

## Video Game Design Composition © 2014

### Chapter 1: Design Composition—Glossary

**alpha version.** When most of the game is assembled.

**art bible.** Contains a drawing or mock-up for every asset that needs to be created for the game.

**articles of incorporation.** Charter that is a legal document outlining how a business will be organized and managed.

**asset.** Any element in a game, such as characters, objects, backgrounds, sounds, and visual elements.

**beta testers.** Loyal customers and players who play trial versions before the game is available to the general public.

**beta version.** More polished iteration of the alpha version.

**bug level.** Importance level of an error; also called *bug type*.

**bug report.** Document that lists an error, its location in the game, how the error occurs, and how important the error is.

**bug type.** Importance level of an error; also called *bug level*.

**channel.** Means of game distribution, such as disc, online, as an app, or as a coin-operated cabinet.

**channel of distribution.** Chain of stops a product makes from the publisher to the final user.

**copyright.** Indication of legal ownership of creative work.

**core mechanics.** Computer programming used to enforce the rules.

**corporation.** Legal entity that limits the personal liabilities of its owners while being able to engage in activities such as entering into contracts, making money, and buying property.

**critical path method (CPM).** All tasks are first prioritized. The next step is to find dependencies for each task. Tasks are then scheduled in the most efficient progression. The tasks are then analyzed to find how the project can be fast-tracked.

**crunch time.** End of a project when time begins to run short and decisive action is required.

**design documents.** Documents that contain all of the decisions used to make the game.

**design team.** Group of very creative people who bring the idea of a video game into a playable version.

**developer.** Game-design studio that is responsible for creating all of the art, sounds, programming, and design elements of the video game.

**direct marketing.** Publisher sells the game to the user.

**distribution.** How a game is sent to the customer.

**fast track.** To analyze a project's tasks to find which can be done in parallel, or at the same time.

**first playable level.** First iteration of the game's first level that can be played and tested.

**five essential questions.** Questions that form the foundation of the concept for the game.

**five Ps of video game publishing.** Pitch; preproduction; production; post production; patch and return distribution.

**functionality testing.** Process of evaluating if everything works the way it should.

**game.** Activity that has three parts: game environment, rules, and a victory condition.

**game designer.** Person who works for the developer whose main tasks are to create the structure of the game and dream up great interactions within the game; generically, almost everyone who works on a design team.

**game environment.** Game environment is an area specifically designed to enable gameplay.

**gameplay.** What the player does and how he or she interacts with the game while playing it.

**game-treatment document.** Document that explains the vision of the game in greater detail than the high-concept document.

**Gantt chart.** Chart that displays the project broken down into tasks and subtasks, length of time assigned to each task, and tasks that must be performed before other tasks are identified.

**genre.** Major category of video game gameplay.

**gold master.** Disc containing the perfected final game that is used as the original from which all other copies will be made.

**governing game design document (GGDD).** Design documents that contain all of the concept elaboration information and are more detailed than the pitch documents.

**graphical user interface (GUI).** Buttons, icons and other graphics that are needed to work the game interface; how the user will send and receive information with the computer.

**hard skills.** Technical abilities a person possesses.

**high-concept document.** One-page overview of the basic idea for your game.

**indie.** Term to describe a company that is small and considered to be independent or outside of the traditional gaming business.

**iteration.** Different version.

**jailbreak.** Altering a smartphone's operating system to allow greater control over the device.

**leave-behind document.** Document that stays with the publisher after you have made your presentation as a reminder of your proposal.

**limited liability company (LLC).** Hybrid of a corporation and a partnership; also called *limited liability partnership (LLP)*.

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**limited partnership.** Partnership in which at least one of the partners is just an investor and does not participate in the running of the company.

**magic circle.** How the rules and game environment create structured play.

**milestone.** Critical point of achievement.

**over budget.** When more money is spent than was allowed for the project.

**partnership.** Agreement between two or more people to open a business together.

**patch.** Software installation program that fixes known bugs or damaged programming.

**piracy.** Illegal copying or distribution of copyrighted material such as a video game; a form of theft.

**pitch document.** Document used to sell a game idea to a video game publisher or the decision makers at a game studio.

**platform.** Device on which a game will be played.

**playability testing.** Testing to check if the level difficulty is appropriate for a human player, make sure the story flows, and verify that objectives can be achieved.

**porting.** Converting a game from one platform to another.

**post production.** Testing, tuning, and distribution.

**preproduction.** Concept elaboration and prototyping.

**production.** Stage at which specialists such as artist, programmers, sound engineers, and other team members build all of the parts for a game and put them together to create a fully functioning game.

**project evaluation and review technique (PERT) diagram.** Diagram that maps milestones for a project and the estimated completion time for each milestone.

**proof of concept.** Main function of a prototype; shows that the concept can work.

**prototype.** Very basic version of the game to test that the concept can be constructed.

**provisional approval.** Approval has been given to start the project, but only to a point before additional approval must be obtained to finish the project.

**quality-assurance (QA) team.** Team that does functionality testing and playability testing continuously to find and report all the errors in a game.

**ready to market (RTM).** When all testing and tuning are complete, the game is finalized.

**reseller marketing.** Publisher allows someone else to sell its game.

**retail marketing.** Boxed game is shipped from a manufacturing point and travels through several other points before reaching the customer.

**rules.** State how a game is to be played, what is allowed, and what is not allowed.

**soft skills.** Personal qualities and behaviors, such as punctuality, teamwork, and attitude.

**sole proprietorship.** When a single person opens a business.

**stock dividend.** Amount of money paid to the owners of the company stock as their portion of the profits made by the company.

**stockholder.** Person or company who has purchased stock in a corporation.

**subroutine.** Group of code within the main game program that controls a segment of the overall program function.

**target market.** Who the game is intended to appeal to most.

**technical bible.** Binder filled with all of the programming structure for a game.

**themes.** Subcategories of gameplay within a genre.

**title.** Each video game in a publisher's library.

**toy.** Item that does not have all three components of a game and is, therefore, not a game.

**triple-A game.** Game that generates a large portion of a game studio's sales.

**tuning.** When a game is polished to perfection.

**unique selling point (USP).** What makes your game different or unique from other games; also called *unique selling proposition*.

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**victory condition.** What it takes to win a game.

**video game publisher.** Company that oversees the entire process of bringing a video game to the retail market.