

Game Design Concept Document

As a team, you must write a compelling document that describes and sells your video game concept. We have already passed the concept milestone, but your team needs to produce the document of this first stage of development. Remember that a new video game involves a development team pitching a game concept to a publisher. If the publisher is interested in the game concept, the team will be asked to provide a more detailed game proposal, which is then used to in deciding whether to fund development of the game.

The game concept document must concisely describe the idea for your game. You need to tell in a way that makes it clear what is compelling about the gameplay of the game, and giving a sense of the graphic elements of the game.

Your artwork used in your game projects need be original material, or material that is licensed for general non-commercial use. You may not use copyrighted material. If you use non-original artwork, you will need to provide documentation concerning its license terms. You may get help from people outside of your team, such as friends, or members of other class teams, in creating the artwork for your game. That is, it is not considered cheating to get assistance in creating your game's artwork, just remember to cite these people in your documentation and the game credits. Remember that you are creating a prototype – not the final version of the game – thus the artwork does not and should not be the final version. The artwork used should meet the needs of your game setting its tone, visual feel, etc.

Document Outline - This is a group assignment, and we expect one game concept document for the entire team:

1. Title page, including:
 - a. Title of your game
 - b. Name of your group
 - c. Name of each member of your group
 - d. One or more images from the game such as a character, scene, or artifact (car, gizmo). The goal of this image is to provide an initial impression of the visual qualities of the game.

2. An overview page – a single page, that states the name of the game followed by three sub-sections:
 - a. A table at the top of the page that describes the game genre, target audience, top-three player types the game should appeal to, player interaction type, and platform.
 - b. A "key points" section in the middle that contains a bulleted list of important aspects of the gameplay. The goal of this section is to give the reader, in a very condensed form, a high level understanding of the goal of the game, the main characters, the main fictional elements, the significant scenes in the game, the flow of the game, what makes the game unique, and the primary actions the player takes. Example bulleted list items include (but are not limited to):
 - i. "An educational game that teaches algebra, calculus, and differential equations!"
 - ii. "MegaFido, the biggest, meanest cyber-dog in the ultrapound chases tetra-cats and zypher-squirrels using his super smell and razor-sharp canines."

- iii. "The player runs around collecting acorns, banana slugs, and bay leaves which they exchange for scantron sheets, allowing them to progress past the exam puzzles."
 - iv. "Multiple levels provide increasingly rich gameplay as the number of mutant starfish grows, and the slippery spiny lobsters get faster, and more canny."
 - v. "You'll have players running for their umbrellas as more and more objects drop from the sky."
 - vi. "8 levels span multiple distinct regions of the campus, as the player clears the giant banana slugs from forest, meadow, library, classroom and dining hall."
 - vii. "The adventure takes the player on a madcap trip through the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, and Zion National Park!"
- c. An image, similar to that on the cover that conveys the visual feel of the game, or displays one or more scenes from the game. The image should generate excitement, and convey the energy of playing this game.
3. A page that gives true pocket (brief) biographies of all team members (1-2 paragraphs per team member). These biographies should stress experiences, skills and background that make you a strong game designer. Why should the publisher trust your team to develop a new, innovative game?
4. 1-3 pages giving, in textual form, a description of your game. This should include:
- a. The fictional background of your game (what is the background story? Are you saving the princess, or saving the world?) This includes a brief description of major characters in your game.
 - b. What is the goal of the player of the game (how does the player win)?
 - c. What are the key challenges presented to the player?
 - d. How does the player interact with the game?
 - e. How does the player advance the fictional aspects of the game (if possible)? For example, how do they save the princess, or save the world?
 - f. If the game has levels, a brief description of each of the levels.
 - g. If the game is an educational game, describe how it meets its educational goal.
 - h. If the game is designed for a specific audience (young kids, middle school girls, absent-minded professors), describe how the game has been specifically designed for this audience.
5. 1-2 pages giving sample artwork from the game. This artwork can be in rough (sketch) form, and does not have to be production quality. This can include:
- a. Sketches of characters
 - b. Sketches of levels
 - c. Sketches of key game interactions (a player performing a specific game activity)

Note: all artwork used in the game to be either original or have license terms that permit non-commercial use.

(This concept design template is from Jim Whitehead at UCSC – CMPS 80K.)