IMGD 1001:
Brainstorming Your Game

Outline

- ☐ Motivation
- ☐ Intro to brain storming
- ☐ Exercises

Motivation

- ☐ Building a game (or doing *anything* interesting) is tough!
  - ■ That's why you are here? ;-)
- ☐ Need to wrap your mind around the problem
  - ■ Divide and conquer: split the problem into manageable parts
- ☐ Iterate multiple times
- ☐ Build team ownership
  - ■ Ownership = commitment
- ☐ This process is done at multiple levels, usually with different people involved

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High-Level Process: Brainstorming

- ☐ Start with a vague notion, and go from there
- ☐ Move towards concreteness
- ☐ Don't throw away ANYTHING!
  - ■ There are no bad ideas
- ☐ Write down every idea (on **Post-it** notes, a flip-chart, whiteboard, etc.)
- ☐ Don't make judgments on quality at this time
- ☐ MAIN IDEA:
  - ☐ Everyone should feel free to contribute

High-Level Process: Prune the Tree

- ☐ Now the group should have all ideas out there on **Post-its**, a whiteboard, etc.
- ☐ First, remove anything obviously irrelevant, but be CAREFUL!
- ☐ Now remove or combine redundant things

High-Level Process: Draw Relationships

- ☐ Now draw charts for each of the remaining things
- ☐ There are many solutions, so you will need to iterate

High-Level Process: Validate the Design

- Go through each object *in detail*, and verify that it meets all the requirements

Gamestorming Process

- Come up with a one-sentence description of your game
  - This is tougher than you think!
- Use free association to generate ideas
  - No culling!
  - Use **Post-It** notes
- Group related ideas together, consolidate
  - Move the **Post-Its** around
  - Set aside unused ideas (might revisit them)
- Drill down through iteration

Gamestorming Drill Down

- Perform this process at a high level, then
- Same for…
  - …the STORY in your game
  - …the STRUCTURE of your game
  - …the ART in your game
    - Visuals/sound/"look and feel"
  - …the INPUT CONTROLS of your game
- Generate a timeline for when each thing will get done
  - Assign a team member to the task

Exercise 1: Do Now!

- 15 min: Intro/Style/Story
- 15 min: Art/Sound/Tech
- 10 min: Discussion

Exercise 2

- *Mario Super Smash Bros Brawl*
  - *List 6* favorite characters
  - Group yourselves by favorite characters
- Now, you want (or need) to add an additional character!
  - But consider a 2d version (like would be made in Flash)
- Brainstorm
  - Phase 1: Think of all possible characters, features, characteristics, needed tasks (5 minutes)
  - Phase 2: Group/Prune/Tree (5 minutes)
  - Phase 3: Discuss as a class (5 minutes)

Do you have…

- A feeling of how complex this is?
- Goals?
- Main mode of interaction?
  - Button-masher, platformer, etc?
- Motivation for the player?
- Humor?
- Violence?

What Next?

- Go home and do the same thing in much more detail for your assignment
- This should be fairly formal
  - Read through the examples
  - Don't write like you speak
  - Include appropriate visual support
  - Be thorough, ITERATE!
- Software may help
  - E.g. checkout xmind, www.xmind.org

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