From Hacks to PAX

SPECIAL MOVES
become available during the course of the game
Nutz
UNARO
DrinkBox Studios
Why Go to a Trade Show?

- Forcing a milestone
- Playtesting
- See what else is going on
- Establish a relationship with your users
- Establish a relationship with press
- Sell Merch
What is a Game?

What are some examples of games?
Difficulty Curve
What is a Game?

- Achieving a goal within a constrained environment
What makes a good showroom demo?

- It is a game!
- A distilled experience. You want the player to discover something new and implement it.
- Easy to restart (If somebody leaves in the middle or worse, if you get lock)
- Accessible -> Somebody should be able to pick up the controller and play.
- Smooth & Bug Free-> Don’t waste people’s time.
- Spectator sport
- Bounded (give people a discrete experience)
- Not too long
- Doesn’t give away too much
- Don’t make somebody sit through long cutscenes.
- Show some hints of what to expect in the full game.
Some Things To Communicate

- Game Name
- Producer
- Release Date
- Platform
- Features
  - Multiplayer
  - Platinum Trophy
  - Game length
How do we get there?

STCE (PC) Select Door Warp Indices

Non-matching index warp locations:
Agave: Juan’s basement
Puebblucho: Outside witch’s house
Forest: Save altar under broken bridge
Santa: Save altar atop Error’s house
Rain: Save altar after Alebrije chase
Canal: Yellow block stalactite
Pico: Save altar before lava pillar fly
Desert: Save altar before plant maze
Yule Tree: Door below Double Jump Choozo
Caverna: Santa entrance
El Infierno: Save altar on first floor

NOTE: W,X,Y,Z correspond to some region’s save altar warp indices
Core Tenets

- Physics-based Puzzle Platform
- Eat things to grow bigger
- Satirical Retro
- Space/Horror Theme

- Metroidvania
- Brawler
- Combat moves for platforming
- Mexican inspired universe
- Overlaid Living/Dead dimensions

- Puzzle Game
- Room Escape
- Touch Based Combat
- Strategic Battles
- Open World Adventure
- In depth upgrade/economy
- Sever enemies for resources
- Infinity Blade style bosses
Establish your goals

-What are your core tenets?
-Make sure everybody knows and agrees what your goals are.
-Write them down!
-Be Specific
  -What are your deliverables?
  -How many levels?
  -How many enemies?
  -How long is our demo?
  -Are we going to make a cutscene?
  -What game features are we going to show? What are we going to foreshadow?
  -What’s our UI going to be like?
  -Music? Audio?
  -What will we cut in a pinch? What are stretch goals?
Project Management Triangle

KEEP THE BALANCE²
Make a schedule

- How will you reach your goals?
- Twice as long as you think
- Figure out blockers and dependencies.
- Budget for Unknown Unknowns.
- Establish milestones and review dates.
- Cut Features and reestablish your goals.
- Don’t forget audio and UI!
- Reach an agreement on how long to work.
  - Don’t say “As long as it takes!”
Project Management Tools - Maintain a task List!

- Pen & Paper
- Google Docs
- Google Calendar
- Trello
- Bugzilla
- Source Control
- Slack
Bugzilla

- Easy to sort/search
- Minimal interface
- Non-trivial setup
Trello

- Easy to set up and share
- Pretty!
- Difficult to track progress
- Difficult to set up notifications
Brainstorm Sessions

- Establish your goals!
- Set a time limit.
- Be mindful of getting off track.
- Get input from the quiet people.
- Keep them small (5 people max).
- Designate a secretary.
- Go to sleep.
Implement The Best Plan You Have!

More is lost by indecision than wrong decision. Indecision is the thief of opportunity. It will steal you blind.

—— Marcus Tullius Cicero ——
Prototypes

- Find a quick and minimal way to prototype.
- Art won’t save bad game design.
- Easier to walk away from.
- Try designing on paper.
Hold Regular Reviews

- Good Practice “Finishing”
- Get used to giving/receiving feedback
- Keep track of progress
- Identify bugs early
- Opportunity to reassess goals
Playtesting!!

- Playtest early and often!
- Often underestimated, but you will learn so much.
- Strive to build to application that requires no intervention.
- Resist the urge to help.
- You’ll find bugs you’d never discover on your own.
- smooth out difficulty
- Take notes!!
- Test with a diverse audience.
- Don’t take things personally
Enforce Lockdowns and Safe Builds

- Objective is to make a build you feel confident in.
- Target your safe build well before you’ll actually need it.
- “Lockdown” people from committing non-critical updates.
- Test build before lifting lockdown.
- Have more than one if possible.
Preparing for the show

- Get there early! You want to have time sort out issues like forgetting a laptop cable.
- Budget your travel time.
- Prepare and practice your elevator pitch. Try telling different people.
- Think about engagement!
  - Business cards?
  - Email List?
  - Web site, social media
- Decorations!
  - Concept art.
  - Back story
- You’re selling more than just a game.
Surviving the Show

- Bring Snacks.
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Pay attention to body language.
- Engage the folks just watching.
- Don’t be afraid to make small talk with people passing by your booth.
  - Where are you from? What cool games have you seen at the show?
Have Fun!

- Great opportunity to meet like-minded people
- See games before lines form and talk to devs
- Meet your fans!
- Don’t miss the opportunity to reflect and take it all in.
Do you want a game dev job?

- It is possible!
- It’s still a job.
- Creative
- Not about the money
...It’s about the love
To Summarize

- Orient yourself towards clear goals
- Be precise with your timelines
- Implement the best plan you have
- Practice “Finishing”
- Playtest early and often
- Lockdown and make Safe Builds
Thank You!

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