

MAS.490: Introduction to Game Design

Problem Set #9

Due November 14, 2002 at 3pm. Send problem sets to orwant@media.mit.edu.

1. For this problem set, you will design a sports game. So that you're not unduly influenced by currently existing games, we'll invent our own. The sport is "cow tipping", which means running into cows so hard that they fall over.

Like fishing, this is a fundamentally repetitive activity, so if your design is bad, the game will be boring. Don't be boring.

Your job is twofold: first, to convince a game publisher to invest millions of dollars to develop this game; second, to ensure that your design gives the project lead enough information to divide up the game into tasks that a project lead can parcel out the tasks to both artists and programmers. Unlike previous designs, I won't ask you specific questions about your game, but here are some broad questions to get you started.

- What are the rules of cow tipping? That is, not the rules of your game, but the rules of the sport that your game is a rendition of.
 - How will players score points? Yes, yes, by tipping over cows, but is that the only way? Are some cows worth more than others? Are there hazards to be negotiated? Does the way in which the cows are tipped affect the number of points?
 - Are there levels to your game, and if so how are they distinguished in gameplay, appearance, and sound? Is the game winnable?
 - Who will the player be competing against? Other players? The cows? Farmers? The clock?
 - How will first-time players learn how to play?
 - What are some special maneuvers that advanced players will learn? What are some different strategies that players will develop?
 - Will there be different games within the game (e.g., a tournament mode) and if so what are they?
2. For your final project, you'll be creating a *complete* game design (but not implementing it). You'll be storyboarding the game, creating visuals (which professional artists would then render into compelling art); you'll be writing pseudocode for the AI; you'll be writing the instructions for the manual that would be distributed with the game, and more.

But you don't have to do that yet. To begin, write a cover letter for your game: several paragraphs of text that set the theme, title, and genre. Your game must be substantially different from any existing game.