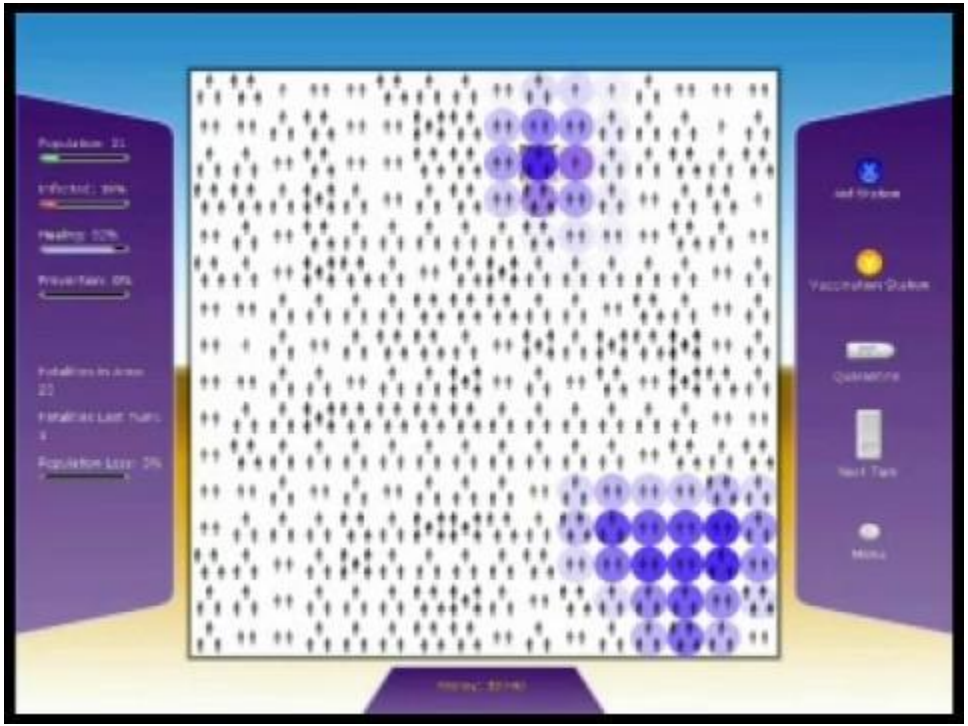
From Hacks to PAX

Nutz

UNARO



DrinkBox Studios

Why Go to a Trade Show?

-Forcing a milestone

-Playtesting

-See what else is going on

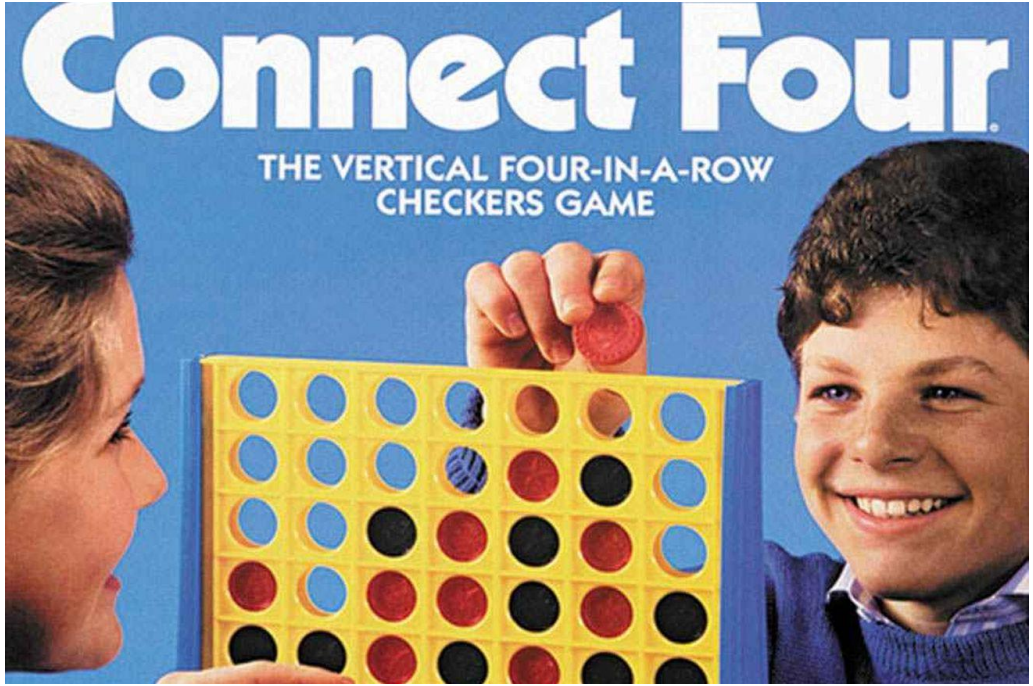
-Establish a relationship with your users

-Establish a relationship with press

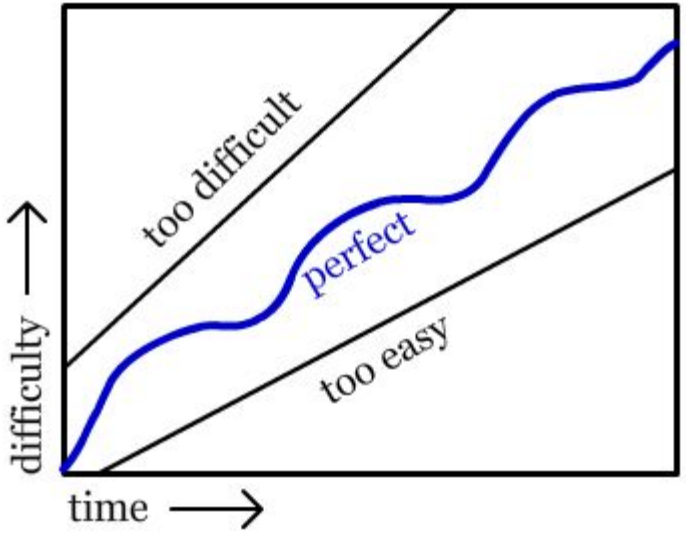
-Sell Merch

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

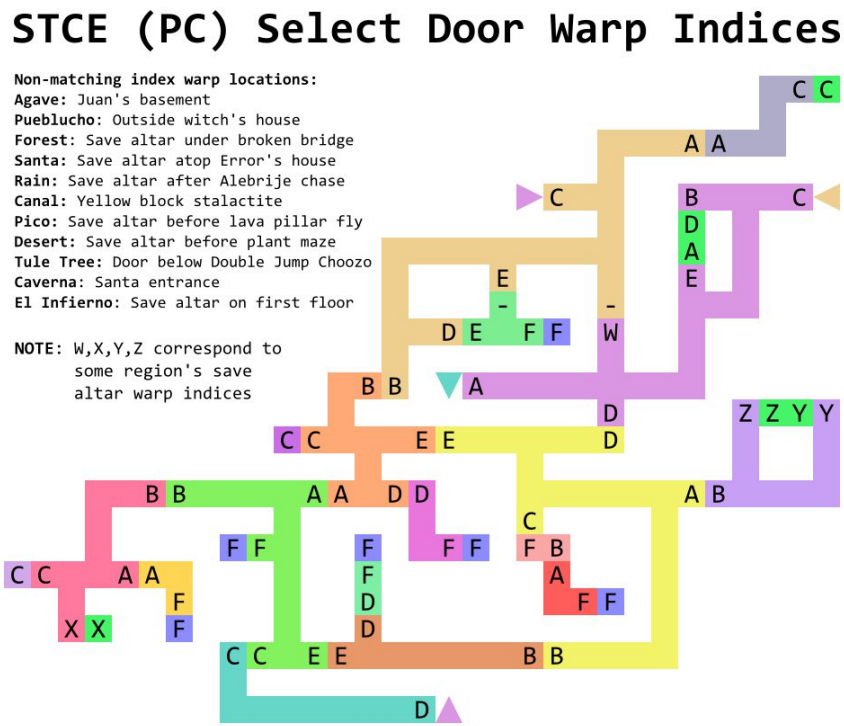
-Features

    -Multiplayer

    -Platinum Trophy

    -Game length

How do we get there?



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 BALANCE[2]

Make a schedule

-How will you reach your goals?

-Twice as long as you think

-Figure out blockers and dependencies.

-Budget for Unknown Unknowns.

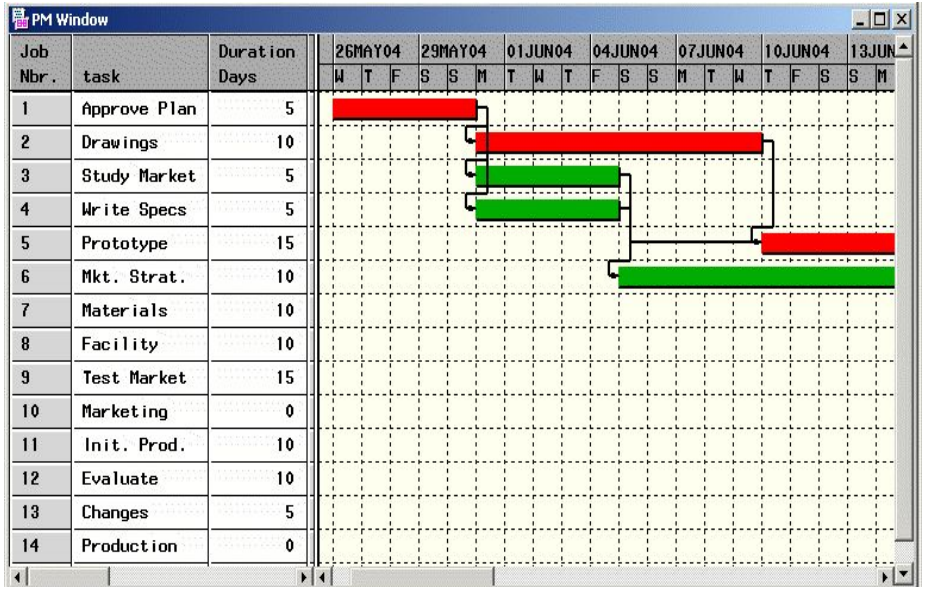
-Establish milestones and review dates.

-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

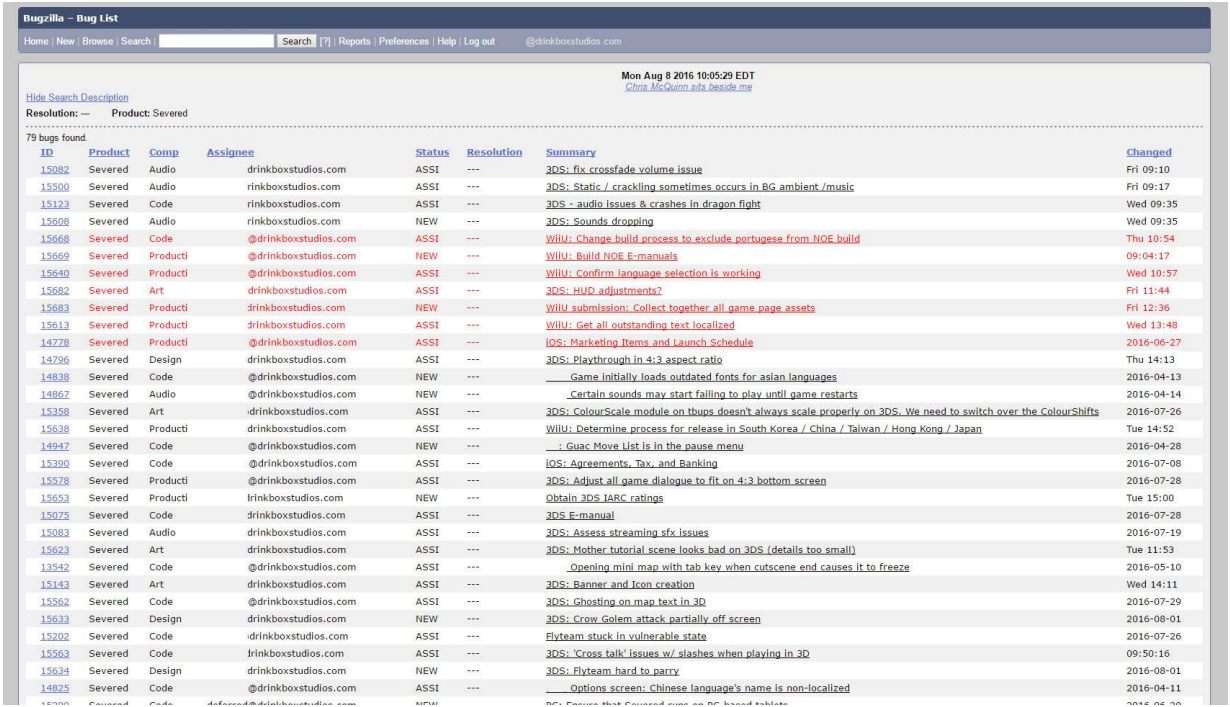
-Slack

Bugzilla

-Easy to sort/search

-Minimal interface

-Non-trivial setup



Bugzilla – Bug List

Home | New | Browse | Search | Search [?] | Reports | Preferences | Help | Log out @drinkboxstudios.com

Mon Aug 8 2016 10:05:29 EDT
Chris McQuinn sits beside me

Hide Search Description

Resolution: — **Product:** Severed

79 bugs found.

ID	Product	Comp	Assignee	Status	Resolution	Summary	Changed
15082	Severed	Audio	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: fix crossfade volume issue	Fri 09:10
15500	Severed	Audio	rinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Static / crackling sometimes occurs in BG ambient /music	Fri 09:17
15123	Severed	Code	rinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS - audio issues & crashes in dragon fight	Wed 09:35
15608	Severed	Audio	rinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	3DS: Sounds dropping	Wed 09:35
15668	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	WiiU: Change build process to exclude portugese from NOE build	Thu 10:54
15669	Severed	Producti	@drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	WiiU: Build NOE E-manuals	09:04:17
15640	Severed	Producti	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	WiiU: Confirm language selection is working	Wed 10:57
15682	Severed	Art	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: HUD adjustments?	Fri 11:44
15683	Severed	Producti	drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	WiiU submission: Collect together all game page assets	Fri 12:36
15613	Severed	Producti	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	WiiU: Get all outstanding text localized	Wed 13:48
14778	Severed	Producti	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	iOS: Marketing Items and Launch Schedule	2016-06-27
14796	Severed	Design	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Playthrough in 4:3 aspect ratio	Thu 14:13
14838	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	Game initially loads outdated fonts for asian languages	2016-04-13
14867	Severed	Audio	@drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	Certain sounds may start failing to play until game restarts	2016-04-14
15358	Severed	Art	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: ColourScale module on tbups doesn't always scale properly on 3DS. We need to switch over the ColourShifts	2016-07-26
15638	Severed	Producti	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	WiiU: Determine process for release in South Korea / China / Taiwan / Hong Kong / Japan	Tue 14:52
14947	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	: Guac Move List is in the pause menu	2016-04-28
15390	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	iOS: Agreements, Tax, and Banking	2016-07-08
15578	Severed	Producti	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Adjust all game dialogue to fit on 4:3 bottom screen	2016-07-28
15653	Severed	Producti	drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	Obtain 3DS IARC ratings	Tue 15:00
15075	Severed	Code	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS E-manual	2016-07-28
15083	Severed	Audio	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Assess streaming sfx issues	2016-07-19
15623	Severed	Art	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Mother tutorial scene looks bad on 3DS (details too small)	Tue 11:53
13542	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	Opening mini map with tab key when cutscene end causes it to freeze	2016-05-10
15143	Severed	Art	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Banner and Icon creation	Wed 14:11
15562	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: Ghosting on map text in 3D	2016-07-29
15633	Severed	Design	drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	3DS: Crow Golem attack partially off screen	2016-08-01
15202	Severed	Code	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	Flyteam stuck in vulnerable state	2016-07-26
15563	Severed	Code	drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	3DS: 'Cross talk' issues w/ slashes when playing in 3D	09:50:16
15634	Severed	Design	drinkboxstudios.com	NEW	---	3DS: Flyteam hard to parry	2016-08-01
14825	Severed	Code	@drinkboxstudios.com	ASSI	---	Options screen: Chinese language's name is non-localized	2016-04-11

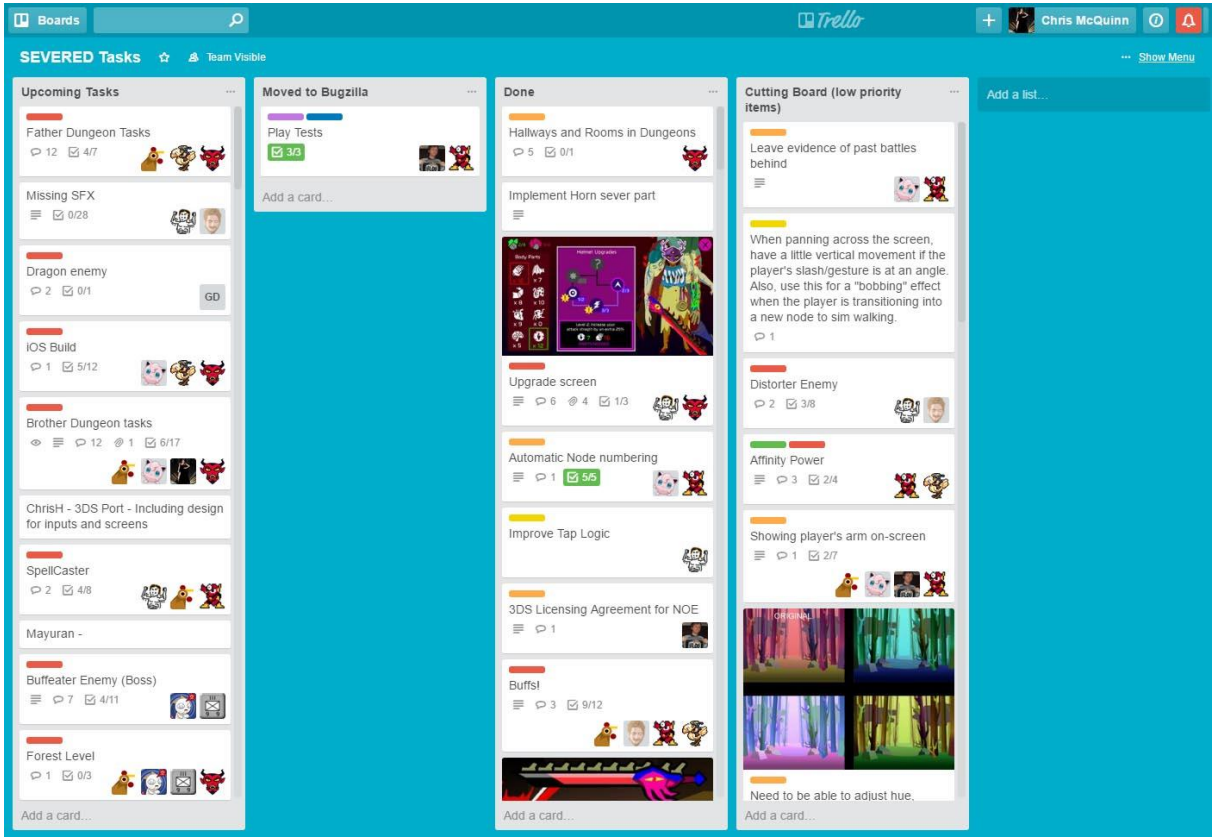
Trello

-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.

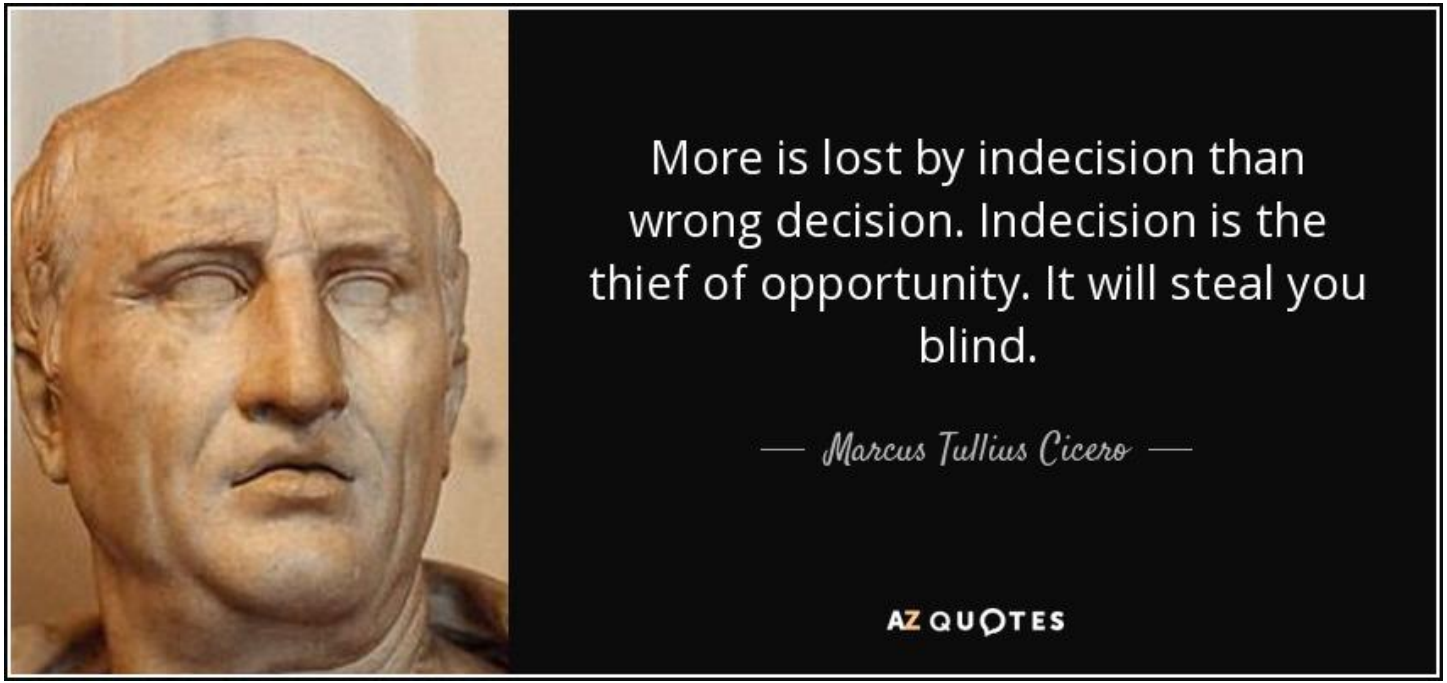
-Get input from the quiet people.

-Keep them small (5 people max).

-Designate a secretary.

-Go to sleep.

Implement The Best Plan You Have!



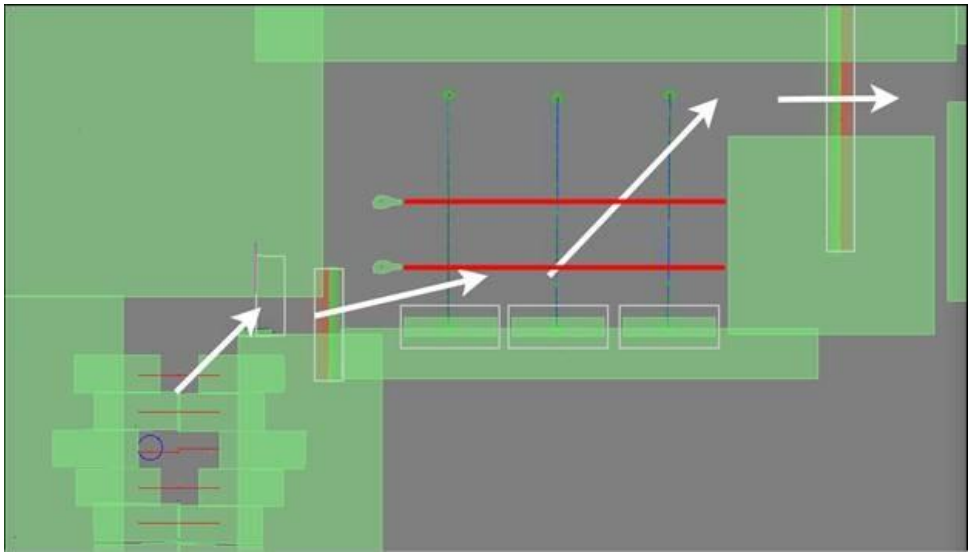
Prototypes

-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

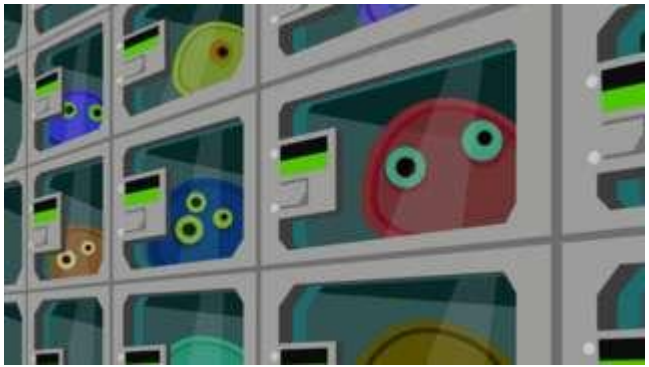
-Objective is to make a build you feel confident in.

-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.

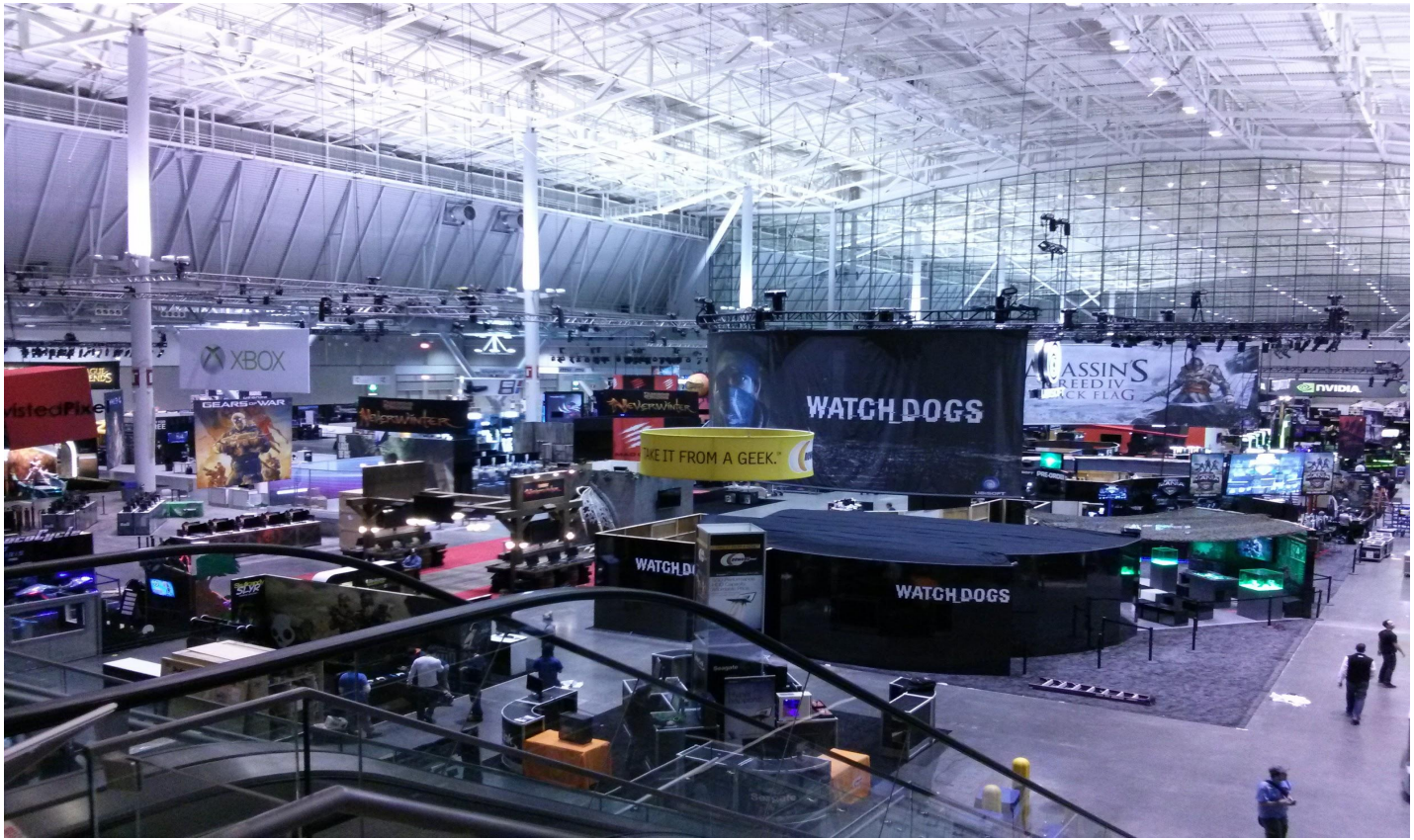
-Think about engagement!

- Business cards?
- Email List?
- Web site, social media

-Decorations!

- -Concept art.
- -Back story

-You’re selling more than just a game.


XBOX
GEARS OF WAR
WATCH_DOGS
TAKE IT FROM A GEEK.
WATCH_DOGS
WATCH_DOGS
ASSASSIN'S CREED IV BLACK FLAG
NVIDIA

LEAGUE of LEGENDS
Carbine
XBOX ONE

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?

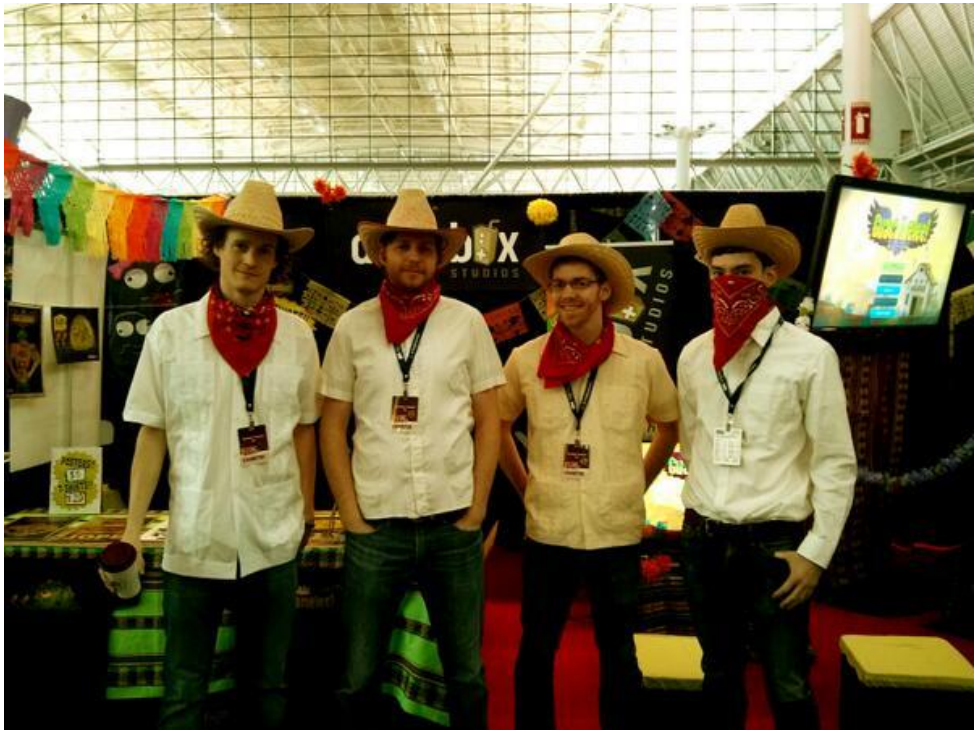
Have Fun!

-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?

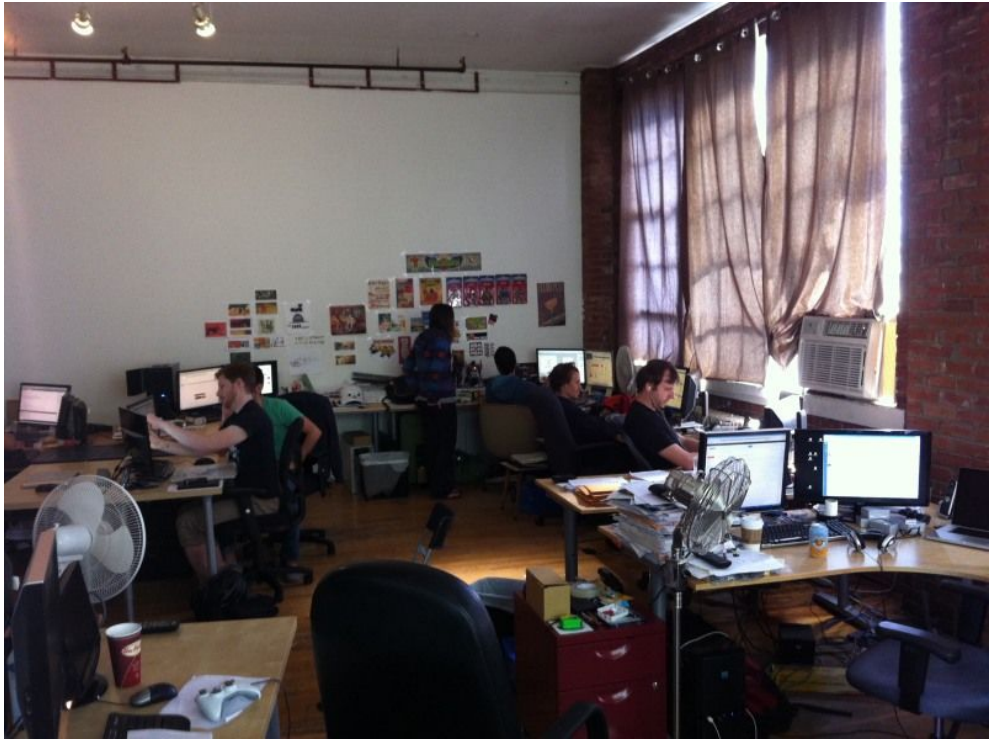
-It is possible!

-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!

-alex.smithers@gmail.com