Fall 2014: Pitch/Game Design Documents

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Game Design Process

Before you start writing things down...

Game Design Process

❏ **Brainstorming**

  ❏ Concept
  ❏ Context
  ❏ Content and Features
  ❏ Mechanics

These can be done in any order; what order fits *your* design?

(From Gamasutra - [Game Design Cognition: The Bottom-Up And Top-Down Approaches](#))

Game Design: Concept

Concept

❏ What is the **definition** of your game?
  ❏ Genre
  ❏ Overall action
  ❏ Establish vision and focus: "What **kind** of game is this?"

Ex.: "A top-down adventure game in which the player explores dungeons, solves puzzles, defeats enemies, and collects lots of cool items."

Game Design: Context

Context

❏ **What** is the player doing? **Why** is he/she doing it?
   ❏ Setting (Place/Time)
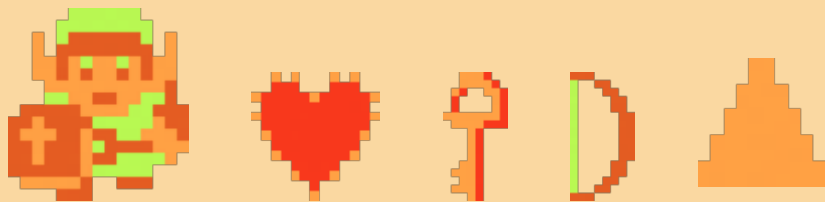   ❏ Motivation
   ❏ Story, if applicable

Ex.: "The game takes place in the fantasy kingdom of Hyrule, where the player must collect eight pieces of the Triforce in order to save the princess."

Game Design: Content and Features

Content

❏ **What** does the player **interact with** in the game?
  ❏ Weapons
  ❏ Items
  ❏ Characters (Avatars)

Ex.:

Game Design: Features

Features

- **How** does the player interact with the game?
    - How does the game behave as a result of player actions?
    - How does the player utilize the content presented to him/her?
        - Emergent behaviors

Ex.: "Discovering new items allows the player to explore a wider variety of locations."

Game Design: Mechanics

Mechanics

❏ The **rules** regarding the player's interaction with the game
   ❏ What **can/can't** the player do?
   ❏ Under **what conditions** can the player invoke an action?

Ex.: "The player can attack enemies one square in front of him with the sword. He can use the bow to attack enemies which are farther away, but it costs him one Rupee per shot."

Game Design: Mechanics

More Examples of Game Mechanics:

- ❏ Turns
- ❏ Action Points
- ❏ Movement
- ❏ Resources
- ❏ Role-Playing

- ❏ Piece Elimination
- ❏ Puzzle-Solving
- ❏ Races
- ❏ Territory Control
- ❏ Victory Points

Game Design: Documents

Once you have your game idea in place:

- ❏ Concept Summary/Game Overview (1-Pager)
- ❏ Pitch Document
- ❏ Game Design Document

(Adapted from Scott Rogers, Level Up!: The Guide to Great Game Design)

Game Design: Documents

Concept Summary/
Game Overview (1-Pager)

A one-page summary explaining your game; if you suddenly met a millionaire on an elevator, this is what you would give him to convince him to fund your idea.

Moribonde
Game Overview

Written by fujiyosky, August '14
fujiyosky@gmail.com
fujiyosky.tumblr.com

Platform: PC/Browser
Genre: Adventure
Target Age: 12+
Target Rating: T

Story: A neurological parasite has descended upon the human population, claiming nearly 40% of lives. In the midst of this apocalyptic scene, a girl named Michelle desperately seeks out her missing friend, Tristan.

Game Summary: *Moribonde* is a point-and-click adventure game in which the player must guide main character Michelle through a series of puzzling events, culminating in her discovery of the truth surrounding her true circumstances and Tristan's disappearance.

Unique Selling Points:
- Psychological game with a powerful story
- Novel take on the zombie apocalypse theme

Similar Competitive Products/Influences:
- Eleusis
- I See You
- Imscared

Game Design: Documents

Concept Summary/
Game Overview (1-Pager)

Include:
- ❏ Platform/Genre/Target Age/Rating
- ❏ Story
- ❏ Game Summary
- ❏ Unique Selling Points
- ❏ Similar Competitive Products

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Game Design: Documents

Pitch Document/Presentation

This is the document you would present to investors who might be inclined to fund your game. Like any other presentation, tailor it to your expected audience and situation!

Moribonde

PC/Browser
Genre: Adventure
Target Age: 12+
Target Rating: T

© fujiyosky, 2014

Six years ago...

... a terrifying parasite arose in the wilds of Africa, preying viciously and indiscriminately upon all forms of local mammalian life. Although capable of infecting any manner of soft flesh, the parasite favored that of the brain and nervous system, resulting in rapid mental descent into feral aggression before the victim's inevitable death.

It was a matter of months before the parasite made its way worldwide.

Game Design: Documents

Pitch Document/Presentation

Include:

- ❏ All of the information from your one-page overview
- ❏ Further details about your game's content
- ❏ Visuals (could be original art, could be **sourced** art from other resources illustrating your intentions)

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Game Design: Documents

Game Design Document

A **working document** outlining the intended design of your game; this document establishes the foundation of your design and exists **for your reference!**
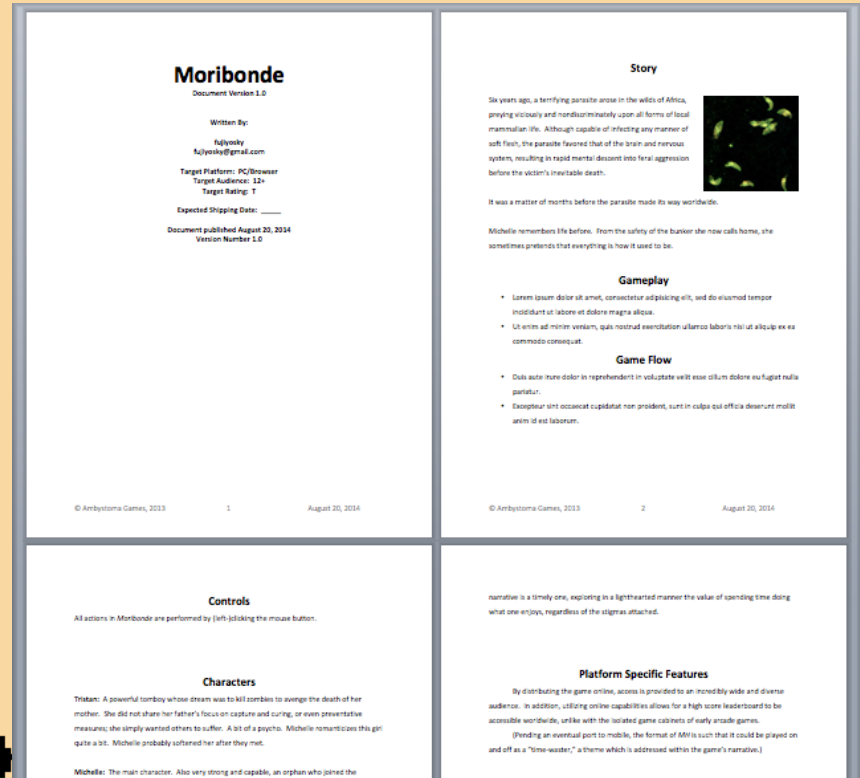
Game Design: Documents

Game Design Document

Include:
- ❏ **Game Overview**
  - ❏ Platform, Genre, Target Audience, Target Rating
  - ❏ Overall vision for the game
- ❏ **Game Specifics**
  - ❏ Gameplay, Game Flow
  - ❏ Mechanics, Controls
  - ❏ Characters, World, Story
  - ❏ Any other specific information
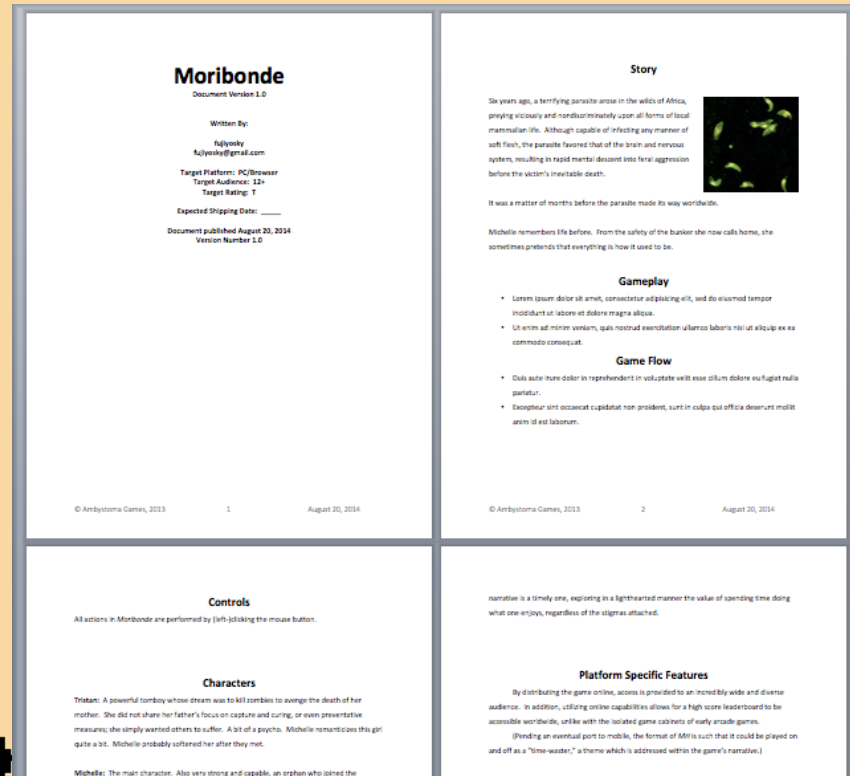
Game Design: Documents

Game Design Document

Other Considerations:
- ❏ Document Style
  - ❏ Font
    - ❏ Headers/Footers
    - ❏ Page Numbers
- ❏ Spelling
- ❏ **Visuals**

Game Design: Documents

The GDD you write will be **unique** to your game.

Be specific! Write down **all details and relevant information**, even if you go on to change them later.

This is the document your whole team will refer to during the development of your game!

Game Design: Documents

Pitch/GDD Resources:

- [Gamasutra: The Anatomy of a Design Document](#)
- [National STEM Video Game Challenge: Game Design Documents](#)
- [Game Pitches](#)
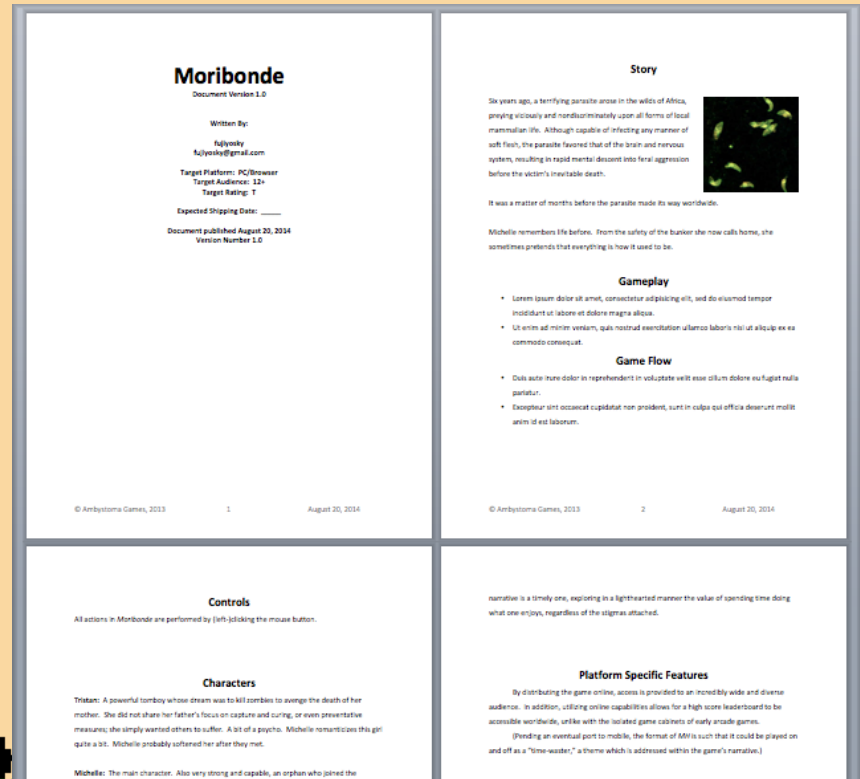
Game Design: Testing

Testing:

- Allow time for testing and revision

- Have a particular audience in mind; who should be playing this?

- Test with an "outside" audience; refrain from trying to guide testers!

- Be willing to cut elements if they don't contribute to the overall experience; consistency and cohesion are key

Conclusion

Comments? Questions?