

Video Game Design

Jeff Wilson

jeff@imtc.gatech.edu

Design Documents



Game **DESIGN** Workshop

A PLAYCENTRIC APPROACH TO
CREATING INNOVATIVE GAMES

by Tracy Fullerton

with a foreword by Eric Zimmerman

 CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group



Game Design Workshop

Chapter 14 Communicating your Designs



Design Document

- Communicates overall vision of the game to all team members
- “Living Document” (Evolving)
- Not a substitute for team meetings and in-person communication



Audience of Document

- **Team Members**
 - Production team
 - Publisher
 - Marketing team
 - Anyone else with vested interest in game



What's in it?

- Overall Game Concept
- Target Audience
- Gameplay (Formal Elements)
- Interfaces
- Controls
- Characters
- Levels
- Media Assets
- etc.



When to Write?

- After building and playtesting several iterations of a working prototype of your game
- Experience with gameplay makes it easier to articulate ideas in design doc



Length

- Don't write just for the sake of writing
- Write clearly and concisely
- Can be created in 50 to 100 well-organized pages
- Not unusual to see 600-page design docs in the industry, but *not recommended*
- (VGD students should expect considerably shorter DDoc for their game)

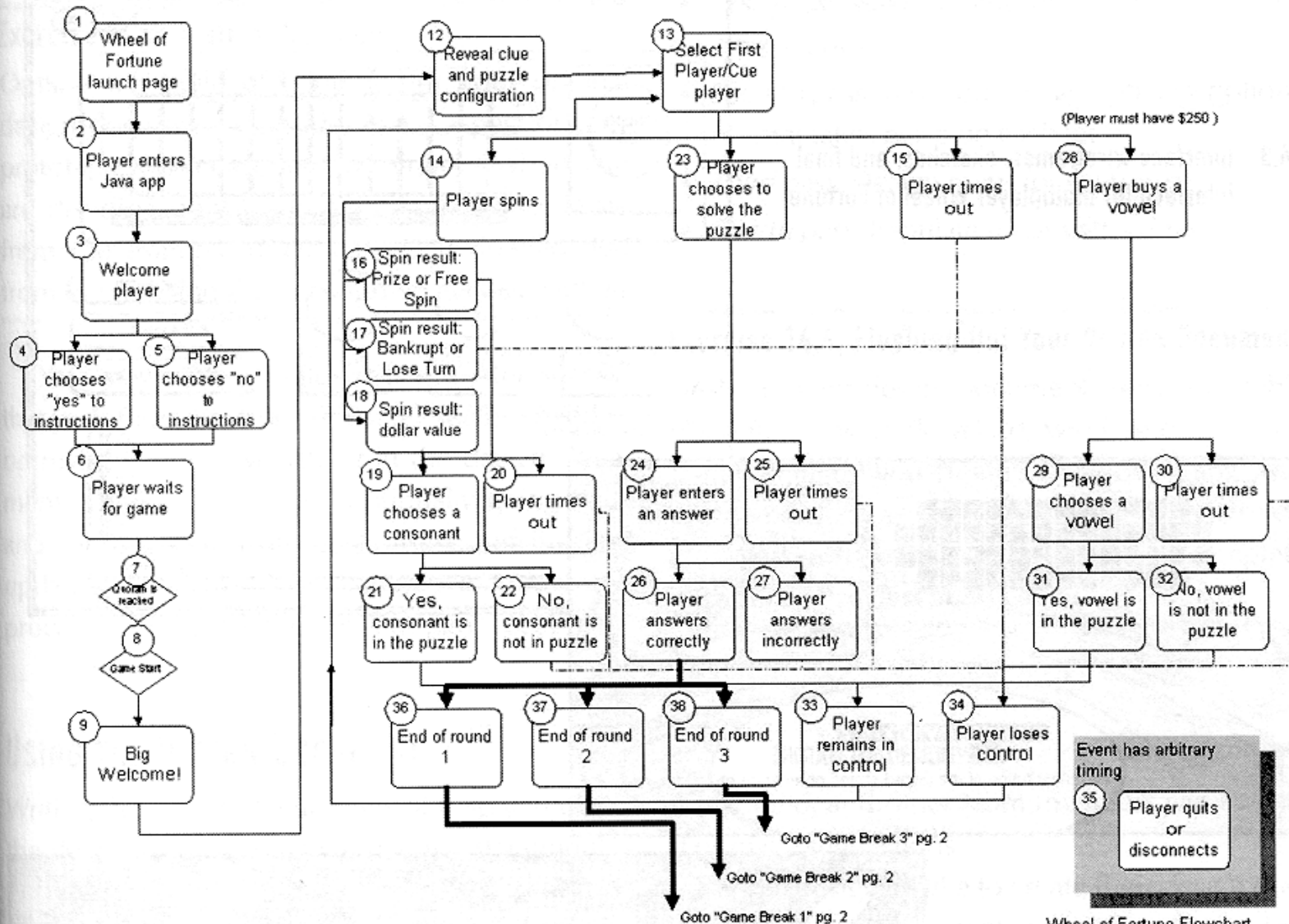


How to Write?

- Start with flowchart
 - Maps how players move through game
- Wireframe interface screens
 - (sketches/mockups)
- Move to outline (modular approach)
- Fill in the sections
- Revise/iterate
- Keep a change log at the beginning of the document (once first draft is complete)
- *Make sure to let team members know when design document changes*

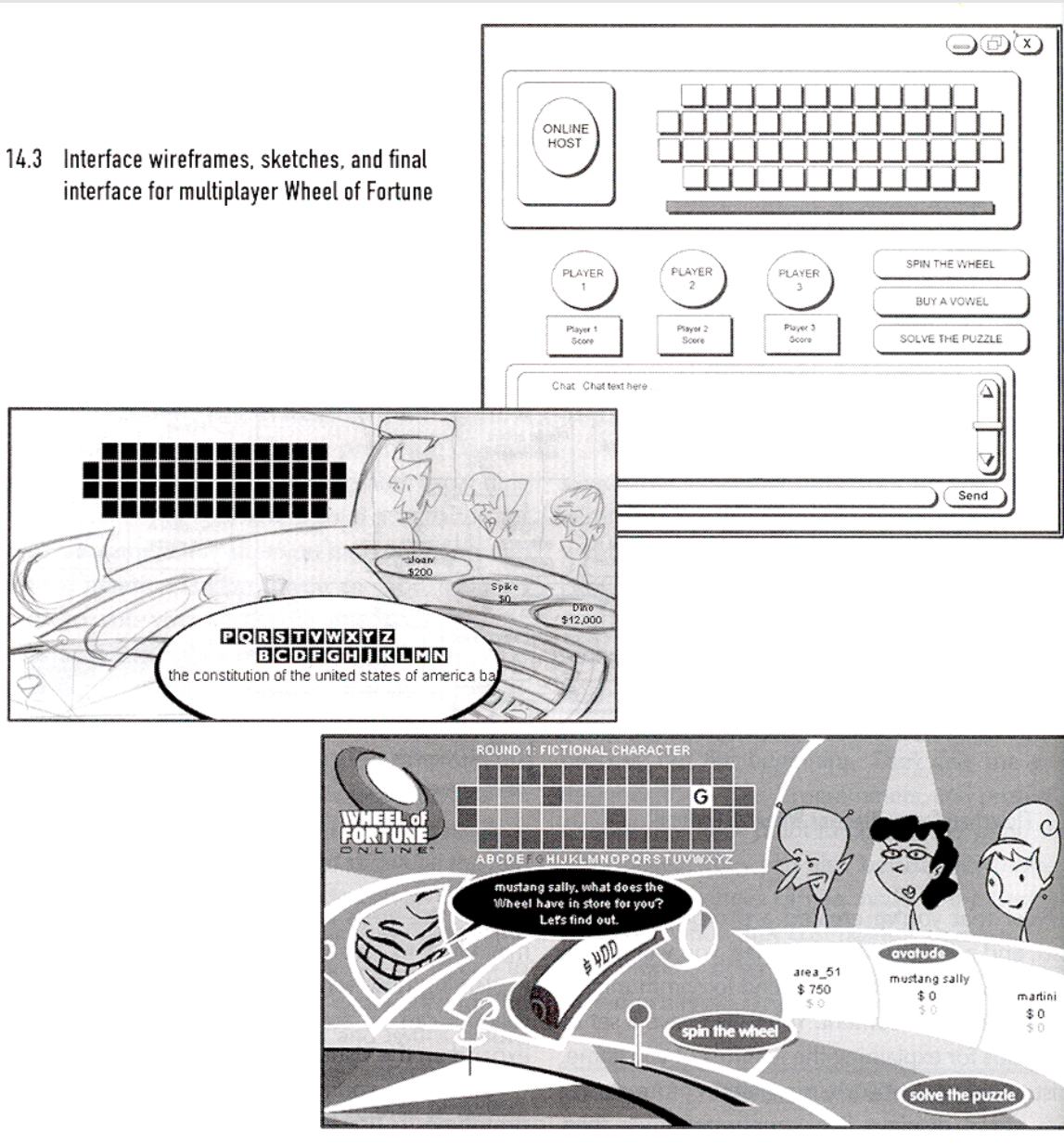


Flow Chart



Wire Frame

14.3 Interface wireframes, sketches, and final interface for multiplayer Wheel of Fortune



Related Documents

- Large projects may break down DDoc into **sub-documents** that are specific to certain areas of game. DDoc may refer to sub-docs
- **Technical Specification Document** – details technical aspects of game such as algorithms



Design is Law? The fallacy of over designing

- Ion Storm example
- “[Ion Storm's] primary mistake was believing that abstract creative design was a primary, or even significant, part of a successful game. The "strategic creativity" in a game is less than 1% of the effort, and if you put that on a pedestal, you will [deemphasize] where all the real work needs to be done.” – John Carmack, id Software

