusion of novella.

## Revision Drafts

Revised versions of Novella by way of general edits

## Line and Copy Edit Marks

A line by line adjustment of the text based solely on style consistency, spelling, grammar, tone, and formatting. No large edits should be made for this

## Area Description for RPG Vertical Slice

### Character Description Sheet for RPG

A detailed description of all the characters in the area, including what they should say, what they have, and what they want to do

### Skills Description

All uses of skills in an area should go here

## Skills Paper Prototype

A model of the in game skills should be made using a cardboard grid and a notebook, potentially with some dice.

## Digital Systems Tests

### Digital Combat Test

The digital combat test should demonstrate grid based movement, flanking, combat based skills and spells, flanking, melee zoning, evasion, item usage, and proper victory and defeat conditions

### Digital Conversation test

The digital conversation test should be capable of skill and non skill based interaction, with some way of differentiating the two. It should also be able to link between multiple conversation trees and demonstrate reactivity based on characteristics and reputation.

### Digital Exploration Test

The digital exploration test should demonstrate out of combat movement, inventory management, shopkeeping, navigation between areas, non-combat skills and spells, sneaking, quest giving, sidequest reactivity, doors,looting, and container interaction.

### Integrated Systems Test

This test should demonstrate an ability to, starting from exploration mode, transition into conversation mode and back into exploration mode, and then from exploration mode into combat mode and back. All features of each mode should be demonstrated as working.

## Vertical Slice

This is the realization of the Area Description Sheet using the tools proven in the integrated systems test. Ideally this should include visual and audio assets that at least attempt to represent what the final experience would look like if this were to be fully implemented.

# Project Timeline

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Week** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Task** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10** |
| Prewriting | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Novella - Initial Draft |  | x | x | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Novella - Revising |  |  |  |  |  | x | x | x | x |  |
| Copy and Line editing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |
| Design and Documentation | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Paper Prototype | x | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Digital Exploration Test |  | x | x | x | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Digital Combat Test |  |  |  |  | x | x | x |  |  |  |
| Digital Conversation Test |  |  |  |  |  | x | x | x |  |  |
| Integrated Test |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x | x |
| Vertical Slice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | x | x |

Table : The Project Timeline. Combat and Conversation currently work independent of the engine, so they do not have toned as much time as other tasks.

# Facilities and Resources

This project will be completed in the Software Engineering Lab at Drexel University on a laptop. The project will use a freely provided version of the Unity 3D game development engine and Microsoft Visual Studio 2012 for its development environment. For the Vertical Slice, assets will be created using Paint.NET and sounds will be created using a microphone and Audacity. Music will probably be synthesized using Abelton Live and recorded by Audacity.

# Expertise

The project will require an intermediate level of Unity experience, as the vast majority of the coding is happening outside of the scope of Unity’s built-in objects. When needed, the Unity Scripting Reference will be used to supplement current knowledge.

# Budget

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| --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Projected Cost** |
| Bag of Dice | 19.99 |
| ***TOTAL*** | **19.99** |

The simple budget for the project

## Bag of Dice

For creating the skills paper prototype, a bag of dice of assorted sizes is necessary to represent a diverse set of potential probabilities. For example, damage from a dagger should have a smaller threat range that that from a sword, and for this reason a 4 sided die might be used for the dagger and a 10 sided die for the sword. Currently, we only possess 6 sided dies, which limits our probably ranges to be based on multiples of 6.

## Chipsounds

Not included in the budget, Chipsounds is a professional tool used to synthesize the musical sounds of classic computers such as the Atari 800 or the sound chips of early videogame consoles. It’s most popular use among musicians is as an instrument in itself, but it has been recommended to the project by composer Dain Saint as a way to compose music through limitation. The limited nature of the sounds and the restriction to 4 tracks and percussion has been said to expose compositional flaws often hidden in traditional music compositions, and the music produced will combine well with a pixilated art style that is easy for this project’s artist to use. At $95.00 dollars, however, it is a luxury purchase whose basic purpose may not be necessary should the project be sufficiently delayed enough that a vertical slice is unattainable, but it does provide many benefits not available in the free software we are prepared to use and we found it worth mentioning.