AUDIO IN DIGITAL GAMING

FASTESTMAN INTHEWORLD

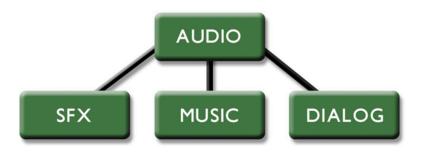Duncan Watt, Founder/Creative Director
Fastestmanintheworld Media

THE ROLE OF AUDIO IN DIGITAL GAMING

- Audio is the primary delivery system used to communicate emotions to the player in digital gaming

- Audio is a powerful, immediate connection to the player's subconscious mind

- Audio is a remarkably powerful tool in creating the "suspension of disbelief".

TYPICAL AUDIO ASSETS IN DIGITAL GAMING

AUDIO ASSET 1: SOUND DESIGN (SFX)

- AMBIENT SFX create atmosphere (example: bat crack/ cheer)
  - usually reflect current player environment
  - usually loop (play continuously)
- REACTIVE SFX create immediacy (example: bat crack/ cheer)
  - triggered by player actions (gunshots, footsteps)
  - triggered by environment (birds, machines)
  - usually one-shot (play once)
  - many one-shots can occur at one time

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AUDIO ASSET 2:
MUSIC

MUSIC

- AMBIENT music works in the background (example: organ)
    - Helps player suspend disbelief
    - communicates story's emotional intent
- REACTIVE music gives the player immediate cues
    - can heighten player's emotions situationally
    - can serve as reward/victory celebration
- Other types of in-game music: "source" music, visual vocal, music as SFX, licensed music, rhythm-based gaming, endless creative uses

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AUDIO ASSET 3:
DIALOG

DIALOG

- CHARACTERS voices can be very powerful (ex: announcer)
    - immediate human connection
- NARRATION helps tell the story quickly and effectively
    - provides information off-screen – no clutter
- AMBIENT voices provide realism to the environment
    - gives player cues to locality, setting, time – can be handled like SFX as well (ex: baseball scene)

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"... sound is half of the (movie-going) experience"

- Steven Spielberg

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Audio is a powerful tool for all of us to use – why not use it to your best advantage?

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Books:**
  - *The Complete Guide To Game Audio*, Aaron Marks (CMP) – slightly dated, but a good overview
  - *Audio For Games*, Alexander Brandon (New Riders) – examples of good audio-directing practice
  - *The Fat Man on Game Audio: Tasty Morsels of Sonic Goodness*, George Sanger (New Riders)

- **Websites:**
  - www.gameaudioforum.com - professional forum
  - www.audiogang.org - audio guild
  - www.audioatrocities.com - examples of horrible voice acting