GAME PROMOTION & MARKETING COURSE 1 – GAME PROTOTYPING

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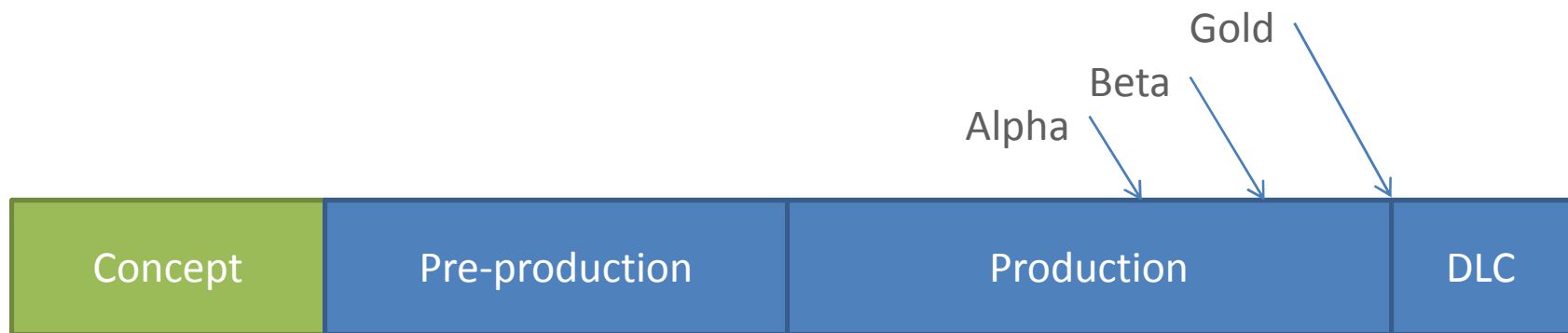Email : saru@salimnoatelier.com

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Starting at the concept phase

At the concept phase, you need to be able pitch your game idea and for that you will need to:

- Start writing a design document
- Start doing a budget
- **Do prototype**
- **Present (pitch) your game to others people**

Gold

Beta

Alpha

| Concept | Pre-production | Production | DLC |

Prototype

What is a game prototype?

A prototype is an early sample, model, or release of a product built to test a concept or process or to act as a thing to be replicated or learned from.*

For us, game prototypes are useful because it helps us:

- Spot problems with the **main gameplay mechanics** early
- Spot **technical problems** early
- Evaluate if the game idea has **potential** or not
- Adjust the game's **design**, **budget** and **schedule**

* Wikipedia

What is in your prototype?

For a prototype to be useful, it absolutely need to include:

- The **main gameplay mechanics** of your game (jumping, shooting, etc.)
- **A small part of a level** that to showcase all that can be done with the main gameplay mechanics.

Don't:

- Waste time on the **art** unless it's part of the gameplay experience (ex. Journey)
- Waste time on **mechanics that are secondary** to the experience (mini games, complex menus, etc.)

When prototyping, I suggest keeping the design document very **light** while **experimenting and revising your design directly with the prototype**.

Some tips when prototyping?

Some tips when prototyping:

- Prototype on **paper** first if you can

- Keep it **simple** and small

- Don't spend too much **time** on it (a few weeks)

- Try new random things, some **fun new mechanics might emerge**

- Playtest and ask for **feedback** from other developer friends

- **Iterate** a lot!

- Make your prototype **visually pretty** only if your plan to showcase it (ex. To a publisher)

Video : Narbacular Drop (http://youtu.be/acs3NLXWphQ)

After the prototype

When you feel that your game mechanics are solid and fun, you can start working on the actual game.

At this point **the prototype can still be used**:

- The **code and assets can be used as a starting point** for the game (you just continue on re-iterating on the prototype)

- The level created for the prototype can be **a level later** on in the game (not the first level)
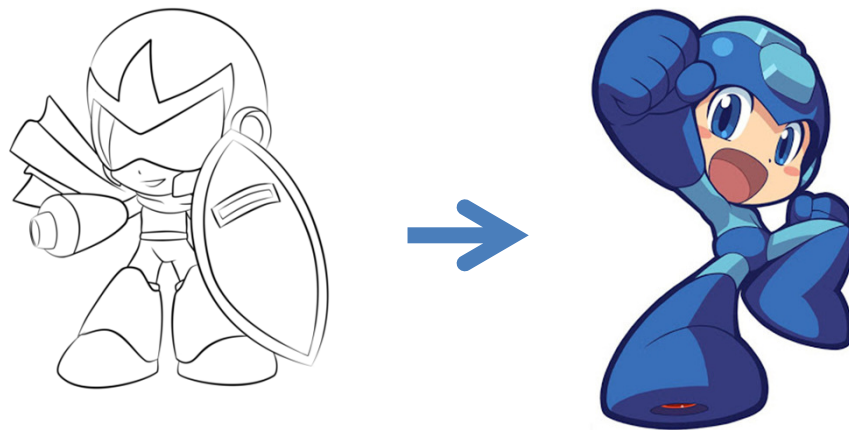
Presenting you game

Game Pitch

The pitch is one of the major presentation that you likely need to make when developing your game.

It should only have basic things like:

- The clear description of **main gameplay mechanics**

- What makes your game **unique** (mechanics, art, etc.)

- A few **example of level design** that can emerge from those mechanics

- A short description of the **story direction** and themes

- A short description of the **visual art**

- An short description of the **scope** (ex. 3 hour game set in 4 levels)

- The **time** and **budget** needed to complete the game (we got this info when we made the budget)

- **Prediction** of sales (we will cover that later)

Note: GnR Pitch Document (very early!)

Planning your presentation

When pitching or promoting your game, you will need to be able to talk in front of an audience.

When planning your presentation you should:

- Define your **objectives** (ex. get funding, inform fans, etc.)
- Know your **audience** (ex. Focus on the budget for investors)
- Understand the **context** of your presentation (ex. Indie meet up)

Note: Know your limits, if you are not confortable in front of an audience, you can let others of your team talk; but make sure you can support them during the presentation in other ways (play the game, answer questions, etc.)

The introduction

During the introduction of your presentation, you should:

- **Introduce** your team
- Define the **purpose** of the presentation (the topic or problem)
- Establish your **credibility** (credentials, experiences, etc.)
- Go over briefly the **main points** to be covered

The development

During the second part of your presentation, you are talking about your topic:

- Make it clear to the audience **why they should care** about the topic
- **Develop a clear need or problem** that you and the audience will solve together
- Incorporate **relevant arguments and examples** with a variety of **supporting materials** (video, pictures, graph)
- **Involve the audience** by asking questions to everyone

The development

If your topic involve a solution, you will present it in the third part of your presentation:

- Present the **solution**

- Help the audience visualize the **benefits** of the solution

- Phrase the solution in terms of the audience's **need**

The conclusion

During the conclusion:

- **Reiterate** the presentation's key message (problem and solution)
- Recommend **action**
- Provide **closure**
- Answer **questions**

Tips when doing a presentation

- Learn as much as you can about your **audience**, and address them from their perspective
- Make your presentation as **short** as possible so your audience does not lose interest; It's better to make fewer points and make them well
- Plan on what to **skip** in the event of your time been cut short
- Use simple **visuals** (easy to read from far, easy to understand)
- Don't **over charge** a slide with information (only 3 to 6 points per slide)
- Use **color**, where possible, but not excessively
- Avoid **Jargon** or terms that might be unfamiliar to the audience

Tips when doing a presentation (cont.)

Some tips:

- **Practice** your presentation on a test audience
- **Test your equipment** and prepare for contingencies (game, slides, etc.)
- Make and maintain **eye contact** with your audience
- Add **humour**
- Provide **analogies** and vivid **examples**
- **Anticipate** as much **questions** as possible and design a respond
- If you don't know the answer to a question, direct the person to another source, offer to get the answer later, or ask whether someone in the audience can answer the question
- **Accept nervousness** as natural

Working space

Working space

You will be working for a long time on making and promoting your game; when starting your project make sure that you have a good working space.

Working space

To make your working space confortable:

- Make sure you have plenty of **skylight** (windows)
- Add **plants** (they have a range of benefits, they are proven to reduce stress)
- Get a confortable **chair**
- Make sure you have plenty of **space** to move
- **Clean** your work space regularly

Video

Jonathan Blow: Indie Prototyping (http://youtu.be/ISutk1mauPM)

Homework

- Enjoy your weekend!

Bibliographies

Books:

Giving Presentation by Havard Business School Press

Dropbox link to course presentations:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3zhrwn6nxrr5ywh/AACKUZSxAv30yzCH9qopVmlia