Screen/Play: Next-Generation Narrative

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Next-Generation Game Narrative

Overview
- Context
- Story design
- Narrative structure
- Documentation
- Cinematics
- Voice acting
- Testing content
- Opportunities
Context

- Justification for action
- Yossarian Syndrome
- What the hell am I doing?
- Why are they trying to kill me?
Production values
- Sound, visuals, divorced from mechanics
- Doom 3 vs. Call of Duty
- Old-school vs. new-school
- When I was your age... blah blah blah
Story Design

Types
- Brick-and-mortar
- Story-driven
- Open world
Story Design

Developer collaboration
• Design: context, scripting
• Audio: sound, voice
• Art: characters, cinematics
• Programmers: AI, engine
Interaction
  • Development team structure
  • Producers, designers, artists, programmers
  • Timetable, budget, parameters

The Working Writer
Story Design

Parameters
• Gameplay
• Brand
• Marketing
• Competition
Narrative Structure

Logocentric vs. Mythocentric
Logocentric Structure

Developer-authored narrative
- Authority: designer
- Experience: controlled
- Design: manipulation
- Ramifications

HALF-LIFE 2

HALO 2
Mythocentric Structure

Player-authored narrative
- Authority: player
- Experience: open
- Design: opportunity
- Ramifications
Documentation

Audience
• Designers
• Scripters
• Audio team
• Programmers
• Voice actors
• QA testers
Documentation

Screen/Play
- Process
- Programs
- Structure
- Format
- Interaction

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTOR</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>INFLECTION</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
<th>FILENAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guard</td>
<td></td>
<td>The guard is waiting for the supervillains to bust through the door and attack.</td>
<td>Noxious</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>m3_s1_01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense is answering the guard's question.</td>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>m3_s1_02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletpoint</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense has just explained the origin of Overcharge.</td>
<td>Incredible</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>m3_s1_03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Queen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ice Queen just blew off his attempt at making conversation.</td>
<td>Sarcastic</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>m3_s1_04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletpoint</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bulletpoint anecys her, and she's trying to shut him up.</td>
<td>Intimated</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Echo</td>
<td>m3_s1_05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense</td>
<td></td>
<td>The team is thickening, but the enemy is approaching and Sense warns them to focus.</td>
<td>Serious, tense</td>
<td>Bank lobby</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>m3_s1_06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canon</td>
<td></td>
<td>He's on the roof of the building, and has just spotted the enemy.</td>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Bank lobby (off camera)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>m3_s1_07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cinematics

Development
- Concept
- Material
- Storyboards
- Animatics
- Audio
- Iteration
Voice Acting

Planning
- Characters
- Voice notes
- Preparation
- Budget/schedule
Voice Acting

Casting
• Accuracy
• Variation
• Role
Voice Acting

- Recording
  - Process
  - Direction
  - Assets
Testing Content

Quality Assurance
- Schedule
- Personnel
- Documentation
- Defects
Next-Gen Opportunities

Production values
  • Appearance, movement
  • Variegated voice cues
  • Disposable content
Next-Gen Opportunities

Significance
- Ludological symbolism
- Metaphor and allusion
- Moral ambiguity
Thanks for your time!

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