

GDC Postmortem

Ryan Rosenthal

IGDA

*Ryan talked about the benefits of joining such as discounts and tutorials, but encourages everyone to join even if you do the free membership.

*<http://www.newwavegamedev.com/> and <http://www.madtown-igda.com/forum/index.php> were introduced for anyone in the room who might be unaware of them.

GDC

*Largest Game Developer's Conference outside of Tokyo

*Taking up some of the slack from E3, which has become more about backroom negotiations and smaller presentations.

*This year, attendees numbered 17-18,000 in San Francisco.

*Attending from ITT: Ryan Rosenthal, Shaun Frederick, Andy and Andrew.

*GDC Website: <http://www.gdconf.com/>

*Watched the Sizzle Reel on above Website. (Side note: Check out the myGDC Vault link further down the page for Conference Media available online)

*9 Focused Summits in 2 days~AI Summit was very intense. Independent Games summits, etc.

Game Design Workshops

MDA Framework

1. Mechanics

- A. Rules and Concepts
- B. Run-Time Behavior
- C. Desired emotional response from the player.

2. Dynamics

A. I'm not sure if I missed this? Ryan was trying to fit 5 days in 90 minutes--he talks faster than I write!

3. Aesthetics

- A. Describe **how** a game can accomplish our aesthetic goals.
- B. Models-how it meets the goal
- C. Failure Modes-how it can fail to meet the goal.

~Appreciate the right flow of the 3~

"Everything I learned about Level Design, I learned from Disneyland"

Disneyland and Gaming

1. Talk given by Scott Rogers
2. Guest (at Disneyland)= Player
3. WWWD (What Would Walt Do)
 - A. Story is First
 - a. Story Sessions Guide Design

- b. Explore the Theme--What is it really about?

*Personal Note: Jesse Schell talks about this in depth, working for Disney, Dreamworks and theming, in his book:

http://www.amazon.com/Art-Game-Design-book-lenses/dp/0123694965/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1240090114&sr=8-1

- B. Start with YOUR interests
 - a. Demonstration of how Pac-Man tied in with the world design of Disneyland
- 4. Weenies
 - A. Attracts the player's eyes
 - B. Provides a navigational reference point
 - C. Guides player where he wants to go, helps him keep focus, whets the appetite for things further down the road.
 - D. Draw players to their goals visually.
- 5. Use lighting to encourage player movement
 - A. Guides them toward things (shiny objects--yay!)
 - B. Absence of light has profound affect on players.
 - C. At the end of the night, all lights are shut off creating a clear path out of the park.
- 6. Posters
 - A. Treat locations as more than destinations; they are activities.
 - a. again, draws the player in.
 - B. In games can be more than just maps. Interactive gambits and such are like this. Creating goals and things to work toward. (Think FFX Sphere Grid, Tekken Character Grid, etc)
- 7. Rewards
- 8. Theme Generic Items (garbage cans at Disneyland were used in this example)
- 9. Add Danger--Cheating Death is a major theme at Disneyland
 - A. Warnings
 - B. Implied Threats
 - C. How many things at Disneyland contain skulls and skeletons?--12
- 10. Build Anticipation
 - A. Use Weenies--glimpse of other places from high points and such
 - a. When you are in the Treehouse (Swiss Family Robinson), you get a glimpse of other areas you can still visit!
- 11. Provide a clear path out
 - A. Well-Lit
 - B. Straight Path
 - C. Nothing Scary on it.

CAREER PAVILION

Keynotes

- 1. Satoru Iwata--CEO of Nintendo
 - A. Introduced the DSi
 - B. 8000 attendees in this seminar alone!
 - C. Focused on Miyamoto's Way
 - a. Upward Spiral
 - b. Ideas are everywhere

- Miyamoto took up yoga. From that, he came up with Wii Fit
- c. Personal communication
- d. Prototype stage
- e. Small teams
- f. Multiple Projects
- g. Trial and Error
- D. Prototypes!!
 - a. showed the prototype for Wii Tennis--very low poly, which was the point.
- E. Random Employee Kidnappings
 - a. Miyamoto regularly grabs an employee at random, locks them in a room and makes them play a prototype to see how they do, what frustrates them, what they like, etc.
- F. Introduced Rhythm Heaven game:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62XRwGKtIHc>
 - a. First time they ever had to budget for dance lessons: Dev team had to take dance lessons to train them to have rhythm to create the game!
- G. Teaser at end of talk for Nintendo DS~The Legend of Zelda Spirit Tracks:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuW2LY6u8uQ>
- 2. Hideo Kojima--Head of Kojima Productions
 - A. Spike has his entire talk: <http://www.spike.com/video/kojima-productions/3139504>
 - a. There are 9 parts, there is also a pre-keynote speech interview on this site. It's also in more than one part. Watch the whole thing--Making the Impossible, Possible in game design.
 - B. Speaks of how Metal Gear Solid was born of the necessity to get over the hurdle of technology...a barrier of impossibility. It was the start of stealth in games.
 - C. Experience=possible. Inexperience=impossible.
 - D. 90% of what is considered "impossible" is, in fact, possible. The other 10% will become possible with the passage of time and technology.

AWARDS

Independent Games Festival Winner

*Mega 64 introduction

--They do spoofs on games

--<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9mzkZ0XKWc>

145 Student Showcase Entries

*Winner: TAG: THE POWER OF PAINT

--Watch gameplay video

here:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOU7yFX5K9E&feature=related>

1. Start in a black and white world.
2. 3 colors of paint~Each color affects your movement through the world in different ways.
 - A. Green= Springboard
 - B. Red= Speed

C. Blue=Sticky

3. Build to where you will need to use all three colors in different ways to navigate the levels.

- Core team of 4 programmers and some artists
- Ryan calls it a "Brilliant Game" and praises the concept.

226 Independent Games Entries

*Winner: BLUEBERRY GARDEN

- Watch Sneak Peek Trailer here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOCsUDVsdu4>
- Collect and eat blueberries
- More like an artsy sandbox game
- Won \$30,000

Game Developers Choice Awards

*Mega64 Video: IF YOU'RE NOT INDIE:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=617IGZjYyNo>

*Brutal Legend--Jack Black does voice

overs~<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM5lMHbq9j8>

*Little Big Planet Stole the show

*Game Dev Choice Awards Game of the Year Vid on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQY1Vyx74ks>

--Fallout 3 wins: Watch Trailer

here~<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPt08UYmyMo>

*Lifetime Achievement Award~Hideo Kojima

--Watch the Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMN7SkGrHz4>

~He speaks in English and was funny. Watch this.

--In honor of this, we watched this: <http://mega64.com/2009/03/30/metal-gear-solid-4/>

10 Things Great Game Designers Exhibit

Gordon Walton

Co-Studio Director, Bioware

10. Passion for Games

- A. All genres, all kinds of games (board games, card games, etc)
- B. Passion is a real edge (in any job)

9. A Breadth and Depth of Knowledge

- A. What is your level of game knowledge (Not only in video games)
 - a. rules, gameplay, story, etc.

8. Problem-Solving and Analytical Skills

- A. What is your approach?
- B. Can you deconstruct complex problems?
- C. How are your logic skills?
- D. Don't over-analyze or make it overly complex

7. Flexibility

- A. Design can be frustrating due to frequency of changes
- B. Design must constantly adapt

6. KISS

- A. Keep it Super Simple
 - B. Prototype on Paper (* Personal Reference of that Art of Game Design Book again-- Chapter 7 is all about Prototyping)
 - C. "If some is good, more is better" is a common fault
5. Player Empathy
 - A. Keep the player's point of view in mind--you know the tricks and levels, they don't.
 - B. Can you understand the player's mental models? For example, if Ryan says Peanut Butter, it means different things to different people.
 4. Continuous Learning
 - A. Much of creation is knowledge integration, not original ideas
 - B. Part of learning is integrating feedback
 3. Teamwork
 - A. Be a team player
 - B. What's most important is that the *team* succeeds.
 - C. Teamwork Tops Brilliance
 2. A Positive Mental Attitude
 - A. Enthusiasm and a "Can-Do" attitude is infectious and can help another person who's on the fence find a solution.
 1. Clear Communication
 - A. Design IS communication.
 - B. Clarity of communication drives the fastest implementation and the most effective iteration.

Future of Design

More specialization (of developer) for big games

More Generalization for small games

Do you have the attributes to be a great designer?

Shaun Frederick--Program Chair, DEGD

1. I-Phone Dev and Mobile Devices
 - A. 25,000 Apps; 10,000 Developers, 165 New Apps Daily
 - B. Shaun would like all students to know there are many options for you in your career path. Casual games is just another option and it's growing in leaps and bounds!
2. WMS
 - A. Slot Machine Creator in Chicago
 - B. Will take over 21's down for a tour--See Shaun
 - C. They are looking for people to hire, so if you have Flash skills...
 - D. Website: <http://www.wms.com/>

Student Talk--Andy and Andrew

*Andrew wanted us to know how to network....where to find food, attending mixers, finding your way around. If you weren't there, you'll have to find Andrew. He'd also like Ryan Simmons to know that attending the GDC is more important than saving his job. ;) *Yeah, the student speech was entertaining; the whole day was. You should have gone. :p*

1. Passes
 - A. Various passes are available at various prices. The ITT students went in a group of

5 and took \$1,000 each (?). They bought the 2nd most expensive pass--the 2 Day Tutorial

Summit Pass.

- B. Took a tutorial class with Jonathan Morin--Lead Design for Far Cry 2
2. You DO NOT UNDERSTAND how much you have to network until you go and see it for yourself
 - A. 49 of 50 people knew someone in the industry going into the interviews.
3. Meeting Ernest Adams~IGDA founder
4. GO NOW!!!!
 - A. Don't wait to go to the GDC, it's that important.
 - B. Try to go AT LEAST twice!
 - C. You absolutely will not understand why it's so essential to attend until you see it for yourself--everything you learn, all of the networking opportunities, seeing the industry up close.
5. Blade Engine
 - A. <http://www.bladeengine.com/>
 - B. Community driven, open source game engine
6. Checking out Garage Games
7. Access to major industry players
8. Could customize your GDC experience down different tracks
 - A. Programming Track, Level Design Track, etc.
 - B. Path through the Game Industry--a speech given by a major player (I missed the name)
9. New OnLive Console
 - A. If you've missed this, there was just a write up on it in the new Game Informer:
 - a. Issue 193, May 2009 Page 28 "Four's A Crowd?"
 - B. Can attach to TV or PC--Broadband connection
 - C. They will host the games, so you can use an entry level PC with no need to upgrade. It's the next big thing.
10. MMBX
 - A. Credit card-sized thingy with a flash drive that folds out.
 - a. I couldn't find anything for this on the web, but it looks really cool!
11. Other things to see: new Torque toys, Voice Command, ridiculous amounts of Motion Capture, new game mechanics for rough terrain (used in the new Prince of Persia game)
12. Don't be a student--Make up a title
 - A. They say there's no segregation, but you have to put a title on your pass and, if you put "student" on it, you close a lot of doors for casual networking for yourself.
 - B. LEARN, DEVELOPE, NETWORK--it's the GDC motto. Take advantage of the mixers and casual networking opportunities
 - C. Learn to use idle chit-chat, small talk.
 - D. Even with 17,000 people, Game Dev is a small community. Positive impressions, or negative, make their way around VERY fast--lots of word of mouth. You will be remembered.

If you want the slides from the meeting or more information, Ryan put up his e-mail:
rosenthal@itt-tech.edu

Thanks to Ryan, Shaun, Andy and Andrew!