

# Production tasks for the coming week

- Create a game concept document.
- Play a paper prototype of the game.
- Discuss tools to use.
- Make a development schedule.

# Tim Ryan's game concept document

[http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan\\_02.h](http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan_02.h)

- Introduction (a few lines)
- Background (optional – other relevant information)
- Description (describe the game to the player as “you ... experience, do etc...”)
- Key features (what stands out)
- Genre
- Platforms
- Concept art (perhaps)
- !Target group

# Make a paper prototype, play it

- (Perhaps while making the concept document).
- Look in *Game Design Workshop* for guidelines.
- Focus on learning from the paper prototype: What works, what doesn't? What do you know, what don't you know?

# Discuss tools

- What tools are you familiar with?
- Can they do what you want?

# Make development schedule

- Follow the readings for next time.
- Suggestion: Make a formal plan, but implement critical stage analysis.

## Typical Tips

- Dependencies should be clear, and everybody must know. ("Lisa cannot make the level before Laura has finished the editor.")
- Break down tasks into 0.5-2.0 day sizes.
- Everyone on the team must feel it is *their* development schedule. "Ownership".
- It is OK to change the schedule, if it helps ownership. Everybody should believe in the schedule at all times.
- Team members should report ASAP when they are over time. Note why it slipped.
- Minimize iteration time: Changes should be quick to implement.
- Let each team member estimate the time for their own work.
- "Glue" takes time: Putting the graphics into the engine, making backups, hunting for bugs. Assign this as tasks.
- Plan time for unforeseen issues. Less familiarity with tool or task = more unforeseen issues.

## You must do this:

- Have a Wiki with the current schedule and documents.
- Use CVS or SVN so everybody has access to current files.

# Readings for February 23

- "Scheduling and Budgets" in *Game Design and Development*.
- Birdwell, Ken. "The Cabal: Valve's Design Process For Creating *Half-Life*". Gamasutra, December 10, 1999.  
[http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991210/birdwell\\_01.htm](http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991210/birdwell_01.htm)
- Hamann, Wolfgang. "Goodbye Postmortems, Hello Critical Stage Analysis". Gamasutra, July 27 2003.  
[http://www.gamasutra.com/resource\\_guide/20030714/hamann](http://www.gamasutra.com/resource_guide/20030714/hamann)  
(registration required)

## Optional reading:

- Read a few postmortems of games. How did their schedule work? What can we learn?  
[http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/article\\_display.php?category=5](http://www.gamasutra.com/php-bin/article_display.php?category=5) (registration required)