GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

1

GDD

- A game design document defines everything in your game
  - The one-sheet
  - The ten-pager
  - The beat chart
  - The game design document

2

STEP 1: THE ONE-SHEET

- Game title

- Intended game systems

- Target age of players

- Intended Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) rating

- A summary of the game's story, focusing on gameplay

- Distinct modes of gameplay

- Unique selling points

- Competitive products

ESRB RATINGS

- eC (Early Childhood)
- E (Everyone)
- E10 (Everyone 10+)
- T (Teen)
- M (Mature 17+)
- AO (Adults Only 18+)

4

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

- Unique selling points (or USPs) are the "bullet points" found on the back of the box.

STEP 2: THE TEN-PAGER

- The ten-pager is a design document that lays out the spine of your game.

PAGE 1 – TITLE PAGE

- Game title
- Intended game systems
- Target age of players
- Intended ESRB rating
- Projected ship date

7

PAGE 2 – GAME OUTLINE

- Game story summary
- Game flow

PAGE 3 – CHARACTER

- Age, sex, and other dossier-style backgroundmaterial can go here . . . as long as you feel this information does your character justice.

PAGE 4 – GAMEPLAY

- Start with the gameplay and detail how the sequence of play is presented.
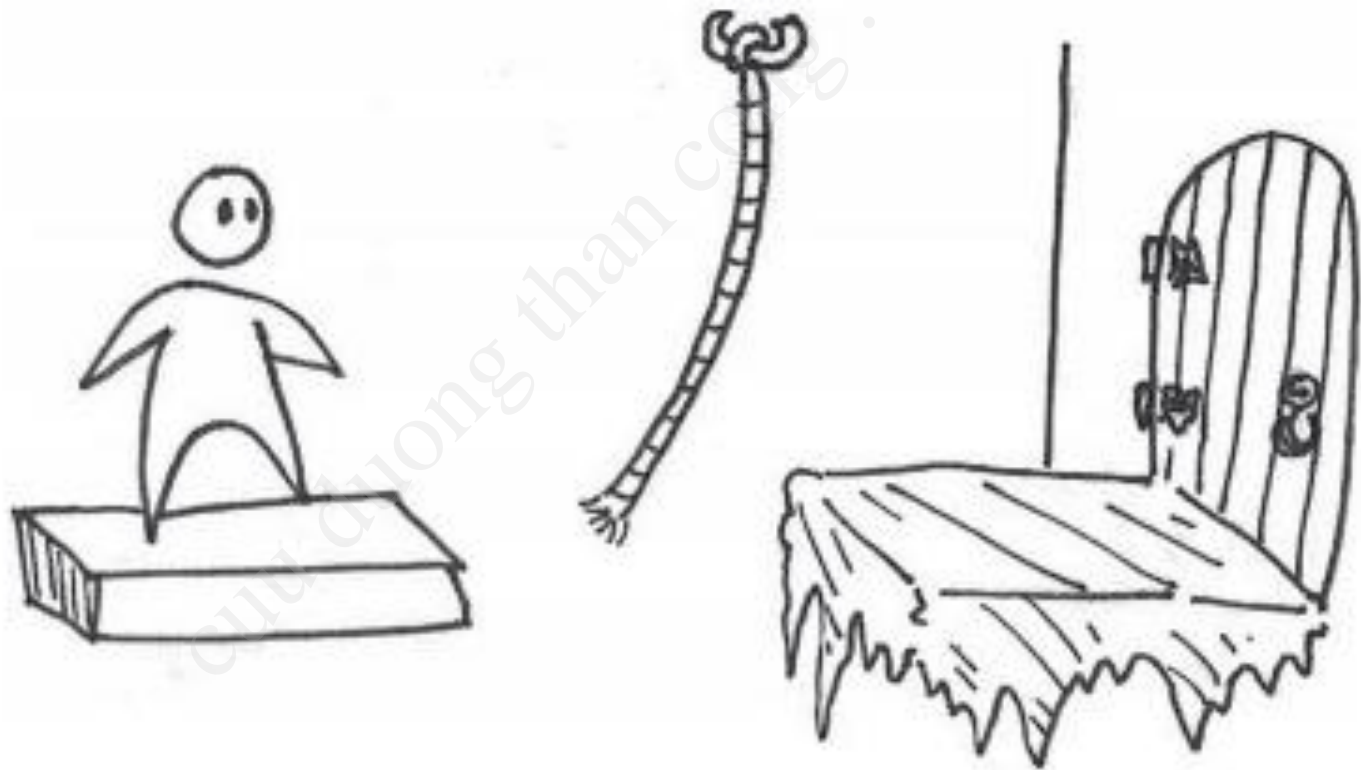
PAGE 5 – GAME WORLD

- Present some images and descriptions of the game world

PAGE 6 - GAME EXPERIENCE

- What do players first see when they start the game?

- What emotions/moods are meant to be invoked by your game?

- How are music and sound used to convey your game's feel?
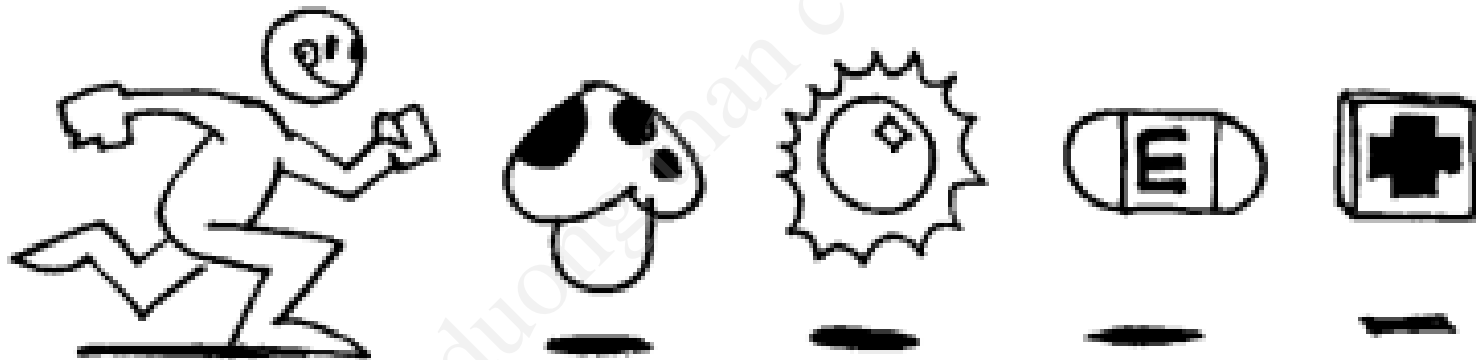
- How do players navigate the interface?
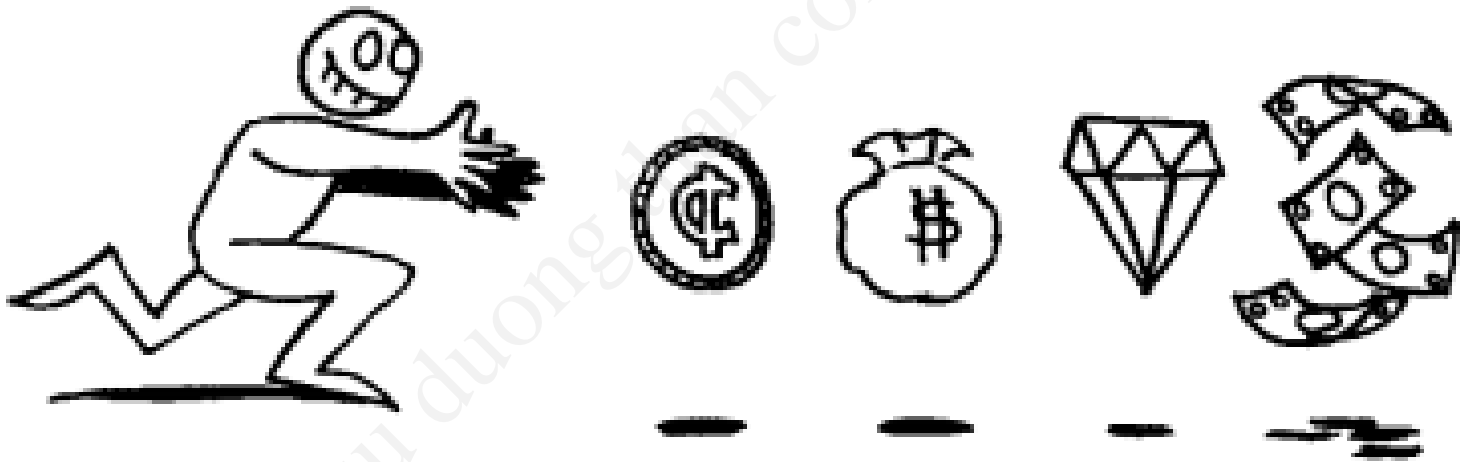
PAGE 7 – GAMEPLAY MECHANICS
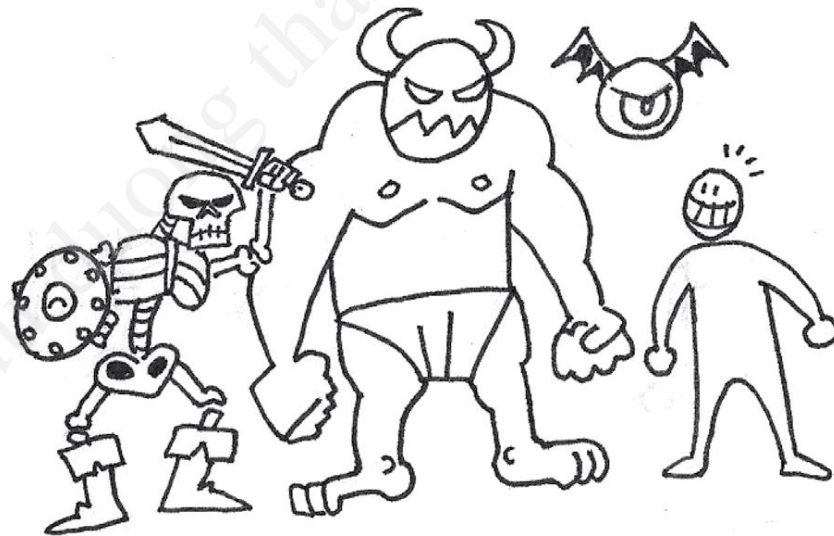
PAGE 7 – GAMEPLAY MECHANICS

PAGE 7 – GAMEPLAY MECHANICS

PAGE 8 – ENEMIES

- Enemy character = hazard + AI
- Boss character >> enemy character

PAGE 9 – MULTIPLAYER AND BONUS MATERIALS

- Bonus materials
- Unlockables
- Achievements

PAGE 10 – MONETIZATION

$$$

STEP 3: GAMEPLAY PROGRESSION

- Players start from ground zero with no skills, gear, or abilities.

- Players have several skills that are presented to them at the beginning of the game but have to be unlocked over time.

- Players have several skills but have no knowledge of how to use them yet.

- Players have significant power that they can use immediately only to lose it after a boss fight or initial confrontation.

- …

STEP 4: THE BEAT CHART

- Level/environment name
- File name (level/environment designation)
- Time of day (in context of the game)
- Story elements for level
- Progression: gameplay focus of the level
- Estimated play time of level
- Color scheme of level/environment
- Enemies/bosses introduced and used

STEP 4: THE BEAT CHART

- Mechanics introduced and used
- Hazards introduced and used
- Power-ups found in level/environment
- New abilities, weapons, or gear unlocked
- Treasure amount and type the players can find
- Bonus material found in level/environment
- Music track(s) to be used in this level/environment

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

- Storyboards
- Diagrams
- Animatics
- The beat chart
- The team wiki

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

- Table of contents
- Revision history
- Game goals
- Story overview
- Game controls
- Technological requirements
- Front end
- Attract mode
- Title/start screen
- Other screens

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

- Game flowchart
- Loading screen
- Game cameras
- HUD system
- Player characters
- Player skills
- Player inventory tools
- Power-ups/state modifiers
- Health
- Scoring

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

- Rewards and economy
- Vehicles
- Major characters in story
- Gameplay classifications
- World overview/level select/navigation screen
- Universal game mechanics
- Game levels
- General enemy rules
- Level-specific enemies
- Bosses

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

- Non-player character
- Collectibles/object sets
- Minigames
- Music
- Sound

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

#LIVING THINGS

STEP 5: THE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

#COMMUNICATION

NOTICE

- A good idea can come from anywhere.

- Make a decision and stick with it.

- Update often.

- Talk to your teammates.

- Tackle the tough ones first.

- Trust your instincts.

- Respect the abilities of your peers and be mindful of their limitations.

- Save often and always.

- Stay organized.

- Be prepared.