



IMGD 1001: Game Design Documents

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Types of Game Design Docs

- ❑ Concept Document
- ❑ Proposal Document
- ❑ Technical Specification
- ❑ Game Design Document
- ❑ Level Designs

Concept Document (1 of 2)

- ❑ Used to explore game idea in more detail
- ❑ Often used as a proposal within an organization
- ❑ Developed by designer or visionary
- ❑ A short sales pitch: 1-3 pages
- ❑ May have no art, or amateur art
- ❑ Many ideas never get farther than this

Concept Document (2 of 2)

- Must include:
 - Intro
 - Description
 - Key features
 - Genre, spin, flavor
 - Platform(s) / market data

- May also include:
 - Background / License info
 - Concept art

High Concept (1 of 2)

- ❑ The key sentence that describes your game
- ❑ MUST get the concept across concisely and quickly
- ❑ If you can't, it may be too complicated to sell

High Concept (2 of 2)

□ Not so good:

- "MindRover is a game in which players build and program robotic vehicles to compete in a variety of challenges including battles, races, puzzles, and sports."

□ Better:

- "MindRover is like *Battlebots* ... but with brains."
- Still not good enough
- Let's see if we can do better! ... (next slide)

Exercise: High Concept

- Pick one of these 4 games
 - *Burnout*
 - *Grand Theft Auto*
 - *Zelda - Twilight Princess*
 - *Dance Dance Revolution*
- Write a high concept for it
- Form groups based on game choice
- Agree on one

Proposal Document (1 of 2)

- ❑ Used to get a deal
- ❑ Shown to publishers and 3rd parties
- ❑ Enough detail to show that the proposal is viable: 5-50 pages
- ❑ Sales oriented
- ❑ Big picture
- ❑ Polished!

Proposal Document (2 of 2)

- Must include:
 - Revised concept
 - Market analysis
 - Technical analysis
 - Schedule
 - Budget
 - Risks
 - Cost and revenue projections
 - Pessimistic, likely, optimistic
 - Art

Technical Specification (1 of 2)

- ❑ The 'How' of game design
- ❑ Contains the architectural vision; technology to be used
- ❑ Engineering detail
- ❑ Production detail
- ❑ Owned by tech director or chief engineer
- ❑ Can be exhaustive (and exhausting):
10-100 pages

Technical Specification (2 of 2)

- Must include:
 - Tooling
 - Art / Music / Sound / Production pipeline
 - Technology detail
 - Platform & portability issues
 - Networking or special tech
 - Server details
 - Software engineering info
 - Major design elements
 - Key areas of technical risk
 - Alternatives to risky or expensive sections

Game Design Document (1 of 2)

- ❑ Functional spec: The 'What' of the design
- ❑ Describes the player's experience and interactions in detail
 - Could be quite long, several hundred pages, but "enough" is the goal.
- ❑ Artistic feel
- ❑ Owned by the game designer
- ❑ A living document
- ❑ "The Bible"

Game Design Document (2 of 2)

- Must haves
 - Game mechanics
 - User Interface
 - Visuals
 - Audio
 - Story (if any)
 - Level Specs

Useful links

- Chris Taylor's sample design doc, in HTML and .doc format:
<http://www.fafhrdproductions.com/ctaylordesign.htm>
<http://www.jonathanjblair.net/ctaylordesigntemplate.zip>

- Tim Ryan's excellent two-part description of game design docs:
http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan_01.htm
http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991217/ryan_01.htm