



Thirty Things I Hate About Your Game Pitch

Brian Upton
Game Designer
Game On The Rails



- Is this game worth making?
- Can this team make it?





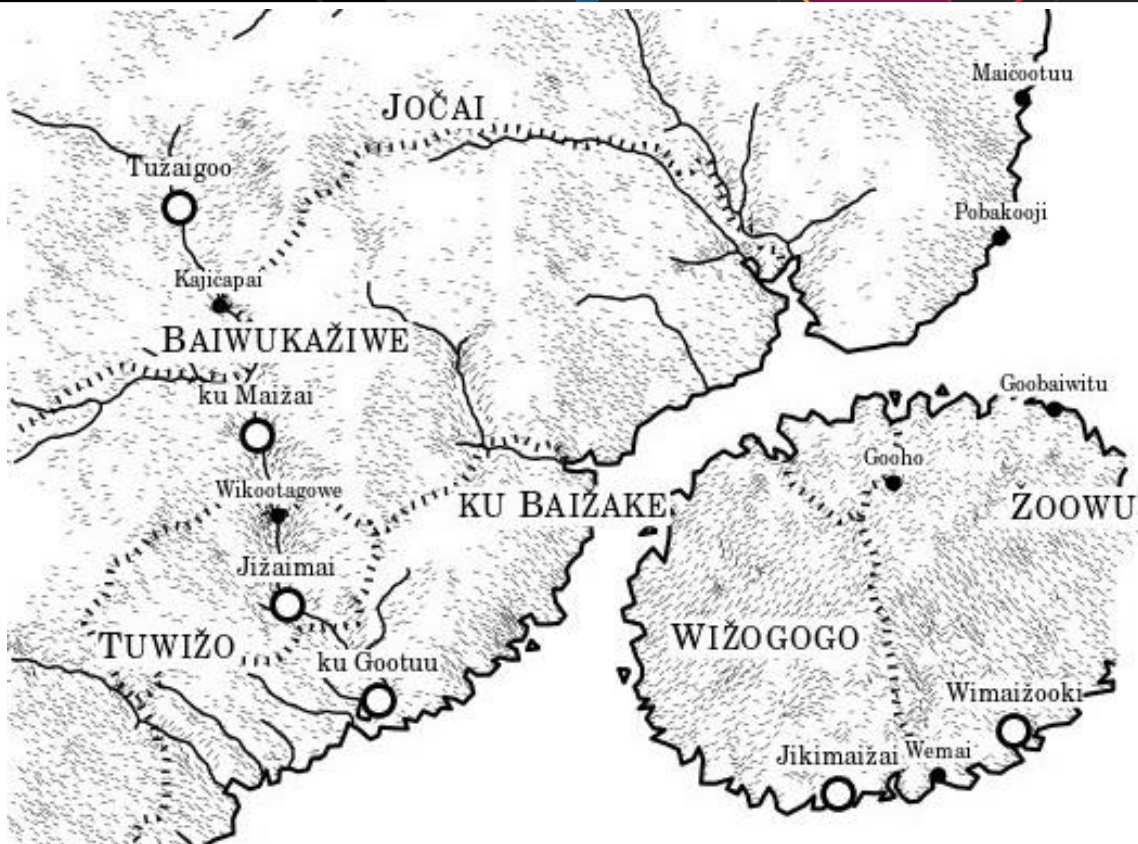
Let the Hate
Begin!





#1

I don't give a
crap about
your backstory.

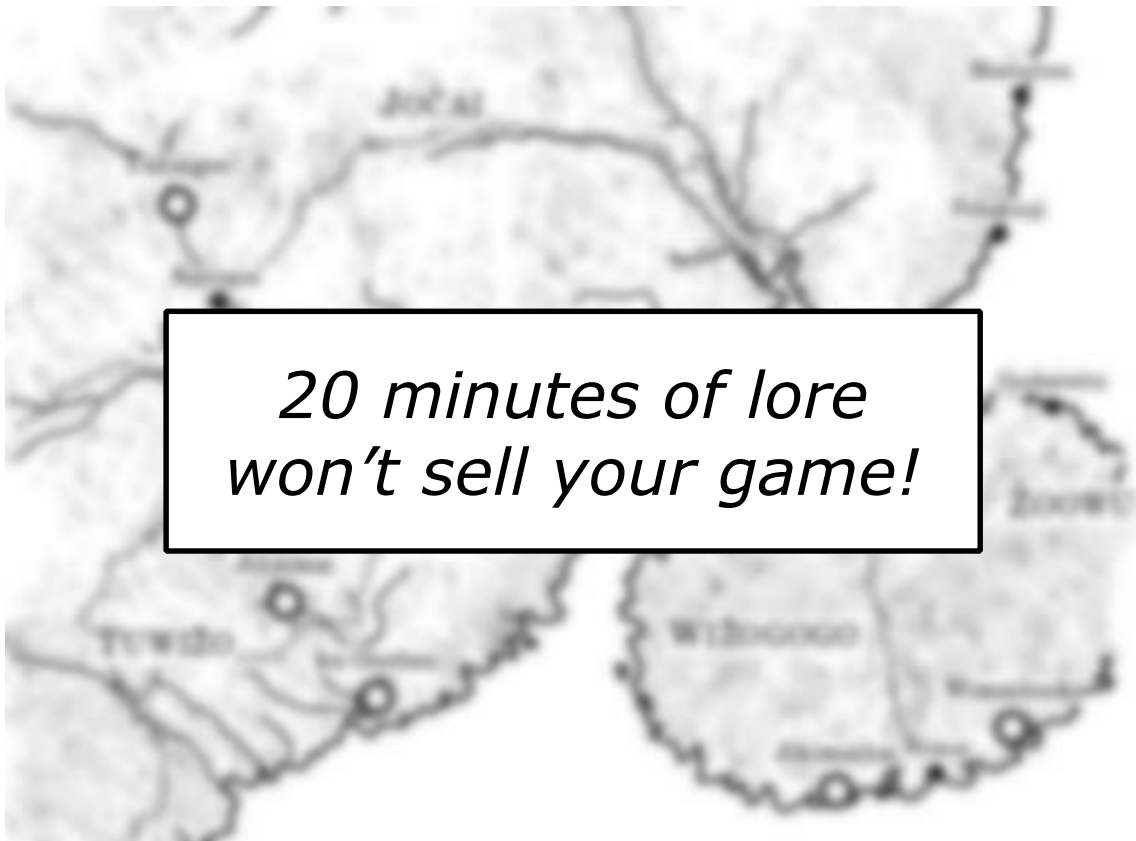




#1

I don't give a
crap about
your backstory.

*20 minutes of lore
won't sell your game!*





#2

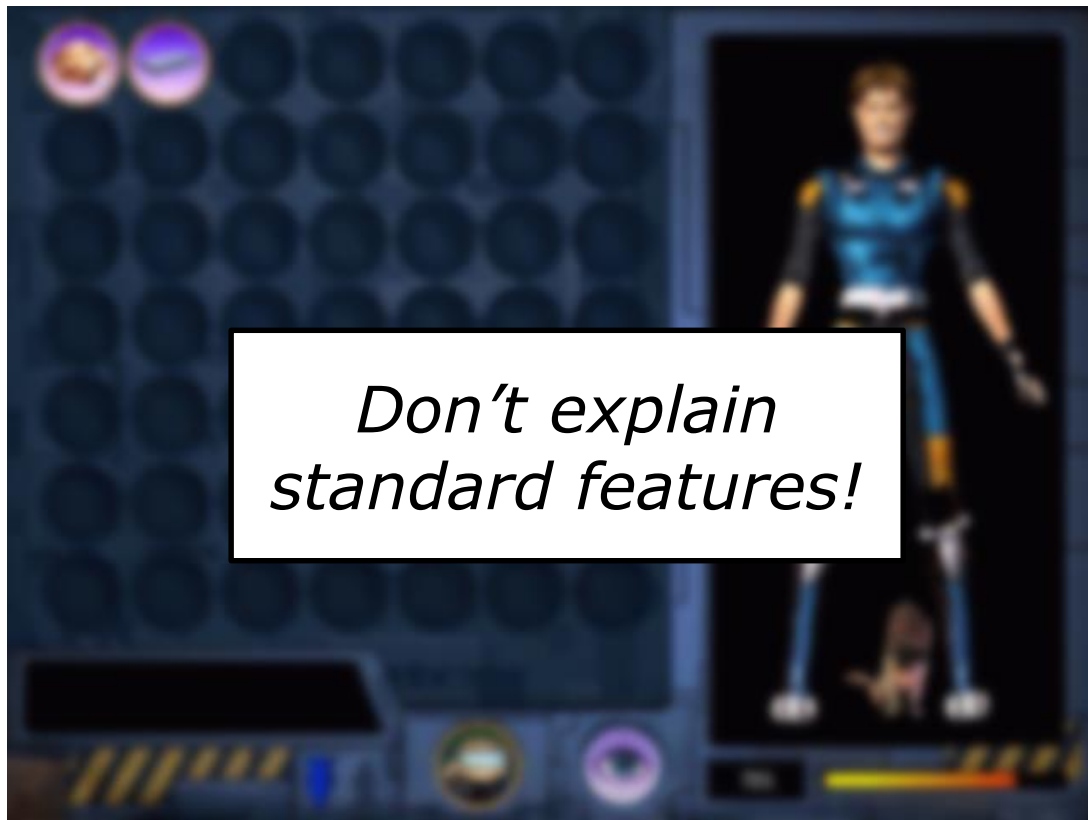
I don't give a crap
about your
inventory system
either.





#2

I don't give a crap
about your
inventory system
either.





#3

I'm not going to
design your
game for you.





#3

I'm not going to
design your
game for you.

Don't ask me what I want.

Tell me what YOU want!





#4

Pillars are not hooks!





#4

Pillars are not hooks!

A blurred background image of a man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, sitting on a boat. He is looking down at something in his hands. The background shows a body of water and mountains.

What makes your game unique?

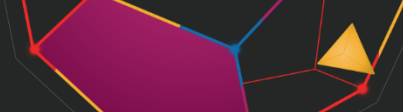




#5

You never explained
what the player does.





#5

You never explained
what the player does.

A blurred video frame showing a man in a dark suit and white shirt, standing in an office environment. The image is out of focus, emphasizing the text overlay.

Describe your mechanics!





#6

“In the real world, no one can double jump!”





#6

“In the real world, no one can double jump!”



Don't use realism to excuse bad design!



#7

“It’s a game show!”

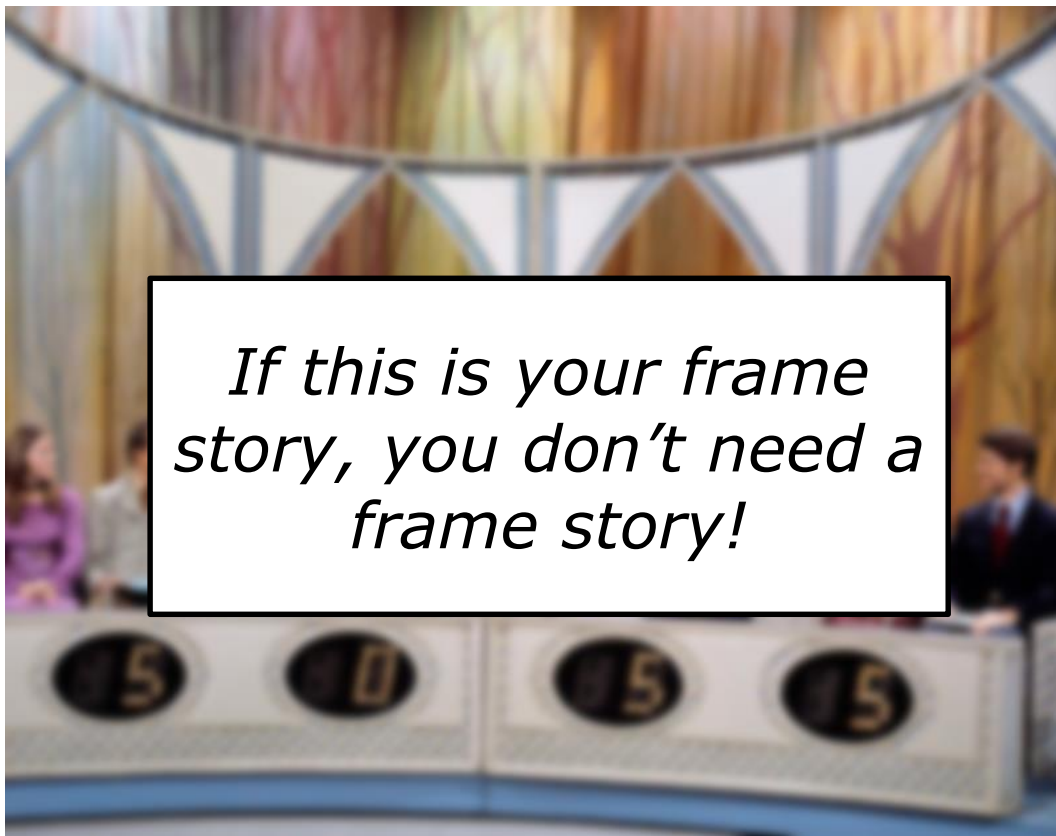




#7

“It’s a game show!”

If this is your frame story, you don't need a frame story!





#8

“It’s a parody!”





#8

"It's a parody!"



*Really?
Or is it just crappy?*





#9

You never mentioned
your glaringly obvious
tech risk.





#9

You never mentioned
your glaringly obvious
tech risk.

*Taking risks is
great, as long
as you're
upfront about
them!*





#10

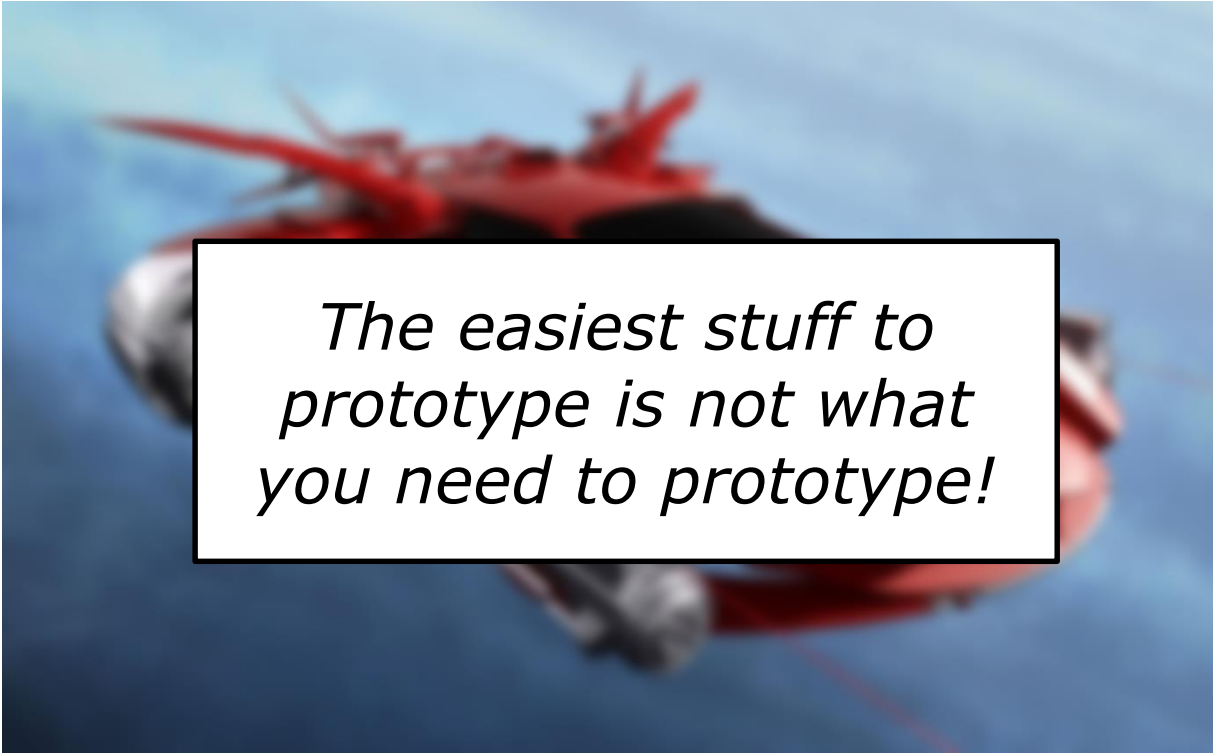
Your proof of concept doesn't prove your concept.





#10

Your proof of concept doesn't prove your concept.

A blurred image of a red airplane flying through a blue sky, serving as a background for the text box.

The easiest stuff to prototype is not what you need to prototype!





#11

Having lots of shitty images doesn't make them less shitty.





#11

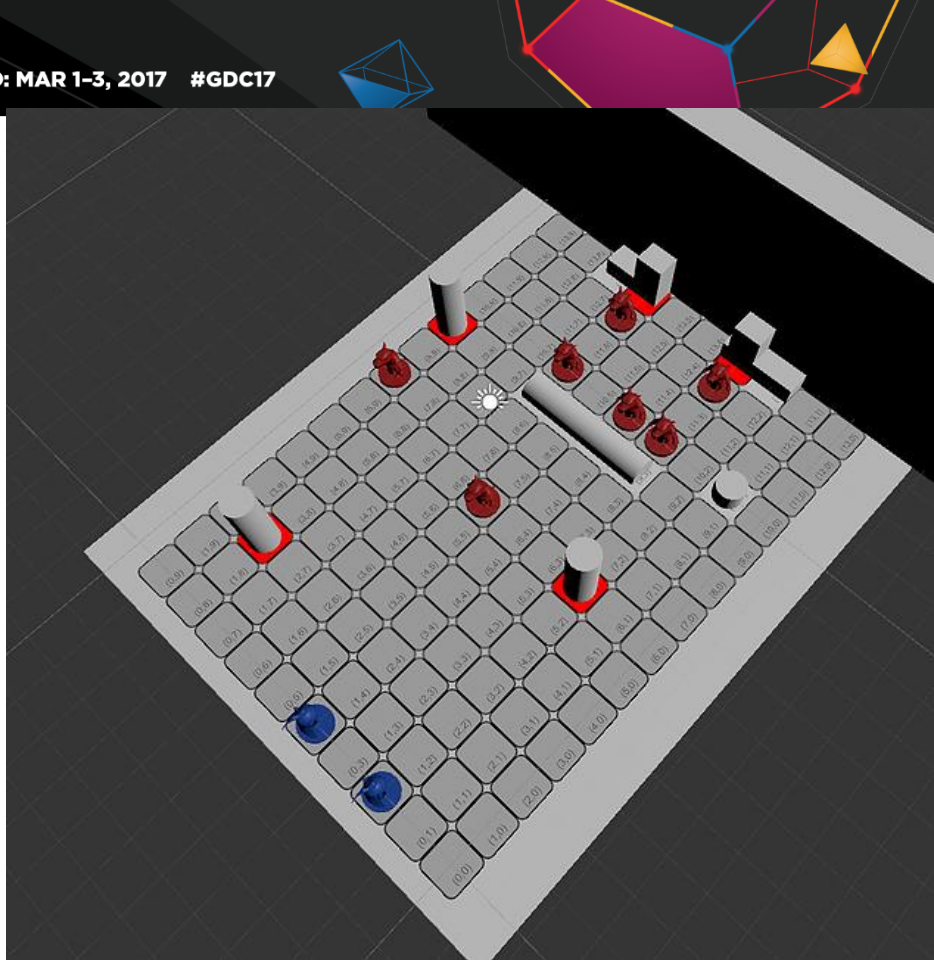
Having lots of shitty images doesn't make them less shitty.

One or two amazing pieces is better than a dozen mediocre ones!



#12

I can't tell what's
placeholder and
what's not.





#12

I can't tell what's
placeholder and
what's not.

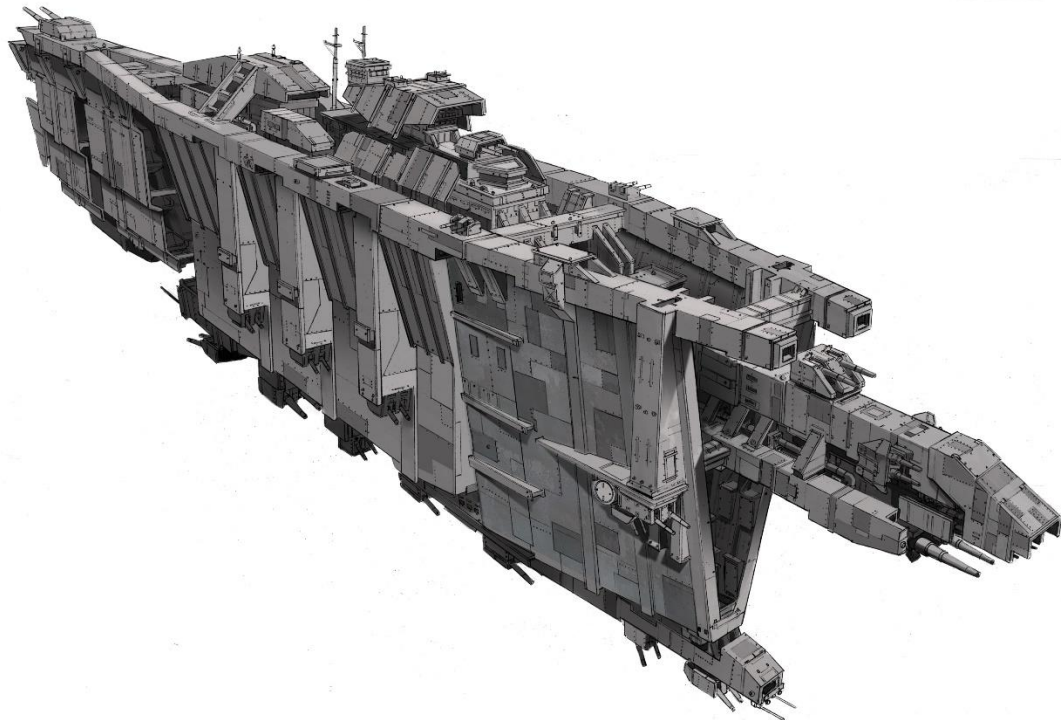
*Obvious placeholders are
better than bad art that
looks final!*





#13

You polished
too early.





#13

You polished
too early.

*Work in progress should
look like work in progress!*





#14

Your sample
dialog sucks.





#14

Your sample
dialog sucks.

*If you're selling the
story, you need to
convince me you can
tell one!*





#15

You're pandering to the latest tech craze.

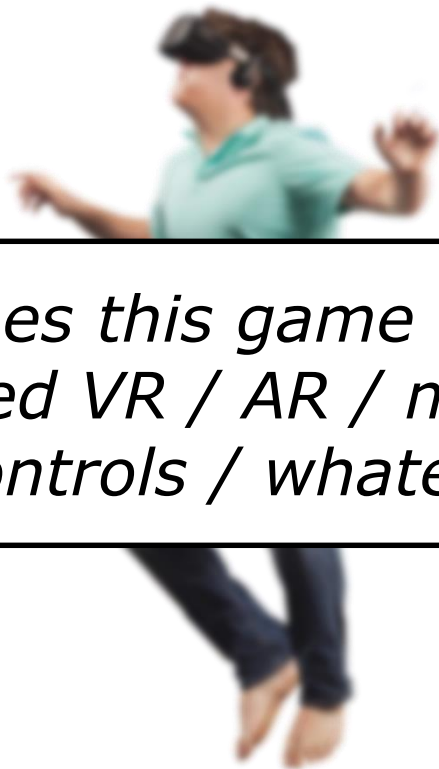




#15

You're pandering to the latest tech craze.

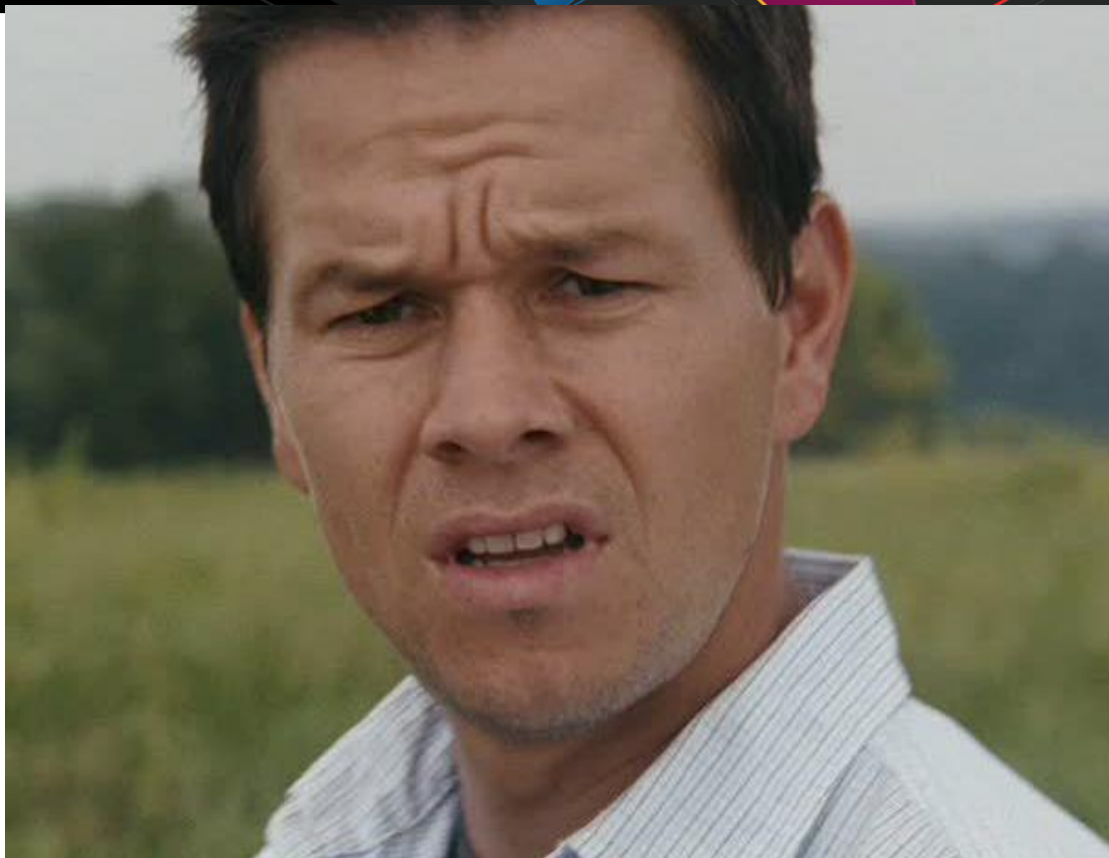
Does this game really need VR / AR / motion controls / whatever?





#16

You just pitched a
phone game to a
console publisher.





#16

You just pitched a phone game to a console publisher.

Do a little research into who you're pitching to!





#17

Gone Home
already exists.





#17

Gone Home
already exists.



So does Minecraft.





#18

“Can you help us negotiate a license deal with Marvel?”

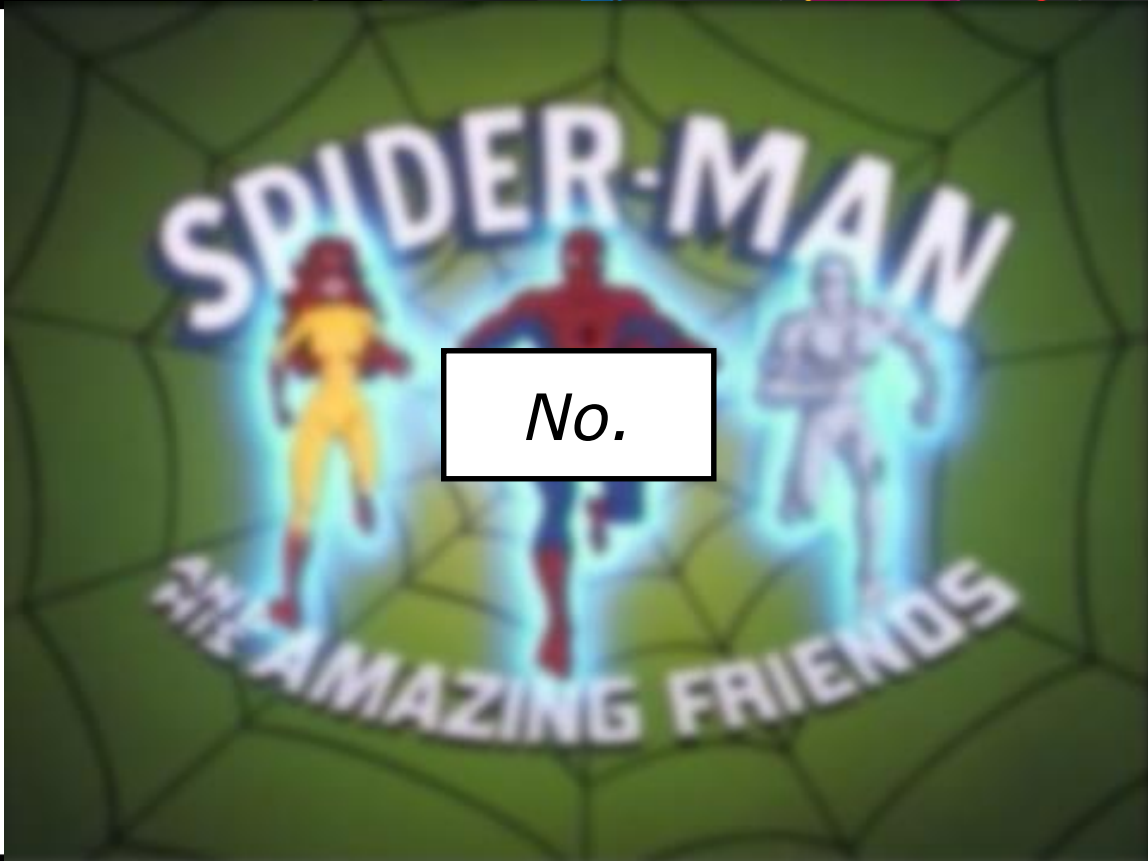




#18

“Can you help us negotiate a license deal with Marvel?”

No.



#19

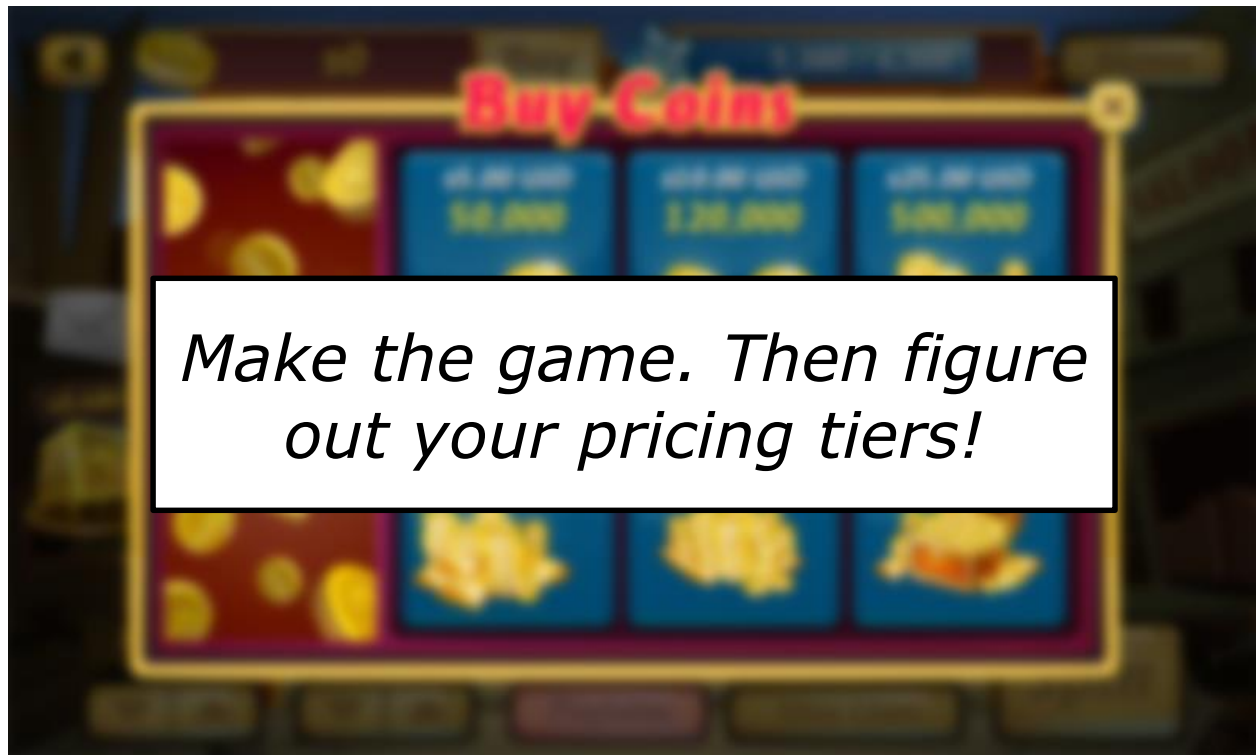
I know more
about your
monetization
than your
mechanics.





#19

I know more
about your
monetization
than your
mechanics.





#20

You have no idea
how much money
you need to make
this thing.





#20

You have no idea
how much money
you need to make
this thing

*Or how many people.
Or how much time.*





#21

You don't have
a team.





#21

You don't have
a team.

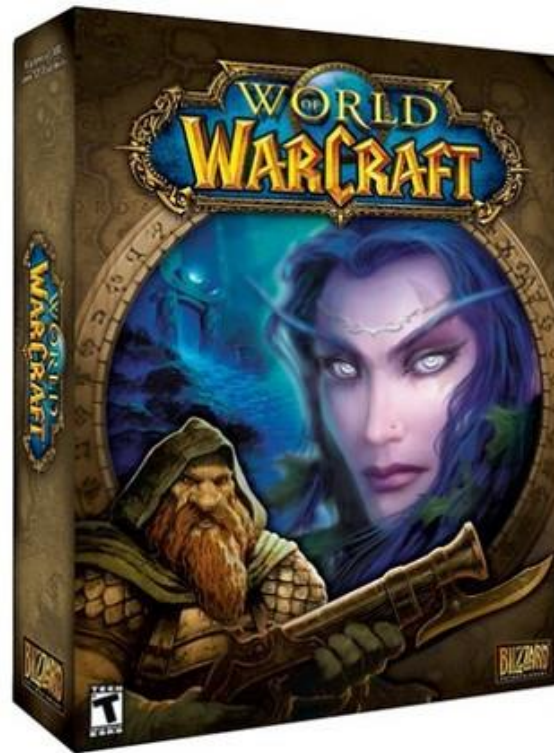
A blurred photograph of a large conference hall with many rows of tables and chairs, suggesting a large gathering of people.

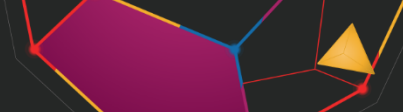
*At least know who
your leads will be!*



#22


Your business plan is
based on outliers.



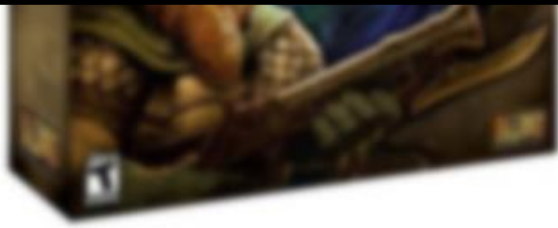


#22

Your business plan is based on outliers.



If your game needs to sell like WoW to succeed, it won't succeed

A World of Warcraft game box is shown in the background, partially obscured by the text box. The top part of the box features the 'WORLD OF WARCRAFT' logo, and the bottom part shows a character holding a sword.



#23

You seem like you'd
be a huge pain in the
ass to work with.





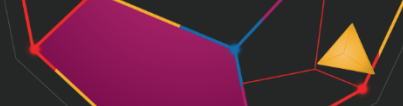
#23

You seem like you'd be a huge pain in the ass to work with.



Your pitch is an audition!





#24

You expect me
to know who
you are.

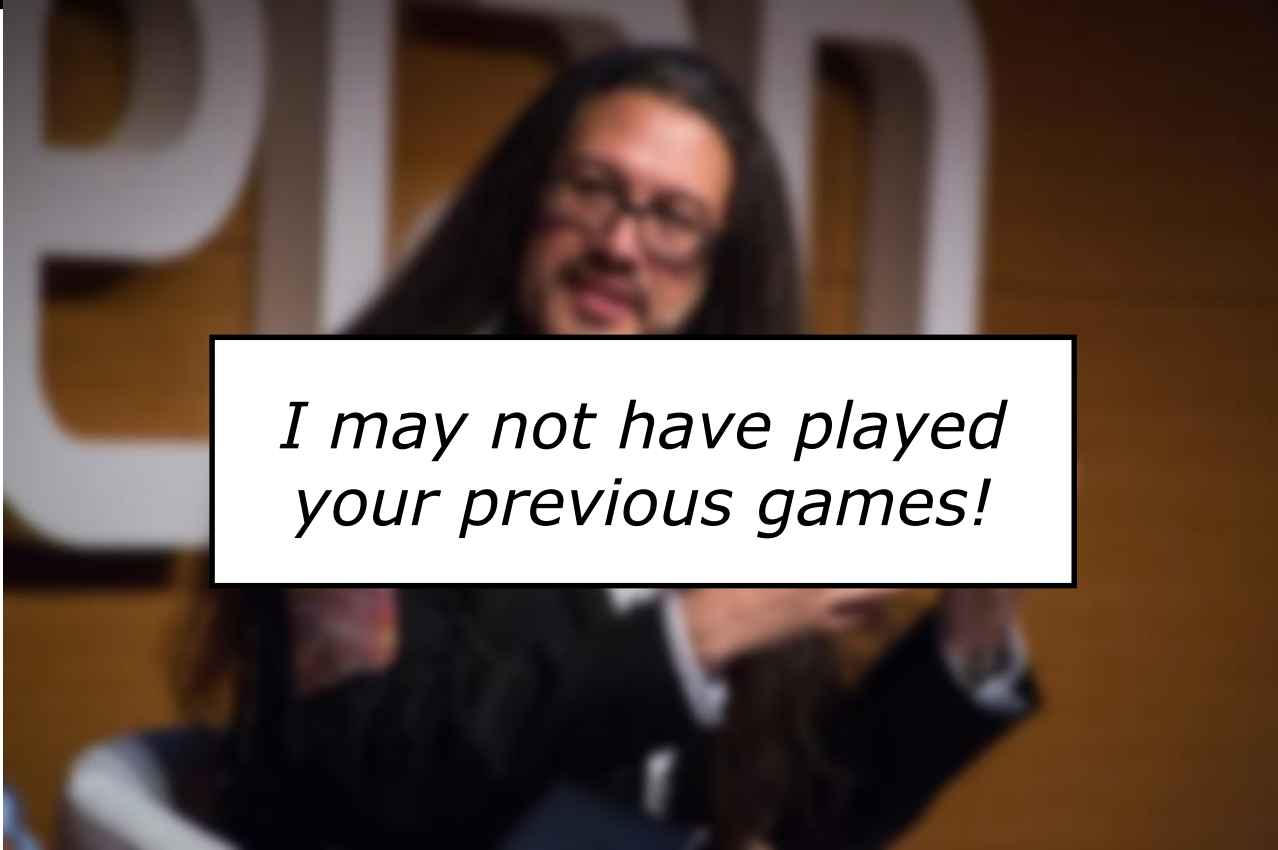




#24

You expect me
to know who
you are.

*I may not have played
your previous games!*





#25

You're
annoyed that
I'm asking
questions.





#25

You're
annoyed that
I'm asking
questions.

*It means I'm actually
interested in your game!*





#26


We're watching
the pitch on your
phone.





#26

We're watching
the pitch on your
phone.



*Please! Bring a
laptop or a tablet!*





#27

You brought a
laptop ... but no
headphones.



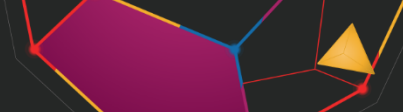


#27

You brought a
laptop ... but no
headphones.

*You never know where
you might pitch!*





#28

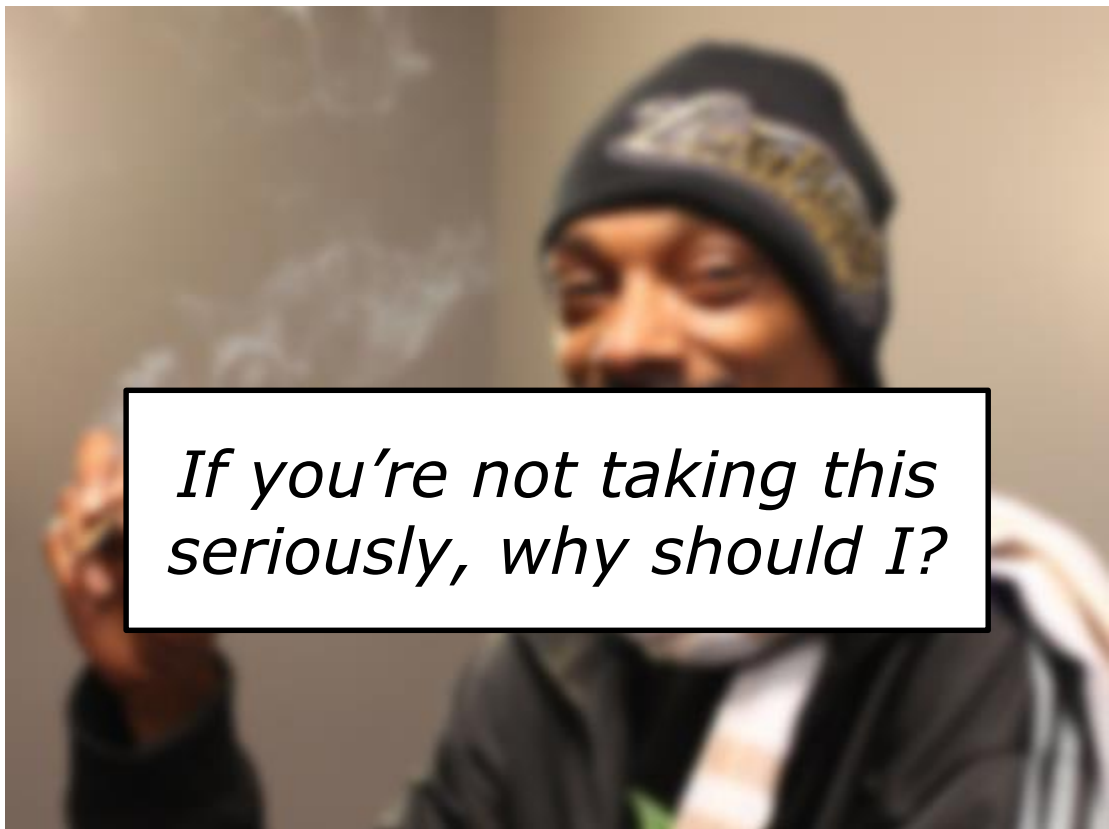
You're hungover ...
Or drunk ...
Or high ...





#28

You're hungover ...
Or drunk ...
Or high ...



If you're not taking this seriously, why should I?





#29



You trash other games.
Or other companies.
Or other developers.





#29



You trash other games.
Or other companies.
Or other developers.



#30


You need to take a shower.





#30

You need to take a shower.

A blurred screenshot of a game character, likely a robot or a creature, standing in a dark environment. The character is wearing a helmet and has a large, bulky body. The background is dark and indistinct.

*I shouldn't have
to tell you this*





- Be enthusiastic
- Be honest
- Sell your hook
- Know your scope





Thank you!





Brian Upton

www.gameontherails.com

Twitter: @bbupton

Email: bbupton@gmail.com

