Free Video Game Idea Book

Adam Jeremy Capps

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For the opportunity to help with creating a great game.

Also as my resume for any game making career.

Introduction

I can't program a game. But hopefully you can. I will give you my best ideas here for a new game. Or to make an old one better. I'll even throw in future possibilities for game makers. This book will become old, and hopefully they will have become possible.

I'll cover the best _method_ the best _things I can teach you_ in your game making approach. I'll begin with I'll cover the things that make a good game. Then I will cover different ways that ideas are used- like how a character jumps or uses in-game money. Afterward I will give you ideas you can use in making new games. ND whatever good things I can write about concerning video game creation will also be written about.

My ideas here are free to use. With or without credit. With or without profit. And keep in mind that this is a public domain book. I don't good it under copyright. So please share my book. Maybe we can get some great new games made together.

My biggest interest is retro gaming. So maybe this book is better for older game styles. But often they go hand in hand. I am very often online watching all forms of it. Whether it be news, play through videos or just listening to music from them. As well as reviews of old games, top ten stuff, hacked video games and remakes, etc.

It's a great community- _the best._ A very large one, too. You'll find a large piece of the internet revolves around it. People eager to talk about old games. To share their ideas, and so on. I invite you into it if you have not yet given it much consideration.

And may your game turn out very well and you have a lot of fun in creating it.

You can read this book randomly if you like until you've digested it fully. It is a short book that doesn't have to be read from the first page to the last. And thank you for reading!

Part One: An effective philosophy of game making

Some precepts, instructions, and advice:

The best games are simply those that are fun and involving. Fun and involving should be key words for what you are creating.

Cloning a game should be done as better in a different way.. not just shadowing it.

Consider how the best games have evolved. While the first in the series was thought of as a great game, the second or third may have outdone it a great deal.

Think into themes. The best stories have come from the same pieces, just pieces put together differently.

Games should have good controls. Not frustrating ones.

The best music composers for games have taken obscure music and reformed it into their own music. Its just the inspiration that the best composers have.

You don't have to go from beginning to end when making a game. You can work on things as they come along later tying them together.

Compare games to each other. Like one old fighting game to the next that took it's place in popularity. It's never one that was just a pure rip- off clone. They did it "differently better."

Some games are just copies and they appear as ugly siblings to the gamer.

Many things have been done and redone over and over in video games. They will *always* work good in any game however they are in it, like the use of money. Some ideas can't get any better, it seems. And so don't feel you have to be totally different. Those things have stood the test of time and will always be things the gamers want in their games.

A good story is going to take the most work. If it is just glanced over in it's creation then you'll not have made a game that can compare to those that have. Some games are successful and have remained so just based on that.

Are you having trouble with knowing where to start? I would say begin by making something simple, gain a talent at it, and move onto bigger things. You might have questions like "its not for the latest going system, so I don't want to bother." Or you find it easy to make a game for a much older platform, but that platform is obsolete. Actually because of the size of the retro gaming community and things like emulators, re-releases of older systems either as clone systems or mini versions, these concerns shouldn't be.

You don't have to know how to program with code. There is software that lets you put games together, with an interface and this-with-that kind of approach. Many of them are good software's, too, letting you make just what you want too.

When you look at the first game to the third game in any gaming era, for 8 bit, 16 and so on, using the same hardware they have multiplied the quality of their

games. They were certainly good at taking an old game and making it much better.

Try to keep things simple. Keep it tangible for you. Know what it is exactly what you have done and are doing.

You might consider uniting two or more games and this is the best approach. Again, the best ideas are those that took what was there before and put it all together in a better way. So if there is any meditation for a game creator it is to think in terms of themes.

There are good effects and graphics that are easily come by given some consideration and tricks. Music too and things. With limited possibilities from older hardware these had to have been come up with.

Do what you can to pull the gamer into the reality of the game.

Good games gives the gamer the sense that *there is another place/world over there that I can't go to yet* (so wants to) and *there is going to be things in this area that I can't get, that are better than what I currently have* (so is invested.)

Can give the gamer a break from playing—giving theme a little bit of cinematics or story telling. Tell them where they came from and how that lead them to where they are. Give them an idea of progress.

Don't over text the gamer with forced pauses and such to read them. Give it as much as can be assimilated and no more.

Don't be too unfair. Too unfair would be like forcing the gamer to take a bit, and couldn't prevent it.

One game that has you re-routing yourself in different areas does well by making each area important but another would have you going out of your way to backtrack for little or nothing. Yet if you don't backtrack your character will die.

Don't be discouraged if your game doesn't immediately reach great success. There is a lot of competition. But there are many looking for hidden gems in the retro going community. My advice is to advertise it wherever you could.

Be cohesive. I'm sure there are a lot of things that people like to eat but to put it together in a soup could taste awful. Or you could relate this to a person whose clothes match up terribly though individually they are good shirts and shoes and stuff.

Replay ability can be very important. With just a little change one level isn't beaten one way but also another. One level being played twice just for that. And even a flag pole at the end makes the level just a little different each time.

As they expect the game to go let it be. As if every new element wasn't expected the gamer would have no idea of what's going on.

Some games were just too plain to have become successful. All the player did was strike and move forward. Least of all was strategy in them. No diversity really. And not even the platforms were ever different.

Ask yourself how you can include one thing in *your* game the best more than how it did well in other games.

Avoid over working something as though things must be perfected. They can't be and that approach is like a painter that's never done, ruining what was at one time a good painting.

And some changes just don't matter enough to bother with. Try not to "split hairs."

I've seen some very fun 2D games made by individuals but the graphics ruined them. They couldn't quite know how to make trees and things. They probably didn't practice. Drawing on paper is one thing, drawing on a grid is another.

What lights the fire? What sends the wind? What drowns in water? What keeps afloat?

The best items are sometimes a box of survival tools. The player collects these to proceed safely across.

It should be about what the player wants, not what the game wants.

The questioned has often been asked: how do we combine different styles? Styles such as platforming with overhead views, or with a 3D perspective, sometimes with *pseudo* 3D. But I've never found these to work well. But you, perhaps, can find the way.

The player should really have the sense that there is an interesting town over there. To be given a good look of a town and places especially with limited graphics.

The player should fall in love with every place they go to.

Be cautious that one thing can make or break the game. The game could be wonderful yet it controls terribly.

There are a lot of sources to pull from. According to what you are creating you can read about old myths, cultures and their gods, ancient weapons and lifestyles, as you choose.

Ask yourself *why isn't this ever in a game?*

Find a good way to have the buttons used in a game. The most revolutionary games are those that innovated upon their uses. Not *just* new gamepads, but new uses of them in gameplay. I guess you could assign the color green to button x, for example.

When in doubt look at life itself and the world. It has a lot to say.

You can include biographical/auto biographical things in your game.

Ideas can be taken from history, from the Egyptians to the Romans, the Romans to the middle ages. Or the Dark Ages and the baroque.

They've often tried to change an old idea into a better thing, but to this day people prefer HP and MP and leveling up over variants of it. Good ideas never die.

The game carriage can be made in such a way as to give 32 bit power to an 8 bit system!

It's hard to guess what will become standard. What new things are popular that weren't before. What new things resurface with much praise. Or if innovation will ever be continued.

Some innovation comes too cheaply to be appreciated. Like giving an old character a cartoon look.

Let your imagination be active and fruitful.

There are a *lot* of ideas around the Tarot that can be used. How these interpretations of each card are broad and applicable in real life lends them well into the life of a game.

Don't lay out all the cards on the table. Mystery is very involving. We want to know what is ahead. We want answers to these things that are hidden in mystery.

Variety is important. Take one area and make it it's own thing. Take steps up and around having the player interested in searching things out and discovering them.

To get the gamers attention is important. Things that put them to sleep or bore them are bad. Tell them things they will remember. Have a "wow" factor. Astonish, dazzle. Perplex, sort out.

It is like Jack and the beanstalk when in a popular game the character climbs up onto one onto a cloud with gold coins. They play the flute and a tornado takes them into a new land.

Somethings may seem entirely bizarre yet work very well in a game. Kind of like in cartoons. Things that not at all appear in real life. Or things in real life that are

given life, like a ball and chain. But they are kind of charming, a mushroom making you large?

You may find it very helpful to just draw and scribble on paper to come up with ideas.

Look into the opinions of others regarding games that are popularly considered either good of bad. They'll tell you what makes a game either good or bad.

Is it an acquired taste?

Don't feel as though you must cover all things right off the bat. That's what part two and three is for.

You can provide a lot of chaos as long as you give the player an ability to sort it out and reform it with a natural skill.

It can be a political affair as long as you teach the gamer what they need to know in order to fit themselves into it.

Playing as a new character is a frequent thing done in sequels. You may have one or two characters to play as but before the series ends they have created many new ones for you. They are good contrasts to the original player on many cases.

Then there are those times the character gains it's opponents power. To conquer them is to learn a trick of some kind or to take their spoils.

Added value is when slight things are added to pre existing things. It makes them a little different, a little better than before.

Atmosphere is rain in the environment that may come along with tension. Or when night comes in the game. It could be a swamp. It could be a forest with fairies and light gleaming down. My advice is to set the mood.

Frustration can lead to dedication especially if they are sure they can achieve with enough practice.

Part Two: Frequently Uses Ideas (the best of them.)

With them pick one or another according to what you think is best.

And in all of these think of what you can add to them if you can't find just the one you want:

The player wakes up in a new bed. Or a temple. Or a grave. Or a save point.

The player gets a treasure chest. Or a ball from a statue, or an item dropped by an enemy. Or buys it with in game money. Finds it. Steals it. Earns it. Is given it. Smashes a block, it comes out.

The money/coins buy a new armor, sword, ring, shield, herb. The money buys a weapon of some kind. The money buys a revival from the dead. The coins give you more life. The money is used in auction. The money gets you various items. Gives you faster transport. Cures and heals. Gets you spells. Brings you help.

An over world and an under world. A dark and light world. A devastated world. A moon world. A heavenly world. A world of hell. Under water. On a mountain. In a cave. A dungeon.

An item to continue. A favor. A note given. Permission given. Responsibility to continue. A needed air ship. A train, a car. A raft. By conquering an enemy blocking the path. Magic to continue, the right spell. Buying your way through. Collecting pieces, putting them together.

Jumping on an enemy. Striking or shooting one. Casting a spell on one. Barging right into them. Throwing something at them.

Collecting coins, bananas, special coins, keys, dots, parts.

Food gives you extra health. A herb does. A tent. An inn. Certain accomplishments. A heart.

And certain things give you extra power. Just a dot. A heart. A ring.

The book or scroll gives you new magic. A wand does. A sword or other weapon. Or a spirit. AP. Or by leveling up.

A character dies. A character joins. Changes. Betrays you. Turns out related. Becomes stronger. Does different things than the others. Has new talents, ones needed. Becomes good. Turns bad.

Eight enemies to defeat. Eight gems to collect. A certain amount of crystals to find. The most powerful sword.

A hidden race. A hidden castle. A hidden level. A hidden item.

Transport by flue. By pipe. By item. By air. By beast. By boat. By vehicle. By foot. By raft. By thing on ground. By vine. By moving platform. By cloud.

Bonded by responsibility. By kinship. By shared interests, responsibilities, relation, by fate, by desire.

Rescuing a princess. A friend. Another's friend. Any who are victimized. A race of people. A mistreated being. A kingdom.

Limited time to leave an area. Limited time to beat a level. Limited time to defeat an enemy. Limited time to accomplish something. Limited time before nightfall.

Bonus given for quickness. Bonus given for defeating an enemy. Bonus given for searching more carefully. Bonus given for more fullness. Bonus given for side tasks. Bonus given for help.

Becoming quicker. Being stronger. Becoming more resistant, more immune. Jumping taller. Striking harder. Lifting heavier things. Noticing things better. Becoming more able. Reaching further with newer items.

Fishing for items. Slashing for items. Breaking for items. Finding them in book shelves and wells. Digging for items. Climbing for items. Swimming for items. Saving for items. Talking for items. Store for items. Homes for them.

The platform falls. The platform moves and twists. It hinges. It tips. Is a rainbow beam. Is on a chain. You turn on it in circles. You bounce on it. You are shot out from it. It fades away. Gets bigger, smaller.

There are stairs. There are balconies, rooftops, there are walls, there are gates, and there are tree branches. There are hills, corridors, doors, and rafts taking you over water. There are missteps and some steps are better than the others. Safe places, dangerous places, but wealthier ones.

Non playable characters that are soldiers, or friends. Helpful with advice or items. Reclusive ones, crazy ones. Defiant ones, and ones with a lot of personality that you may find throughout the game.

There are trees and herbs. Flowers and plants. Hills and mountains. Rivers and oceans. Castles and towns, cities and the moon. Dungeons and singular homes. Bridges and caves. Fields and forests. Tombs and graves. Pits. Wells. Other-worlds.

There are games that effectively turn the simple into an entertaining experience. Paper routes, the organ trail, finding San Diego. Point and click games of lesser and greater complexity. Some are very illustrious. A great idea matters a great deal.

The enemies overtake the world politically, through magic, using a powerful item, one that is mystic, or formidable. They gather crystals of power, or they defy the gods and do what was warned against by those who know. Sometimes they were just simply born to take over. Being a greatly powerful being. Sometimes they cheat their way into power. Sometimes they inherited a kingdom of great power and decide to take everything else over.

Boss enemies are often creatures of some kind: dragons, monsters, serpents, spiders. They can also be something .ore of a beast than a creature. They can even be robots. They shoot beams, spit fire, jump onto you, and attack in many different ways. They have weak spots. They are sometimes very difficult to defeat, but much easier given practice.

There are very plain areas. There are areas once plain like home, but something bad happened there. There are rainy areas, dark areas, spooky places, gloomy places, social places, mysterious places. Try not to make any one area the "plain" kind.

And there are areas that would feel risky for the player. There are some that feel sacred, some that feel safer than others. There are some that truly make the player feel as though they've stepped into a new world. And what once was may change.

There are boss enemies that are normal compared to others. The normal kinds are just a regular monster you could say. The others are like an evil group of dolls, a demon wall that inches forward requiring you to quickly beat it. They change forms and such too making them better than just ordinary opponents.

Items can be glamorized to an extent. They can be gotten normally, just by coming across them. Or more difficultly gotten. They may have required puzzles to be solved or things brought together that were far dispersed. And the setting behind getting them could be enchanting like a sword in the Stone in a forest kind of way.

There are countless things an item can do. Far more than just slashing it shooting. They can be used musically, they can give you further reach. They can rock and

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