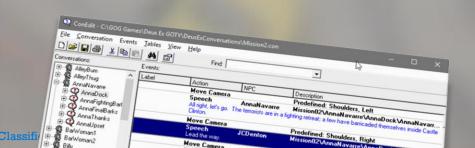




Tools Live Longer Than Games Do

What I learned by interviewing John Romero, Tim Sweeney, and other legendary game tools developers











User Experience Director

Ubisoft Technology Group



About Me



1990s - Web and motion design

2001 – Game development



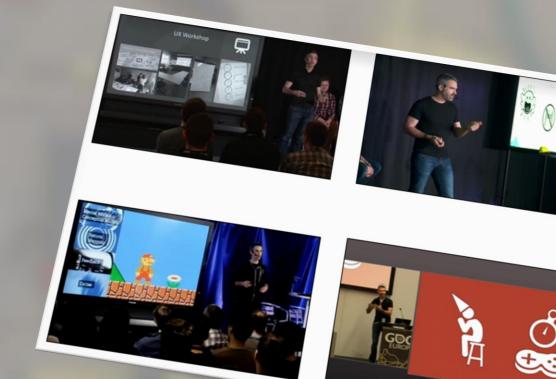
About Me



GDC

Siggraph

CEDEC







m * * 1 @ MASTERCLASS ABOUT ATTEND CONFERENCE SPONSOR 9 Things Learned While Building Frostbite's The System of Tools: Cinematics Tools Reducing Frustration in a Ludovic Chabant Daily Workflow Many to Laura Teeples (343 Industries) me Tools Tutorial Day Sessions at GDC 2019 c experience possible. By using Game Developers Conference, you to provide you with the be

About Me

Game Tools Summit

Tools Design Roundtables

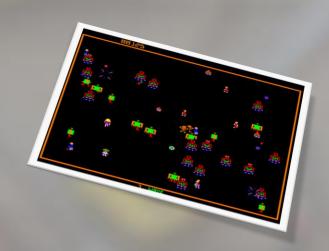






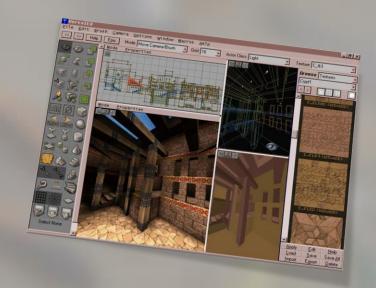


Game Post-Mortems at GDC





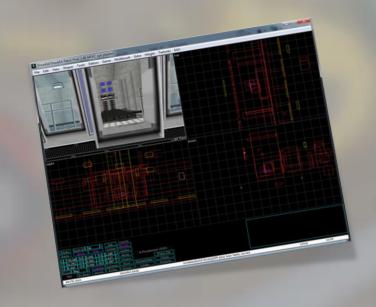




Tools Post-Mortems?



Preserving the **history**



"People who forget the history of game tools development are doomed to repeat it"

"People who forget the history of game tools development are doomed to repeat it"

- Fix-it Felix, probably





Interview key people

History of game development tools





John Romero

TEd (Tile Editor)





Tim Sweeney

Unreal Editor 1





Chris Norden

Deus Ex Tools





John Austin
Tim Preston
Dan Amerson
Mike Daly

Gamebryo





Marc Leblanc

DromEd / ShockEd



Unreal Editor 1
TEd (Tile Editor)
Gamebryo
Deus Ex Tools
ShockEd / DromEd

Most of these tools are still used today

Hobbyists Professionals



"Tools Live Longer Than Games Do"



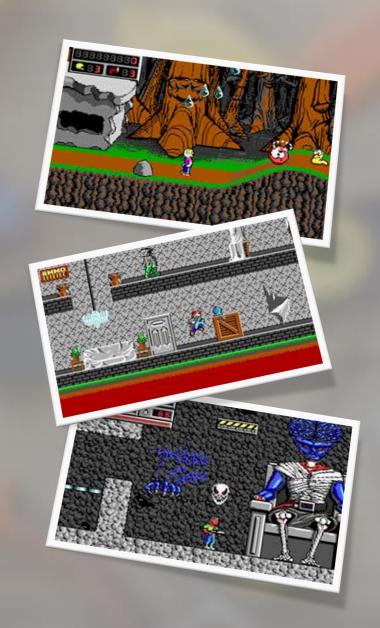
"Tools Live Longer Than Games Do"

- John Romero



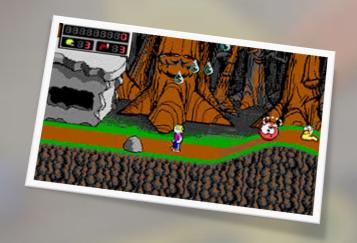
John Romero





TEd (Tile Editor)

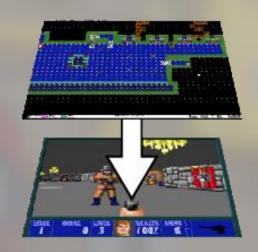


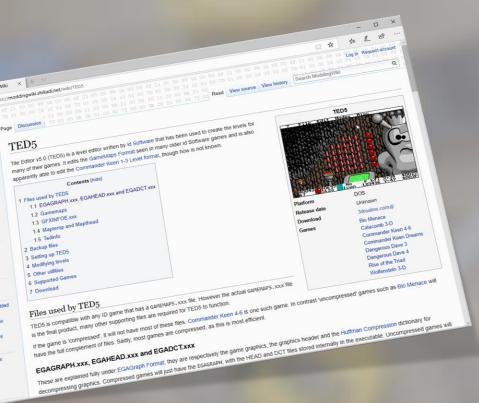




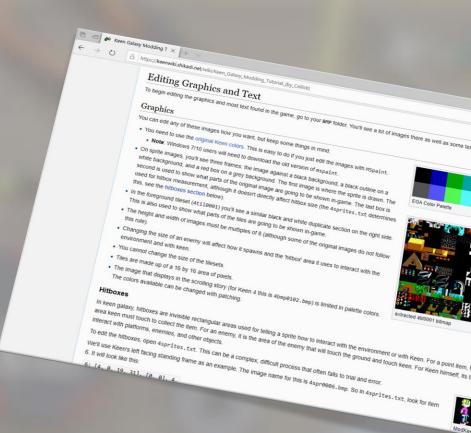


TEd (Tile Editor)





TEd is still used today!





"Tools Live Longer Than Games Do"

- John Romero

Why is it important to remember that?

Just enough
tools development
to ship the game

"the game"
becomes
the next game
and
the next game

You might change teams

You might change companies

Someone might keep it alive





"Tools Live Longer Than Games Do"

- John Romero

An accelerator, not a hinderance

Stand the test of time

Learning from Tools Development History

"What advice would you give to tools developers today?"



Three Questions

1

What is the **problem** that the users want to **solve**?

Three Questions

2

What can you **learn** from **other tools** that **solve the same problem**?

Three Questions

3

How do people use your tools, and how do they fit in with their other tools?

1

What is the problem that the users want to solve?



It's not always the user's responsibility to tell you how they want the tool to work

But it is the user's **responsibility** to tell you what **problem** they **want to solve**



Chris Norden





Deus Ex Tools



"Listen to your customer.

Don't ever write tools in a vacuum."

"A lot of times, tools programmers
don't go far enough asking the questions
about 'Why do you want that?
What is it that you're actually trying to do?"



Yes No

Why? → Why? → Why?

1

What is the problem that the users want to solve?

2

What can you learn from other tools that solve the same problem?

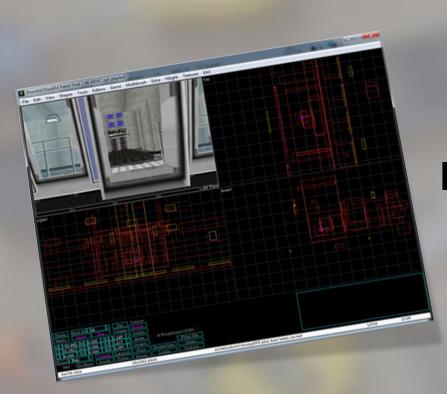


Looking at other tools
that solve the same problem
can make your tools better



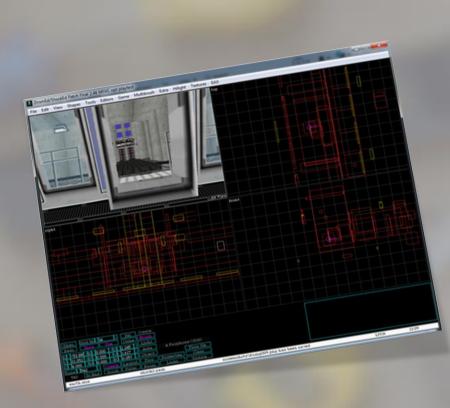
Marc Leblanc





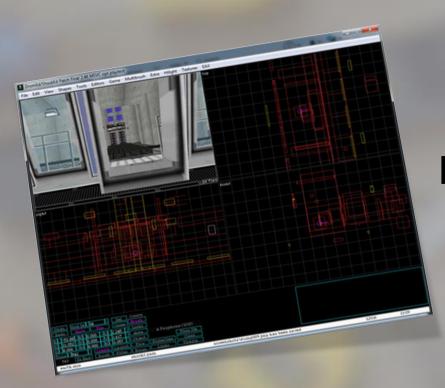
DromEd / ShockEd





DromEd / ShockEd





DromEd / ShockEd





"Look at the old tools and ask why people were doing what they were doing"



"Natural Selection" in game tools





Contextual Menus





WASD

VS

WXSD



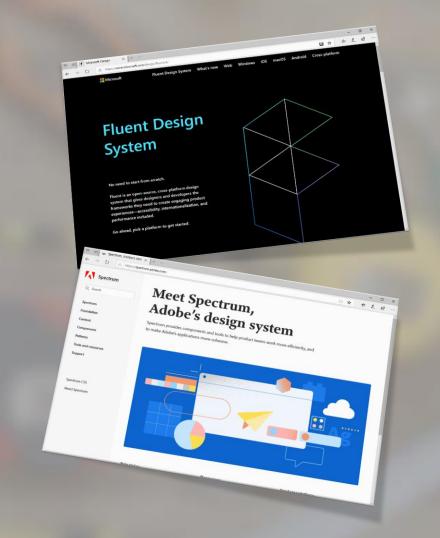


"You look at a lot of the professionally designed tools and they're usually pretty consistent."

"There are design guidelines for how those things should work."



Design Guidelines



2

What can you learn from other tools that solve the same problem?

3

How do people use your tools, and how do they fit in with their other tools?



Other tools at your studio





Tim Sweeney



Unreal Editor 1





"There's this iterative process where the engine team is out creating new ideas..."

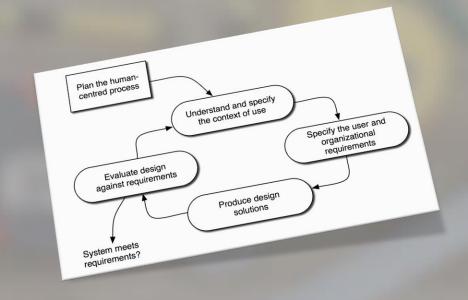


"...and then
sharing them with the
game teams and getting
constant feedback on what
works and what doesn't work"



Iterative Process
Constant Feedback

User-Centered Design Process





John Austin
Tim Preston
Dan Amerson
Mike Daly

Gamebryo





John Austin
Tim Preston
Dan Amerson
Mike Daly

Gamebryo





"At Epic,
the artist was king.
Gamebryo was
very engineer-centric."





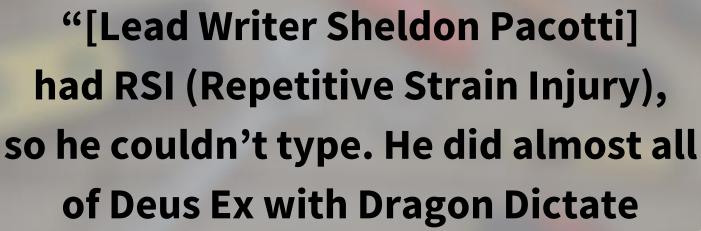
"We never had enough content and users in-house to know whether what we were making was going to be useful"





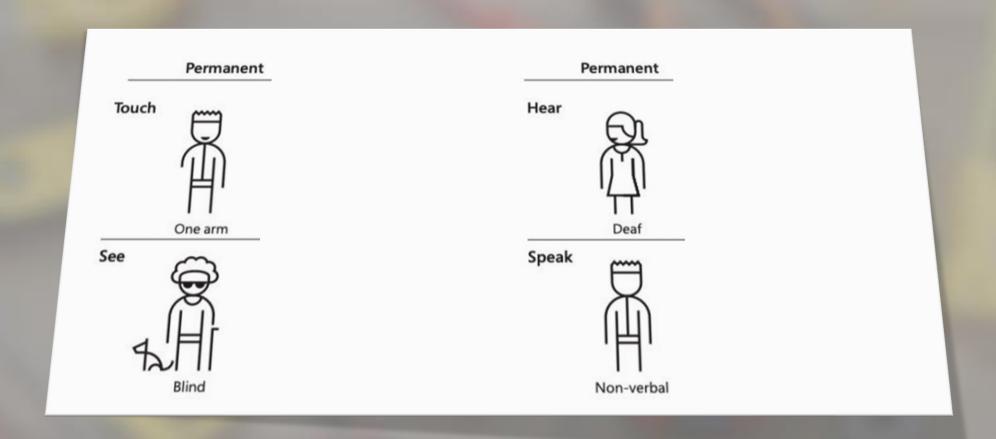
Conversation Editor (ConEdit)





voice transcription."







"As an engineer, you think a certain way, and you think 'Oh, I can use the tool this way, and that's the most efficient way, so that's the way I'm going to write it.'

You're almost always wrong."

3

How do people use your tools, and how do they fit in with their other tools?



Three Questions

1

What is the **problem** that the users want to **solve**?

Three Questions

2

What can you **learn** from **other tools** that **solve the same problem**?

Three Questions

3

How do people use your tools, and how do they fit in with their other tools?

Main Message

"Tools Live Longer Than Games Do"







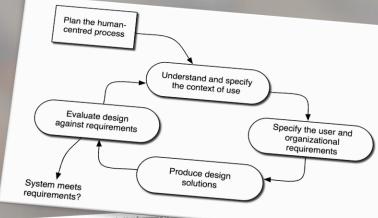
https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/author/DavidLightbown/1009234/

ShockEd / DromEd



CRC CRC Press AN A K PETERS BOOK Designing the User Experience of Game Development Tools _____ DAVID LIGHTBOWN

My Book



CHAPTER 2

The User-Centered **Design Process**

WHAT WILL WE LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER?

- What is the User-Centered Design process?
- How can User-Centered Design help us to achieve a better user experience faster?
- How can pre-visualization be used to improve the user experience?
- · How can we integrate the User-Centered Design process into Agile (Scrum)?
- How do we deal with a lack of time to implement the User-Centered Design process?

WHAT IS THE USER-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS?

The User-Centered Design process is one of the most widely used approaches to user experience design. It has been applied in a variety of different industries for many years. The majority of this book is focused on guiding you through each step in the process and, along the way, presenting concepts and techniques that can be used to improve the user experience of game development tools.

The most important concept to understand about the User-Centered Design process is that it is not a magic solution. There is no "secret sauce" that will provide immediate results, and it is not a "shiny coat of paint" 16 Designing the User Experiences



DICLEE 2.1 Iterative improvements to the iPod Classic scroll-wheel across sev-

that can be applied at the end of development. It is an iterative process. Comparing the first few generations of the scroll-wheel on the Apple iPod (see Figure 2.1) reminds us that even very popular products take time and sometimes several iterations to get it right ... and even then, they can always be improved.

By applying the User-Centered Design process, we accept that we may not get it right the first time. However, with each quick iteration, we will analyze the tool to find problems, make improvements to the design, and evaluate it with the users to confirm that we are going in the right direction.

THE PHASES OF THE USER-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS

"It is a shift in attitude from designing for users to one of designing with users."

ELIZABETH SANDERS (EMPHASIS ADDED)

User-Centered Design is an iterative process that revolves around the users. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the users are at the center of the process (see Figure 2.2). Everything that we do is done out of consideration for the users.



FIGURE 2.2 Each phase of the User-Centered Design process revolves around the users.

