How a Video Game is Created From Start to Finish

By John Albers, eHow Contributor

Design

- First, a producer or lead designer comes up with a simple premise for a game. This may be a basic storyline, scenario, experience or some intended moral the designer wishes to impart to the player. He then sits down with writers and artists to come up with a comprehensive storyline, back story, script, list of characters and any other pertinent information necessary to telling a story and incorporating the player in the experience. Concept sketches of game characters, levels and enemies are developed until the design team is happy with it. With this in mind, the team then works to bring the story to life.

Gathering Data

- Three-dimensional designs of all the game’s characters, enemies and interactive background are generated on computers in order for the design team to figure out how they want them to move and act. Special attention is paid to facial features and expressions while the characters are meant to speak. At this point a great deal of outside information needs to be collected. Designers will observe athletes or soldiers as they move in order to have their characters better emulate these sequences of actions. They will collect sound bytes and hire voice actors to play the parts of each character, recording the entire script digitally to be used in the game's programming. They will also go on site and record sound effects, such as the cheering of a crowd, the growling of animals, chirping of birds or the sounds of various guns firing.

Programming

- Programming is by far the most difficult and time-consuming process. Programmers need to have a firm grasp of multiple computer programming languages, as well as computer logic and mathematics. A large team of said programmers may take up to a year to complete their task, which is what typically will make or break a game. If they do a good job, the game company makes money. If not, the company losses money because of the cost of development, production, and shipping of the game. They take all the three-dimensional designs of backgrounds, cut scenes, characters, level designs and sound effects and combine them all into one coherent game experience. This involves a massive effort and an eye for incredibly minute detail, as well as the patience to deal with it day in and day out.

Testing

- When the programmers believe their job is done, the game is tested. Employees play the game inside and out, looking for any bugs, errors or glitches as a result of the game’s programming. They file reports on this over a matter of months for the programmers to review, fixing the problems. They are also responsible for giving their opinion of the game—whether the control scheme is intuitive and responsive and whether the game has the appropriate feel that the designers were aiming for. If everything is up to the testers’ standards, the game goes into production.

Mass production

- The entire game is compiled and burned to a single master disc. This disc is then inserted into a specialized machine designed to produce copies of the disc at a very high rate of speed. The copies are placed in premade plastic cases and then wrapped in plastic to be shipped to distributors across the country.
How to Make a Story Plot for a Video Game

By Grahame Turner, eHow Contributor

As video gaming systems become increasingly complex, so too are the stories they can tell. The gamer is also becoming more sophisticated and expects to be entertained by both the gameplay as well as the plot. Writing is an art—not a science. There is no way to guarantee that any particular piece will be a success, but there are a few tips and tricks that will help you make a story that is entertaining at the least and compelling at best.

Instructions

1. **Determine the genre of the game you are working with.** This helps determine which plots will work and which will not. Puzzle games, for example, generally don't need much of a plot—a tournament setting will do; first-person shooters need to have a clear opposing force and a motivation to fight back.

2. **Brainstorm the main goal of the game.** Figure out whether your hero is trying to save the world, the girl or the wallet. A good goal is what Hitchcock calls the MacGuffin: an object all characters, heroes and villains alike, are seeking with fervor. Consult other video games of the same genre, or films, books and TV shows, for some good ideas—as well as a host of bad ones.

3. **Draw a rising action chart on a piece of paper.** This is a roughly shark-fin shaped line—a long, steady slope, rising to a point, and then quickly dropping back down. Use this to guide your story from beginning to climax to conclusion. Along the sloping line, write several plot points that are increasingly intense. Also include brief moments of rest, when the tension is slightly relieved.

4. **Write down, at the top of your chart, the climactic battle for the goal of the game:** the hero meets the big bad, and the fate of your MacGuffin hangs in the balance. This is also a good time to include a false-ending: perhaps the big bad is only a puppet for a larger villain, and defeating him only reveals this fact.

5. **Write down the falling action along the declining side of the chart.** Many game developers use this time to include the credits, as well as show the aftermath of the hero's victory. For example, your characters can meet with various non-player characters who were in trouble but are now safe.

6. **Construct a rough flowchart of the game's progress.** Begin with the point where you will introduce the characters, and end with the goal from Step 2. Remember that how a character is introduced is extremely important to the audience reaction: if a character is
introduced as a jerk, people may eventually grow to like him, but the first impression will be very strong. Typically, heroes are introduced in idyllic settings unaware of their fate.

7. Include branching moments along the plot. Not all games have them, making this step optional, but more sophisticated games give the player moments to make significant choices that could alter the game. This also allows you to have multiple endings.

8. Edit the flowchart and action charts. Make second, third and even fourth drafts until you feel this is a compelling plot. Consult a trusted friend or editor, and gauge their reaction to the plot. Then, make more changes.

**Tips & Warnings**

- Ideally, you start plotting around the time you have a working build of the game's main system. For example, a fighting game should already have at least one basic level and two fighters built; an RPG should have the combat system and small portion of the world started. This makes it easier to visualize for writing, as well as nails down the genre of the game.

- Remember that making an original story is extremely unlikely. Many stories have already been written over the course of history. Consulting a website like TV Tropes (see Resources) will lead to an ever-evolving database of stock images and characters that have been used before. This will help you add literary allusions and depth, and may even allow you to come up with new ideas for your characters.

Read more: How to Make a Story Plot for a Video Game | eHow.com
http://www.ehow.com/how_6101828_make-story-plot-video-game.html#ixzz21H82AeOZ
How to Write a Video Game Script

By Will Kalif

Writing a video game script offers a challenge that goes well beyond the normal realm of writing. But it is also something that can be tremendously rewarding in the scope of its creativity. Here are some guidelines and tips for writing a video game script.

Today's video games are based in complex worlds and they tell stories. No longer does a player simply advance through repetitive screens slaying goblins and ghouls in a quest toward the goal. A player now expects to progress through a world where there is a rich history and a plethora of decisions to be made. This adds to the complexity of writing a video game script and it also adds to the richness of the creativity involved.

The first thing you need to think about is that writing a video game script is that it is not the same as writing a movie script. The two processes are similar and you do write a movie like script for your video game but that is only part of the process. There is a whole host of accompanying materials that you need to write for your game script. Here is an overview of what you need to write and why.

Write An Executive overview of the story in prose

This is the most important part of your game script and this is what will sink or float your script. This overview has to tell a compelling and unique story and it should tell the complete story from the opening scene of the game through the major steps all the way to the completion of the game. An overview like this can be almost any size and it would be very easy for this to be ten written pages or more. Remember that today's video games are very complex and the stories can be very complex. This overview is also the most important part of the script. You would shop this to game developers to see if they are interested in developing it into a game.

Write a History and Background of the world

Video games are complete worlds and game designers need to know what the world is like and what kind of history it has. This will help the designers to visualize what the world will look like.

Create a Flowchart for the entire game

Your game is going to be very complex and there will be many decisions that the player will have to make and each decision opens up a whole new path for the player to take. Creating a flowchart is the best way to keep track of all the possible paths through the game.

Create sub-quests and write a prose overview of each quest

Sub quests can be simple or complex but each one is a story in itself and you must tell these stories.

Create character descriptions and bios for all the major characters in the game.

Game designers need a complete picture of the characters in the game. Many of the non-player characters you create will pop up time and time again. And their story is woven deeply into the fabric of your world. You need to describe this relationship in detail to the game designers.
Write interactions with non-player characters

Your game will probably involve interaction with non-player characters (NPC's). You should write out the dialogue and flowchart the choices the game player can make. These interactions are often critical to the story and they can take the player on very different paths toward the conclusion of the game.

Write Cut scenes

Cut Scenes are short animations or movies that come before or after major plot points in your story. A cut scene should always be written to enhance or describe the story. A cut scene is also a reward given to the player for achieving a major milestone in game play.

Writing the actual storyboard script

This is the final step in the whole video game script writing process and it is the most detailed. You do this step last because you need all the supporting materials to understand and describe this correctly. This part is very similar to that of a movie script. You progress through each scene of your story and you detail all the necessary information. Here is an example:

Scene 1:

*Location:* A dark cathedral with stained glass windows. An NPC is kneeling before a stone casket in the center of the main room

*Music:* background music of an organ playing introduces the scene but subsides

*Characters:* Main player, NPC named Thomas, seven were creatures

*Player Goal:* Discover the location of the underground lair

*Action:* Player must initiate discussion with Thomas, upon first contact we activate cut scene (1) where Thomas morphs into a were-creature and summons his were-minions. Main character must battle the were-minions then re-initiate discussion with Thomas.

*Flowchart:* No decisions made at this point: If battle is completed Thomas reveals the entrance to the underground lair and player advances to that level. If player is defeated in battle revert to death cut scene (11) and move to try again screen.

*Notes:* Player is locked in the cathedral and there is no exit. The only viable way out is to initiate contact with Thomas. Random were-creatures can be activated if player explores cathedral before talking with NPC.

Scene End

When writing a video game script you have to remember that your primary audience is not the game player but the game developer and what the developer needs is a complete picture of what your game is about. This means that you are not just writing a story but you are creating a world complete with a tone, sounds, characters, story, plot, and subplots. To successfully communicate this to the developer you need to use a whole set of creative tools and this is where video game scripts depart from normal scripts and open up a whole realm of creative possibilities.

Will Kalif is the author of two self-published epic fantasy novels. You can download free samples of his work at his personal website:

*Storm The Castle.com - Creativity and Medieval Fantasy with an edge*

Or you can visit his site devoted to Amateur Video Game Design at:

*The Amateur Video Game Designer Resource*

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Will_Kalif
Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/327520
What Is Game Designing?

By Charles Pearson, eHow Contributor

Video game designing is an essential process that must occur before a video game can actually be programmed and released. While programming and testing can be a lot of work, the game design phase is an exciting process full of creative energy.

Idea

- Game designing is when the original ideas that spark the game are fleshed out before the programming and graphic designing of the game can actually begin. Game ideas come from a variety of sources, including unique inspiration, license acquisition, a new innovation in game coding or the realization that a particular niche isn't being utilized enough. Once an idea is born, a producer must be designated and a game design document must be created.

Game Design Document

- When an idea for a game is designed, that idea must be written out. While there is no formal way of writing out a game idea, the game design plan must clearly and informatively describe what the game designer expects to occur within the game. While a game company might not use every idea, copious innovative ideas will help sell the game concept.

Phases

- Game designing comes in three stages. The I/O structure stage is when a game designer decides exactly how the game is communicated to the player, including the visual and audio elements. The next stage is the game structure stage, where the game designer tries to transform the abstract game concept into a system of rules within which the player can operate. The final stage is the program structure stage, in which the game designer determines exactly how the game will be programmed.

Goals

- A game designer usually attempts to appeal to a variety of psychological factors when creating a game. Common reasons why games are played include the need for exploration, escapism, achievement, socially unacceptable behavior, socializing and common rewards also associated with fiction, such as the experience of knowing interesting characters, worlds and storylines.

Becoming a Designer

- Game designing is a large business that consistently looks for game enthusiasts with problem-solving skills. Game design companies are most likely to hire applicants who have degrees in computer graphics technology with a specialization in game design. Once this degree has been acquired, aspiring game designers are recommended to create their own game design document detailing a game concept in order to demonstrate that they will know how to make a game work.
Writing a Video Game Script - Write the Game by Keira Peney

Writing a video game script is very different to writing a movie script or a novel. Firstly you have to contend with different choices taking you through different routes, and secondly you have to deal with the limitations of game programming. And finally, the writer is often pulled on board long after the basic premise and setting has been decided. S/He will probably have to work as part of a much larger group, and have their ideas ruthlessly shot down by the investors. A daunting prospect.

However, games are one of the few places where what you get is limited only by your imagination. As science-fiction novels have gradually waned from their height during the 1950's, the medium of games has stepped in to take their place - frequently cheesy and badly written, but with incredible ideas and explorations at the center. As they become more sophisticated - and more expensive - the writer becomes the source of these innovative ideas. Games are not afraid of drawing on mythology and ancient legends, they are not afraid of religion, they are not afraid of political commentary, and they are not afraid to make you think or cry.

All of which is well-and-good - but how do you actually go about writing a game from beginning to end?

The Overview

The Overview is the prose story outline. This is where you detail the opening scene and motivation, all of the salient plot points, and the climax. If you have several story arcs, you detail each one separately and write two (or three or four) endings.

If you are working on something huge like an MMO, you will probably only be worrying about a minor story arc or two. These work in exactly the same way - if your Player begins the quest by going into an inn and talking to a shady looking man with an eye-patch, that is where you begin your story. What has gone before is irrelevant, as you have no idea what quests they may have completed.

Breaking it Down

Okay, you have your overview. Now you need to break it down into scenes. A scene can be playable, and it can be a cut. It can also be one of those hybrids, in which the character is stuck with hitting a button to work their way through the conversation.

For cut scenes and hybrids please keep them short. Anyone remember that flashback in Final Fantasy 7 where you are talking to Aeris' Mom? Your game should not be testing your player's patience.

At this point you will probably want to start making a flow chart. I like to do this step on paper and pen, each scene on a different sheet, so I can juggle them around. There is loads of software devoted to making flow charts if you prefer the computer. Check out the Google Search!
Reviewing your script means you show it to your team, your managers, or your friends. If you are making this game all by yourself - and kudos to you if you are - you shove it in a drawer for a week and forget about it. When you pull it back out, look over it as though you were a jaded gamer with a short attention span. Is it gripping? Is it new? Does it have a Hero character you really want to play?

Rewrite anything that doesn't make sense, or would get missed. Make sure that really important plot points are repeated throughout the game. Many people will drop a game half way and not come back to it for four months. If you've written an incredibly long and complex RPG, people may not remember when they reach the end some 400 hours of gameplay later what crucial thing was said at the start of the game and on which their survival now hinges. Quest logs, notebooks and diaries can be very useful for this reason.

Make sure that any absolutely essential things are completed without the Player having to reload from an earlier point. For example, if they needed that secret book of ciphers, and you let them leave the room without it, and then later that building falls down so they can't get back inside - well, you'll make a lot of gamers very angry. If that building fell down fourteen levels ago... you've just made a lot of lifetime enemies.

Finally, ask yourself if you would want to play the game. There are hundreds of corporate created games out there, slick and shiny with invested money. If you want your game to succeed, it should offer something new and heartfelt. Like any creative endeavor, writing a game is about giving something of yourself to the world.

Figure 1 Sample Flow Chart