Foundations of Interactive Game Design (80K)

week nine, lecture one
Today

- Demos of *Psychonauts* and *Dreamfall*
- Finishing games and fiction overview
- *Eliza* effect and look at fictional processes
Demos
Psychonauts

http://www.psychonauts.com/
Psychonauts

Double Fine (Tim Schafer) 2005
Dreamfall: The Longest Journey

http://www.dreamfall.com/
Dreamfall

Funcom (Ragnar Tørnquist) 2006
Psychonauts and Dreamfall

- What do you notice about these games?
- Both are “post-adventure” games. Adventure games combined story and puzzles (hidden objects, order of operations)
- *Psychonauts* combines story and platforming
- *Dreamfall* updates adventure puzzle mechanics to 3D, adds combat and stealth
Game fictions, part 3
What about multiplayer fictions that aren’t in a role playing game?
Gaming the real world

promotional game for the movie A.I.
“The Beast”

- Elan Lee (puzzles), Sean Stewart (writing), and Jordan Weisman (concept)
- Murder mystery; denied its own existence; spread through internet text, movies (and phone, fax, USPS, bathroom walls, live events)
- Required massive player collaboration (Cloudmakers had 7,500 members)

Nearly 150 characters, nearly 4,000 documents, four languages, nightmare database, Enigma code, etc.
Pervasive games

• Bring players out into the physical world with computing devices (PDAs, cell phones)

• An interesting form of performance play, and a promising site for fiction

• Uncle Roy All Around You, Go Game, Nokia Game
And finally there are those who see the gameplay/fiction relationship in other ways...
“Story Recognition”

- Will Wright, creator of *The Sims*, didn’t think of it in terms of fiction.
- But his players use *The Sims* for storytelling, and as a game designer he wants to respond.
- Not *storytelling* but *story recognition* — making storytelling the gameplay.
“Playable Texts”

• The 1970s and 80s had many textual games — and writing games have a long history

• What would it mean now to have a textual computer game? A graphical textual game? A multiplayer textual game?

Screen, my piece for the Cave
Fictional processes
Role-playing games

• Began as tabletop games, descended from wargames.

• Statistical combat model generalized (e.g., character development).

• Referee becomes DM/GM, guiding collaborative storytelling.
Computer RPGs

- Retain statistical combat and characters.
- DM/GM role played by operational logics:
  — Quest flags
  — Dialogue trees
Quest flags

• Story broken into quests and sub-quests, flags at progress points.

• Quest state exposed to player in journal (or similar).

• Game scripts update flags and journal.

[Image: Journal editor for Aurora tool]
Dialogue trees

- Hierarchically-nested PC and NPC options.
- Active section chosen by flags, may set flags.
- Important element of gameplay (quests, battles, rewards, allegiances, etc.).
This week
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• Playtestable games due in sections
• Visitors: indie developers Edmund McMillen and Alex Austin (syllabus is being updated with readings for this and other days)
• Details on final game contest — prizes from Electronic Arts, indie and big studio judges, and more...