CS 148/248
IF Design Document
Winter 2010
Mail these to the TA, Ben Samuel (Benjamin.m.samuel@gmail.com).

Student Name: Dustin
IF Name: Extravoid

Describe the story arc for your game. What happens in the beginning, middle, and end? Is there a central dilemma or crisis that the player character has to overcome?

Max Cunning is a tester for the Pseudovirtual Game company. The entire IF encapsulates one particularly eventful day on the job. While testing a virtual reality game called Extravoid, Max finds himself trapped within the game. He must use his skills as a tester to get free. His only contact to the outside world is his co-worker Chris Nickle who can guide him through voice chat. Max will be killed if he remains in the game when the company shuts its servers down.

What is the role of the player character in the game? Does the player play multiple characters? If so, what is the relationship between the multiple characters?

The player is the protagonist, Max Cunning. He must play the game Extravoid until he can identify a way out. He must query his partner Chris Nickle to discover the hidden properties of the game.

Describe each location that will appear in your game. Draw a map showing how the locations relate to each other (boxes and lines are fine for the map).

This design will be expanded...

*Pseudovirtual Game Company*

Floor 1
[Enterance]--[Cafeteria]
  |
[ Elevator]

Floor 2
[Hallway]--[Max's Cubicle]
  |
[ Elevator]
What are the significant objects in your game? What role do they play in the game?

The most significant object in the game is the Mic which allows talking with Chris. All other objects belong to *Extravoid's* diegesis. These objects are typical to RPG and/or IF: Sword, Rope, Torch, etc. They are supposed to be used to play the game. The player will have to find more creative uses for them. Thinking outside of the Virtual Reality box.
What is the role of non-player characters (NPCs) in your game? Can the player talk with NPCs? If so, how will dialog be implemented (topic keywords, conversation dialogs, etc.)? Do NPCs move around and take action or are they primarily conversational? If NPCs move around and take actions, what do they do?

All NPCs are purely conversational. But, conversation plays a significant role in the game. Chris Nickle is the main supporting actor, and appears as a disembodied voice throughout the game. He and Max (the player) are friends from the same company. Max can talk to Chris from any room in Extravoid. The other characters in the game are stereotypical medieval fantasy characters. The King, Princess, Knight, Squire, Wizard, Witch, Jester, etc all use a pseudo-olde-english dialect. Max must roleplay to speak with them (but Max recognizes that these are characters within a game and lack autonomy). The characters are in place to create the sub-story Extravoid, but Max has a secondary motive of harrassing the NPCs to extract information about the game design.

What prior stories, story genres, or games will your game reference? If so, how will you leverage the player's prior knowledge in your design?

This IF is loosely a technothriller. The technology is virtual reality. Players will have prior knowledge of story conventions, and will note similarities to movies such as The Matrix. The game also references games in general (specifically RPGs).

How will player interaction be integrated into the story structure? Will the player be uncovering a story that already happened? Will the player have an impact on the plot (and if so, how)? What will be the relationship between story and discourse in your game? In describing the interactive story structure of your game, use terminology from the readings from the first half of the class.

The player is part of the story (Internal), and will not be uncovering a story that already happened. The player's actions directly influence the story (Ontological). What the player does describes Max's struggle to free himself from the Extravoid. The discourse of the game uses repetition. The game Extravoid is short, and Max will play it multiple times to try different things. He doesn't even notice he is trapped until after the first playthrough.