Foundations of Interactive Game Design (80K)

week three, lecture two
Today

- Grateful Dead archive presentation
- Demos of *Mass Effect* and *Uncharted 2*
- Some of Fullerton’s dramatic elements (character & story, not challenge/flow, etc)
- *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, *Fable*, and typical game story structures
- Demo of *Betrayal at the House on the Hill*
Mass Effect
Uncharted 2
Mass Effect and Uncharted 2

• What do you notice about them?

• Set in different worlds, with different mechanics — except shooting and cover :-)

• Story, character, and presentation (e.g., voice acting) are important to both

• In one case, gameplay can impact story and character — in the other gameplay reveals immutable story and character
Let’s start from the beginning
Spacewar!

graphics, movement, multi-player
You are standing at the end of a road before a small brick building. Around you is a forest. A small stream flows out of the building and down a gully.

> enter

You are inside a building, a well house for a large spring.

There are some keys on the ground here.
There is a shiny brass lamp nearby.
There is food here.
There is a bottle of water here.

> get lamp

Ok.
What happened next?
Arcade 84, Dave Dries
What now?

- Having met many of the goals of pure graphics, there’s a search for new directions (and new audiences)
- One direction is taking up the textual, narrative thread and pushing it further
- This requires thinking about the relationship between *game design* (gameplay) and *writing* (text, narrative)
Not just these...
Game fictions

• A great variety of fictions.
• But only two major approaches to how the fictional elements are implemented.
• Two examples for which we have script excerpts: *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* and *Fable*. 
Start with a script

voice actors, animation
Prince of Persia

The Sands of Time

Jordan Mechner, Ubisoft
dagger as device for story and gameplay
Prince of Persia
The Sands of Time

- Do it, don’t view it. (Fighting the father.)
- Story is not king. (Must work with game mechanics and goals.)
- Maximize efficiency. (The sands are the thing you collect, source of your power, reason for goals, reason for NPC violence)
- Know who’s on the box.
Prince of Persia
The Sands of Time

• Build a playground for your hero. (Two ruined castles.)
• Break as many rules as you can get away with. (We’re still figuring out what works.)
• Combine genres. (Arabian nights, swashbuckling action, survival horror.)
• A memorable character is one you can play with. (Farah.)
Prince of Persia
The Sands of Time

• Dialogue is not precious. (Let people go forward if they want, instead.)

• Build the tools you need. (We don’t know how to organize the script or do other things film has standardized — invent!)
Prince of Persia

The Sands of Time

Linear story, with side trips
(playing a cinematic story)
Fable

- James Leach (writer), Peter Molyneux (designer), Lionhead Studios
- Goal: the hero’s journey, in RPG mechanics, with more dynamic non-player characters
- Strategy: script the story, but also simulate the people
Fable: begin with a story

Write a traditional hero fiction
Break story into scenes
Break scenes down into dialogue and animation
Pass to animators and AI scriptors
TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_10
GUARD
Welcome to Arena. Heroes fight here etc...

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_20
GUARD
You need to be nominated. And Guild Seal won't work.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_FAIL
GUARD
Not nominated yet!

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_10
GUARD
Been nominated now. Well done.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_20
GUARD
Guard will show you in.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_30
GUARD
You could die in here.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_READY
GUARD
Go in? Yes/No.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_10
GUARD (ATTITUDE_PRIDE)
Welcome to the Arena. This is where Heroes battle to become legends.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_20
GUARD
You need to be nominated before you are allowed entry. And note that your Guild Seal won't work in here.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_FAIL
GUARD (ATTITUDE_ANNOYANCE)
You can't come in without a nomination card. You think we just let anyone in?

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_10
GUARD
Ah, a nomination card. You must have done something pretty special to earn this.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_20
GUARD
The Guard on the other side of the door will show you in.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_CHECK_PASS_30
GUARD (ATTITUDE_SADNESS)
Take a good breath before you enter. You might not see the outside world again.

TEXT_QST_005_GUARD_ENTRY_READY
GUARD
You ready to go in now?
Fable: the NPCs

17 non-player character types
Evolving attitudes
Things to say — 155k words
Alternating world/story control of characters and world state
Fable

Putting it together

Linear story, good and evil choices

NPC logics same for animation and language
Current RPGs — *Mass Effect, Fable 2, Fallout 3* — use mostly the same techniques
We need to look to independent & research projects for the next step — which we’ll do soon
But first:
What’s a fictional structure that’s not so software heavy?
Betrayal at the House on the Hill

- Genre and gameplay working together
- Assembling the board keeps each initial exploration surprising, gives reason to collaborate
- Many different betrayals keep endgame surprising, and give reason to compete
- The dramatic arc of play and fiction match
Finally
Info

• Sony scholarships for women in games, applications due Feb 15: http://www.station.sony.com/girl/

• Tutoring for this class available: https://eop.sa.ucsc.edu/OTSS/tutorssignup

• Reminder: come to my office hours if needing DRC accommodation
Next week

• Concepts and prototypes due next week
• For Tuesday, reading in text and online, Thursday reading will be updated soon
• Reminder: sign up for research study (get one extra credit, limited slots available)