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1. Introduction

Robota is a third person, tactical-action game for next-generation consoles. Trading the focus on stealth for agility, both the detailed combat system and environmental features are extended for an immediate experience adding an even greater intensity to a genre synonymous with dramatic depth and nuance.

This will immerse the player in true cinematic storytelling, dramatically punctuated with intense combat.

The cinematic story features are also developed to include player/character progression.

Targeted at the core game-playing market of males, teens and up, Robota will deliver breakthrough tactical-action in combination with a unique style and setting that clearly delineates the title from other entries in the genre.



The combination of knife-edge action and dynamic visual presentation results in an unforgettable experience.

2. Background

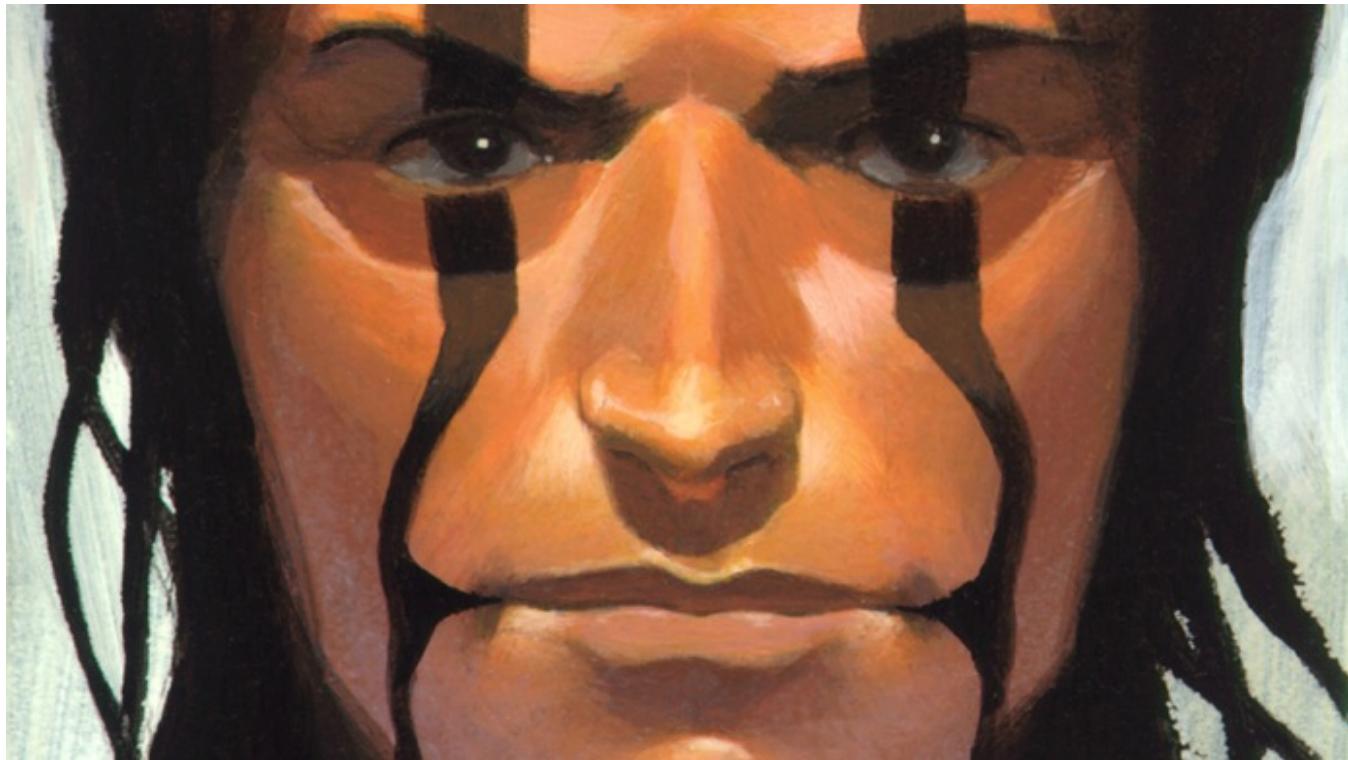
Doug Chiang's Robota is a science fiction epic, set in a vividly realized world with a rich and detailed history. The book, by Doug Chiang and Orson Scott Card, tells a story of the conflict that has ravaged the world of Robota for centuries. The game creates a complementary storyline to the narrative established in the book, adding details for fans of the series and dramatic focus for all players.

Robota embraces the evocative art direction established by Doug Chiang, expanding the vision into fully realized 3D environments. Harnessing the power of latest generation graphics technology, the world will live and breathe through the use of advanced shader effects, dramatic lighting, particulates and powerful character animation.

The gameplay itself draws heavily on the established mythology of Robota. The key features of the game are all derived from the ideas expressed in Doug's work. The player's super-human kinetic movements, the focus on gladiatorial combat and the extension of the player's abilities through the recollection of memories are all elements to be found in Robota's existing materials.

This close relationship between Robota's narrative and action elements allows for a uniquely action-driven approach to visual storytelling. An approach perfectly suited to immersive gameplay.

Robota is a tale of a hero without memory, pitted against an army of ruthless robots, bent on the destruction of all organic life. The combination of knife-edge action and dynamic visual presentation results in an unforgettable experience, building a fan base for future adventures in the world of Robota.



3. Gameplay Illustration

The bridge appears deserted. Across, the city looms, the once ornate buildings bear the scars of a huge conflict. Scanning the city for signs of movement you notice only a flock of birds scratching in the dirt. Suddenly, an alarm, the birds take to the air. You peer into the incessant wind, dust clouding the view. Something moves out of cover of the buildings.

Robots!

Bearing the marks of Kaantur's elite SS-5 units, the group advances onto the bridge, looking for something. You!

You pull back into the cover of the trees, weighing the odds. This is just a small patrol. Checking the walls for snipers you decide to engage. Climbing high into the canopy you find a branch that arcs above the bridge. The robots are advancing carefully, scanning the banks for movement, any tell tale sign of life.

You run and jump. Leaves disturbed by the rush alert the robots, but it's too late. Your leap has taken you 20 meters above their heads and you are already plummeting down from above, fighting staff gripped in your hands.

Your landing knocks the nearest robot off its feet and over the precipice. It clings precariously by one hand above the drop. In one swift movement, you turn and strike the next robot leaping 5 meters to inflict the blow full force. The blow knocks it back, crippling its left arm.

You turn again in time to see the last robot coiled in a strike position. In its hands it grasps a menacing two-handed blade. It begins to circle, slowly, hissing.

You tense ready for the attack. A dash would be fruitless at this point, the robot is ready. As you desperately search for a weak point, the robot suddenly springs forward. The speed of the attack surprises you and you just manage to parry the blow enough to throw the robot to the side, its blade slicing the air behind you.

Off balance you roll to the side to gain some room. Regaining your composure you realize that one of the other robots has recovered and is flanking you with a short sword in its remaining good hand. This time you decide to rush your adversary before it gets into position.

The robot is vulnerable to the left and your fighting staff lands a blow. You follow up with a direct thrust, but the robot parries the attack, pushing the metal tip away from its neck. Instead it catches the robots shoulder above the damaged arm, fluid sprays from the wound.

The robot coils back, menacingly.

You realize the element of surprise is gone. You look to the side and notice the third robot climbing back onto the bridge. It didn't fall to its death!

Attempting to regain the initiative you focus on the wounded robot. You attack with a barrage of blows, focusing on devastating combinations whilst leaping in and out of range of the robots counters.

The robot with the double-handed sword leaps at your back, but with astounding agility you leap into the air with a back somersault.

You land behind the robots errant charge and simultaneously thrust the tip of your staff into the base of its spine. It crumples to the floor. Their commander destroyed, the two remaining robots pull back, unsure.

You leap forward for the kill, but the still undamaged robot leaps in front to block the attack, clutching short daggers in each hand. You parry fast strikes as it slashes at you.

You back off, waiting for your opportunity. Without warning, it leaps forward. Just in time you step to the side, swinging your staff to block the attack. The swinging staff catches the robot as it passes. The strength of the blow throws the robot clear of the bridge. This time, there's no hanging on.

You turn to finish the last robot, but the bridge is empty. Although it's wounded, you know that it is already calling for reinforcements. You turn and run for the shelter of the city. In a series of leaps, you scale the wall and dive into the shadows.





An advanced, extensible melee combat system, incorporating force-based physics and skeletal damage.

4. Key Features

Robota the game, relies on a careful balance of game play and storytelling. It is critical to point out that the games overall dramatic presentation is a result of combinations of strong game concepts and innovative presentation. The following key features describe the core technical and game elements that combine to achieve the experience.

- An advanced, extensible melee combat system, incorporating force-based physics and skeletal damage.
- Powerful animation features that combine key-frame techniques with Inverse Kinematics and physics for incredibly natural effects.
- Hyper-kinetic player character allowing navigation to become an integral game play challenge.
- Core linear story structure with open ended game experience.
- A dramatic, intelligent camera that frames the action in a fluid and exciting manner.
- Aggressive, group based enemy AI incorporating rank and environmental awareness.
- Tribal robot organization incorporating body markings and varied weaponry and tactics.
- Interactive and destructible environments with physical properties for sophisticated game play.
- Navigational challenges that reward the player with definite tactical advantages.
- Average time of 15-20 hrs of gameplay.

In addition to these specific, core features, Robota will include advanced graphical and audio techniques and utilize 480 progressive scan output with Dolby Surround Sound, for a deeply immersive experience.



Robota has a unique visual style and setting that takes tactical-action into an entirely new realm.

5. Genre

Robota is primarily a tactical-action game. As such it incorporates all the hallmarks of the genre established by games such as Metal Gear Solid and Splinter Cell. These are, specifically: heroic characterization, cinematic action, the inclusion of tactical decisions that weight the outcome of situations, complex environmental interaction and exceptionally dangerous enemies.

As described in the design appendix of this document, Robota pushes the boundaries on all these features to create an experience that is deeper than its current competitors.

Additionally, it has a unique visual style and setting that takes tactical-action into an entirely new realm. The game's hero is more dynamic, the combat system more dramatic and the environments more visually striking and challenging.

Robota is most definitely not a Metal Gear clone; it is an exceptionally unique take on the tactical-action genre. The inclusion of a more dynamic and action-driven play style broadens the game's appeal

beyond the hardcore fans, leading to even greater sales potential.

Robota is an exciting opportunity to establish a new videogame franchise, capable of delivering the depth of experience required by the evolving audience and art of videogames.

Appendix: Design Notes

i: Navigation and Exploration

Environmental navigation in Robota combines both physical and mental challenges. It is also critical for establishing tactical advantages in combat scenarios. The system is immediate and accessible, but allows for a great degree of context-sensitive variation.

The player's basic moves are easy to execute with WALK/RUN handled by the analog stick and JUMP and CROUCH having designated buttons on the controller.

The systems depth and flexibility comes from the use of button combinations and the inclusion of a further context-sensitive ACTION button.

An example of this flexibility is in the use of the CROUCH button. When standing still or walking, the button simply makes the player-character assume a crouch position. When crouched, moving the analog stick will produce a crawl.

Hitting CROUCH when running will produce a roll to a crouch position, useful for quickly getting into hiding. The CROUCH button also modifies the player's landing from a jump, allowing for a 'stealth' landing.

The context-sensitive ACTION button is used for extended moves such as grabs, pulls and pushes that can be combined with the basic moves for an incredible array of environmentally dependant variations.

The key purpose of the navigational elements of the game is to enable the player to explore the environment and gain positional superiority ahead of a combat scenario.

Learning to exploit the environment to your advantage is a key skill, vital to the player's chance of success.

Height, shadows, and environmental occlusion are all elements that can be exploited by the player. However, reaching these areas will require both mental and physical dexterity.



Environmental navigation in Robota combines both physical and mental challenges.

ii: Combat and Enemies

Robota's combat system differs from other tactical-action games in that its core focus is on melee encounters. The player's primary weapon is a fighting staff, tipped with a metal piercing alloy. In combination with the character's super-human speed and strength, the staff becomes a devastating weapon. The player starts the game with a basic set of moves grouped as light attacks, heavy attacks and blocks. Each of these groups is assigned to a specific controller button.

Variations on these moves come from input from the directional pad and from decisions based on whether the player is stationary, running or jumping. As with the navigation system, context sensitivity is the key to the system's flexibility. Targeting is intuitively handled by resolving directional input and target proximity.

The adoption of a physical fighting system also allows for the inclusion of a significant tactical dimension. Moment-by-moment, the player must choose the appropriate attack for the most relevant target.

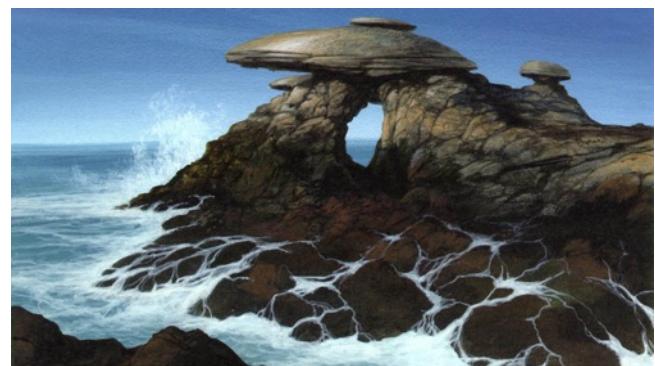
Enemies in Robota are generally encountered in groups. Members of each group may pose greater or lesser threats depending on proximity, weaponry and position in the command chain. Identifying each enemy's threat, vulnerability and command position is central to the player's success when executing combat moves.

This focus on real-time tactics provides a more natural and dramatic combat experience. To echo this, damage levels are the result of the force of each blow and are inflicted on the skeletal component that is struck. Enemy skeletons consist of limbs, torso and head for the purpose of the combat system. Additionally, striking the weapon-carrying hand with sufficient force can disarm enemies.

The robots in Robota are not the large, cumbersome designs found in other games. They are sleek, agile warriors carrying the legacy of their gladiatorial heritage. They carry a variety of hand weapons, including swords, spears and lances.

With their incredible speed and strength, even a disarmed robot carries itself with considerable menace.

The robots have also become regionally distinct, forming into tribes that exhibit variations in weaponry and fighting styles. This tribal organization is visually reflected in their adoption of painted warrior markings. The tribal and regional variation in the robot ranks enables the game to provide a wide variety of combat challenges.



As with the navigation system, context sensitivity is the key to the system's flexibility.

iii: Character Progression and Customization

Robota includes two primary methods for player character development. Character progression is not a core mechanic, rather it serves to extend the combat system and encourage greater emotional investment in the character and story by the player.

The first method is derived from the hero's ability to rapidly learn new combat techniques through exposure. That is to say, that by fighting enemies the character has the ability to acquire that enemy's moves and techniques.

Therefore, by encountering different robot tribes, the player is able to develop a unique arsenal of combat abilities.

The various fighting styles included in Robota have relative strengths and vulnerabilities. Learning to utilize these techniques in different situations adds a final tactical dimension to the combat system.

Although less important than environmental and situational factors, it is a level of detail that the more adventurous player will appreciate.

The second character element is the mechanism for regaining the player-characters memories. Memories are reclaimed by the discovery of memory deposits, deep in the earth.

Ancient technology allows the player to interface to these deposits and gain access to information regarding all aspects of Robota. This information will provide history and strategic information that will direct the players adventure.

These deposits must be discovered through exploration and are often hidden. By reclaiming his past, the player will protect his future.



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