

# CIS 300

## Game Concepts

### Lecture 6

### Week 3

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## Announcements

- **Writing Lab** this week:
  - **presentation:**
    - technical/artistic presentation info
    - present your abstract to class
  - **new material:**
    - prepare for **concept doc**
      - Info: Lectures, Chap 2 of R&A
      - Brief: pg 53 R&A
    - initiate **game script** and **designer diary**
      - one member from group needs to setup webpage
      - <http://www.people.cornell.edu>
    - webpage setup and draft of concept doc due NEXT week
- **Game Lab** this week:
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> lab of programming/art/music development

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## Overview

- **Game concepts**
  - what's in your game?
  - where is your game?
  - when is your game?
  - who plays?
  - how do they play?
  - why do they play?
  - can you create your game?
- **Help with your upcoming concept document**

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## From Ideas to Game Concept

- **Concept:**
  - object conceived by the mind
  - general notion of a class of objects
- **Picking idea:**
  - you've gone through this process with group
  - see your abstract
- **Game Concept:**
  - collection of choices for game
  - choices address features/structure of game
  - So... what are these choices?

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## Game Concept Features

- **Game concept formed by making choices:**
  - Ideas and Genre
  - Technology and Business
  - Challenges, Gameplay, Goals
  - Player Role, Audience
  - Structure, Game Modes
  - Narrative, Story
  - Setting and Realsm
  - Interaction Model, Perspective
  - See Chapter 2 R&A for more detail
- **Concept document!**
  - State/explain your choices from above
  - See worksheet on **pg. 53 of R&A**

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## Ideas and Genre

- **Already discussed in previous lectures:**
  - generating **ideas**
  - choosing (blended) **genre(s)**
  - addressing **audience** (*core gamer* and *casual gamer*)
- **Pending:**
  - more depth about genre and ideas
  - want to explore history of games and computer games
  - <http://www.pbs.org/kcts/videogamerevolution/history>

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## Technology and Business

- **Platforms and computers:**
  - design for today? tomorrow?
  - must bear in mind limitations
  - affects scope of design!
- **Role of technology:**
  - can an old-tech game be good?
  - can new tech provide new ideas?
- **Business:**
  - marketing
  - what's hot, what's not
- More later when talk about industry

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## Challenges

- Games provide **challenges:**
  - want to motivate players
  - need to achieve something:
    - goals presented to player to achieve
    - goals might not actually be in the game
- **Victory/Lose conditions:**
  - state of game when player has won/lost
  - need for **all** games?
  - notion of competition:
    - **single/multi-player**
    - **cooperative, competitive**
    - **learning games?** (constructive?)

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## Gameplay

- **Play:**
  - See Chapter 22, *Rules of Play*
  - *Play is free movement within a more rigid structure*
  - many definitions...
- **Gameplay:**
  - Sid Meir: *a series of interesting choices*
  - R&A: *one or more causally linked series of challenges in a simulated environment*
  - **challenges + player actions to overcome them**
    - What obstacles/challenges must the player overcome?
    - What kinds of abilities are being tested?
    - Does the player win? If so, how?
  - role of **mechanics** (how game works)?
- Types of challenges:
  - see Chapter 7 R&A

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## Satan

- **An Aside: Do games corrupt people?**
  - are games and their designers Satanic?
- See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satan>
- In Hebrew, **Satan** (pronounced "sah-tahn") is one who **obstructs** (provides obstacles)
- Since a game designer provides obstacles....
- But, obstructive influences aren't necessarily bad, so at least we've addressed *that* issue :-)

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## Setting and Realism

- **Artificial universe** concept
  - a place with unique laws, creatures, interaction....
  - helps define a game world
- **Game Setting:**
  - physical location (athletic games, table games, ...)
  - a time period? (wargame, historical piece, ...)
  - worlds (real, imaginary)
- **Realism:**
  - how close is the artificial universe to the real one?
  - abstraction from reality? surreality? unreality?
- Issues to consider:
  - role of graphics and music
  - balance of gameplay and setting

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## Interaction Model and Perspective

- **Interaction model:**
  - ways that player interacts with game world
  - actions to overcome challenges
  - two common models in computer games:
    - **avatar**: play a character
    - **omnipresence**: take actions throughout a world
    - examples?
- **Perspective:**
  - how player sees game
  - displays: top-down, side-scrolling, isometric
  - people: 1<sup>st</sup>-person, 3<sup>rd</sup>-person

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## Player Role and Audience

- **Player Role:**
  - **who** is the gamer in the game world?
  - player might connect better to certain roles
  - player might understand game better if play cast in form of role
  - connections to audience, story, gameplay, perspective, ...
- **Audience:**
  - who will play your game?
  - different ways for different types to enjoy?
  - connections to marketing
  - connections to all other aspects (length, levels, setting...)

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## Modes and Structure

- **Game Mode:**
  - a particular form of gameplay during a game
  - might be same or change
    - phases?
    - games within a game?
- **Examples:**
  - games with an unchanging mode?
  - games with changing modes?
- **Effects of changing modes**
  - interaction model
  - perspective, roles
  - maybe challenges
- **Game Structure:**
  - modes and their transitions
  - R&A suggest making a flowchart

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## Narrative and Story

- Do games have to tell a story?
  - Does Tic Tac Toe "say" anything?
  - Name some games that have great stories....
- **Roles:**
  - Set up setting for game
  - "Play a story" (game as interactive fiction)
  - Story created by "path" of game
- Linear vs non-linear games
- **Asides:**
  - Stories and MMOs
  - How to integrate author intent with gameplay?
  - Can a game make you cry?

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## What's Next?

- **Next lecture:**
  - Parts of a game:
    - Engines, mechanics, interfaces, content
  - Start thinking about how to construct your game
- **Next week:**
  - Refine your concepts:
    - Chapters 3-7 R&A

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