

# Using Studio Design Groups to Build a More Cohesive Culture and Strategy

**Jason Scott**

Studio Design Director, Volition

volition  inc<sup>®</sup>

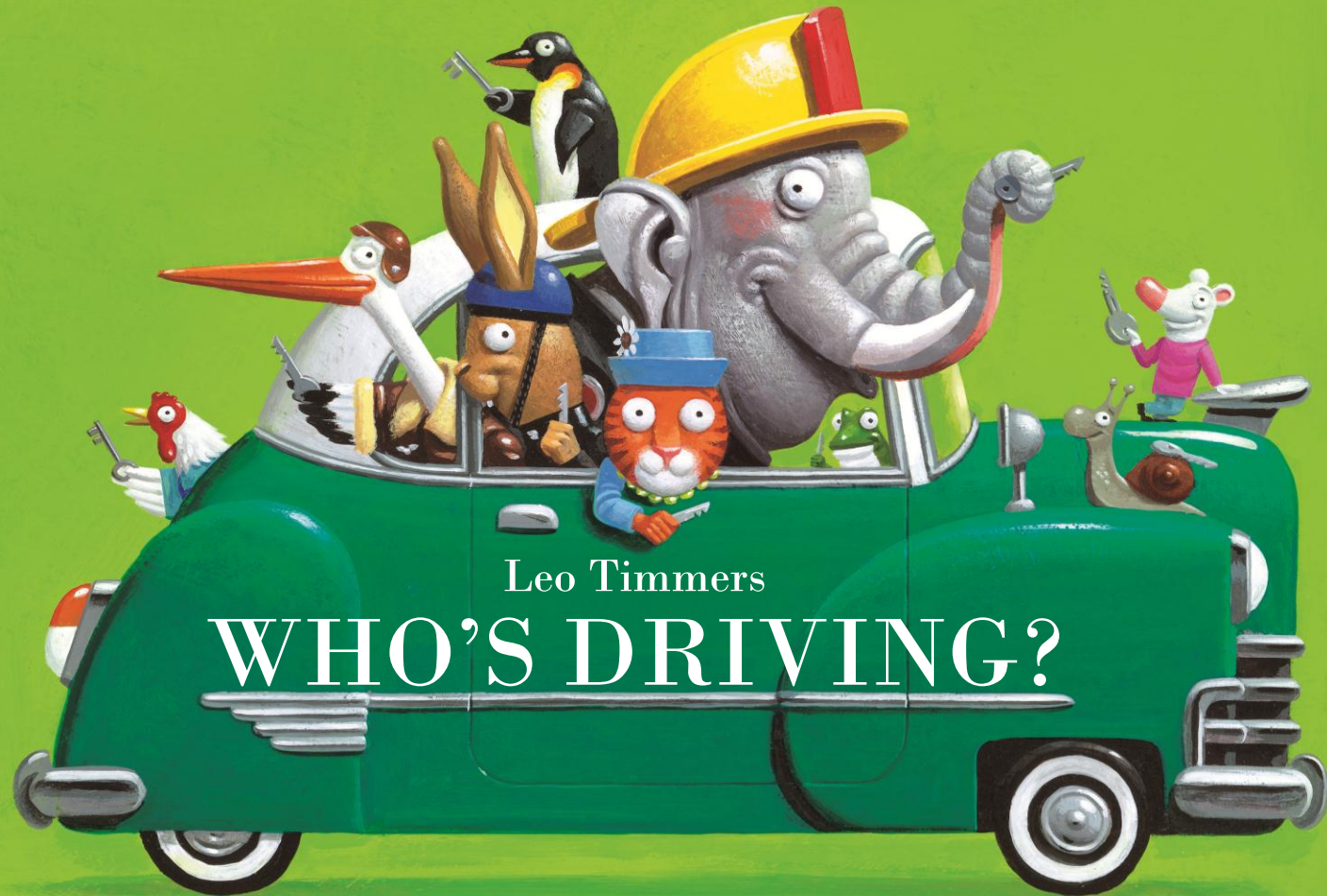




IM SANE

RED FACTION  
ARMAGEDDON





Leo Timmers

# WHO'S DRIVING?





INVEST IN  
SHARING

WHY we did it

WHAT we accomplished

HOW you can do it too

WHY we did it

WHAT we accomplished

HOW you can do it too









[illegible]



**“discontinuing the weekly  
meetings really hurt...”**

**— designer exit interview**





B O L T I N I

Southern Decadence  
Celebration  
October 28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>



**SORRY**

**DUE TO  
ALLOCATION  
WE CAN SERVE  
NO MORE  
GASOLINE  
TODAY**









# Today's Agenda

---

- Thoughts on THQ strategy
- What it means for design
- Studio design groups

# Focus on Quality

## 3 Paths for Improving Quality:

- Set a high **QUALITY BAR**
- Optimize the **ITERATION CYCLE**
- Develop our **SKILLSET**

# Focus on Quality

---

- Career Paths
- Project/Studio Roles
- Studio Initiatives
- Studio Design Groups

## 3 Groups

- Building cohesive worlds
- Systems & mechanics
- Modal gameplay



WHY we did it

WHAT we accomplished

HOW you can do it too

**2009**

**1** 02/09  
06/09

**2010**

**2** 10/09  
03/10

**3** 04/10  
09/10

**2011**

**4** 10/10  
03/11

**5** 04/11  
06/11

**2012**

**6** 10/11



**quality**

**iteration**

**skillset**









**DESIGN**

**CULTURE**

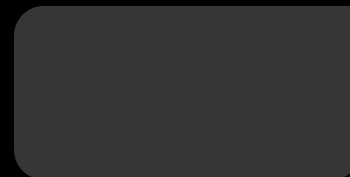




2009



2010



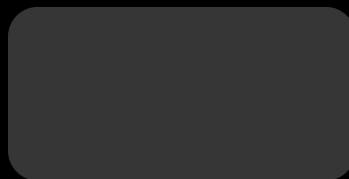
2011



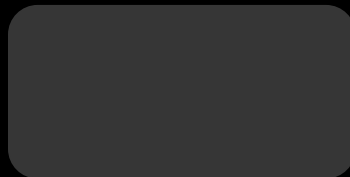
2012



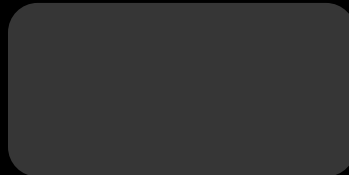
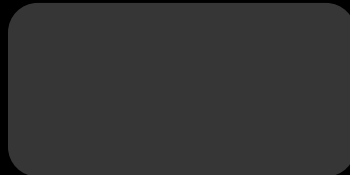
2009



2010



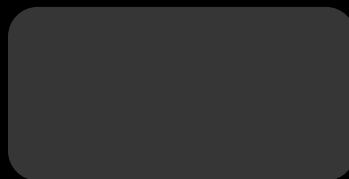
2011



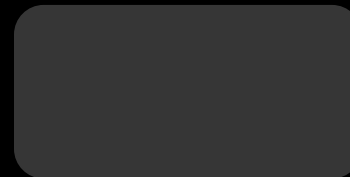
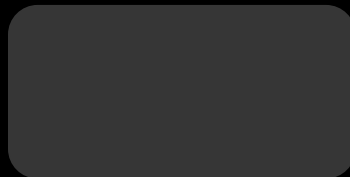
2012



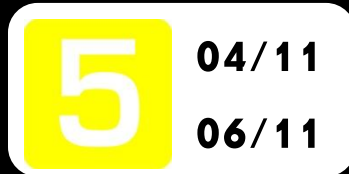
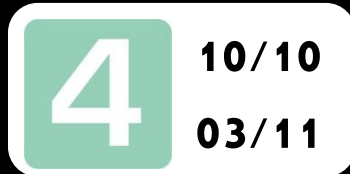
2009



2010



2011



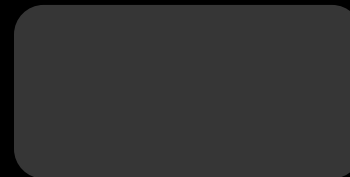
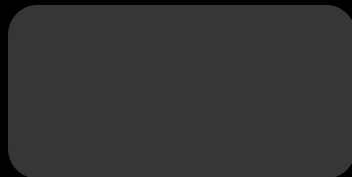
2012



**2009**



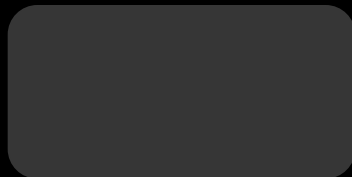
**2010**

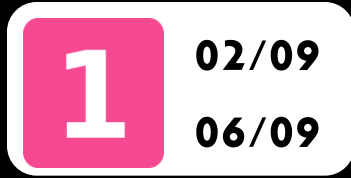


**2011**



**2012**





# **Building Cohesive Worlds**

## **Systems & Mechanics**

### **Modal Gameplay**

**1**

**02/09**

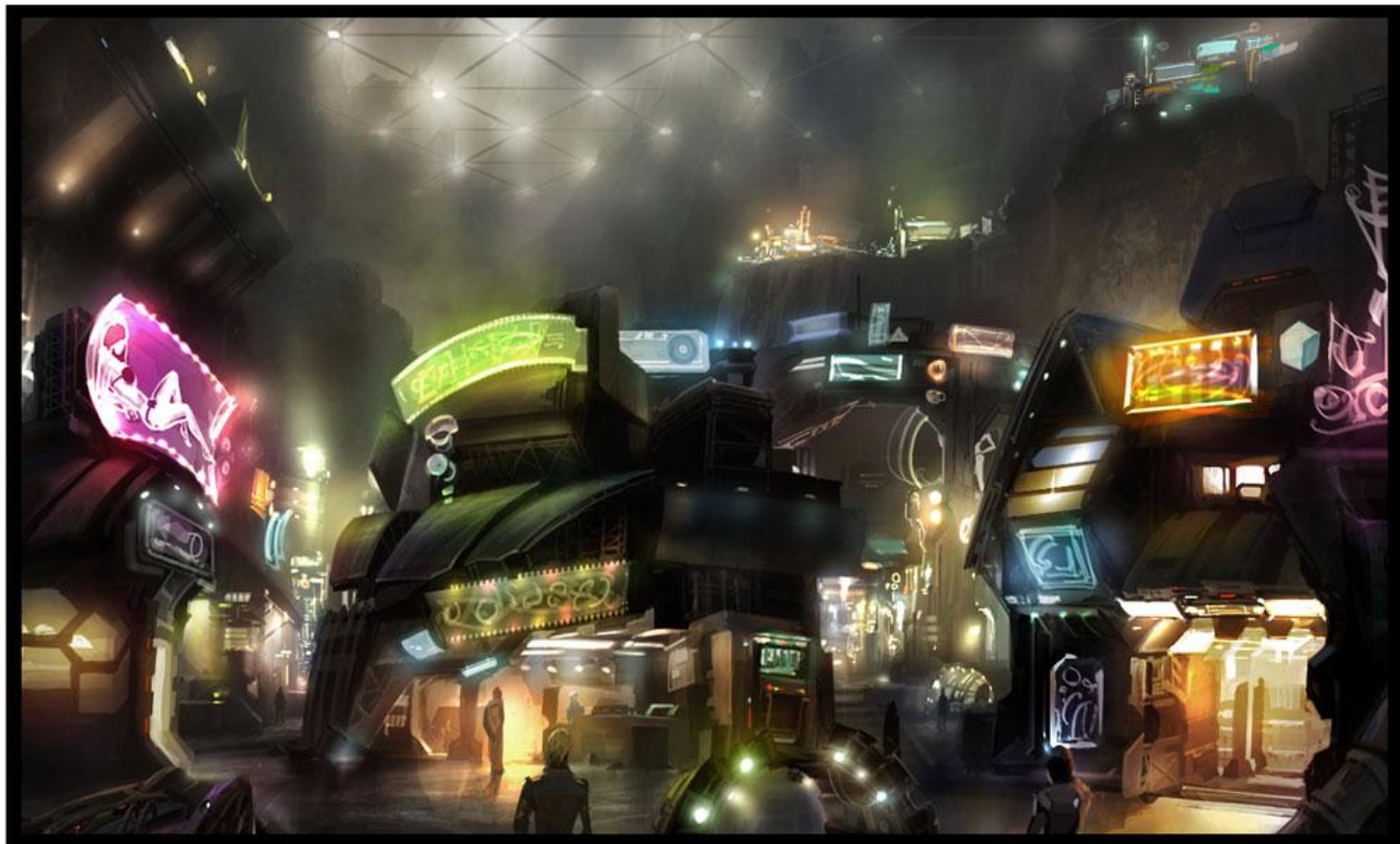
**06/09**

# **Building Cohesive Worlds**

**quality**

**Systems & Mechanics**

**Modal Gameplay**



WINKING  
ENTERTAINMENT



# RF4 World Bible - Colonist Settlement

## Overview

Although some equipment and supplies were transported belowground for refugees evacuated during the last EDF invasion 20 years ago, there was no expectation at that time that this Refuge belowground would become permanent. Since the Refuge, the Colonists have had to rebuild their society belowground.

Since the early days, there has been a major boom in prefabricated houses. These structures are manufactured and hauled into position already containing the crucial appliances for living, and represent a major improvement over makeshift buildings even if they appear cramped and Spartan by modern Earth sensibilities.

Because of the prevalence of these tight prefab buildings, a major trend among Colonists is to modify homes and businesses by "building out". Colonists are perfectly happy to cut a hole in their wall in order to create a new window, or to install a hydroponics unit that would take up too much space inside.

These prefab buildings still price custom building out of the market for all but the most affluent of Colonists – these buildings are the domain of the rich and of large businesses.

What are today's poor areas were some of the first shelters created as the Refuge stretched from a few days into years. Large containers that had held materials and other salvaged materials were used to create makeshift buildings. Improvised building materials are still used for trading posts and other irregular structures.

Colonist towns often feature a "light grid" hung above the buildings that shine natural-spectrum lights to prevent problems with Vitamin-D deficiency. These grids often also support fans and other devices to circulate air and otherwise control climate.

## Contents

Overview.....	1
Climate Systems .....	2



Climate Seals.....	2
Warm Vent Chimneys .....	2
Cool Intakes .....	2
Circulation Fans.....	3
Cave Ventilation Interaction.....	3
Cave Roads .....	3
Corniche Roads.....	3
Light Paving.....	3
Bridging.....	3
Road Signs and Lighting .....	3
Residential and Commercial Structures.....	4
Commercial .....	4
Poor Homes .....	4
Middle - Class Homes.....	4
Rich Homes .....	5
Combined Business-Homes .....	5
Food System Facilities and Process .....	6
Food Storage .....	6
Lighting.....	6
Light Grids.....	6
Light Conventions.....	7
Mass Transit .....	7
Power Systems .....	8
Power Distribution Infrastructure .....	8
Power Cells.....	8
Water Systems .....	8
Water Pipe Cutoff Collar.....	9
Water Systems Manufacture.....	9
Water Systems Appearance .....	9
Security.....	9
Religion .....	9





**I'm an  
AI  
programmer**



**I'm a  
level  
designer**



**I'm an  
audio  
designer**



**I'm an  
interface  
artist**



**Question 18:**

**What payoff is just out of reach?**

**1**

**02/09**

**06/09**

**Building Cohesive Worlds**

**Systems & Mechanics**

**quality**

**Modal Gameplay**



1. **Intuitive**
2. **Fluid**
3. **Visceral**
4. **Rewarding**
5. **Cohesive**
6. **Useful**
7. **Deep**
8. **Meaningful**
9. **Varied**
10. **Innovative**





# Saints Row 3





<b>Acrobatic</b>	<b>Engaging</b>	<b>Intense</b>	<b>Satisfying</b>
<b>Awesome</b>	<b>Empowering</b>	<b>Intuitive</b>	<b>Simplistic</b>
<b>Bloody</b>	<b>Epic</b>	<b>Meaningful</b>	<b>Slapstick</b>
<b>Brutal</b>	<b>Explosive</b>	<b>Methodical</b>	<b>Spontaneous</b>
<b>Chaotic</b>	<b>Evasive</b>	<b>Natural</b>	<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Challenging</b>	<b>Frantic</b>	<b>Overwhelming</b>	<b>Structured</b>
<b>Dangerous</b>	<b>Fast</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Synchronized</b>
<b>Deep</b>	<b>Fluid</b>	<b>Precise</b>	<b>Tactical</b>
<b>Destructive</b>	<b>Frenetic</b>	<b>Puzzle-Like</b>	<b>Tense</b>
<b>Dirty</b>	<b>Gritty</b>	<b>Realistic</b>	<b>Versatile</b>
<b>Dynamic</b>	<b>High Risk</b>	<b>Reflexive</b>	<b>Visceral</b>
<b>Emergent</b>	<b>Instinctive</b>	<b>Responsive</b>	



	A	B	C	D
1	RFG Adjective Exercise			
2	Select the seven (7) adjectives from the following list that best describes the combat experience in RED FACTION GUERRILLA.			
3	Answer Options		Response Frequency	Response Count
4	Destructive		63.5%	54
5	Chaotic		49.4%	42
6	Explosive		45.9%	39
7	Frantic		37.6%	32
8	Intense		31.8%	27
9	Satisfying		28.2%	24
10	Dynamic		27.1%	23
11	Frenetic		24.7%	21
12	Fast		23.5%	20
13	Brutal		22.4%	19



**1**

**02/09**

**06/09**

# **Building Cohesive Worlds Systems & Mechanics**

## **Modal Gameplay**

**quality**

1. **Cohesion**
2. **Transition**
3. **Clarity**
4. **Pacing**
5. **Balance**
6. **Surprise**
7. **Variety**
8. **Choice**
9. **Reward**
10. **Progression**

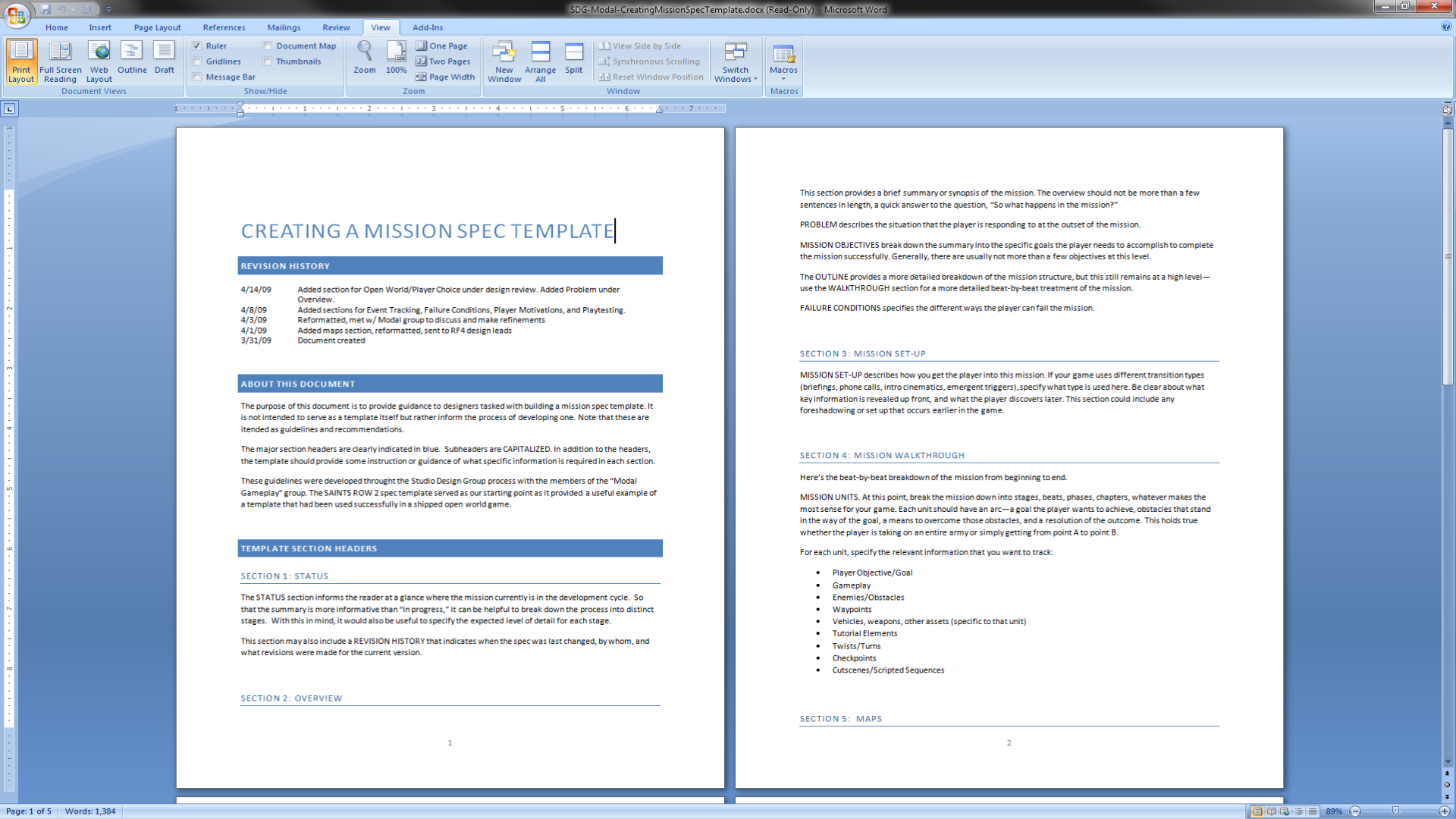
## **6. Surprise**

- **Is the mode predictable?**
- **Are there twists and turns?**
- **Did anything memorable happen?**









1 2 3 4 5 6 7

# CREATING A MISSION SPEC TEMPLATE

## REVISION HISTORY

4/14/09	Added section for Open World/Player Choice under design review. Added Problem under Overview.
4/8/09	Added sections for Event Tracking, Failure Conditions, Player Motivations, and Playtesting.
4/3/09	Reformatted, met w/ Modal group to discuss and make refinements
4/1/09	Added maps section, reformatted, sent to RF4 design leads
3/31/09	Document created

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to designers tasked with building a mission spec template. It is not intended to serve as a template itself but rather inform the process of developing one. Note that these are intended as guidelines and recommendations.

The major section headers are clearly indicated in blue. Subheaders are CAPITALIZED. In addition to the headers, the template should provide some instruction or guidance of what specific information is required in each section.

These guidelines were developed through the Studio Design Group process with the members of the "Modal Gameplay" group. The SAINTS ROW 2 spec template served as our starting point as it provided a useful example of a template that had been used successfully in a shipped open world game.

## TEMPLATE SECTION HEADERS

### SECTION 1: STATUS

The STATUS section informs the reader at a glance where the mission currently is in the development cycle. So that the summary is more informative than "in progress," it can be helpful to break down the process into distinct stages. With this in mind, it would also be useful to specify the expected level of detail for each stage.

This section may also include a REVISION HISTORY that indicates when the spec was last changed, by whom, and what revisions were made for the current version.

### SECTION 2: OVERVIEW

1

This section provides a brief summary or synopsis of the mission. The overview should not be more than a few sentences in length, a quick answer to the question, "So what happens in the mission?"

PROBLEM describes the situation that the player is responding to at the outset of the mission.

MISSION OBJECTIVES break down the summary into the specific goals the player needs to accomplish to complete the mission successfully. Generally, there are usually not more than a few objectives at this level.

The OUTLINE provides a more detailed breakdown of the mission structure, but this still remains at a high level—use the WALKTHROUGH section for a more detailed beat-by-beat treatment of the mission.

FAILURE CONDITIONS specifies the different ways the player can fail the mission.

### SECTION 3: MISSION SET-UP

MISSION SET-UP describes how you get the player into this mission. If your game uses different transition types (briefings, phone calls, intro cinematics, emergent triggers), specify what type is used here. Be clear about what key information is revealed up front, and what the player discovers later. This section could include any foreshadowing or set up that occurs earlier in the game.

### SECTION 4: MISSION WALKTHROUGH

Here's the beat-by-beat breakdown of the mission from beginning to end.

MISSION UNITS. At this point, break the mission down into stages, beats, phases, chapters, whatever makes the most sense for your game. Each unit should have an arc—a goal the player wants to achieve, obstacles that stand in the way of the goal, a means to overcome those obstacles, and a resolution of the outcome. This holds true whether the player is taking on an entire army or simply getting from point A to point B.

For each unit, specify the relevant information that you want to track:

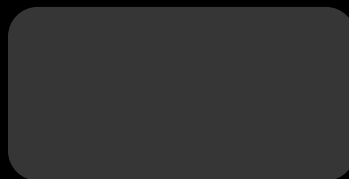
- Player Objective/Goal
- Gameplay
- Enemies/Obstacles
- Waypoints
- Vehicles, weapons, other assets (specific to that unit)
- Tutorial Elements
- Twists/Turns
- Checkpoints
- Cutscenes/Scripted Sequences

### SECTION 5: MAPS

2

[illegible]

2009



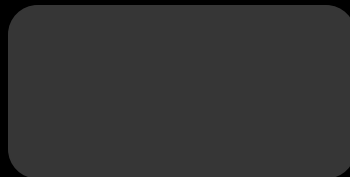
2010



2011



2012





**Open World Design**  
**Hiring Designers**  
**First Ten Minutes**  
**Coop Gameplay**





# Open World Design

quality

Hiring Designers

First Ten Minutes

Coop Gameplay





00

11

14

06

09

Artist: Kinky

Show keys  
to the city

BACK

100

RPM





# ASSASSIN'S CREED™

## Objectives

- Objectives are usually given from an NPC or as an audio cue.
- NPC's that have a highlight can usually be approached and actioned to give objectives
- Objective locations are reinforced with color coded mini-map markers and in-game goal object (Red=Enemies, Blue=Allies, Yellow=Objective target)
- Early in the game you go to the home of the main character, where the bulk of the beginning objectives stem from
- This is further driven by family member NPC's who give you mini-tutorial objectives in the form of small missions



## Activities/ Side Missions

- Races- usually free run world navigation races against a timer or NPC. The first use of this mechanic is to race your brother using free running, and is introduced in story after the first main character combat encounter.
- Beat Up Events - find and defeat certain NPC's as indicated. Again this is introduced early by a family member in the form of a short mission.
- Courier Missions - similar to free run races, but you are carrying a delivery. The setup early on for this introduces Leonardo Davinci, and does not require free running

## Communicating with UI elements

### 1. Tooltips

- Posted to the top left of the screen when a new mechanic is introduced.

### 2. The Objective Banner

- Displays your current objective. The objective normally remained on screen but later in the game it was inconsistent and for certain objectives it would fade out after a few seconds.

### 3. In-World Icons

- Objective displayed as color coded chevrons

- Yellow = location
- Red = kill/destroy
- Blue = friendly/protect

- Off-screen objectives that are nearby stick to the edge of the screen.

- Render through obstructions.

- Scale based on distance to the objective with a min and max size.

- Distance to objective was not indicated.

### 4. Proximity Based Interaction Button Prompts

- Displayed in the top center of the screen.

### 5. Counters, Meters, and Timers

- Displayed as progress bars below the objective banner.

- No numerical values are given.

- Used to gauge things like the paranoia level of someone the player is supposed to follow, time remaining, health of a buddy NPC, number of kills, and vehicle health.

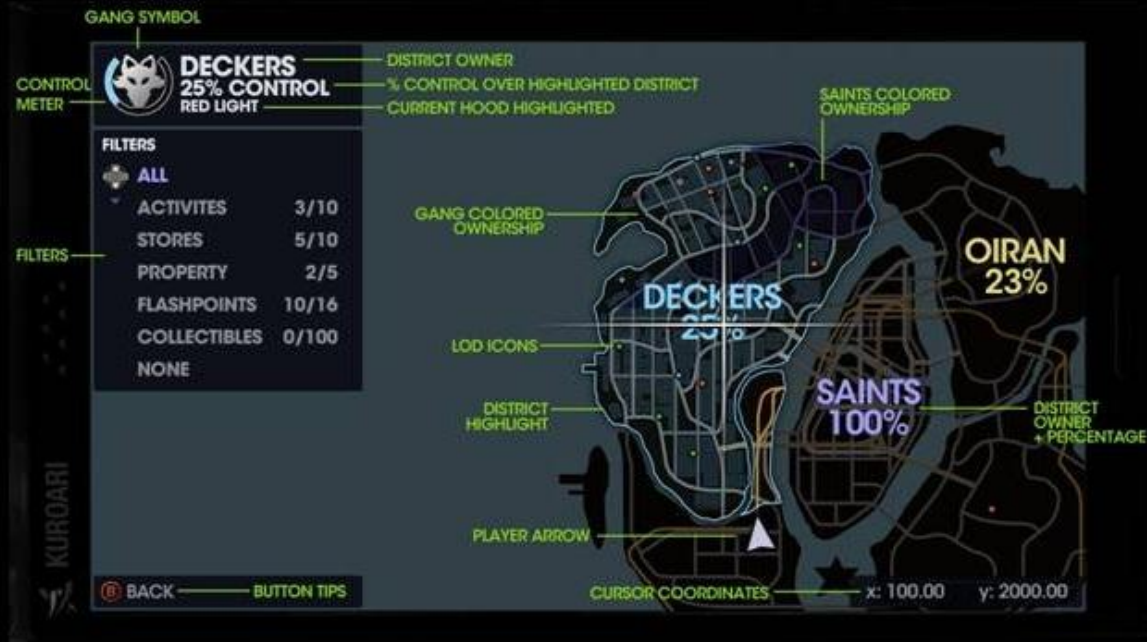


**RULE #5:**

**Don't nag the player.**



# Pause Map



## In Game Indicators



## In World GPS





Open World Design

Hiring Designers

skillset

First Ten Minutes

Coop Gameplay



Name of Candidate	Max Zorin
Date of Interview	5/24

**RATINGS**

For each of the 3 areas below, provide a rating from 1 through 4. Decimals are acceptable.

A rating of "3" means that you feel the candidate meets our requirements and quality standards. A rating of "4" indicates an exceptionally strong candidate. A candidate may receive a rating of "2" in a given area and still earn a "Yes" recommendation, if his or her strengths are enough to compensate. A rating of "1" in any area should result in a "No" recommendation.

The descriptions provided are intended as guidelines, not as rules to be strictly parsed. For each area, it is possible to encounter exceptions that don't exactly fit the wording, and many factors can impact your final assessment.

Keep in mind the level and position the candidate would fill. As a rule of thumb, if the candidate has previous experience in a senior designer role, we would likely consider bringing him or her in at a senior level.

<b>Area</b>	<b>THOUGHT PROCESS</b>
<b>Questions</b>	Given the candidate's level of experience, how did you feel about his or her ideas, insights, and solutions?
<b>Ratings</b>	1 – Hopeless. Responses were generally lacking in any real substance or value. 2 – Unimpressed. Responses were serviceable but not very interesting. 3 – Satisfied. Responses showed depth, originality, and a practical understanding of the problems presented. 4 – Impressed. Responses offered surprising and insightful solutions.
<b>Your Rating</b>	4
<b>Comments</b>	Speaks at least five languages, no accent. The old rags-to-riches to story. Made his first fortune in oil and gas. Now a second in electronics and hi-tech.


<b>Area</b>	<b>TEAM IMPACT</b>
<b>Questions</b>	Based on your observations of the candidate's behavior, how do you feel about his or her potential impact on the

For each of the 3 areas below, provide a rating from 1 through 4. Decimals are acceptable.

The descriptions provided are intended as guidelines, not as rules to be strictly parsed. For each area, it is possible to encounter exceptions that don't exactly fit the wording, and many factors can impact your final assessment.

<b>Area</b>	<b>THOUGHT PROCESS</b>
<b>Questions</b>	Given the candidate's level of experience, how did you feel about his or her ideas, insights, and solutions?
<b>Ratings</b>	<p>1 – Hopeless. Responses were generally lacking in any real substance or value.</p> <p>2 – Unimpressed. Responses were serviceable but not very interesting.</p> <p>3 – Satisfied. Responses showed depth, originality, and a practical understanding of the problems presented.</p> <p>4 – Impressed. Responses offered surprising and insightful solutions.</p>
<b>Your Rating</b>	4
<b>Comments</b>	Speaks at least five languages, no accent. The old rags-to-riches to story. Made his first fortune in oil and gas. Now a second in electronics and hi-tech.



A hand-drawn scene on cardboard. On the left is a simple house with a triangular roof, two square windows with cross-hatching, and a rectangular door. In the center is a small, round, angry-looking monster with horns, a wide toothy grin, and one arm raised. To the right is a tall, thin tree with a wavy, cloud-like top. A speech bubble points from the monster to the text.

Click to fight!



**Volition Inc** ☆

1 E Main St # 300 , Champaign, IL 61820  
61820

(217) 355-0320

[volition-inc.com](http://volition-inc.com)

[Write a review](#)



[Directions](#) [Search nearby](#) [Save to map](#) [more ▼](#)



Open World Design

Hiring Designers

**First Ten Minutes**

quality

Coop Gameplay



**Cinematic**

**Moment**

**Combat**

**Gameplay**

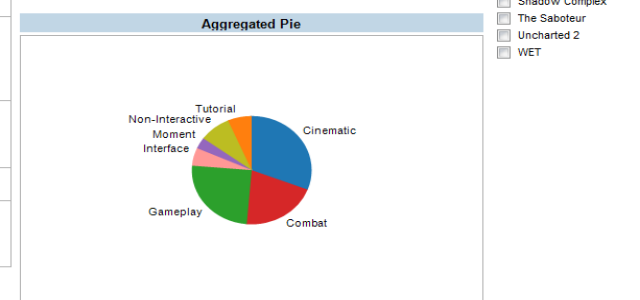
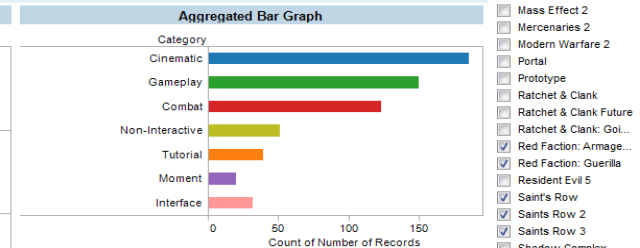
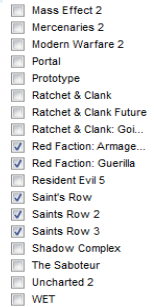
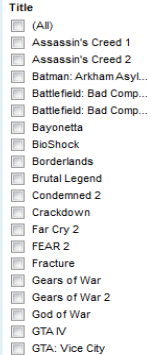
**Interface**

**Non-  
Interactive**

**Tutorial**

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Title	Step	Start	End	Category	Description
2	Assassin's Creed 1	1	00:00	00:05	Moment	Walking in the mist
3	Assassin's Creed 1	2	00:05	00:10	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
4	Assassin's Creed 1	3	00:10	00:15	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
5	Assassin's Creed 1	4	00:15	00:20	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
6	Assassin's Creed 1	5	00:20	00:25	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
7	Assassin's Creed 1	6	00:25	00:30	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
8	Assassin's Creed 1	7	00:30	00:35	Gameplay	Experiment with movement
9	Assassin's Creed 1	8	00:35	00:40	Tutorial	Synchronization Bar
10	Assassin's Creed 1	9	00:40	00:45	Tutorial	Synchronization Bar
11	Assassin's Creed 1	10	00:45	00:50	Tutorial	Synchronization Bar
12	Assassin's Creed 1	11	00:50	00:55	Tutorial	Synchronization Bar
13	Assassin's Creed 1	12	00:55	01:00	Tutorial	Synchronization Bar
14	Assassin's Creed 1	13	01:00	01:05	Tutorial	Lecture about "puppeteering concept"
15	Assassin's Creed 1	14	01:05	01:10	Tutorial	Lecture about "puppeteering concept"
16	Assassin's Creed 1	15	01:10	01:15	Tutorial	Lecture about "puppeteering concept"
17	Assassin's Creed 1	16	01:15	01:20	Non-Interactive	Fade to White
18	Assassin's Creed 1	17	01:20	01:25	Tutorial	Camera Look
19	Assassin's Creed 1	18	01:25	01:30	Tutorial	Camera Look
20	Assassin's Creed 1	19	01:30	01:35	Tutorial	Camera Look
21	Assassin's Creed 1	20	01:35	01:40	Non-Interactive	Fade to White
22	Assassin's Creed 1	21	01:40	01:45	Tutorial	Crowd-wading
23	Assassin's Creed 1	22	01:45	01:50	Tutorial	Crowd-wading
24	Assassin's Creed 1	23	01:50	01:55	Tutorial	Crowd-wading
25	Assassin's Creed 1	24	01:55	02:00	Tutorial	Crowd-wading





# Timeline

Metacritic (gr... Title

Category

RFA

Red Faction:  
Armageddon

Tutorial

Gameplay

Combat

Moment

Cinematic

12:00 PM

12:01 PM

12:02 PM

12:03 PM

12:04 PM

12:05 PM

12:06 PM

12:07 PM

12:08 PM

12:09 PM

12:10 PM

## Bar Graph

Category

Cinematic

Gameplay

Combat

Tutorial

Moment

0

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

60

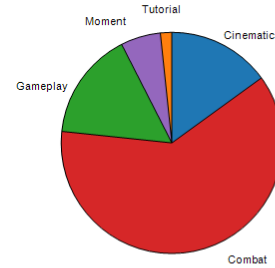
65

70

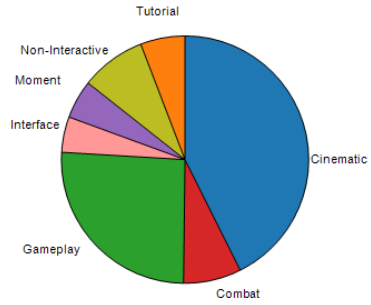
75

Count of Number of Records

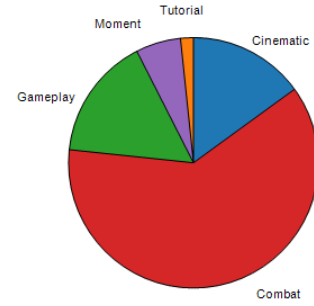
## Aggregated Pie

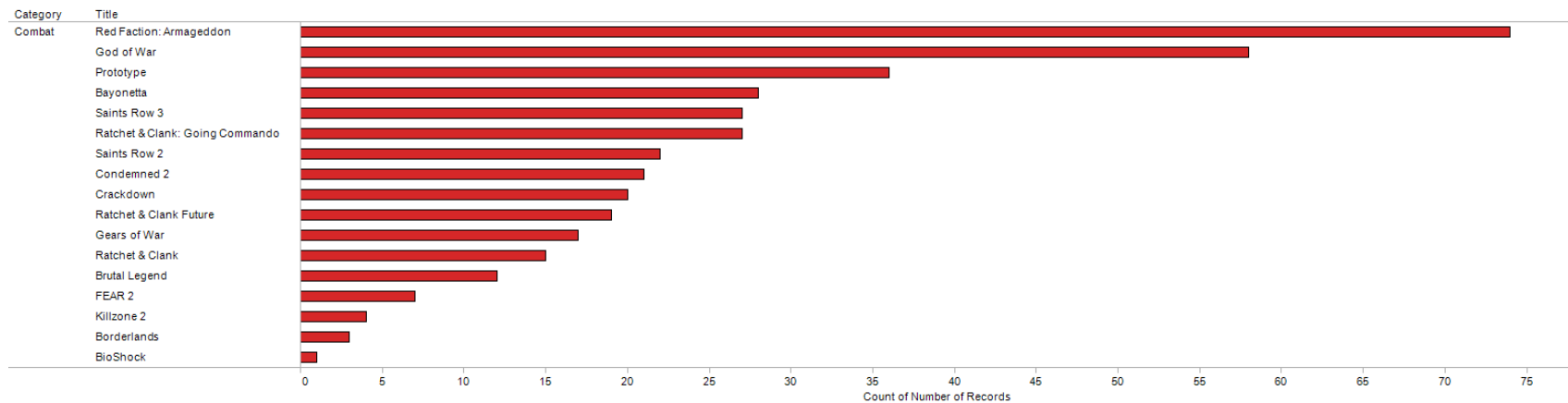


Top-Rated Games



Red Faction Armageddon









# Mission 1 – Gameplay

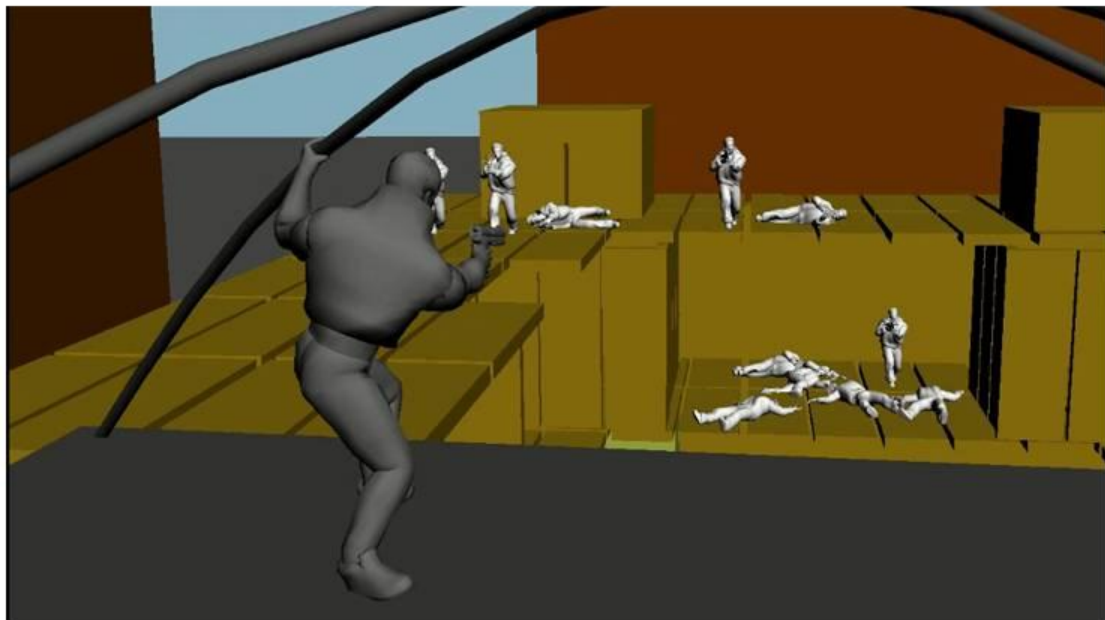
Gameplay begins – kill some guys



# Mission 1 – Gameplay

## Mission finale – Bank Vault Action Sequence

- [Previs](#) video





 **STEP FORWARD**





**Open World Design**

**Hiring Designers**

**First Ten Minutes**

**Coop Gameplay**

**skillset**



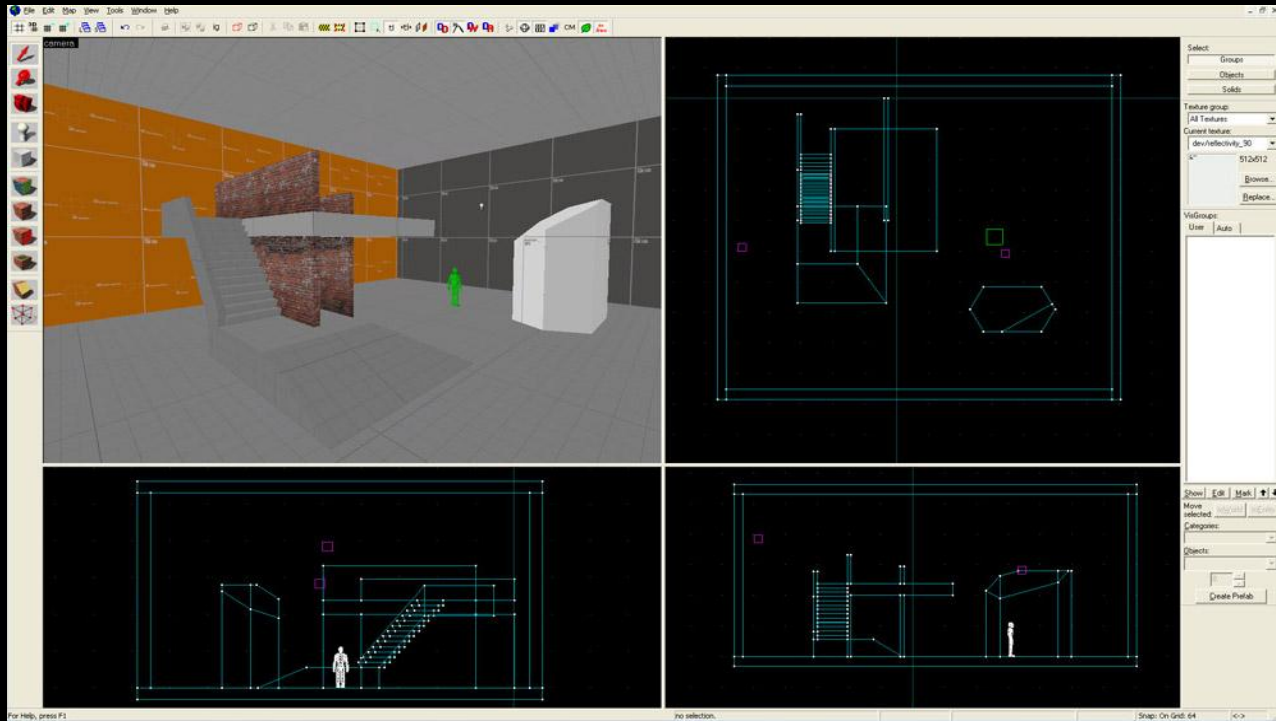


# LEFT 4 DEAD

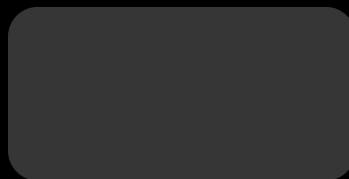
THE VIDEO GAME



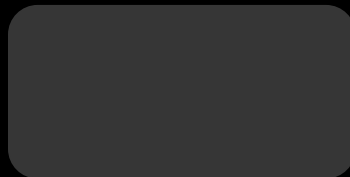
VALVE



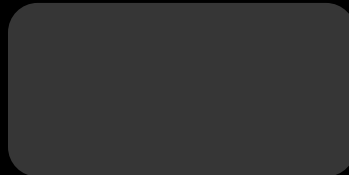
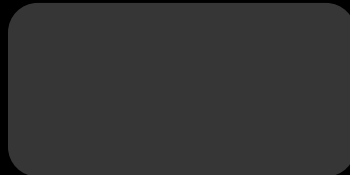
2009



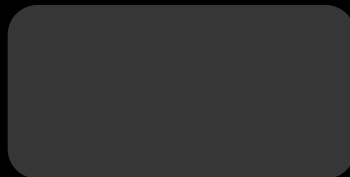
2010

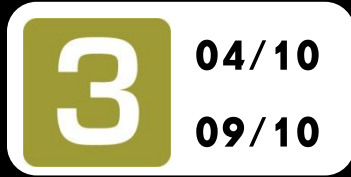


2011



2012

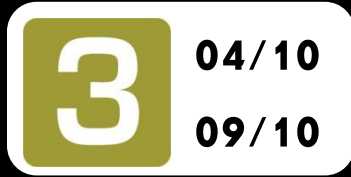




# **Preproduction**

## **Empowering Design**

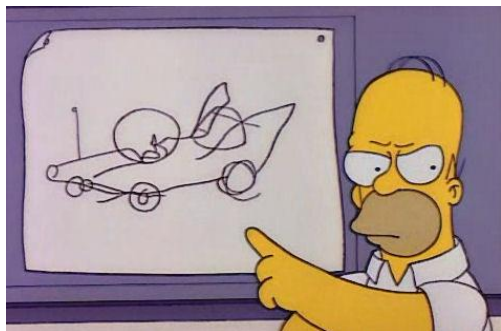
### **Feedback & Critique**



# Preproduction **iteration**

## Empowering Design Feedback & Critique





...it has earned its spot as the best innovation book of this year. — *strategy + business*

# Sketching User Experiences

getting the design right and the right design



Bill Buxton





THQ

SUCK  
IT UP

GENKI MOBILE

1. **quick**
2. **timely**
3. **inexpensive**
4. **disposable**
5. **plentiful**
6. **clear vocabulary**
7. **distinct gesture**
8. **minimal detail**
9. **appropriate degree of refinement**
10. **suggest and explore rather than confirm**
11. **ambiguity**

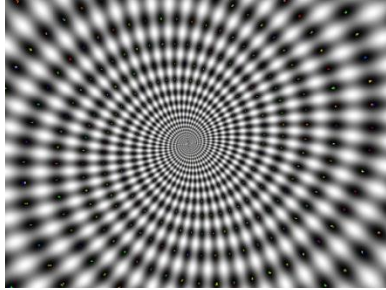
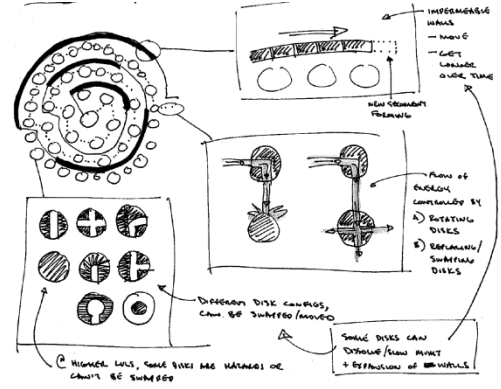
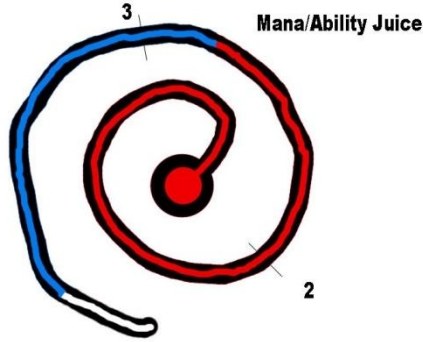
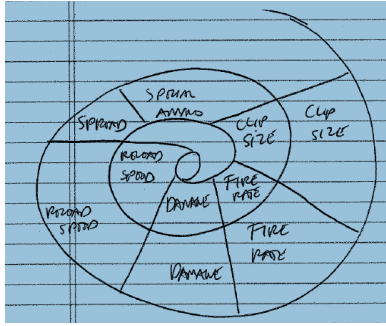
1. **quick**
2. **timely**
3. **inexpensive**
4. **disposable**
5. **plentiful**



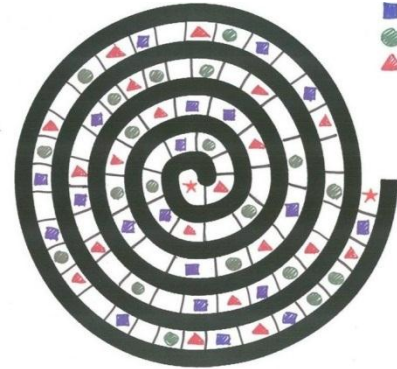
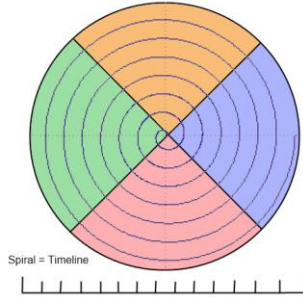
- 6. clear vocabulary**
- 7. distinct gesture**
- 8. minimal detail**
- 9. appropriate degree of refinement**

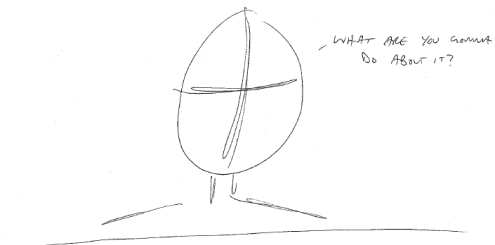
**10. suggest and explore rather  
than confirm**

**11. ambiguity**

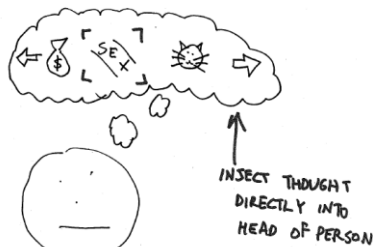


Color = Art Theme

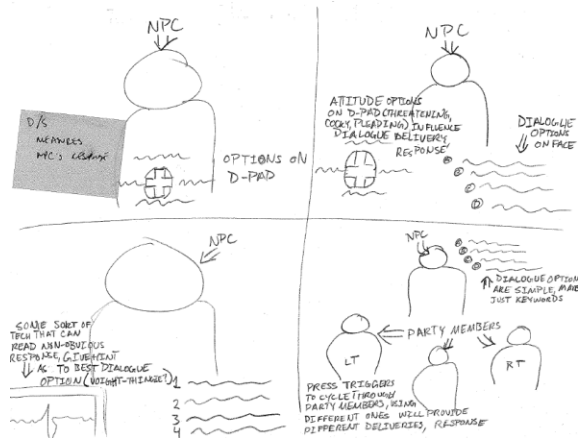




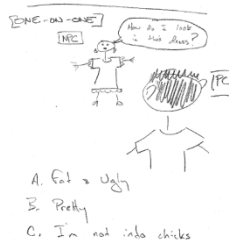
1. BASH YOUR FACE IN.
2. WOULD \$1,000 MAKE YOU TALK?
3. SICK MY ROBOT TORTURE ON YOU.

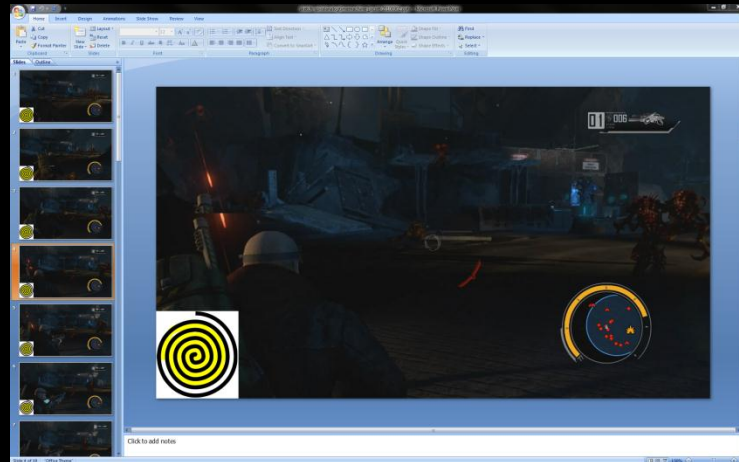
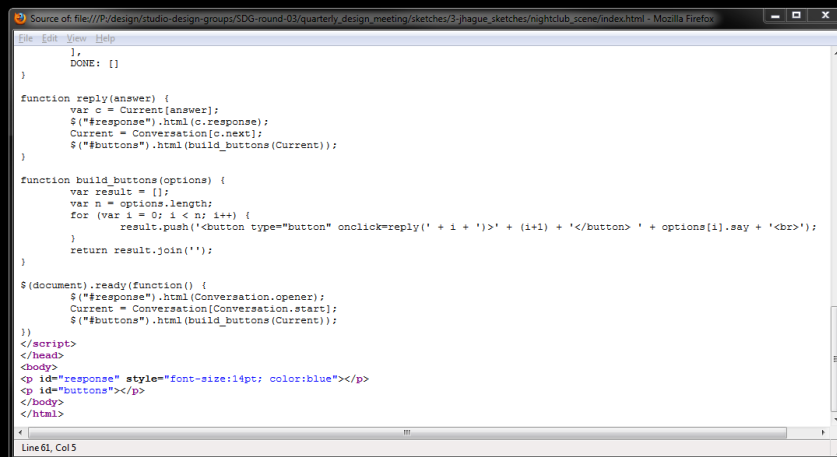
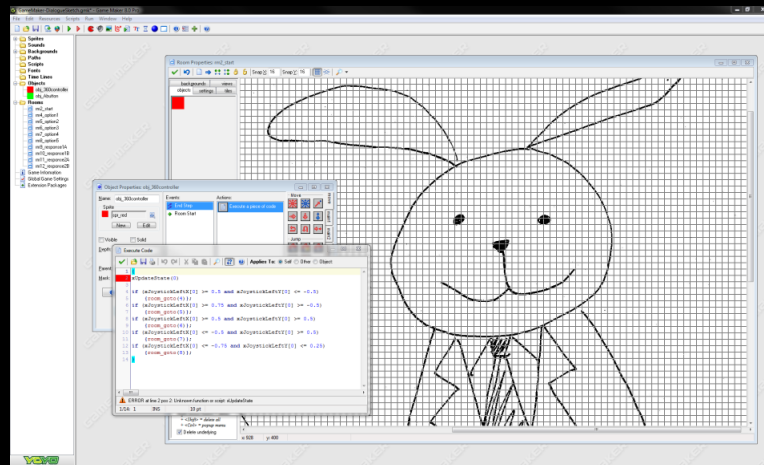
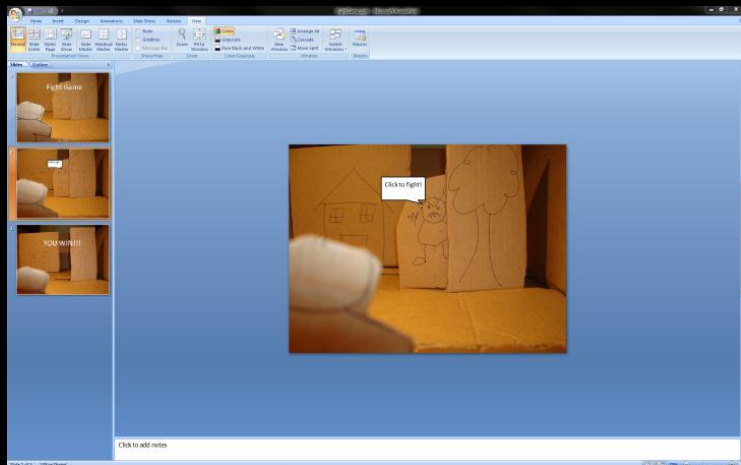


You don't talk, you put thoughts into the person's head, and then he or she responds to that thought.

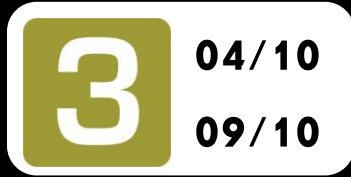


### Forced Randomizers









**Preproduction**

**Empowering Design**

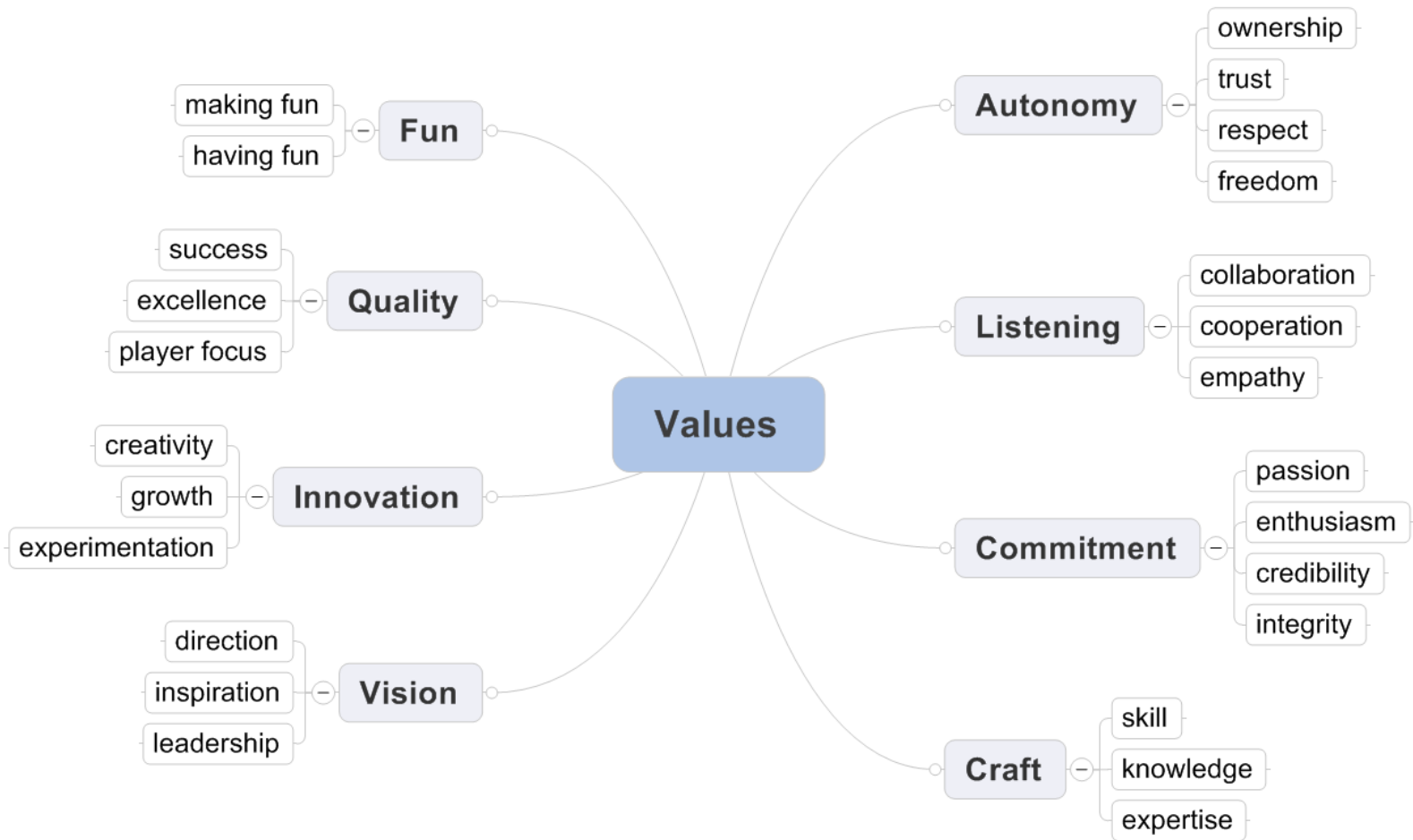
**skillset**

**Feedback & Critique**

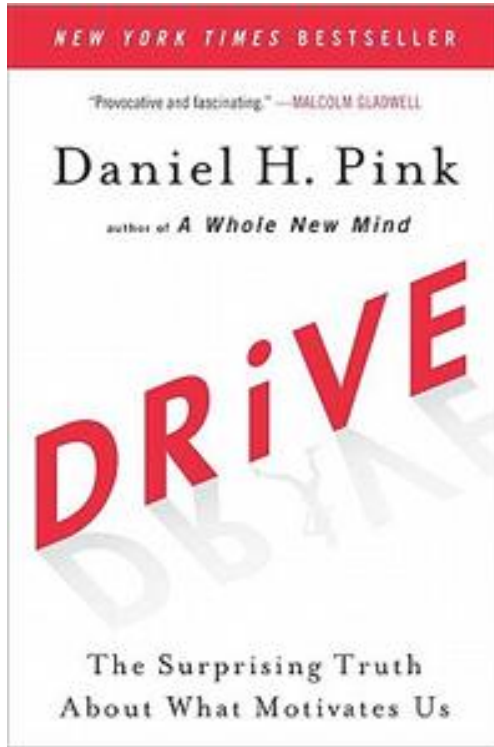


# **Survey**

- 1. I want to work with people who...**
- 2. I want to work with leaders who...**
- 3. I want to work on projects that...**
- 4. I want to work for a company that...**



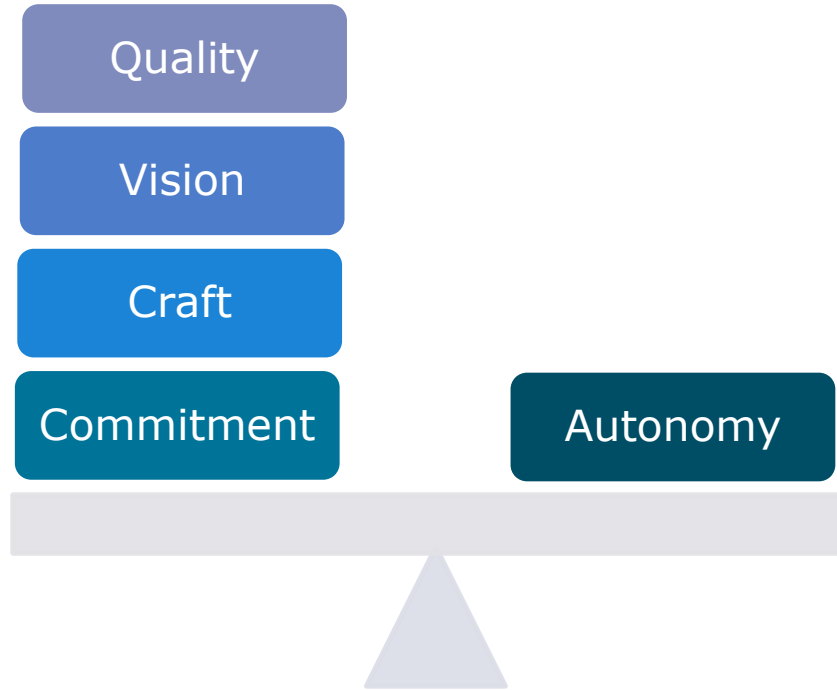
AUTONOMA



**“[Empowerment] presumes that the organization has the power and benevolently ladles some of it into the waiting bowls of grateful employees.”**



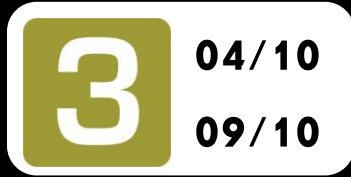






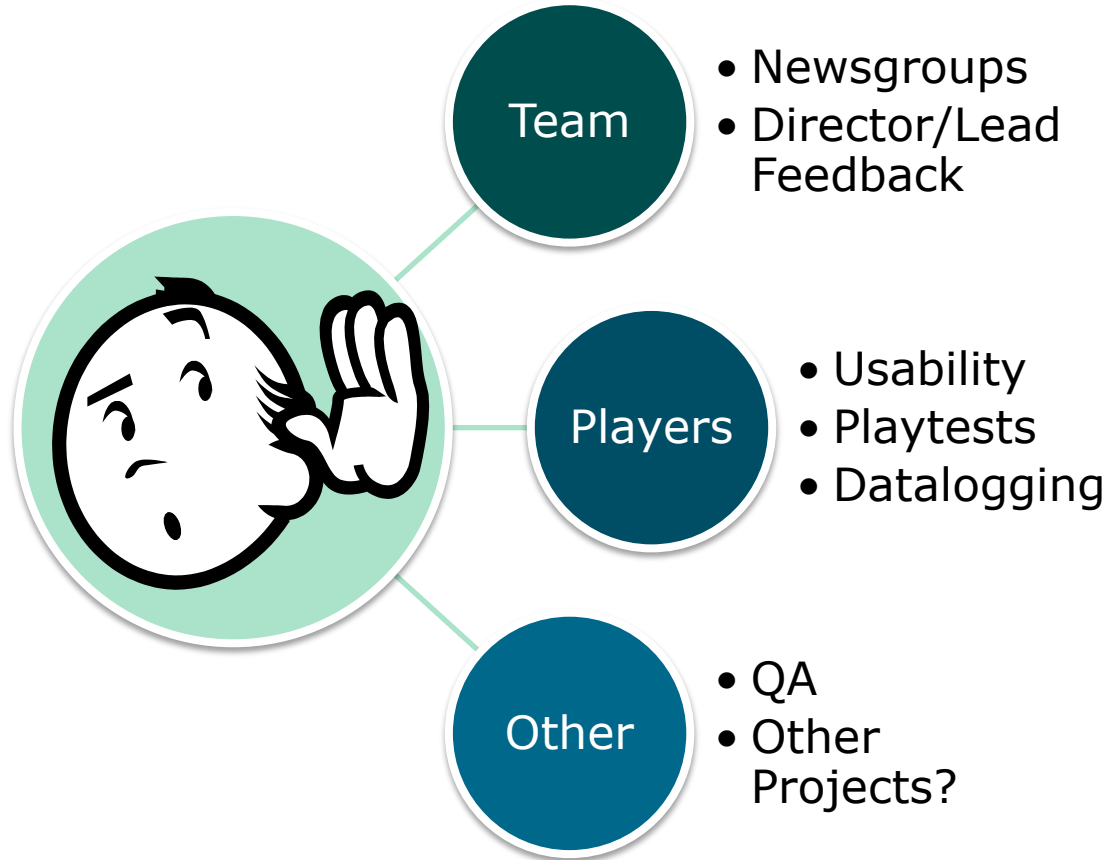
**AUTONOMY  
BAG**

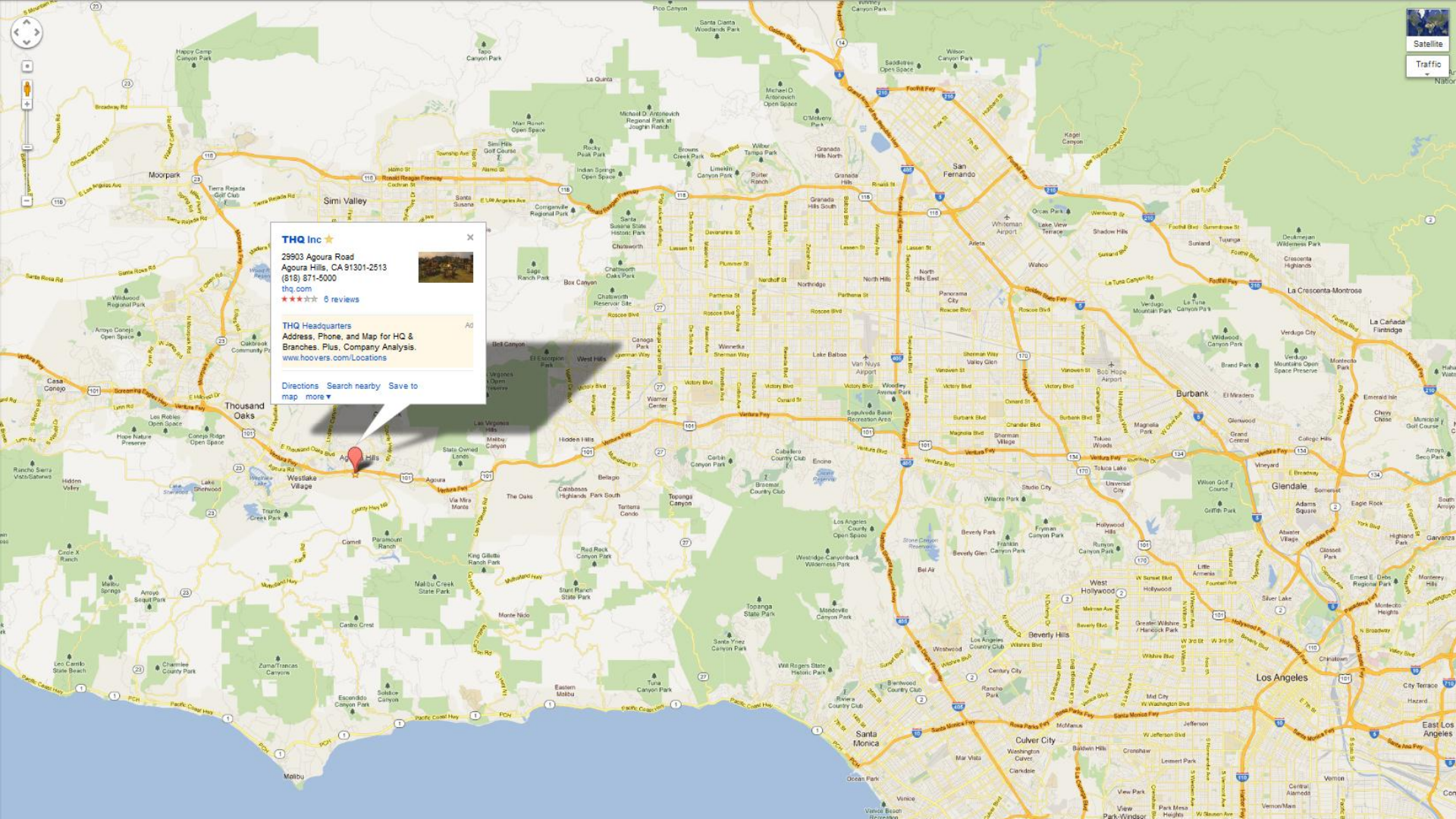




# Preproduction Empowering Design Feedback & Critique

quality





**THQ Inc**

29903 Agoura Road  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301-2513  
(818) 871-5000

★★★★★ 6 reviews

**THQ Headquarters**

Address, Phone, and Map for HQ & Branches. Plus, Company Analysis.  
[www.hoovers.com/locations](http://www.hoovers.com/locations)

[Directions](#) [Search nearby](#) [Save to map](#) [more](#)









**Brief**

**Description**

**Brief**

**Description**

**Goals**

**Brief**



**Description**

**Goals**

**Brief**

**Questions**



**Description**

**Goals**

**Brief**

**Questions**

**Status**

DepthMapParticleStream.exe

Dolphin.exe

Filtering.exe

LightShafts.exe

MenuUsingHandles.exe

xe:\sr3\main\sr3\SP3

Launch

Date: 11/03/20  
Time: 2:40:24 P

SR3 DL  
OCTOBER 24,

CRITIQUE B

DESCRIPTIO

Gangstas in

EMOTION

## AGENDA

0:00 – 0:10	Set up, review brief and process.
0:10 – 0:25	Play (3 minutes per round)
0:25 – 0:50	Players provide critique.
0:50 – 1:00	Wrap-up

## GUIDELINES

If you are giving critique...

- Be on brief (i.e., stay focused on the goals and questions)
- Be concise
- Be as clear as possible (even if you don't have a solution or know exactly what's wrong)
- Be thoughtful (remember what's it's like to be on the other end)

|||||

|||||

|||||

|||||

|||||

|||||

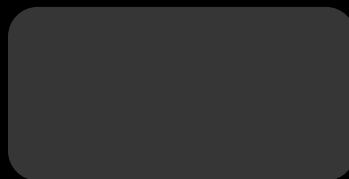
|||||

|||||

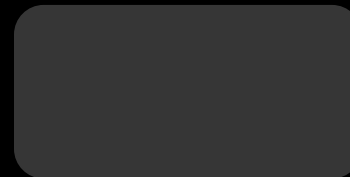
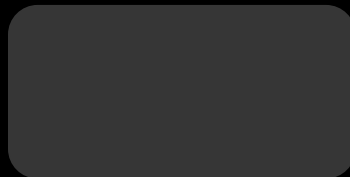
|||||

|||

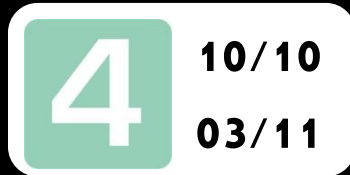
2009



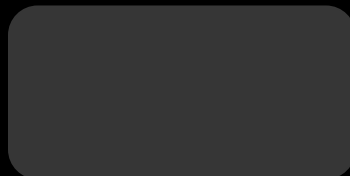
2010

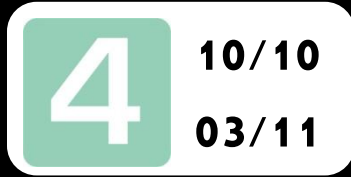


2011



2012

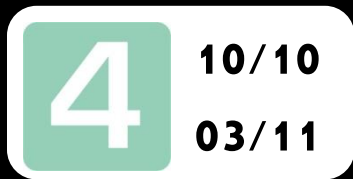




# **Design Rationale**

## **Sketching**

### **Training**



# Design Rationale

iteration

## Sketching

## Training





Fun Gameplay

Player Choice

Slick Presentation

Cohesion

**“The design rationale . . . helps guide the process away from decision by bullying, browbeating, or seniority to one where the reason for the decision is understood and can be articulated by anyone on the team.”**

**—Bill Buxton, Sketching User Experiences**



1



3



4



6



7



2



5

*Heliotype*



1



2

*Heliotype*



**“If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first fifty-five minutes determining the proper question to ask.”**

**– Albert Einstein**

## Design Brief

Saturday, November 05, 2011

3:20 PM

### Description

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Phasellus hendrerit. Pellentesque aliquet nibh nec urna. In nisi neque, aliquet vel, dapibus id, mattis vel, nisi. Sed pretium, ligula sollicitudin laoreet viverra, tortor libero sodales leo, eget blandit nunc tortor eu nibh. Nullam mollis. Ut justo. Suspendisse potenti.

### Function

Sed egestas, ante et vulputate volutpat, eros pede semper est, vitae luctus metus libero eu augue. Morbi purus libero, faucibus adipiscing, commodo quis, gravida id, est:

- Vivamus molestie gravida turpis.
- Fusce lobortis lorem at ipsum semper sagittis.
- Nam convallis pellentesque nisl.
- Integer malesuada commodo nulla.

Sed lectus. Praesent elementum hendrerit tortor. Sed semper lorem at felis. Vestibulum volutpat, lacus a ultrices sagittis, mi neque euismod dui, eu pulvinar nunc sapien ornare nisl. Phasellus pede arcu, dapibus eu, fermentum et, dapibus sed, urna.

### Emotion

Morbi interdum mollis sapien. Sed ac risus. Phasellus lacinia, magna a ullamcorper laoreet, lectus arcu pulvinar risus, vitae facilisis libero dolor a purus. Sed vel lacus. Mauris nibh felis, adipiscing varius, adipiscing in, lacinia vel, tellus. Suspendisse ac urna. Etiam pellentesque mauris ut lectus. Nunc tellus ante, mattis eget, gravida vitae, ultricies ac, leo. Integer leo pede, ornare a, lacinia eu, vulputate vel, nisl.

Suspendisse mauris. Fusce accumsan mollis eros. Pellentesque a diam sit amet mi ullamcorper vehicula. Integer adipiscing risus a sem. Nullam quis massa sit amet nibh viverra malesuada. Nunc sem lacus, accumsan quis, faucibus non, congue vel, arcu. Ut scelerisque hendrerit tellus. Integer sagittis. Vivamus a mauris eget arcu gravida tristique. Nunc iaculis mi in ante. Vivamus imperdiet nibh feugiat est.

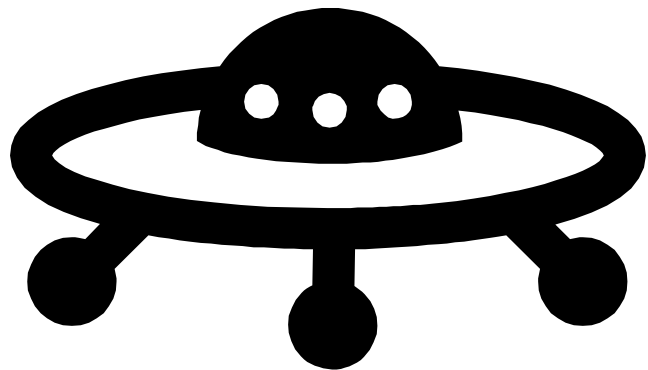
### Justification

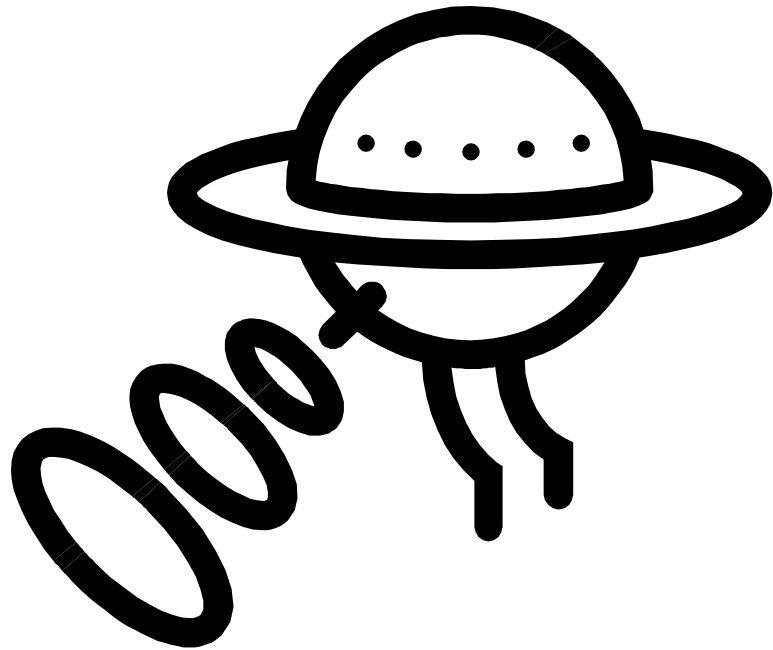
Ut convallis, sem sit amet interdum consectetur, odio augue aliquam leo, nec dapibus tortor nibh sed augue. Integer eu magna sit amet metus fermentum posuere. Morbi sit amet nulla sed dolor elementum imperdiet. Quisque fermentum. Cum sodis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Pellentesque adipiscing eros ut libero. Ut condimentum mi vel tellus.

Suspendisse laoreet. Fusce ut est sed dolor gravida convallis. Morbi vitae ante. Vivamus ultrices luctus nunc. Suspendisse et dolor. Etiam dignissim. Proin malesuada adipiscing lacus. Donec metus. Curabitur gravida.



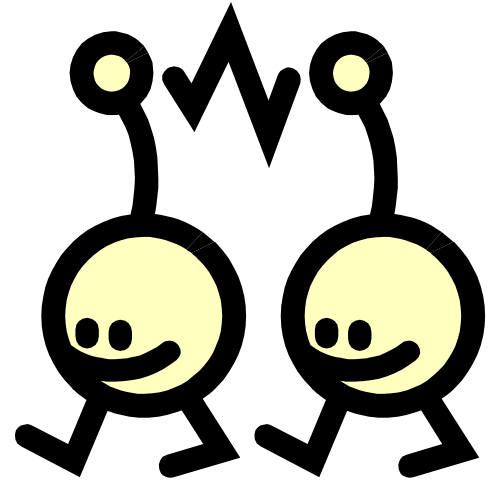
# description





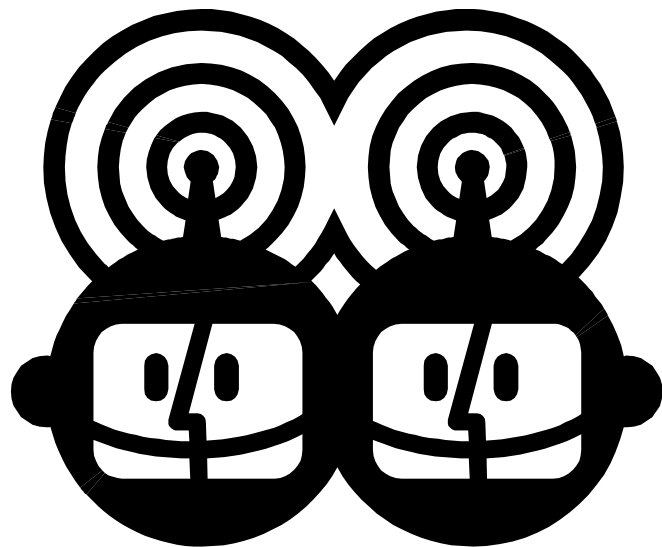
**function**

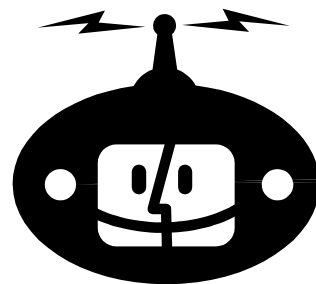
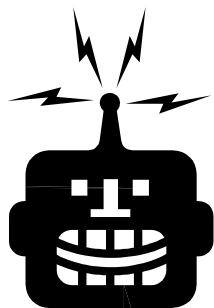
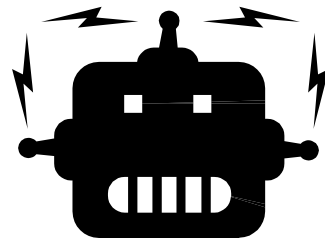
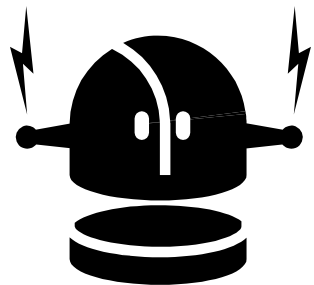
# emotion





**justification**

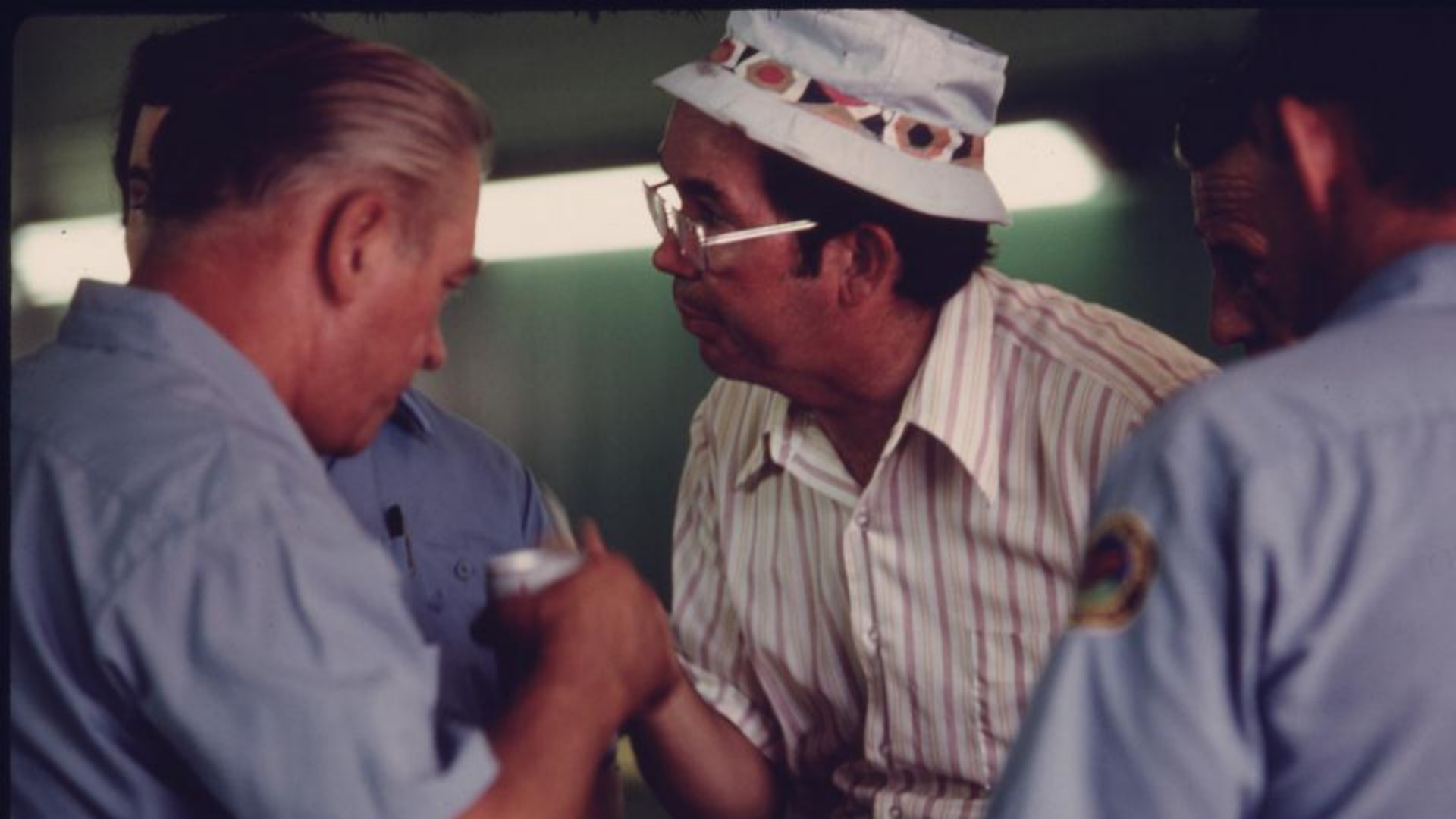






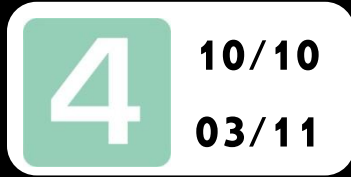










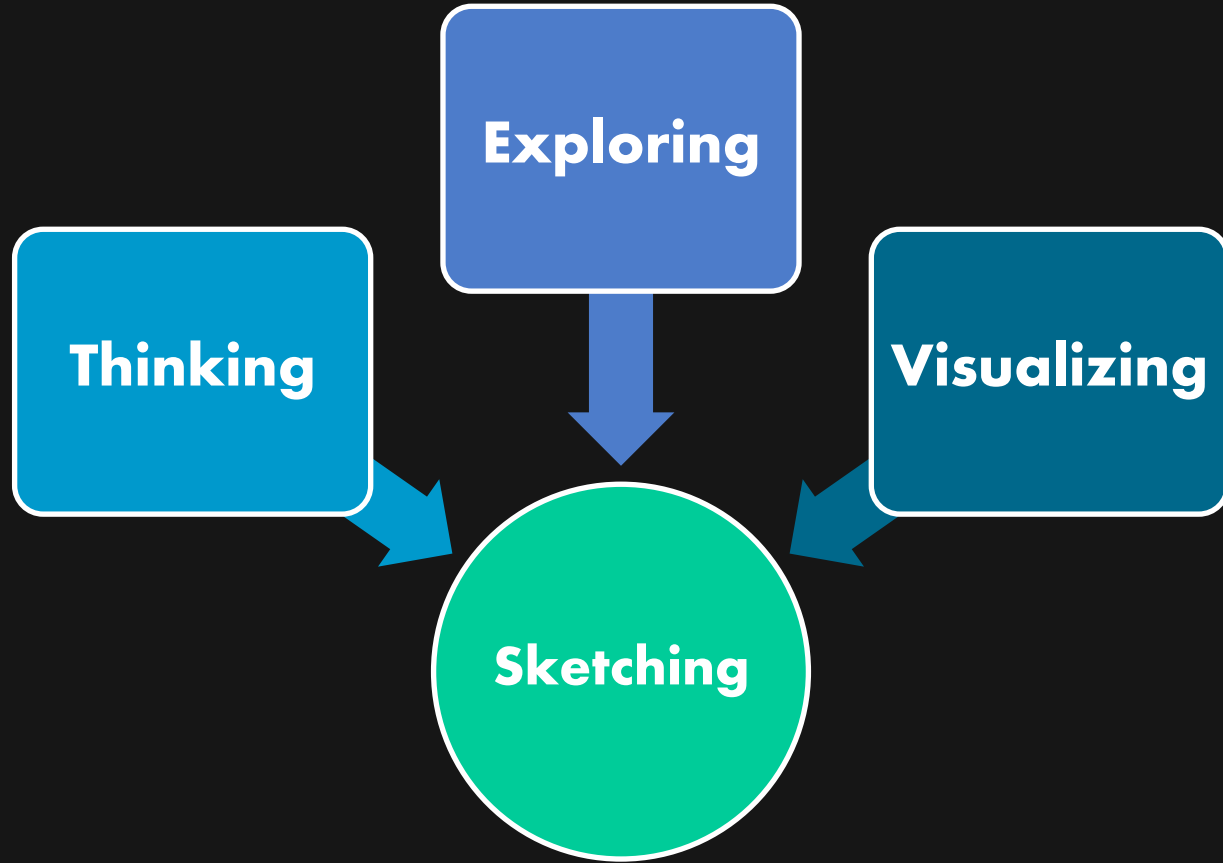


# Design Rationale

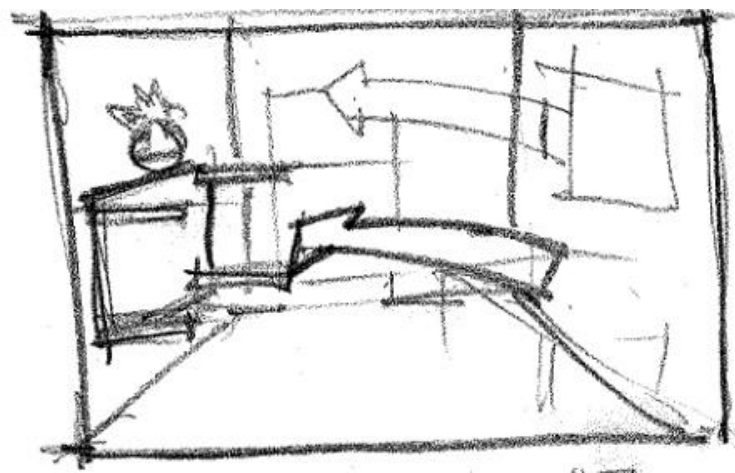
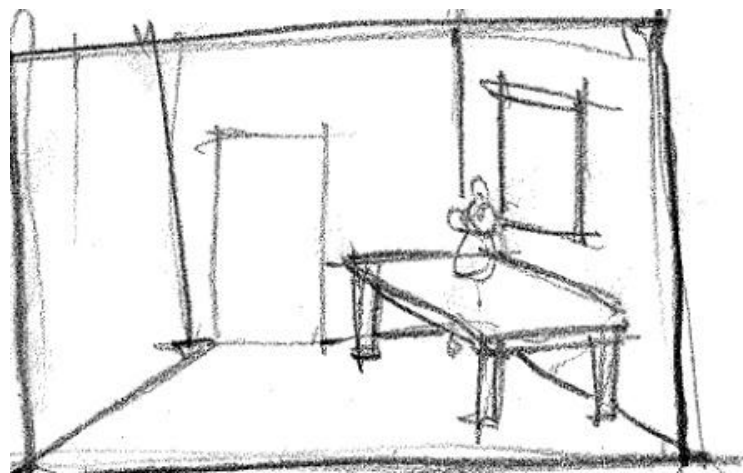
# Sketching

# Training

iteration









ALLOY  
BRACELET

900g

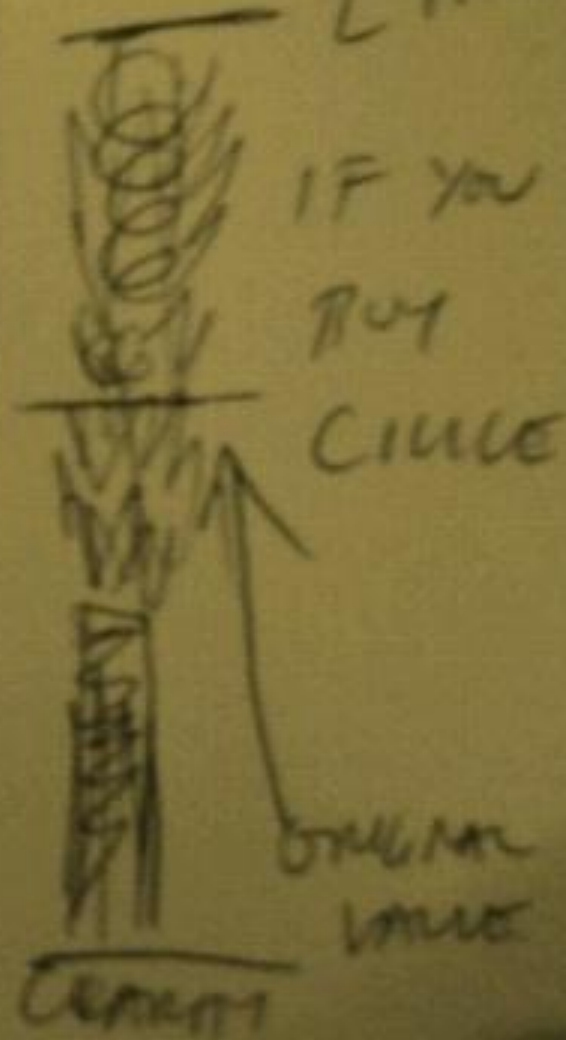
[PASSIVE]

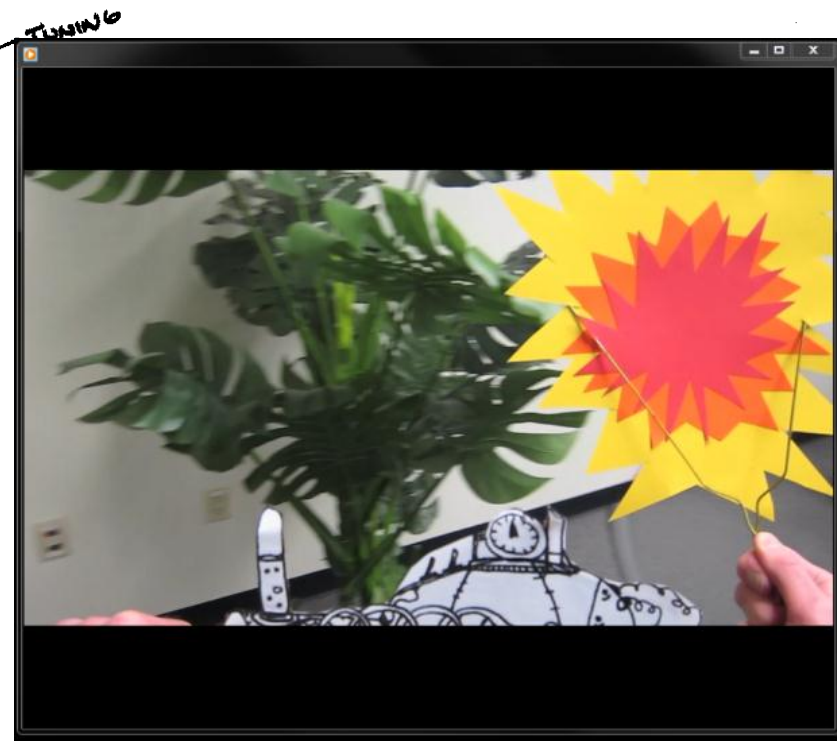
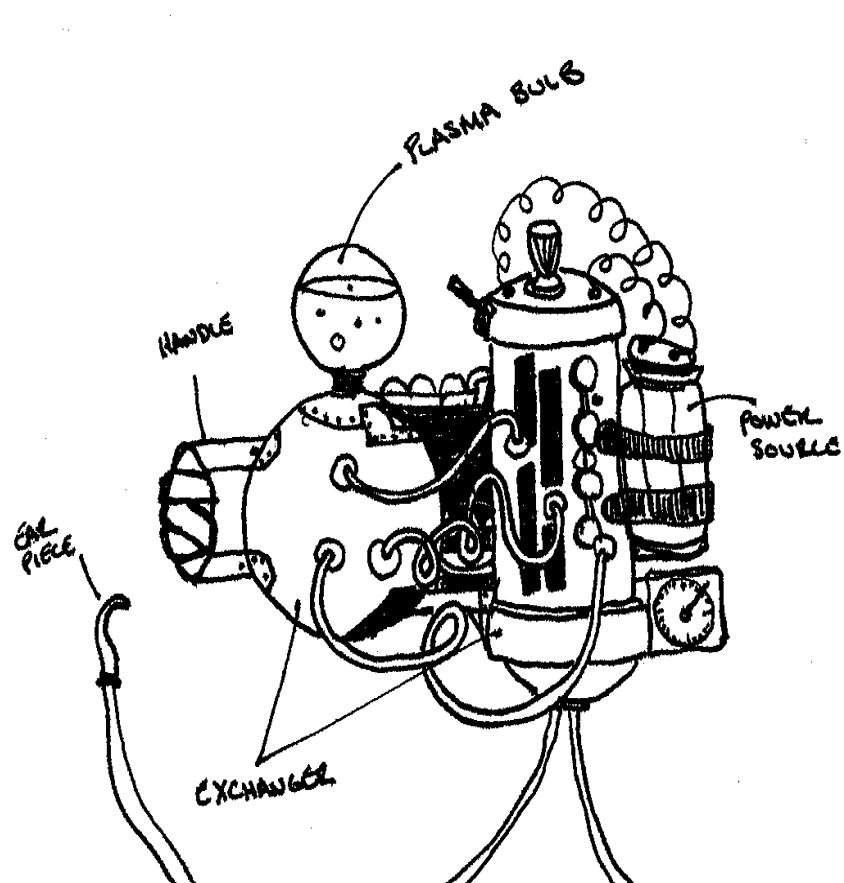


CILICE

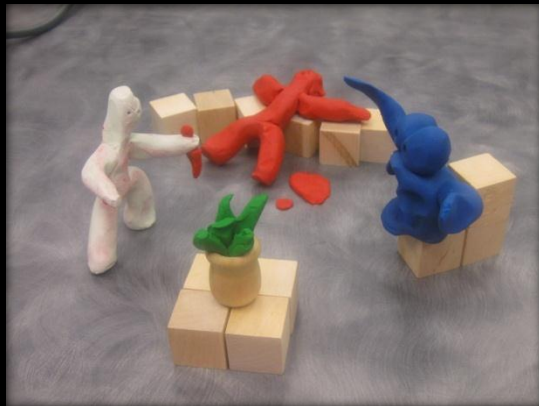
1200g

[PASSIVE]





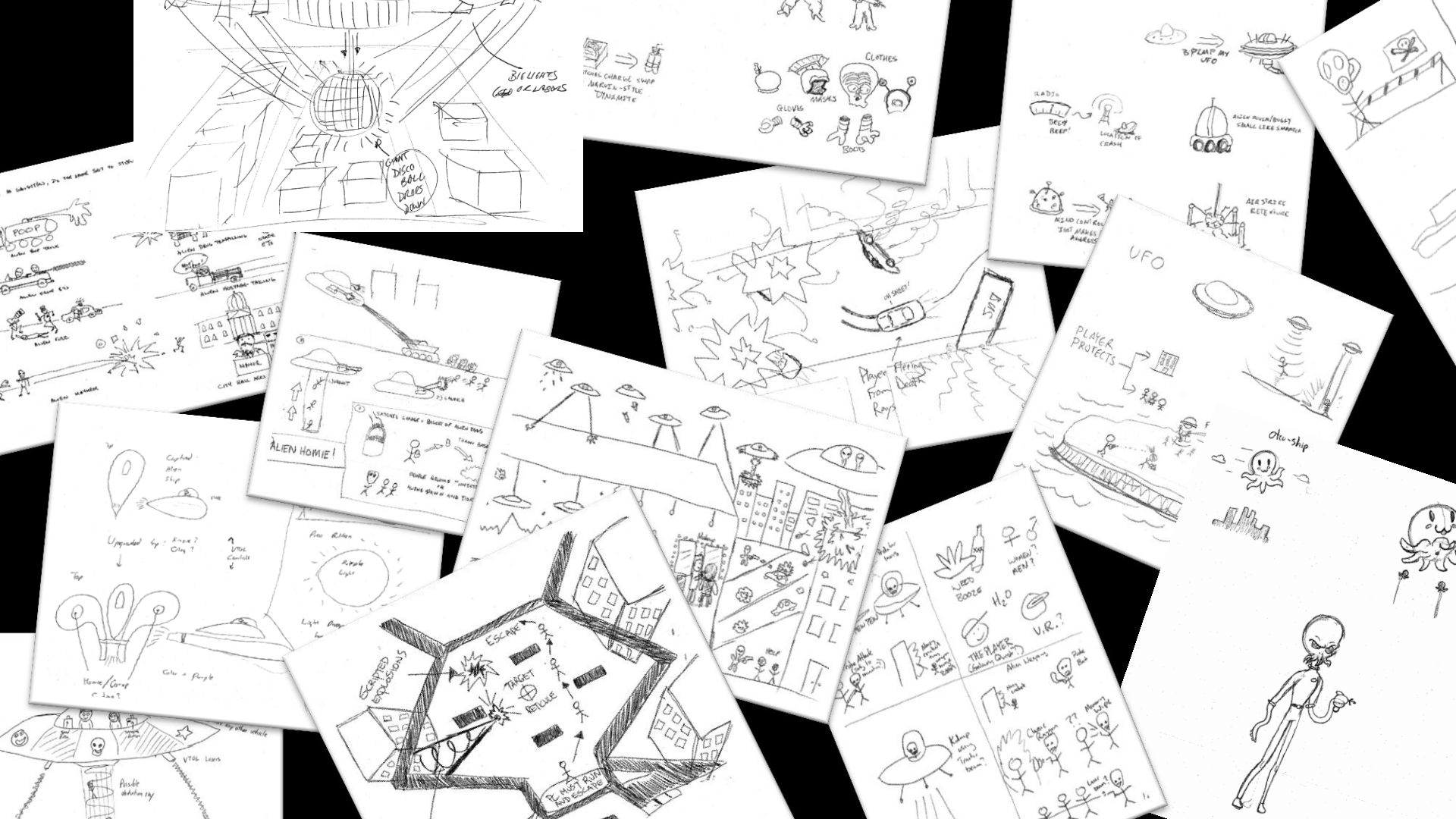
INVISIBLE CREATURES OF DARKNESS













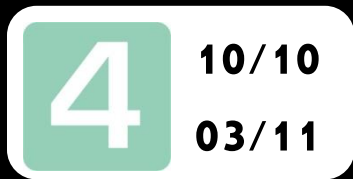
Dog.







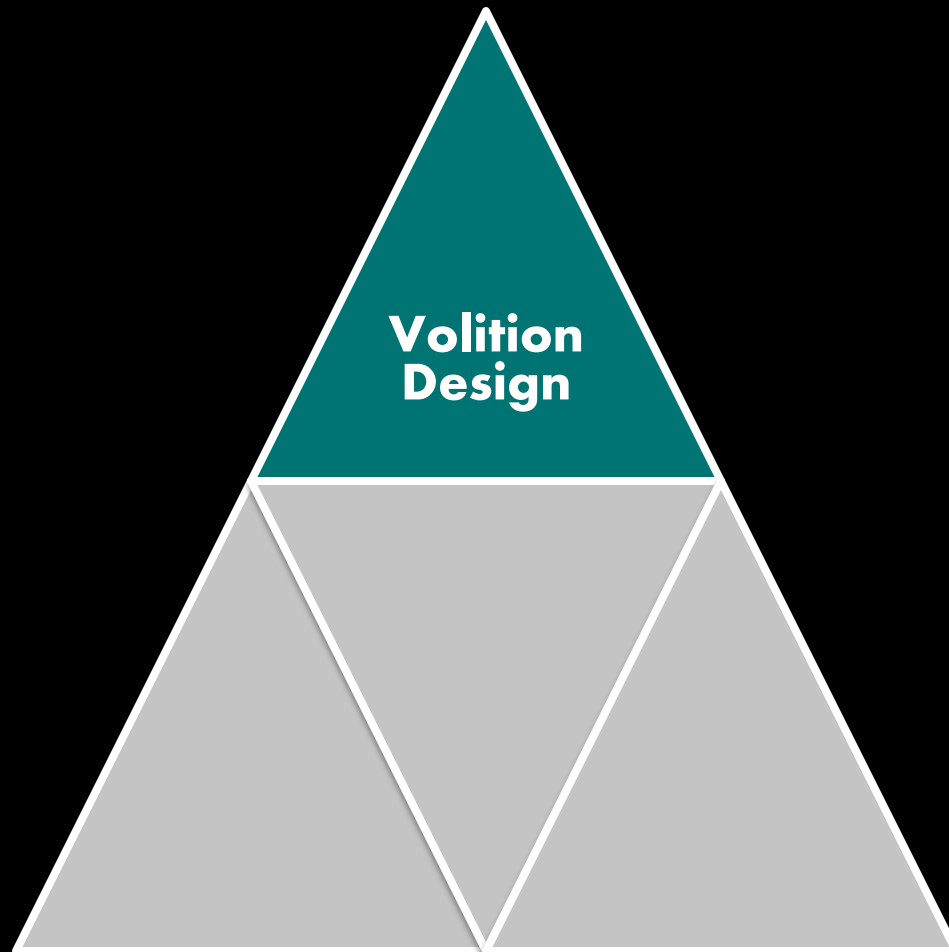


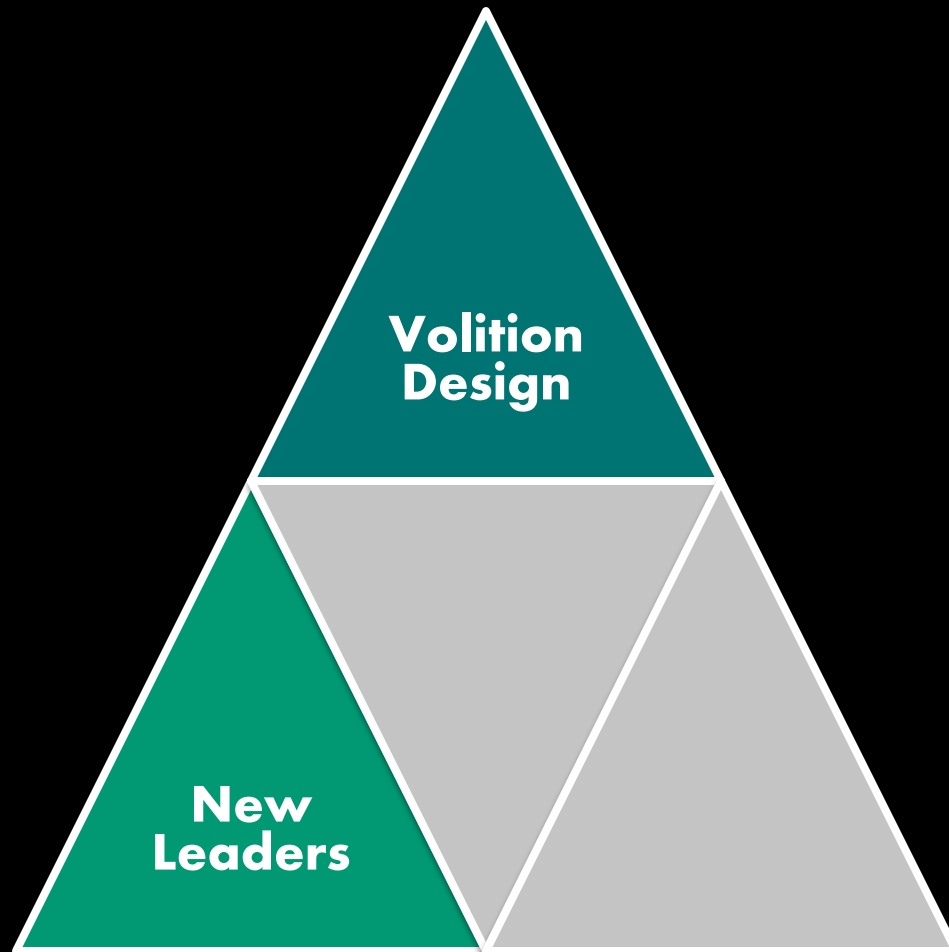


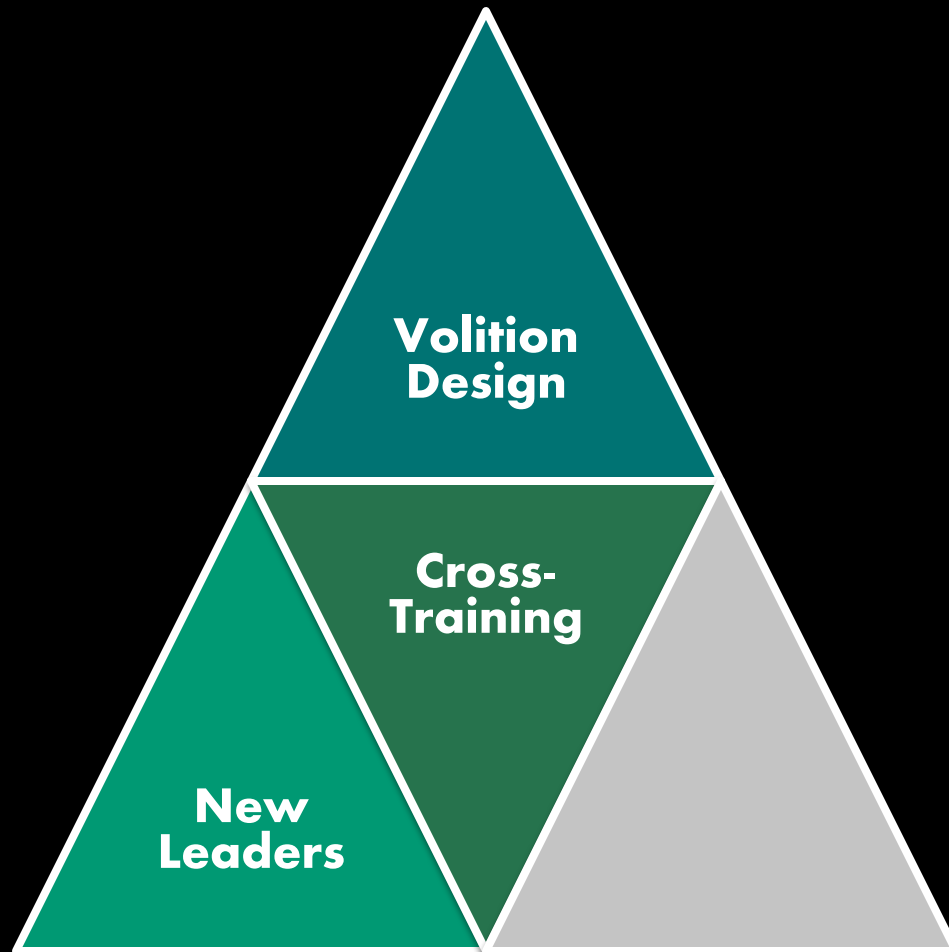
# Design Rationale Sketching Training

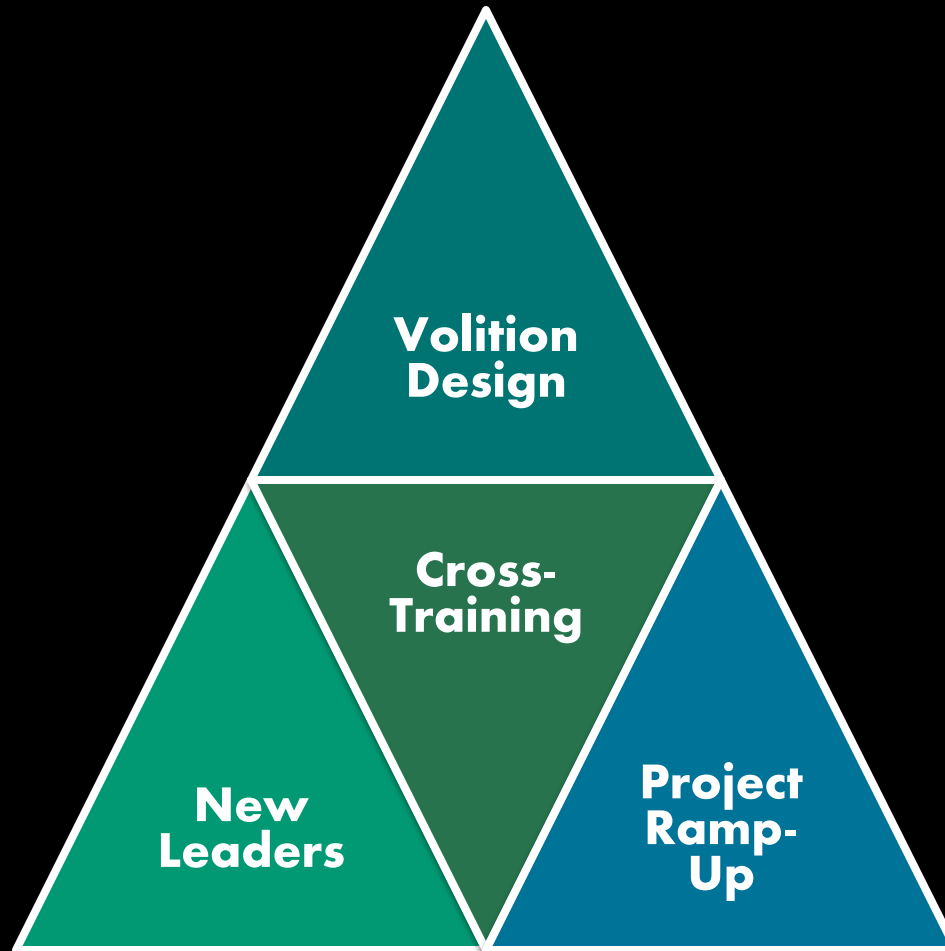
skillset

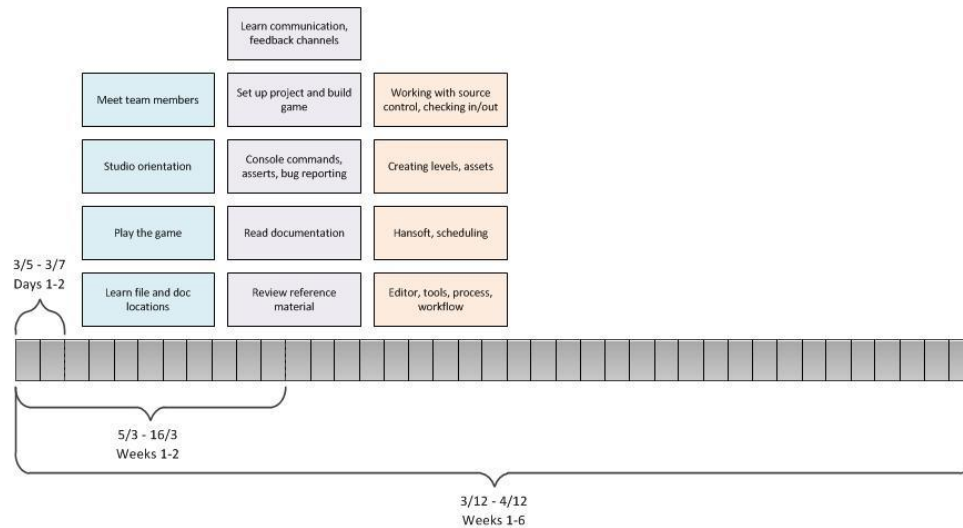








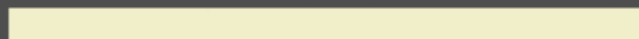






### **Design By Committee**

**Attended your first design meeting**



**50/100**

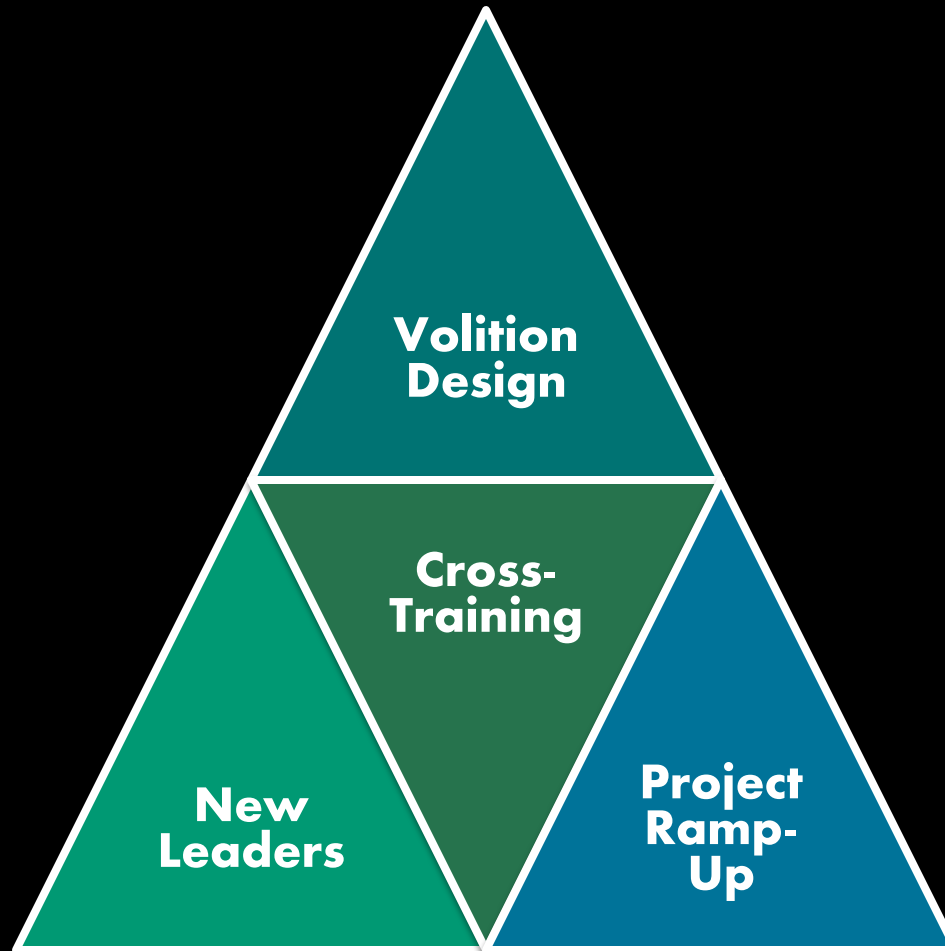
[www.says-it.com/achievement/](http://www.says-it.com/achievement/)



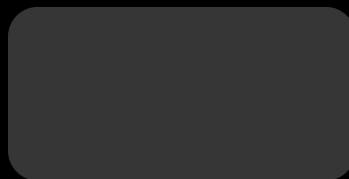


Achievement unlocked  
50G - Attended CTG editor tutorial

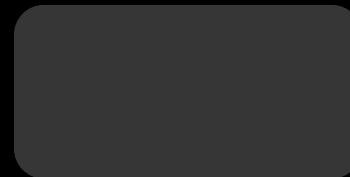
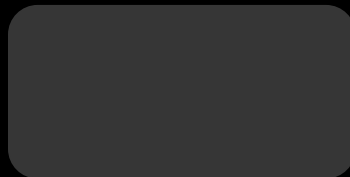
[www.says-it.com/achievement/](http://www.says-it.com/achievement/)



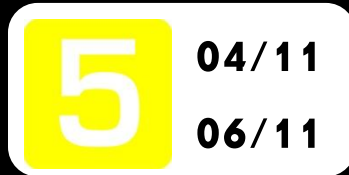
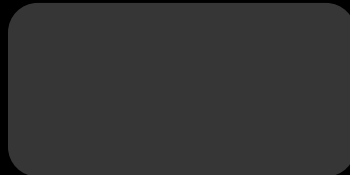
2009



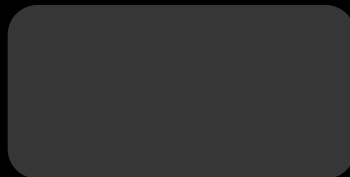
2010

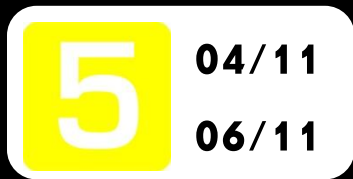


2011

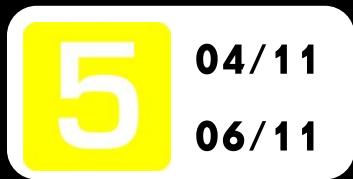


2012





**Pacing**  
**Working w/ Other Disciplines**  
**Scripting**  
**Rapid Visualization**



04/11

06/11

# Pacing

quality

## Working w/ Other Disciplines

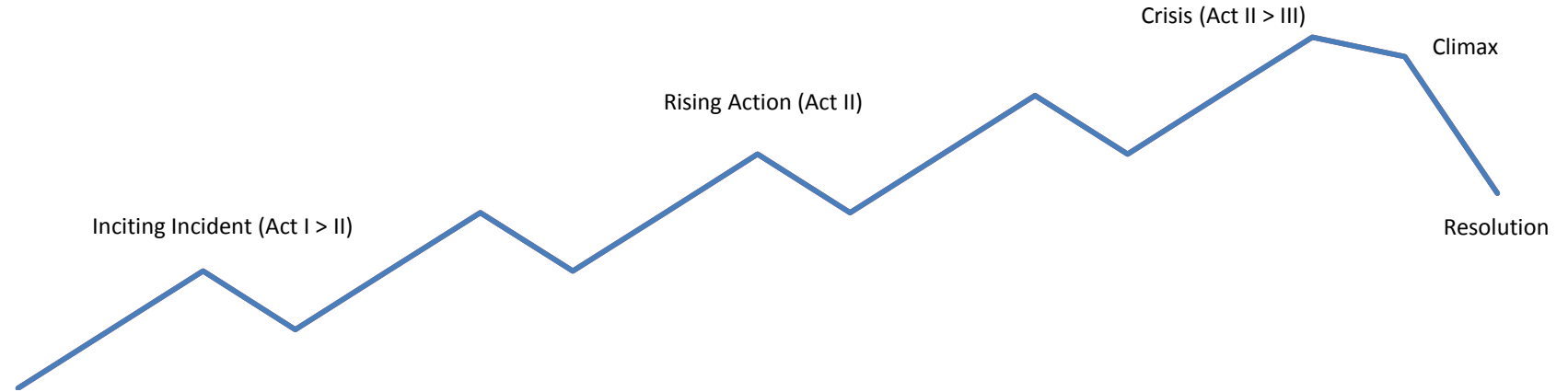
## Scripting

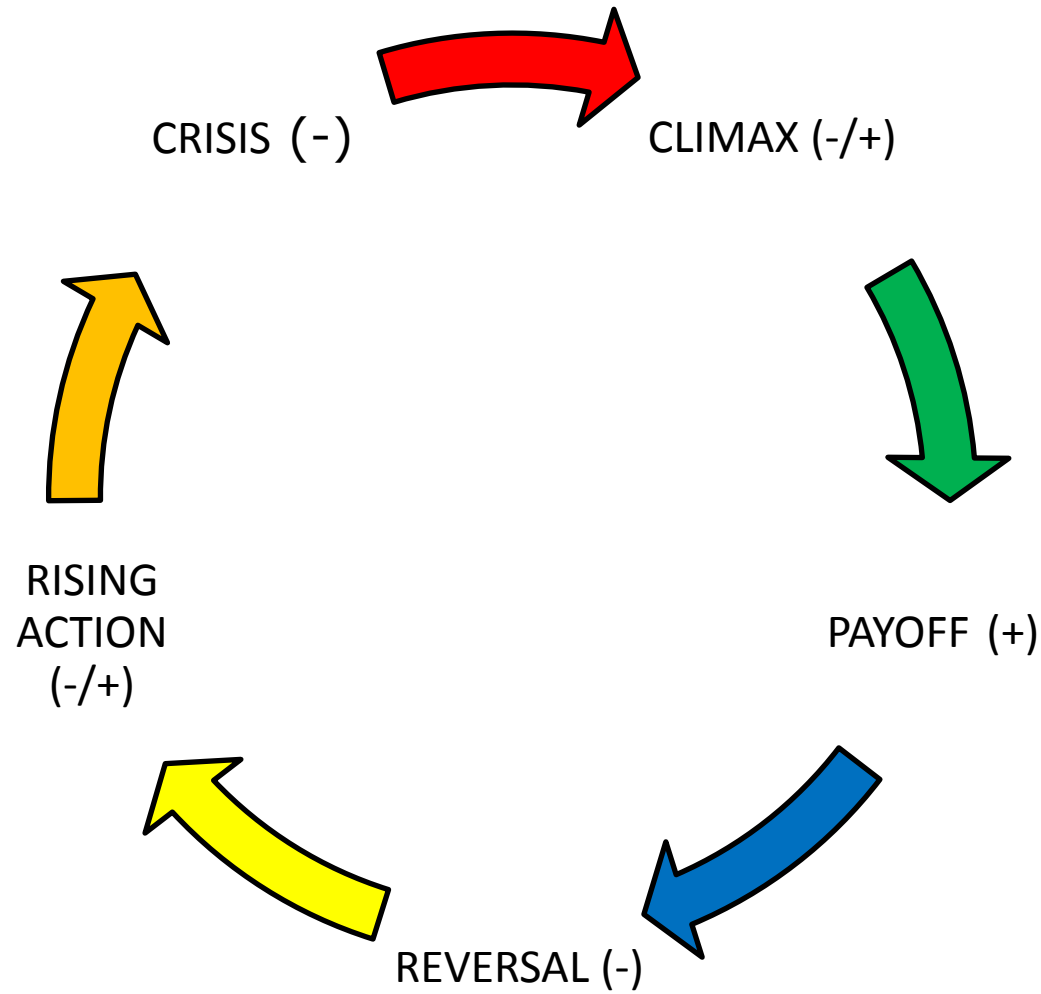
## Rapid Visualization

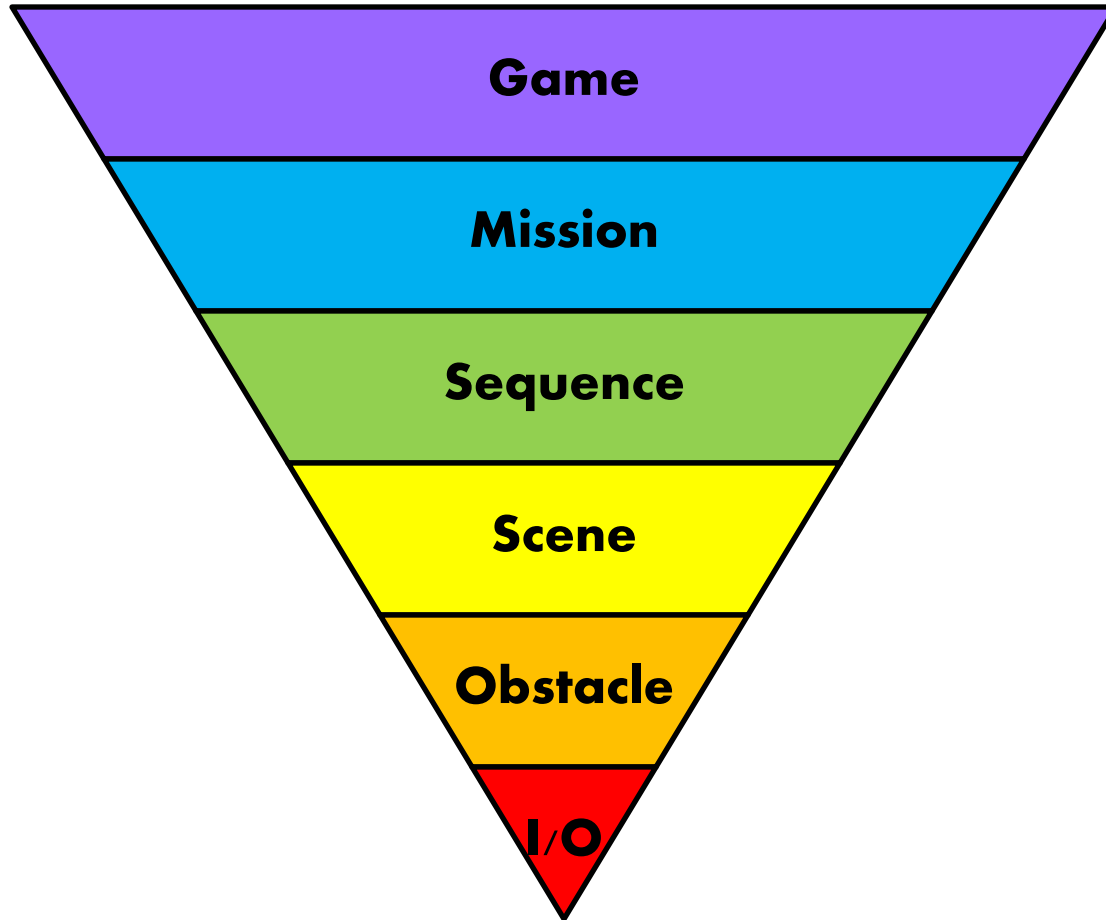












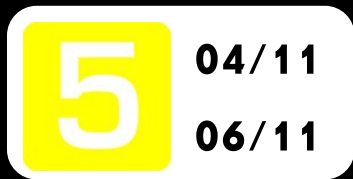












04/11

06/11

Pacing

**Working w/ Other Disciplines**

Scripting

skillset

Rapid Visualization



A black and white photograph showing a person's face in the background, slightly out of focus. In the foreground, a hand holds a small, white, rectangular carton. The carton has the word "empathy" printed in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and "200ml" printed in a smaller font below it. The hand holding the carton has a ring on the ring finger. The carton appears to be a juice or milk carton, with a white cap visible at the top.

**empathy**  
200ml



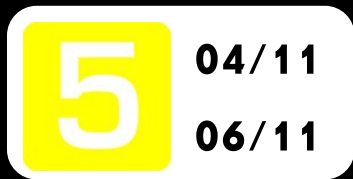


The screenshot displays a digital audio workstation (DAW) interface. The top section features a piano roll with a timeline from 3:12.000 to 4:16.000. A video window on the left shows a character in a purple hoodie. The bottom section contains a mixer with multiple tracks, each with a volume fader and a solo button. The interface is dark-themed with various colored elements for different audio tracks and video content.









04/11

06/11

Pacing

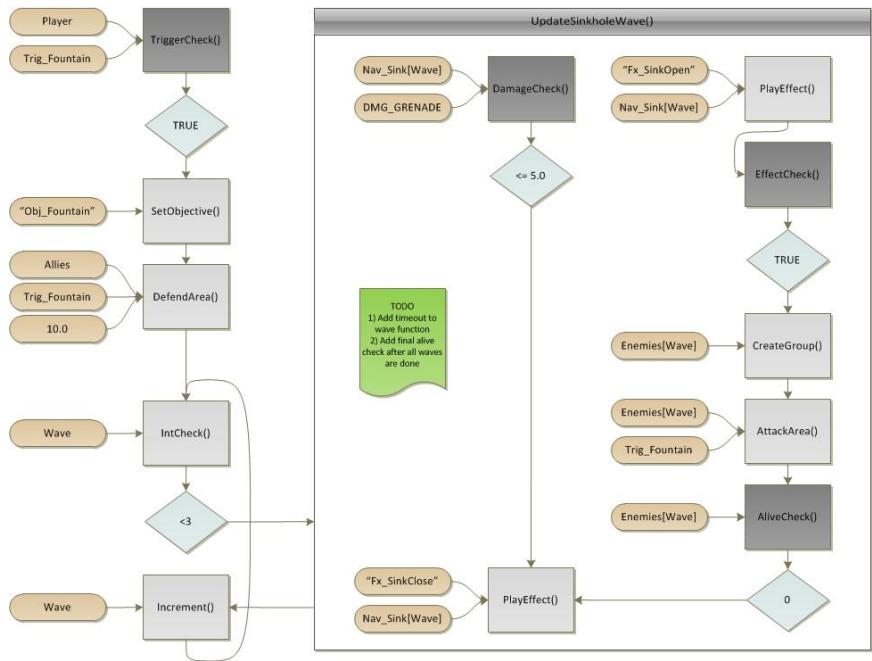
Working w/ Other Disciplines

Scripting

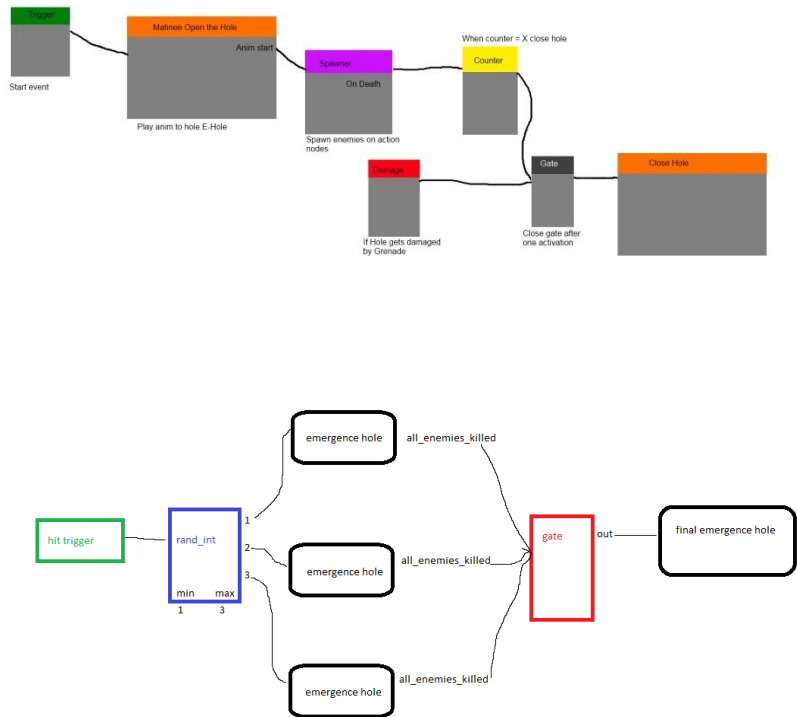
iteration

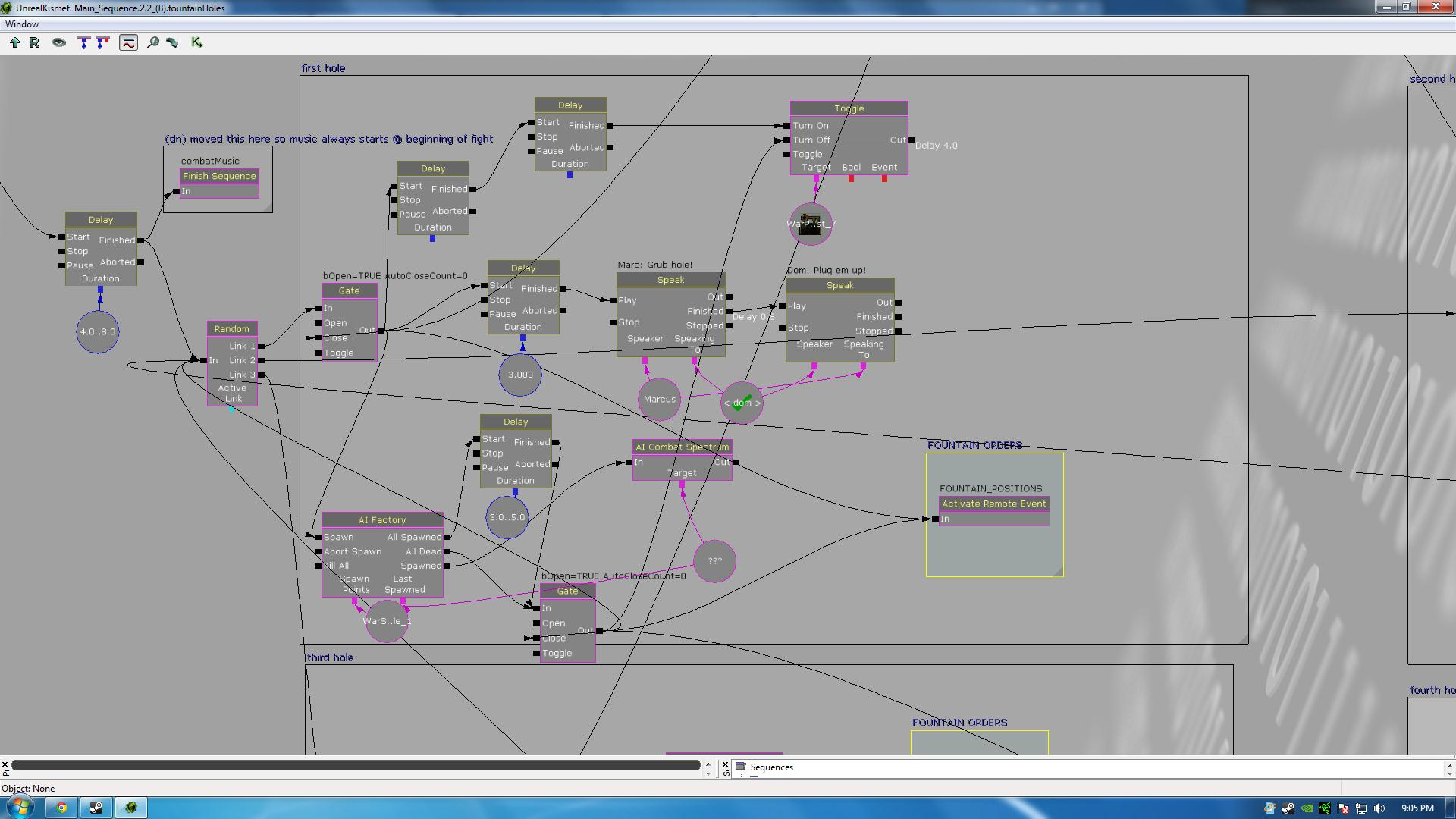
Rapid Visualization





## Emergence Hole Script









Zoom Extents

Browser1 x Visual Scripting Editor Docu...

Group Properties

Group Name	Fail message
Comment	None

Color Properties

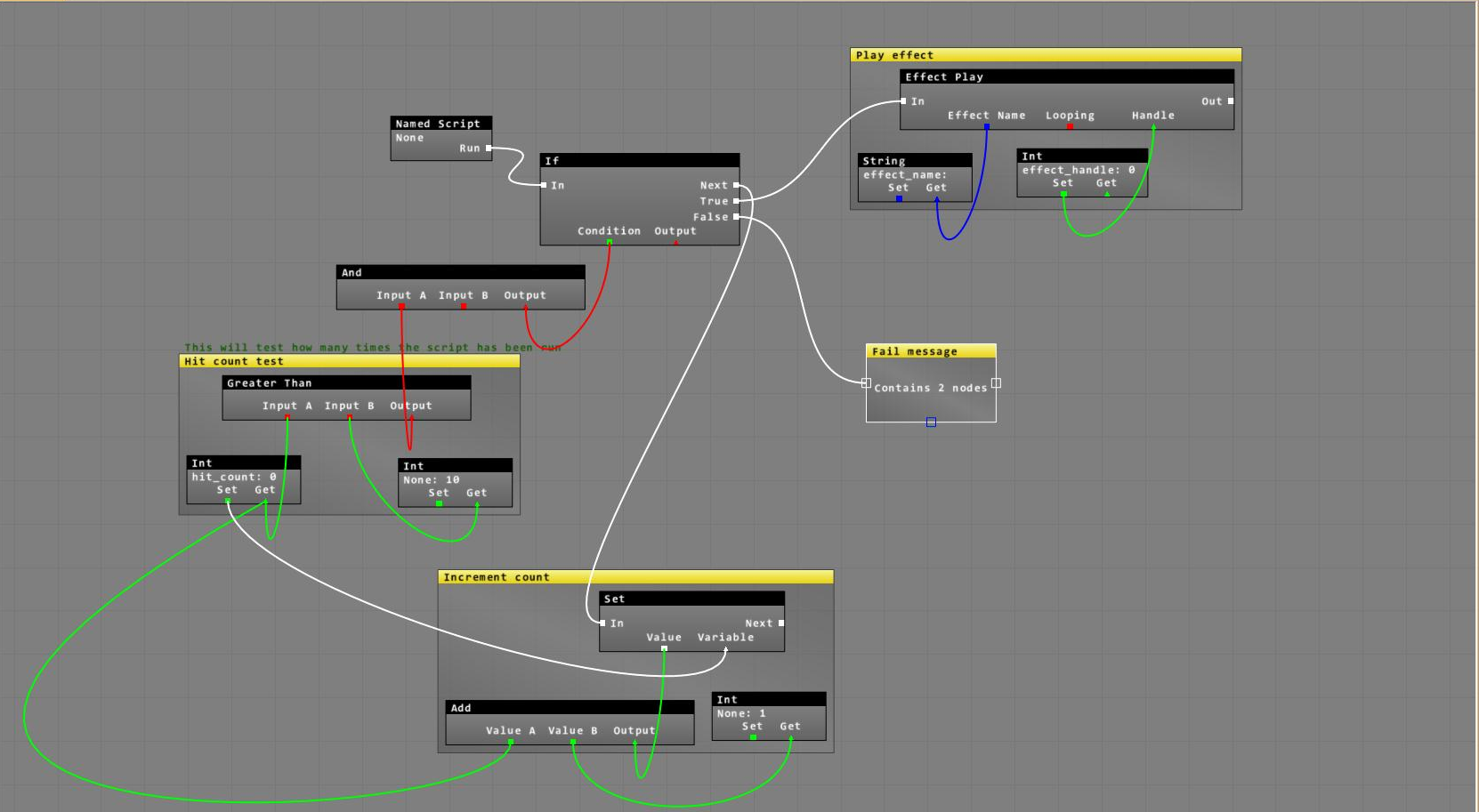
Text Color	Black
Top Color	(247,245,153)
Bottom Color	(232,209,13)
Theme	Blue

Nodes

- Action
  - Function
    - Effect Play
    - Message
  - Logic
    - And
    - Equal
    - Greater Than
    - Greater Than Equal
    - Less Than
    - Less Than Equal
    - Not
    - Or
  - Math
    - Add
    - Divide
    - Mod
    - Multiply
    - Subtract
  - Conditional
    - If
    - Set
    - While
  - Event
    - Level Init
    - Level Start

Effect Play

Play an effect in the level.





**5** 04/11  
06/11

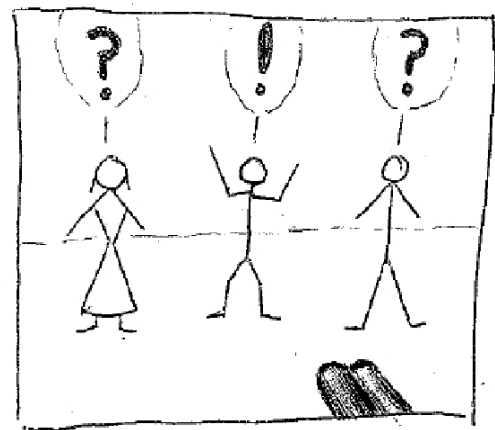
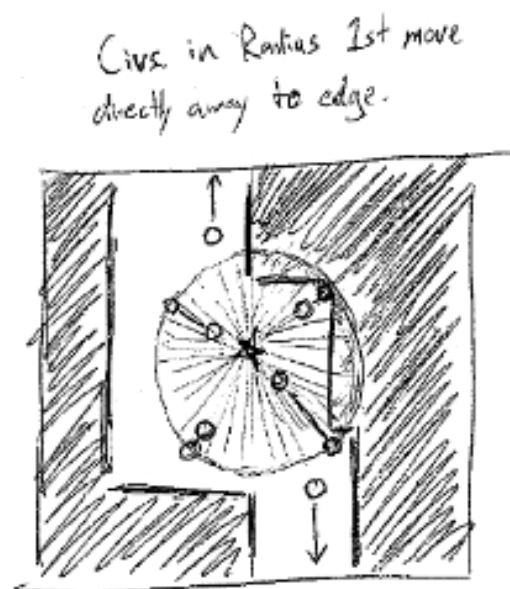
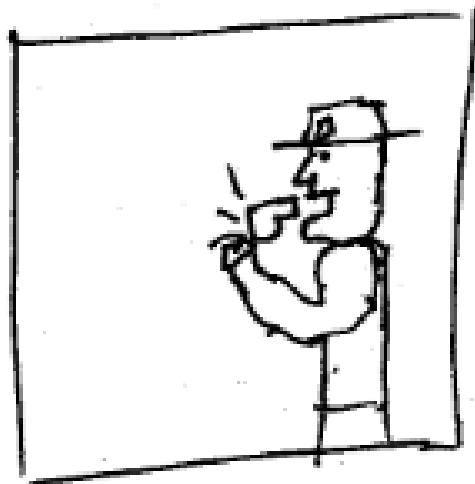
Pacing

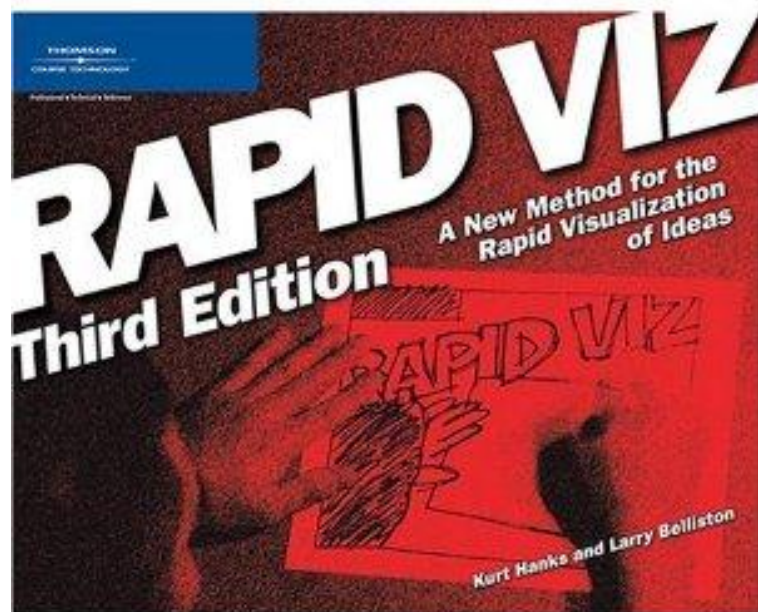
Working w/ Other Disciplines

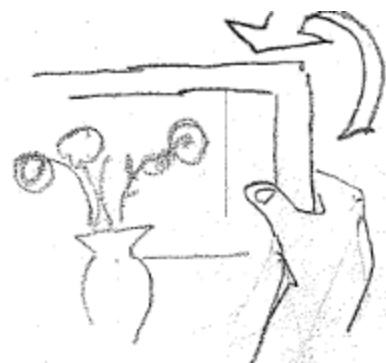
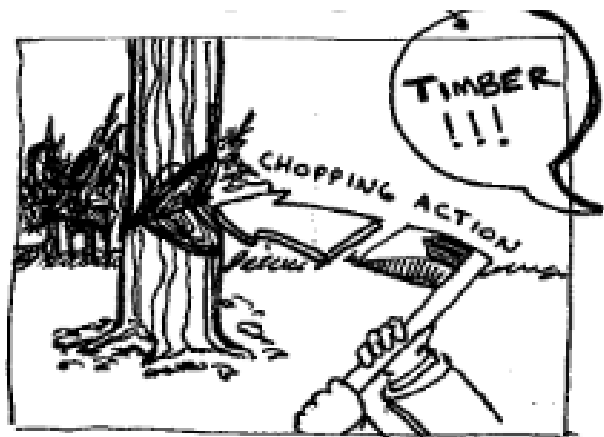
Scripting

**Rapid Visualization**

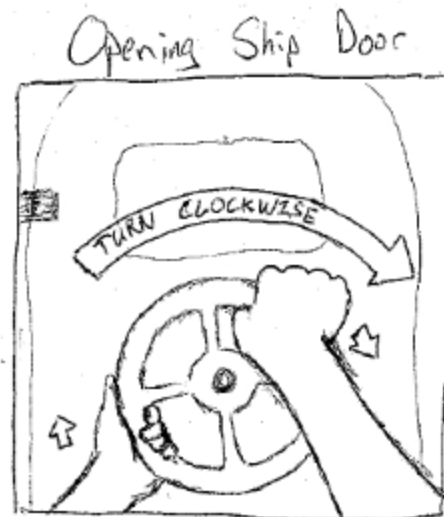
iteration



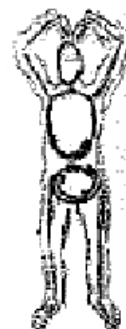
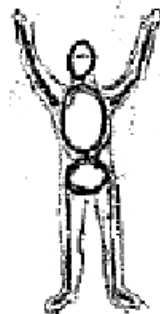




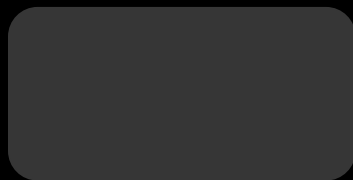
LIFT PAINTING  
FROM HOOK  
THEN PULL TOWARD  
SELF



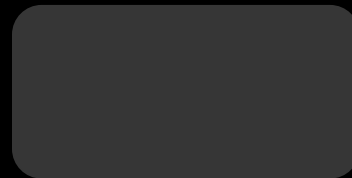
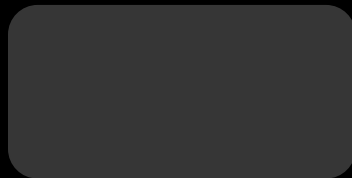
PLAYER JIGGLS  
THUMBSTICK TO  
SHAKE CAT DOWN  
FROM TREE.



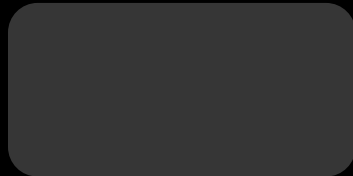
2009



2010



2011



2012





# Pacing (part 2) quality

Science of Emotion

The Future



## Mission 02 (Scott Example)

### 0. Mission intro cutscene

- 5 Notes sets up the battle on the airplane  
Pacing: Reversal

### 1. Mission start - passenger section

- 1 Fight 3 enemies, Then a door opens up and you fight 2 more  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

- 2 Final door opens up and the enemy has a gun  
Pacing: Crisis

As you walk thru the door you are forced to stumble as Gat can't fly the plane very well  
Pacing: Climax

- 4 Kill final enemy and get a gun  
Pacing: Payoff/Finale

With your gun you realize there are lots more enemies to kill in the cargo bay.  
Pacing: Reversal

### 2. Cargo Section of the airplane

- 1 shoot your way thru several enemies, making your way towards the end  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

- 2 Another forced stumble sequence  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

Continue killing enemies and in-gameplay reach near the rear of the cargo area  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

Player hears Gat over the Intercom being overcome and in trouble  
Pacing: Crisis

Z-scene triggers, player has parachute, Shaudi calls for Gat on intercom  
Pacing: Climax

Gat gets shot up and killed, the PC attempts to turn back and help Gat  
Pacing: Climax

the plane is rocked by a violent movement and the PC and shaudi fall out the rear  
Pacing: Reversal

### 3. First Skydiving Section

- 1 PC immediately tries to catch Shaudi  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

- 2 But is grabbed into a QTE by the first enemy and gets guns  
Pacing: Crisis

PC must then shoot several enemies while holding the QTE enemy as a shield  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

Then PC must shoot several more groups of enemies skydiving towards him  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

Finally PC begins to dive towards shaudi, shooting and dodging debris to eventually catch her  
Pacing: Climax

PC catches shaudi and they briefly talk  
Pacing: Payoff/Finale

Then PC realizes that the airplane is coming to ram him.  
Pacing: Reversal

### 4. Shaudi caught - Shoot Airplane window

- 1 PC talks with Shaudi about his plan.  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

- 2 Then drops Shaudi and must shoot out airplane window.  
Pacing: Crisis

- 3 PC shoots out the window  
Pacing: Climax

After shooting out the window the Z-scene triggers the PC flies thru the airplane shooting at enemies and emerges out the back of the plane with another parachute  
Pacing: Payoff/Finale

PC realizes that there are still more enemies AND shaudi is somewhere below still falling, the city is getting closer  
Pacing: Reversal

### 5. Second Skydiving Section

- 1 PC must shoot a new group of enemies  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

After killing these enemies the PC begins diving to catch shaudi again,  
Pacing: Core Gameplay

but is quickly grabbed into another QTE where he must kill the enemy  
Pacing: Crisis

After killing this enemy the PC is put into the final dive with flaming debris all around that he must shoot and dodge to reach shaudi at the bottom of the debris field  
Pacing: Climax

PC catches shaudi and wins the mission  
Pacing: Payoff/Finale

### 6. Outro Cutscene

The player and shaudi land in Sweetroot but quickly realize that the Syndicate has frozen their money and they're all on their own in this new city  
Pacing: Reversal

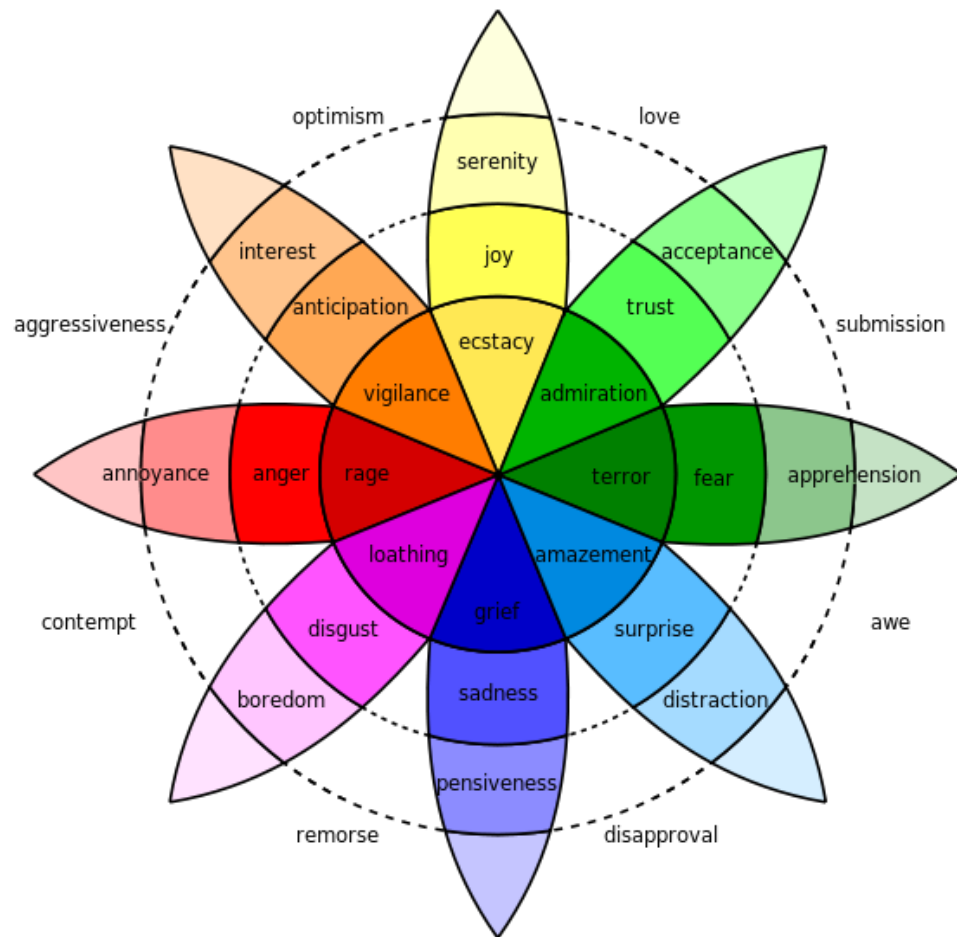


Pacing (part 2)

**Science of Emotion**

quality

The Future





**Pacing (part 2)**

**Science of Emotion**

**The Future**

**quality**



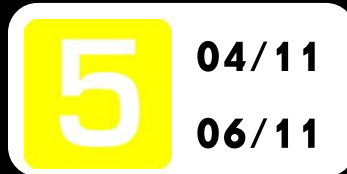
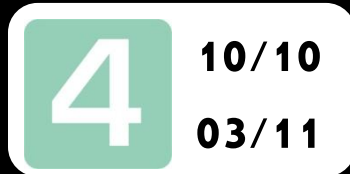
**2009**



**2010**



**2011**



**2012**





**“As a new hire the SDG sessions were a great way to get to know the team, contribute early on, and improve my design skills.”**

**—Volition senior designer**

**“The SDGs have encouraged positivity and a spirit of collaboration throughout the studio as a whole.**

**Those thirty minutes each week have elevated my craft, and provided a weekly reminder of the larger questions of game design.”**

**—Volition audio designer**



**quality**

**iteration**

**skillset**

WHY we did it

WHAT we accomplished

HOW you can do it too



Define Topic



Define  
Topic

Ask  
Questions



```
graph LR; A[Define Topic] --> B[Ask Questions]; B --> C[Find Resources];
```

Define  
Topic

Ask  
Questions

Find  
Resources

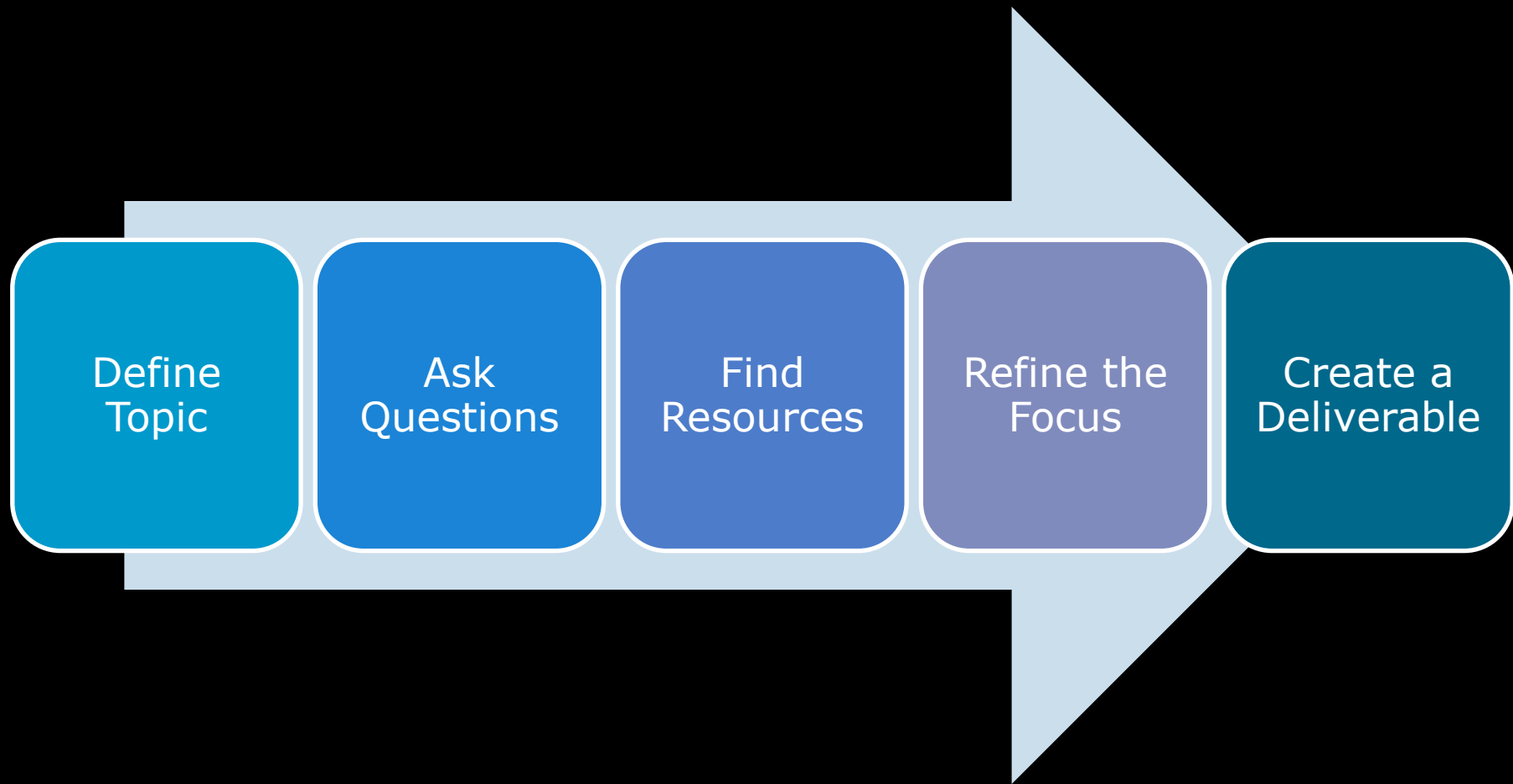
```
graph LR; A[Define Topic] --> B[Ask Questions]; B --> C[Find Resources]; C --> D[Refine the Focus];
```

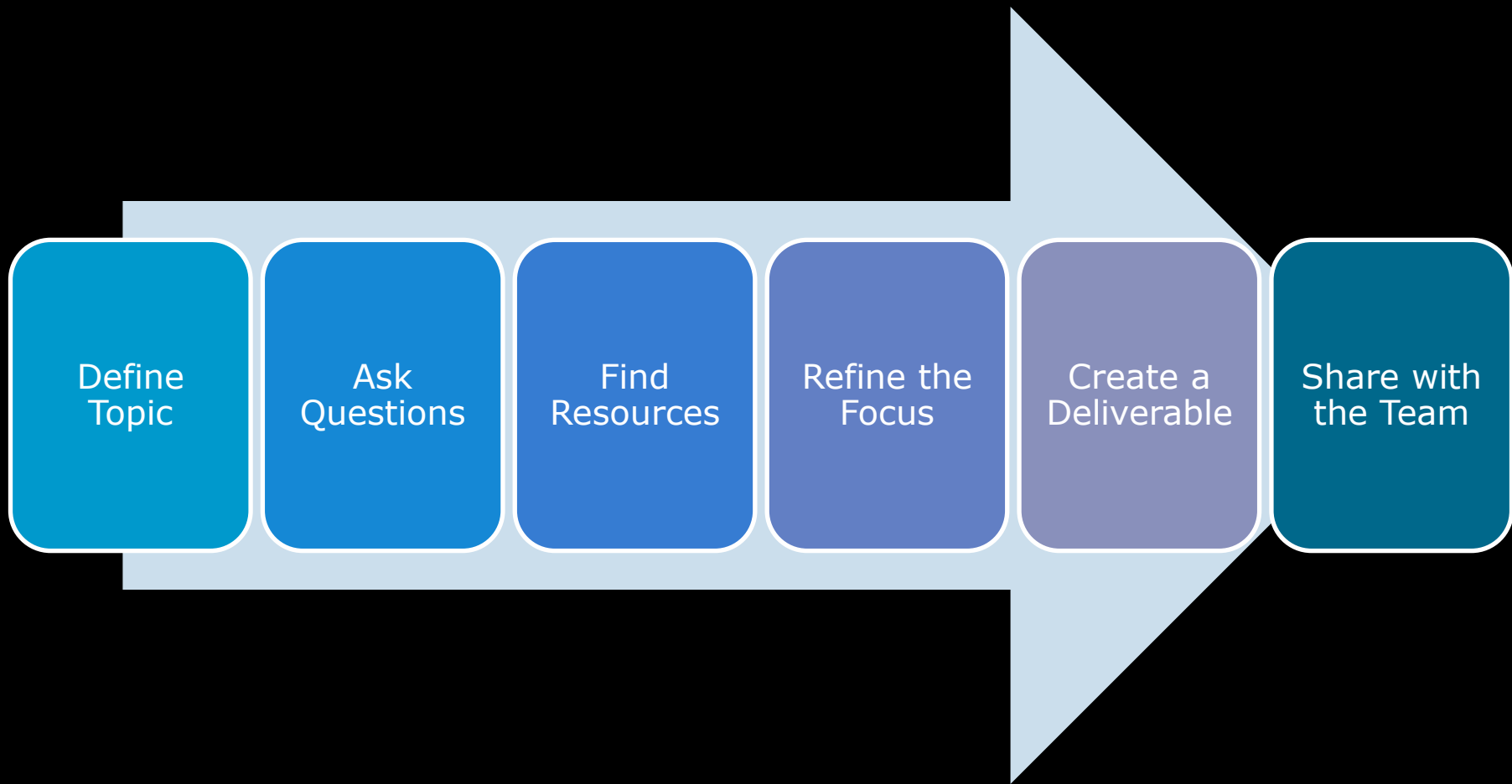
Define  
Topic

Ask  
Questions

Find  
Resources

Refine the  
Focus





**someone has  
to drive the**

**BUS**

**eight** < **people** < **twelve**



**You can choose a  
better name than  
“SDGs”**



# WOMBATT

# FREQU

*matters more than* **length**

# ENCY



Calendar - Mailbox - Jason Scott - Microsoft Outlook

File Home Send / Receive Folder View Add-Ins McAfee E-mail Scan

New Appointment Meeting Items New Online Meeting Today Next 7 Days Day Work Week Month Schedule View Open Calendar Calendar Groups E-mail Calendar Find a Contact Address Book Refresh Add to Evernote 4

February 2012

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

My Calendars

- Team: Jason Scott
- Team: Dan Cermak
- Shared Calendars
- Other Calendars
- iCloud

February 10, 2012

Search Calendar (Ctrl+E)

10 Friday

8 am

9 00

10 00

SDG Round 6: The Future of Interactive Entertainment; V3F White Conference Room; Jason Scott

11 00

SDG Round 6: Pacing; V3F White Conference Room; Jason Scott

SDG Round 6: The Science of Emotion; V3F White Conference Room; Jason Scott

12 pm

1 00

Tasks: 7 Active tasks, 43 Completed tasks

Items: 6 Reminders: 6 All folders are up to date. Connected to Microsoft Exchange 100%

**Assign work.**



you need a •  
**beginning**  
and an  
**end**







**connect**  
**strategy**  
**with**  
**practice**



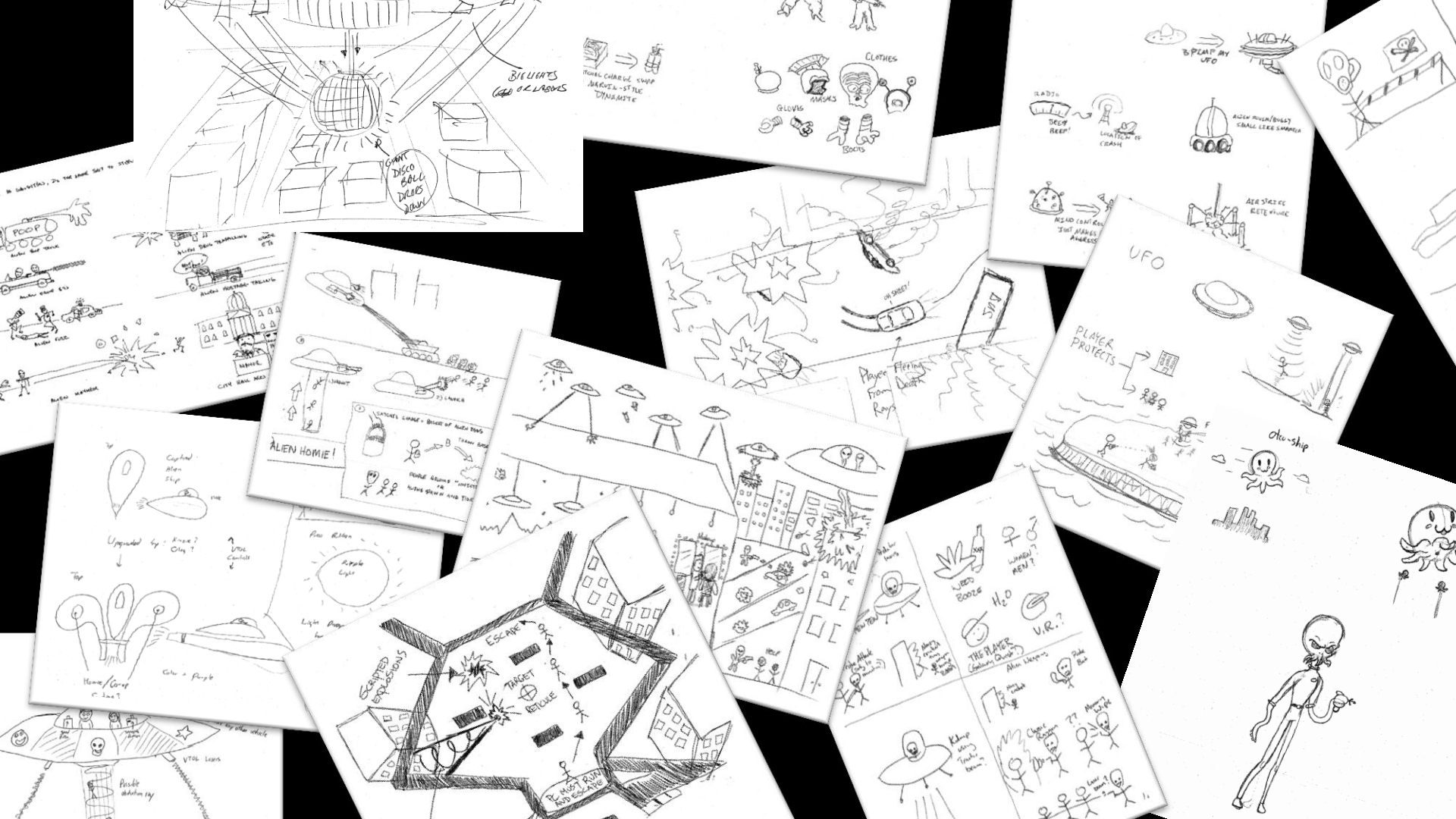
THINK

big

*then find* FOCUS



**Share.**



INTEGRATION

needs **LOVE**

**Be patient.**



volition

# Special Thanks

- **Critters and Crayons Blog**
- **Gabriel Bremler**
- **Chaz Evans**
- **Jonathan McIntosh**
- **Brooke Murphy**
- **Francesco Pedano**
- **AJ Sabino**
- **Mike Stimpson**
- **Leo Timmers**



Jason Scott

Studio Design Director

[jason.scott@volition-inc.com](mailto:jason.scott@volition-inc.com)

[jason.scott@thq.com](mailto:jason.scott@thq.com)