

Practical Assignment 1: Concept Pitch

Game Design course 2016-2017, Utrecht University.

Overview

The first practical assignment concerns the communication aspects of the game designer role. It is very important for a game designer to successfully convey ideas about the game.

Tasks

First your team will generate a game concept and write it down in a short *concept document*. Then your team will *pitch* the concept to the other students in a short presentation. Finally, your team will evaluate how the other students have interpreted your pitch and write this down in an *evaluation report*. To facilitate the evaluation for other teams, you must individually write *feedback* down about the other pitches. In total, this creates four subtasks in this assignment. You do this assignment in Dutch.

Deadlines

This assignment contains several small short term deadlines. This requires an active participation. Keep track of these deadlines!

- Thursday February 9th (first week) before 23.59: P1.0 Submit your team.
- Monday February 20th before 23.59: Submit subtask P1.1 (concept)
- Thursday February 23rd before **17.00**: Submit your presentation slides **pdf** by mail.
- Friday February 24th 13:00 - 17:00: Pitch presentations.
- Friday February 24th before **19.00**: Submit subtask P1.3 (feedback)
- Tuesday February 28th before 23.59: Submit subtask P1.4 (evaluation report)

Grading

Subtasks 1, 2 and 4 contribute equally to the grading. Grading is done per team, but individual changes can be made. Subtask 3 (feedback) is handled differently because it is an individual task. For each team you didn't give feedback, 0.25 points are deducted from your individual grade of the entire assignment. Note that an effortless write-up counts as missing.

Subtask 0: Report team

Important: the same team for assignment 2

This team will also do the second practical assignment together (creating the game prototype). Be aware of this and choose your team accordingly. Your team must consist of 5 students.

Keep in mind that you should use the tool you are most familiar with for the second assignment, so you'll want a team with experience in the same tool. Unity is recommended, a separate lecture will be given (crash course Unity).

If you do not have programming experience, you are encouraged a team with mostly programmers. As a non-programming member, you can focus on creating content such as visuals, sound and levels. Keep in mind that the general game design should be done by all team members. Ideally, teams should consist of 4 programmers and 1 non-programmer. More than 1 non-programmer in a programming team is discouraged. You are allowed to be in a team with students you know well, but it is encouraged to find a team with students you haven't worked much with. You will learn much more about cooperation if you move outside your comfort zone.

Tutor teaching assistant

Your team will have one TA as tutor. This TA can help you with all sorts of things such as technical issues, teamwork difficulties, and game design questions. You can also ask your TA for feedback on how you are progressing and the quality of your work.

To make the tutoring work, you need regular contact with your tutor TA. You will have weekly meetings during the practicum sessions on Friday with your TA, where you should keep him/her updated about the project and ask your questions. Meeting with the TA is your responsibility as a group. To encourage this, you can get a small bonus on Assignment 2 if you keep your TA involved very well. Conversely, if you repeatedly neglect to meet with your TA you will get a small penalty on Assignment 2.

Finding your tutor

After you have formed your team, first think of a team name. Then you submit this team name and the student details of the 5 students in the team on a [Google Form](#) on Thursday February 9th. A TA will be appointed, **Please note: when the group is not well balanced there is a change your team will be shuffled.**

Problems finding a team

If you cannot find a team or if your team is incomplete e-mail game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com before the deadline on Thursday February 9th before 23.59. Start the e-mail subject with **[TEAM-PROBLEM]**, and mention in the e-mail your name, the issue and if you have programming experience or not. The TA's will arrange the completion of the teams on Friday.

Deadline: Thursday February 9th (first week) before 23.59

Before this deadline you must have reported your team with the [Google Form](#) , or you must have e-mailed the TA's. If you fail to find a team quickly, you cannot participate in Assignment 1.

Subtask 1: Concept document

Create a game design concept with your team. Be creative, an original concept benefits your grade significantly! The concept you create can also be adapted for assignment 2, but this is not required.

Don't be afraid to share your ideas, ideas are never stupid! The creative process requires a lot of input, and through team interactions any idea can turn into a great idea. Make sure to be open to ideas of others. Listen carefully, let each other finish and provide constructive feedback. Build upon ideas, it may not be great at first but how can you improve it?

It's also important that you're not very attached to your own ideas. It's likely that your idea will not be chosen (or will be modified) and you should be okay with that. Even though it was a great idea, that doesn't mean that it's the best idea for this team. If teamwork is troublesome, go to your teaching assistant.

You are free to choose the structure of your concept document, but make sure there is a structure and that it makes sense. For example, a short introduction with a little background makes sense. Also make sure to be concrete, the purpose of the concept document is to clearly present the concept.

Requirements

- Deliver a pdf
- Name the pdf "P1.1- team-#" (*where # is your team number*)
- The concept document should be at least 1 and at most 2 pages.
- The document should contain the teamname & number and the names of all members.
- Do not mention or reference other games. (Images from other games can neither be used.)

Submit the concept document by email to game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com subject [P1.1-team-#]

Deadline: Monday February 20th before 23.59

Criterion	Poor	Fair	Good
Originality (important)	The concept is in a well-known genre but has a small twist.	The concept is in a well-known genre but has a large change, which truly changes the nature of the game.	The game is so different that a link with a well-known genre is hard to see.
Concreteness (important)	Some aspects of the game are explained clearly, but others are kept vague: their exact implementation is unclear.	Most aspects are explained clearly, but some important aspects remain vague or don't have enough detail.	All important aspects of the game are clearly discussed, even though the lists may not be complete due to lack of space. A mock-up screenshot is included.
Formatting (less important)	The document has a title and a few sections, but no more formatting.	The document is divided in logical sections and paragraphs, lists are used where applicable. Correct font use.	In addition to "fair", the document is well polished and contains several images and colors to aid in the explanation.
Language (less important)	There are some weird sentences.	Most sentences are nice and clear.	It is very easy to read.

Subtask 2: Pitch presentation

You will present the concept from your concept document in a elevator pitch-style presentation. There are two goals you must achieve using your presentation. The first goal is to clearly and concretely communicate your game concept. The audience should be able to create the game experience after hearing the presentation. (Obviously the technical part is not relevant, only the game design.) The second goal is that you must show your enthusiasm and transfer it to the audience. Try to be creative in accomplishing these two goals in your presentation.

Your pitch has to take at most 5 minutes (aim for 4 minutes!), so your presentation must be very brief and concise. The 5 minutes is a hard limit, you must stop when the time is over. Practice the presentation multiple times in advance to make sure it fits in the timeslot. It is recommended that one student does the talking, although this is not a strict requirement.

Context

The pitch should *not* be a pitch for a publisher. In that case, your objective would be to get a publisher contract. In a real-world context this assignment is like a pitch you'd give to your development team to introduce a new game project.

Requirements

- Do not mention or reference other games. (Images from other games may also not be used.)
- The slides must be in **pdf** format. They cannot contain movies or animations.
- Name the pdf "P1.2- team-#" (*where # is your team number*)
- First slide contains team name and student names.
- Submit your slides a day in advance. See the deadlines.
- Your pitch is at most 5 minutes, aim for 4.

A presentation slot will be assigned to your team. Check the course website under "Assignments" to see in which slot your team must present.

Your slides must be e-mailed in advance to game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com with subject **[P1.2-team-#]**. Be aware of the requirements for the slides. The TA will combine all slides into a single presentation, this enables fast switching between pitches.

Deadline: Thursday February 23th before 17.00: Mail your presentation slides

Presentation: Friday February 24th, somewhere between 13.00 and 17.00

Criterion	Poor	Fair	Good
Transmission of enthusiasm (important)	The presenter is talking with little enthusiasm. The slides contain some nice graphics, but nothing special.	The presenter is talking with some enthusiasm and seems to like their idea. The slides contain some cool graphics showing the game.	The presenter uses an original way to grab the attention of the public and makes people enthusiastic.
Concreteness and completeness (important)	Some aspects of the game are explained clearly, but others are not mentioned or kept vague.	Most aspects are explained clearly, but some important aspects remain vague or don't have enough detail.	The pitch shows all important aspects in a clear way. The audience has a very good idea what the game experience will be like

Subtask 3: Feedback

To provide all teams with information on how their pitch is understood, each student must individually write down something about the other pitches. **You're required to do this for all other pitches, except for the pitches in the same session as yours.** There are four sessions which are separated by 15 minute breaks.

For each pitch you must answer the following questions:

- What did you like about the presentation? (at least 1 genuinely positive remark required.)
- What did you find unclear about the design or what did you miss about the design in the pitch? (at least 1 concrete remark required.)
- What game is similar to this one, and why? (If you don't know a similar game, state a game which has a similarity and mention what the similarity is.)

Do not review the quality of the pitch or state what your opinion on the game concept is, that is not relevant for this task. (Note that this feedback does not influence the grade of the pitching team.)

The answers must be submitted through a Google Form. You can find the links in the schedule on the course website. Make sure you have a copy of your answers in case something goes wrong with the submission of the form!

For each pitch you did not provide feedback on (or too late) you get 0.25 points deducted from your total assignment 1 grade. Note that effortless or otherwise non-serious submissions do not count as a submission. If something goes wrong or you are not able to create the feedback, contact your TA with the teacher in cc <game-ontwerp@doornena.nl>. Do not let someone else provide feedback for you, that is fraud.

Deadline: Friday February 24th before 19.00

This tight deadline is required to give the other teams the possibility to start evaluating on Friday.

Subtask 4: Evaluation report

It is expected that there will be things unclear after the pitch presentation. This is almost unavoidable after such a pitch. For this subtask you will evaluate which things were not understood well, and which things were understood correctly. The main goal of this task is to do evaluate your own presentation, i.e. self-reflection, based on the feedback from other students from Subtask 3. This requires you to be honest, be critical to your own presentation but also see the good parts of it.

The feedback from the other students will be available on the course website on Friday February 24th shortly after 19:00.

Create a short document of about 1 page and discuss the general tone in the feedback from other students. Which aspects of the game concept were not clear to them, and which parts were clear? How could your pitch be improved to convey the concept more clearly? Note that there are always individuals with strange opinions, focus on general trends instead.

Requirements

- The evaluation report should be about 1 page.
- Deliver a pdf
- Name the pdf "P1.4- team[number of your group]" (e.g. P1.4-team-3)
- The document should contain the name of the team and the names of all members.

The quality of the evaluation itself influences the grade. The evaluation is not used for the grading of the pitch. A good and honest evaluation report after an unclear presentation improves the grade!

Submit the concept document by email to game.ontwerp.2017@gmail.com subject [P1.4-team-#] (where # is your team number)

Deadline: Tuesday February 28rd before 23.59

Criterion	Poor	Fair	Good
Self-reflection (very important)	The evaluation focuses mainly on the poor or good aspects. There are no interesting remarks.	There is a good balance between positive and negative remarks. There are some interesting insightful statements.	Good balance and there are several very insightful remarks, resulting from careful analysis of the feedback.
Improvements (important)	The suggestions for pitch improvement are simple or not very helpful.	Some fair suggestions for pitch improvement are given.	Some suggestions for pitch improvement are clearly a major addition.
Language (less important)	There are some weird sentences.	Most sentences are nice and clear.	It is very easy to read.