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Game Developers Conference®
March 23-27, 2009 | Moscone Center, San Francisco

CITY
OF
HEROES

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CITY OF HEROES
ARCHITECT

Mission Architect Overview

Mission Architect allows players to create their own stories within City of Heroes and then share those stories with other players.

Players earn equivalent experience and rewards in Mission Architect as they would outside of the system.

Player-made missions are rated by other players (1 – 5 stars), allowing the best content to be easily recognizable.

The higher a story is rated the more in game rewards the author is granted, encouraging players to create enjoyable content.

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SYSTEM SPECIFICS

- Operates across all game servers, is available to all players regardless of level, allows for cooperative play and can be found in almost every zone.

- Allows each account to have up to 3 published stories, 5 missions per story and 25 objectives per mission.

- Provides over a thousand pre-balanced maps, dozens of existing enemy groups, thousands of individual characters, a hundred plus dialog states per mission and ten distinct mission goals.

- Gives players the ability to create unique characters and enemy groups with different costumes, powers and difficulty settings.

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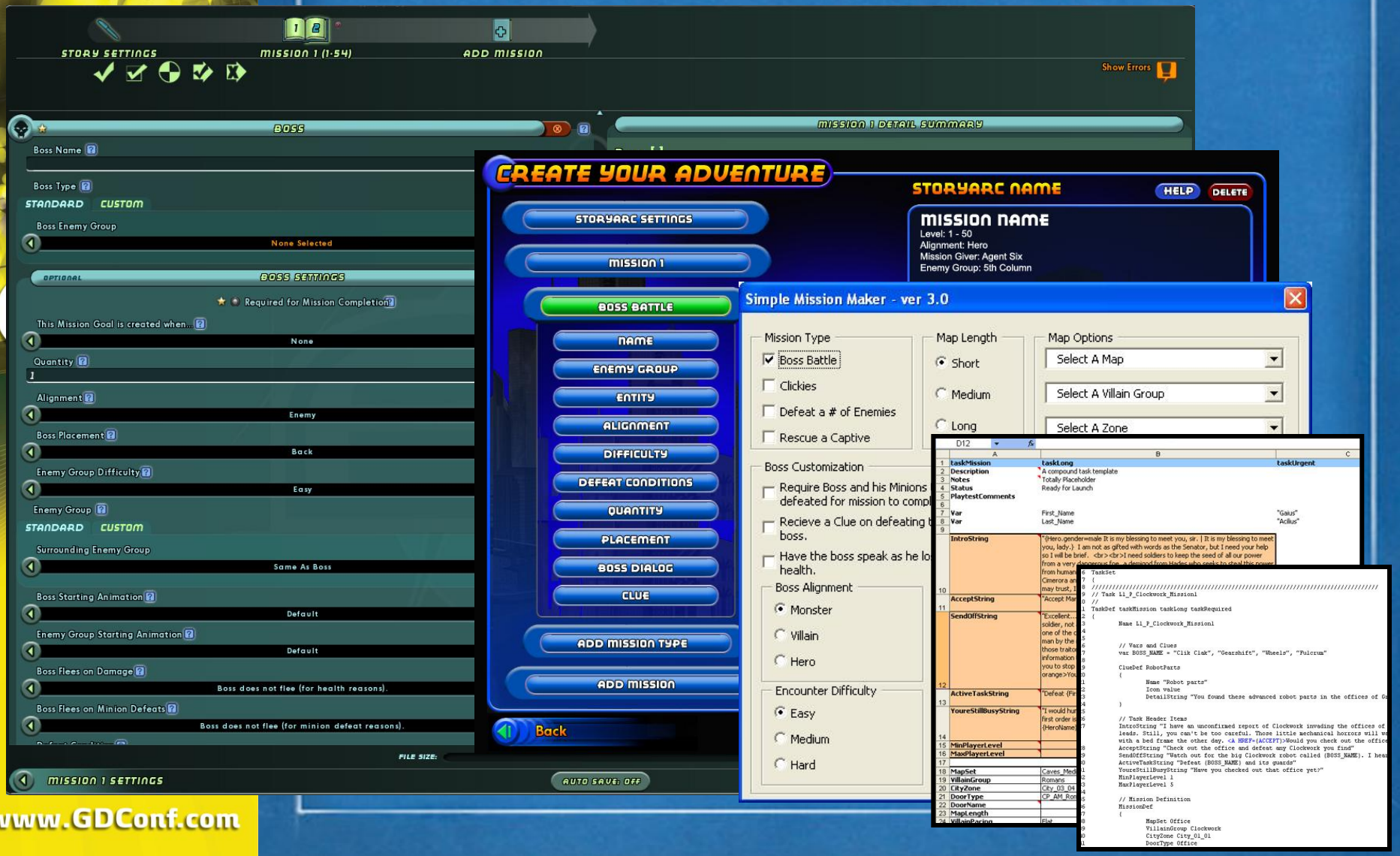
ARCHITECT HISTORY

Architect was initially designed to be a developer's tool.



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MISSION ARCHITECT

DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHIES

MAKE – FIND – PLAY – CONTROL

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MAKING CONTENT

- Costume Creator-like drop down interface
- Tooltips on every option
- Clearly display invalid content
- A ‘show errors’ window
- In game instructor

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FINDING CONTENT

- Auto sorts and filters
- Dev Choice / Hall of Fame / Guest Author
- Sorts (Rating, Date, Length)
- Filters (Played, Rating, Morality)
- Keyword search
- Arc ID

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PLAYING CONTENT

- No barrier to entry
- Similar play experience as regular content
- Equal XP for playing User Generated Content
- Instead of random drops we grant Tickets

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CONTROLLING CONTENT

Positive Reinforcement

- Reward additional story slots for good content
- Reward positive behavior in game
- Players rate content
- Players can send comments to author

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CONTROLLING CONTENT

Negative Reinforcement

- Language Filters (Profanity and IP)
- Flag for Content
- Ban players for crossing the line
- Track ‘suspected players’
- Grief Voting

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CHALLENGES

EDUCATE – ENHANCE – INTERACT – EXPLOIT

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EDUCATING THE PLAYERS

- What is Mission Architect?
- More than just ‘mad-lib’ missions
- Mission Architect not MMO Architect

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Enhancing the Game

- The hard part wasn't putting Architect into CoH, but putting CoH into Architect
- Retrofitting existing system with new functionality
- Massively Multiplayer means Massive Team

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THE USER INTERFACE

- Simple to understand, but not simplistic
- Teaching development methods through the UI
- Iterate. Iterate. Iterate

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EXPLOITATION

- All rewards are based off of defeating enemies
- We allow players to have NPC allies in the map, but they kill steal XP if they defeat the enemy
- We also restrict how often NPC allies can attack
- We don't allow discrete enemy placement
- Tickets as opposed to random drops
- End of mission bonus is based off of merit
- Overall cap on enemies, missions and stories

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MISSION ARCHITECT

LESSONS LEARNED

MAKE VS. PLAY – GODZILLA – DEVELOPMENT · CRITICS

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Fun to Make vs. Fun to Play

- If you had to choose between the two, which would you pick over the other?
- Fun to make brings more players into the system, yet potentially limits the quality of what they output.
- Fun to play creates a more entertaining product, yet limits the gateway to entry for the majority of your player base.

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CONTENT GODZILLA

- The amount of content generated is staggering
- There needs to be multiple layers of content filtering
- Look at existing programs as a starting point
- Giving the players to tools to make content doesn't mean your job is done
- Now players are even more invested in the game

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PLAYERS AREN'T DEVELOPERS

- A Development team moves towards a ship date
- Players won't approach a project in the same logical, efficient method that a team would
- A Player never wants to and should never have to ship
- They will look at their creation more like a sandbox and less like a product on a shelf

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Everyone's a Critic or Should Be

- A Critic or Reviewer is someone who finds and disseminates content to the masses
- The Reviewer helps with the signal to noise ratio
- Systems that help players become reviewers help keep your audience focused

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IN CONCLUSION...

We have created something that has taken on a life of its own. Its massive form now rises - moving towards Paragon City.

It is weeks away, yet already the shadow it casts eclipses our skyline.

What will it do once it reaches us, no one can truly know. But I can tell you, we will never be the same city again.

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QUESTIONS?

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