



The basic principles of Level Design

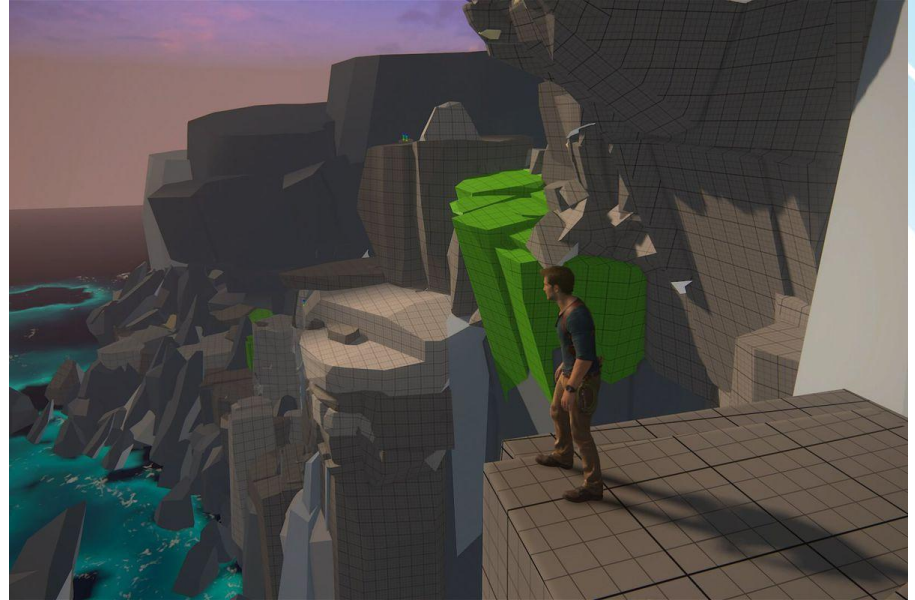


Who Am I?

- Creative Director at Freesphere Entertainment Ltd an independent studio based in Warrington.
- 10 years plus video game industry experience.
- 4 years working in the written press for Inside Mac Games & Mac Gamer HQ.
- 7 plus years as a designer on 6 released titles.
- Started working on Necropolis Suite in March 2021 and have since grown the products visibility and the team to support it.
- WAGames host, The Level Design Lobby contributor & speaker in education.

Scaling

- Import a scaled correctly test character in the editor.
- Use this a point of reference for scaling your world and its content correctly.
- Learn to work in METERS.



Landmarks

- Showing landmarks can be used as foreshadowing for an objective/quest.
- These are usually locations in your world that stand out visually.
- Can help orientate the player in the world.
- Framing is important when showing a landmark as you can hint to the path.



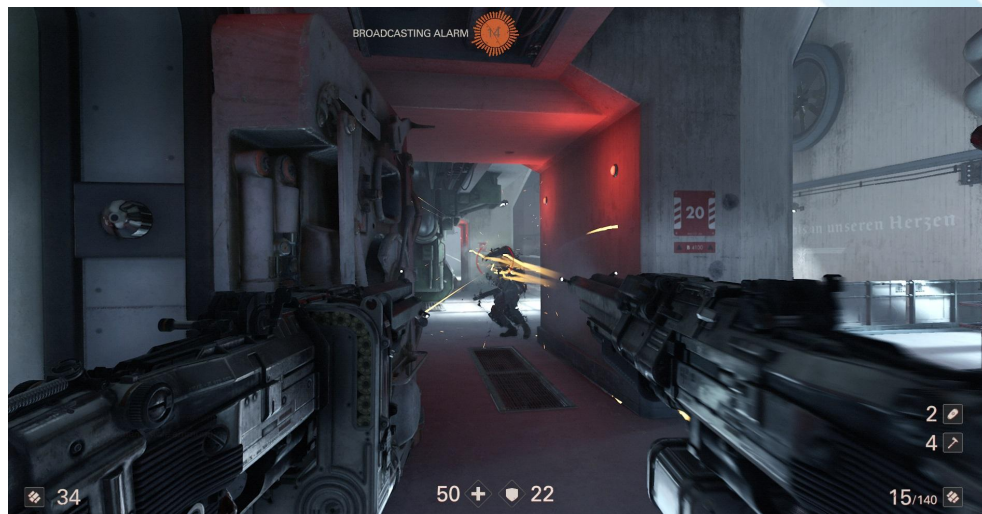
Lighting

- Guide the player.
 - ◆ Exit(s)
 - ◆ Path Guides
 - ◆ Enemy introduction
- Highlight important areas.
 - ◆ Brightly lit areas for objectives or resources.
 - ◆ Darkness for stealthy players.
- Lighting helps set the tone for an area.
- Be sure to use this in your Blockouts.



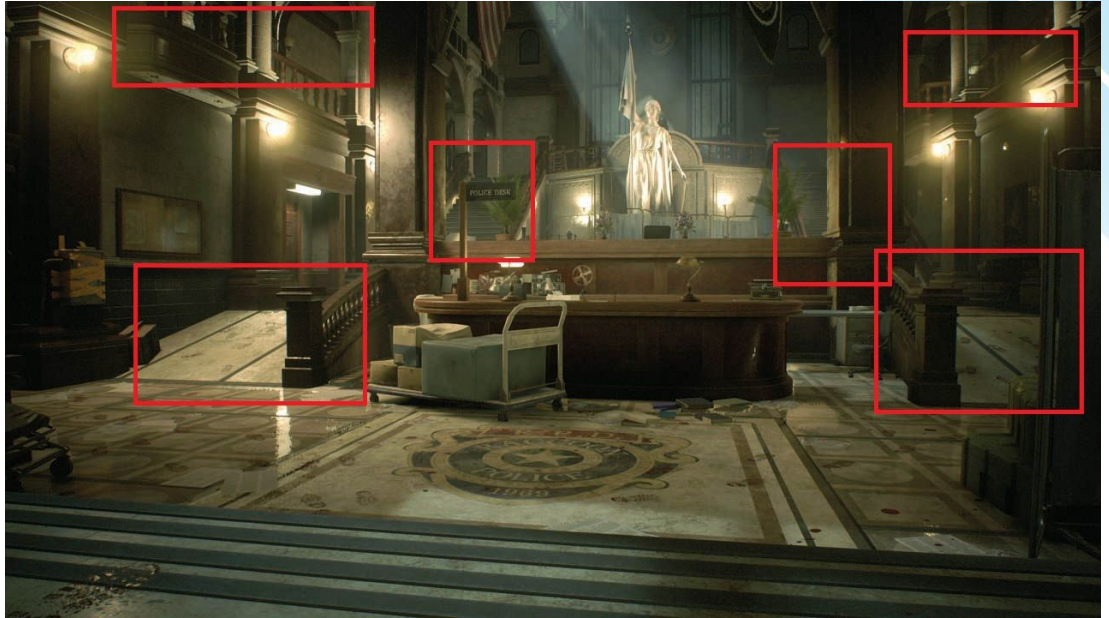
Colour Theory

- Can help create the mood of an area.
- You can use colour to draw the players attention.
- Use it to make your level easier to read.
- Work with artists to find a consistent palette.



Symmetry

- The use of symmetry is a great tool to help the player understand a space very easily by making it quick to read.
- Can be used to draw attention to a goal.
- Using too much symmetry can get the player(s) lost - mazes!



Signage

- Signage placed throughout your game world is a great way to guide a player to their objective.
- Using real world signage is a good way to communicate with the player.



Environmental Storytelling

- We don't always have to tell the player what is going on in the world. We can use environmental storytelling to do this for us.
- Can be used to communicate with the player on a subliminal level.
- Contextual to the narrative and theme of your level.



Multiple Paths

- Supporting multiple pathways to an objective is a great way to encourage the player to explore your world.
- Offers great agency to the player.



Vertical Lines

- Vertical lines makes you look up.
- Horizontal lines makes you look across.
- Diagonal lines makes you look up and out.

Use them together to guide the eye.

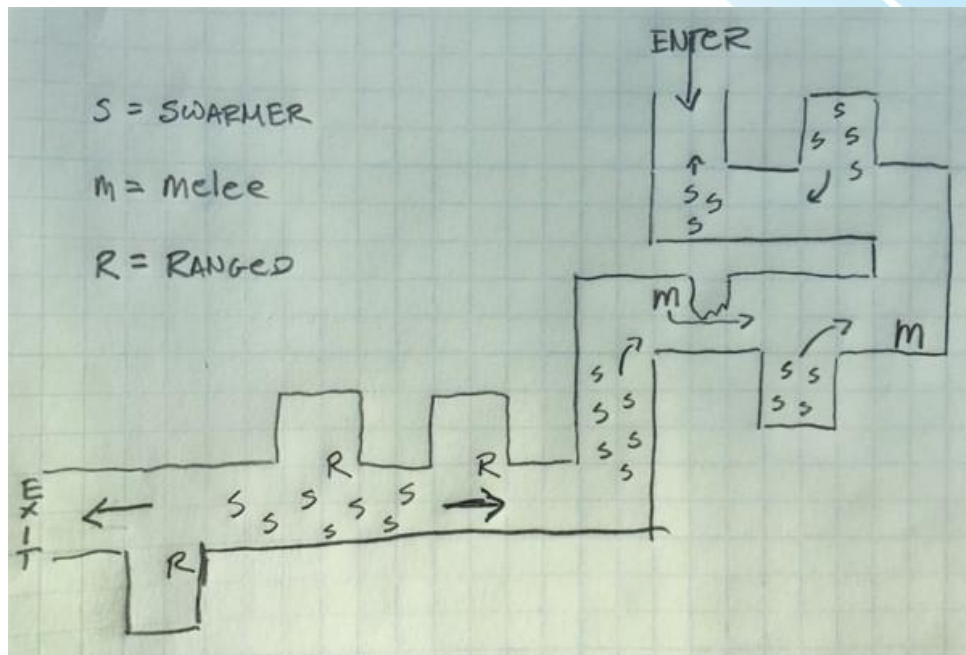


Research! Research! Research!



Paper Design

- Quickest way to mapping out an area.
- Easiest way for your team to visually understand progression through a map.
- Quick iteration.
- It's only a guide, level design is an iterative process.

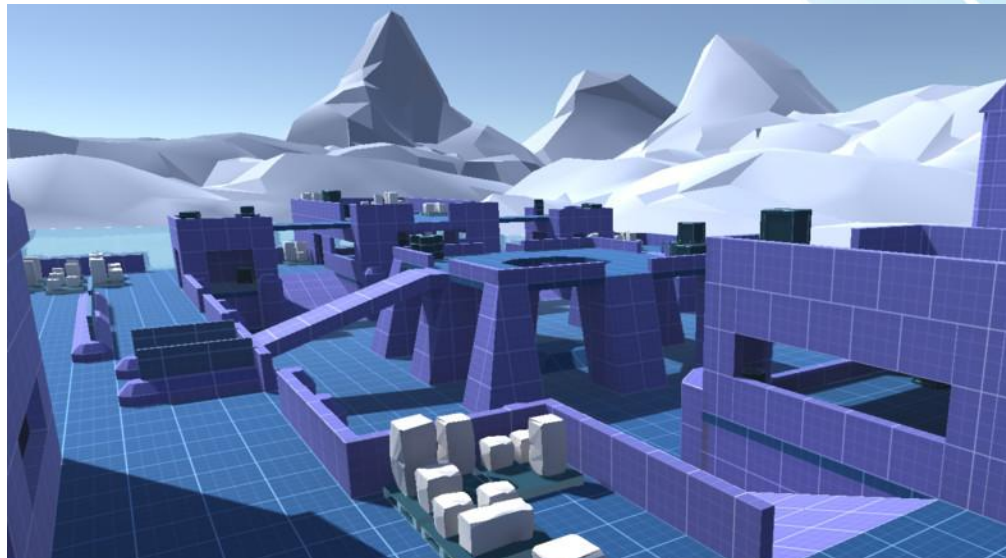


Blockout

After paper designs comes blocking out in 3D using basic shapes.

- Speed
- Quick iterations
- “Feel”
- Scope
- Setting up interesting scenarios for the mechanics of your game.

All techniques explained in previous slides could be used here.

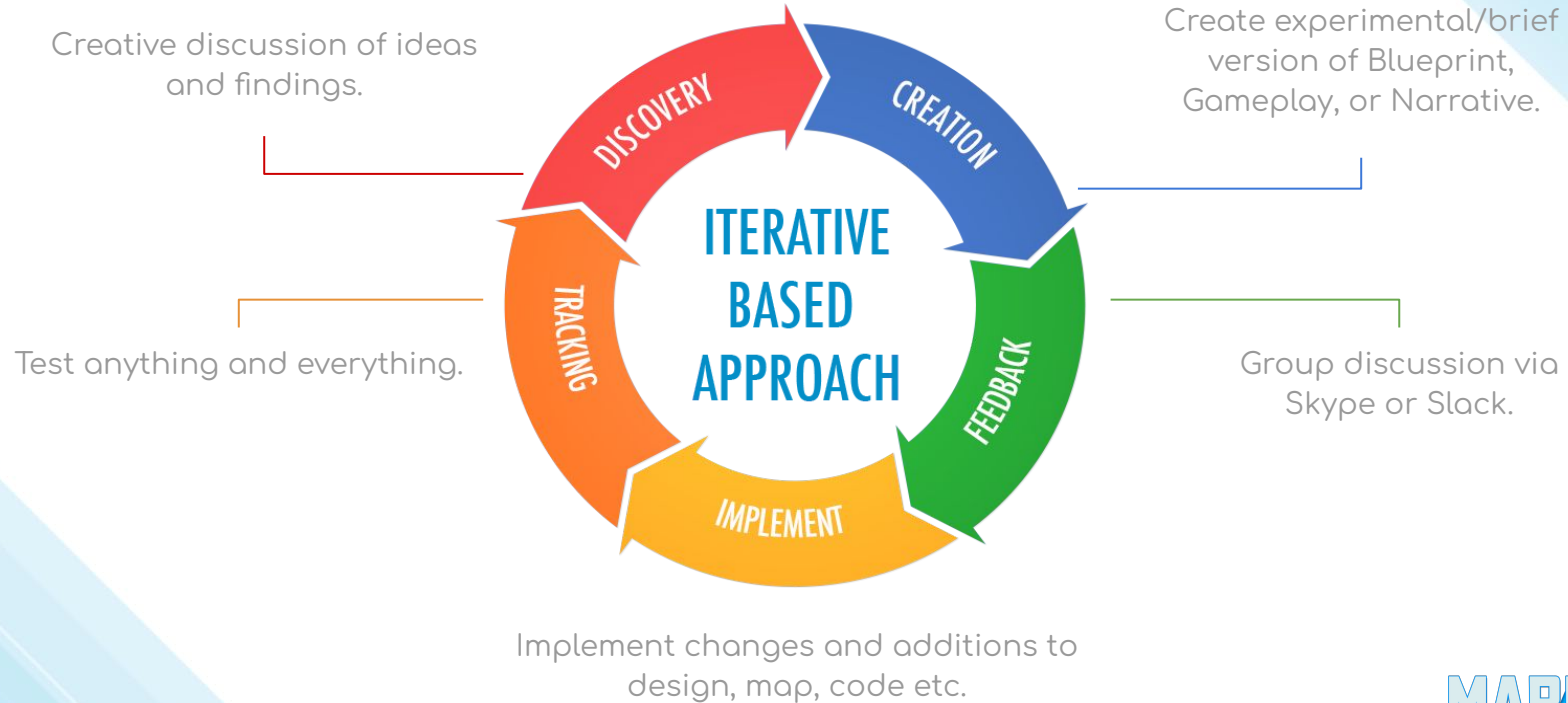


Get People To Play Your Level

- It's never too early to ask people to play your level.
- Without critical feedback how do you know you're on the right track?
- Stand back & watch see how players interact with the level (take notes).
- Refrain from force guiding players during play test. It's not telling you anything.
- Listen don't speak (no backseating).



Iterative Life Cycle



Thanks for Reading

Thank you for reading, if you have any questions you can reach me at [@markgregory](https://twitter.com/markgregory) on Twitter & Instagram.

