

Contents Summary

Chapter 1	What Players Want	1
Chapter 2	Interview: Sid Meier.	20
Chapter 3	Brainstorming a Game Idea: Gameplay, Technology, and Story	40
Chapter 4	Game Analysis: <i>Centipede</i>	57
Chapter 5	Focus	69
Chapter 6	Interview: Ed Logg	87
Chapter 7	The Elements of Gameplay	115
Chapter 8	Game Analysis: <i>Tetris</i>	141
Chapter 9	Artificial Intelligence	151
Chapter 10	Interview: Steve Meretzky	172
Chapter 11	Storytelling.	202
Chapter 12	Game Analysis: <i>Loom</i>	227
Chapter 13	Multi-Player	237
Chapter 14	Interview: Chris Crawford	257
Chapter 15	Getting the Gameplay Working	281
Chapter 16	Game Analysis: <i>Myth: The Fallen Lords</i>	296
Chapter 17	Game Development Documentation	306
Chapter 18	Interview: Jordan Mechner	320
Chapter 19	The Design Document	355
Chapter 20	Game Analysis: <i>The Sims</i>	382
Chapter 21	Designing Design Tools.	392
Chapter 22	Interview: Will Wright	408
Chapter 23	Level Design	449
Chapter 24	Game Analysis: <i>Grand Theft Auto III</i>	475
Chapter 25	Playtesting	483
Chapter 26	Interview: Doug Church	500
Conclusion	532
Appendix A	Sample Design Document: <i>Atomic Sam</i>	535
Appendix B	Sample Design Document: <i>The Suffering</i>	579
Glossary.	655
Selected Bibliography	672
Index	677

Contents

Foreword	xvi
Introduction to the Second Edition	xvii
Introduction	xx
Chapter 1 What Players Want	1
Why Do Players Play?	2
Players Want a Challenge.	2
Players Want to Socialize.	3
Players Want a Dynamic Solitary Experience	5
Players Want Bragging Rights	5
Players Want an Emotional Experience	6
Players Want to Explore	6
Players Want to Fantasize	7
Players Want to Interact	8
What Do Players Expect?	8
Players Expect a Consistent World	8
Players Expect to Understand the Game-World's Bounds	9
Players Expect Reasonable Solutions to Work	10
Players Expect Direction	10
Players Expect to Accomplish a Task Incrementally.	11
Players Expect to Be Immersed	12
Players Expect Some Setbacks	14
Players Expect a Fair Chance	14
Players Expect to Not Need to Repeat Themselves	15
Players Expect to Not Get Hopelessly Stuck	16
Players Expect to Do, Not to Watch	17
Players Do Not Know What They Want, but They Know When It Is Missing.	18
A Never-Ending List	19
Chapter 2 Interview: Sid Meier.	20
Chapter 3 Brainstorming a Game Idea: Gameplay, Technology, and Story.	40
Starting Points	41
Starting with Gameplay	42
Starting with Technology	43
Starting with Story	45
Working with Limitations.	47
Odyssey: The Legend of Nemesis	48
Damage Incorporated	49

Centipede 3D	50
The Suffering	51
Embrace Your Limitations	52
Established Technology	53
The Case of the Many Mushrooms	54
The Time Allotted	55
If You Choose Not to Decide, You Still Have Made a Choice	56
Chapter 4 Game Analysis: Centipede	57
Classic Arcade Game Traits	59
Input	62
Interconnectedness	63
Escalating Tension	65
One Person, One Game	67
Chapter 5 Focus	69
Establishing Focus	70
An Example: Winter Carnival Whirlwind	72
The Function of the Focus	74
Maintaining Focus	77
Fleshing Out the Focus	78
Changing Focus	79
Sub-Focuses	82
Using Focus	85
Chapter 6 Interview: Ed Logg	87
Chapter 7 The Elements of Gameplay	115
Unique Solutions	116
Anticipatory versus Complex Systems	116
Emergence	117
Non-Linearity	119
Types of Non-Linearity	119
Implementation	121
The Purpose of Non-Linearity	123
Modeling Reality	125
Teaching the Player	127
Tutorials	128
Input/Output	131
Controls and Input	131
Output and Game-World Feedback	136
Basic Elements	140
Chapter 8 Game Analysis: Tetris	141
Puzzle Game or Action Game?	142
Tetris as a Classic Arcade Game	144
The Technology	146

Artificial Intelligence	147
Escalating Tension.	148
Simplicity and Symmetry	149
Fifteen Years On, Who Would Publish Tetris?	150
Chapter 9 Artificial Intelligence.	151
Goals of Game AI	153
Challenge the Player	154
Not Do Dumb Things	156
Be Unpredictable	157
Assist Storytelling	159
Create a Living World	162
The Sloped Playing Field	162
How Real Is Too Real?	163
AI Agents and Their Environment	164
How Good Is Good Enough?	167
Scripting	168
Artificial Stupidity	171
Chapter 10 Interview: Steve Meretzky	172
Chapter 11 Storytelling	202
Designer’s Story Versus Player’s Story	203
Places for Storytelling.	206
Out-of-Game	207
In-Game.	212
External Materials	216
Linear Writing Pitfalls.	217
Player Character Personality	218
Game Stories	222
Non-Linearity.	223
Working with the Gameplay	224
The Dream.	225
Chapter 12 Game Analysis: Loom.	227
Focused Game Mechanics.	228
User Interface	230
The Drafts System	231
Difficulty	233
Story	233
Loom as an Adventure Game	235
Chapter 13 Multi-Player.	237
Motivations	238
The Forms	239
Single System Multi-Player	239
Online Multi-Player	241

Design Considerations	242
Playing to Strengths	244
Protect Newbies	246
Socialization	248
Development Issues.	251
Playtesting and User Feedback	253
A World of Their Own	256
Chapter 14 Interview: Chris Crawford	257
Chapter 15 Getting the Gameplay Working	281
The Organic Process	283
Too Much Too Soon	283
Keep It Simple	285
Building the Game.	286
Core Technology	286
Incremental Steps	287
A Fully Functional Area	288
Going Through Changes	290
Programming	291
When Is It Fun?	293
Chapter 16 Game Analysis: Myth: The Fallen Lords	296
Use of Technology	297
Game Focus	300
Storytelling	301
Hard-Core Gaming	302
Multi-Player	303
A Cohesive Whole.	304
Chapter 17 Game Development Documentation	306
Document Your Game.	308
Concept Document, Pitch Document, or Proposal	308
Competitive Analysis.	309
Design Document	309
Flowcharts	311
Story Bible	311
Script	313
Art Bible	315
The Game Minute	316
Storyboards.	317
Technical Design Document	317
Schedules and Business/Marketing Documents	318
No Standard Documentation.	319
The Benefits of Documentation.	319

Chapter 18 Interview: Jordan Mechner 320

Chapter 19 The Design Document 355

 The Writing Style 357

 The Sections 359

 Table of Contents 360

 Introduction/Overview or Executive Summary 360

 Game Mechanics 361

 Artificial Intelligence 366

 Game Elements: Characters, Items, and Objects/Mechanisms 369

 Story Overview 371

 Game Progression 371

 System Menus 373

 One Man’s Opinion 373

 Inauspicious Design Documents 374

 The Wafer-Thin or Ellipsis Special Document 374

 The Back-Story Tome 375

 The Overkill Document 376

 The Pie-in-the-Sky Document 377

 The Fossilized Document 378

 A Matter of Weight 379

 Getting It Read 380

 Documentation Is Only the Beginning 380

Chapter 20 Game Analysis: The Sims 382

 Abdicating Authorship 383

 Familiar Subject Matter 384

 Safe Experimentation 386

 Depth and Focus 386

 Interface 387

 Controlled Versus Autonomous Behavior 389

 A Lesson to Be Learned 390

Chapter 21 Designing Design Tools 392

 Desired Functionality 394

 Visualizing the Level 394

 The Big Picture 396

 Jumping into the Game 397

 Editing the World 399

 Scripting Languages and Object Behaviors 400

 Us Versus Them 403

 The Best of Intentions 405

 A Game Editor for All Seasons 406

Chapter 22 Interview: Will Wright	408
Chapter 23 Level Design	449
Levels in Different Games	450
Level Separation	451
Level Order.	453
The Components of a Level.	454
Action	455
Exploration	456
Puzzle Solving	457
Storytelling	458
Aesthetics	459
Balancing It All	460
Level Flow.	460
Elements of Good Levels	463
Players Cannot Get Stuck	463
Sub-Goals.	463
Landmarks	464
Critical Path.	465
Limited Backtracking	465
Success the First Time.	465
Navigable Areas Clearly Marked	466
Choices	466
A Personal List	466
The Process	467
Step 1. Preliminary.	467
Step 2. Conceptual and Sketched Outline	468
Step 3. Base Architecture/Block Out	469
Step 4. Refine Architecture Until It Is Fun	469
Step 5. Base Gameplay.	470
Step 6. Refine Gameplay Until It Is Fun.	471
Step 7. Refine Aesthetics	471
Step 8. Playtesting	472
Process Variations	472
Who Does Level Design?	473
Collaboration.	474
Chapter 24 Game Analysis: Grand Theft Auto III	475
Believable Game-World	476
A Living City.	477
Actions and Consequences	480
Storytelling	481
Chapter 25 Playtesting	483
Finding the Right Testers.	484
Who Should Test	485

Who Should Not Test.	487
When to Test.	489
How to Test	491
Guided and Unguided Testing.	492
Balancing.	493
Your Game Is Too Hard	495
The Artistic Vision	497
Chapter 26 Interview: Doug Church	500
Conclusion	532
Art	532
The Medium	533
The Motive	534
Appendix A Sample Design Document: Atomic Sam	535
I. Overview	539
II. Game Mechanics	540
III. Artificial Intelligence	555
IV. Game Elements	561
V. Story Overview	571
VI. Game Progression.	572
VII. Bibliography	578
Appendix B Sample Design Document: The Suffering.	579
Section I: Introduction.	587
Section II: Game Mechanics	588
Controls Overview	616
Section III: Resources.	617
Section IV: NPCs	622
Section V: Story	630
Section VI: Gameflow	638
Section VIII: Menus	651
Glossary	655
Selected Bibliography	672
Index	677