

ALKAID

Profound Misunderstanding
Process of Design Document

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1.0 Problem

1.1 Problem Overview

Create a Concept Document for a game.

- Unique Platform Adventure hybrid.
- Combat.
- Graphical style.
- Environment.
- Target Audience.
- Mechanics.
- Characters.
- Enemies.
- Story
- Controls

1.2 Problem Tier One

1.2.1- What makes a platform game?

- Before deciding on a genre, the group need to identify popular, successful and innovative platformers throughout history and detail their core components.
 - [Go to Research Tier One \(2.1\)](#)

1.3 Problem Tier Two

1.3.1- Combat

- The group chose to analyse the notion of combat within several different games in attempt to pick out commonalities and also to identify any unique takes on combat.
 - [Go to Research Tier Two \(2.2\)](#)

1.4 Problem Tier Three

1.4.1- Graphics

- In order to develop a graphical style for the game, it is necessary to gain an understanding of some of the graphical styles currently in use.

1.4.2- Environment

- The overall setting of a game is crucial to player immersion. With this in mind the group decided to investigate game environments.
 - [Go to Research Tier Three \(2.3\)](#)

1.5 Problem Tier Four

1.5.1- Decide on the platform

- In order to choose a development platform that best meets the needs of the game, research must be conducted into the current generation consoles on the market.
 - [Go to Research Tier Seven \(2.8\)](#)

1.6 Problem Tier Five

1.6.1- Focus

- It is necessary to narrow down exactly what the focus of the game will be. How will the city be implemented on the intended platform?

1.6.2- Finalising the overall direction the game

- Having looked previously at the notion of combat and its implementation, it was necessary to define exactly what path the actual gameplay would take. Would it feature guns and other weaponry? From here the group could begin laying down the mechanics.

1.6.3- How will graphics apply?

- What visual style will the game take? How will the graphical style affect gameplay?

1.6.4- Target Audience

- Before moving any further it was necessary to finalise who would actually be playing the finished game in order to establish the direction the game would follow.
 - [Go to Research Tier Eight \(2.9\)](#)

1.7 Problem Tier Six

1.7.1- Mechanics

- The group now had enough information gathered from prior research to start implementing how the various parts of the game would function and interlink.

1.7.2- Mechanics: USPs

- Since the group had elected against the inclusion of traditional weaponry, there was a need to devise an alternate means of allowing the player to overcome adversaries.

1.7.4- Characters

- The group needed to define and develop some of the characters that would reside within the city.

1.7.5- Enemies

- Enemies would play a key role within the game and tie in to the USPs.

1.7.6- Story

- Story was largely secondary to developing the gameplay aspects and was implemented at a late stage.

1.7.7- Controls

- A control map was required for the intended platform to give an indication as to which buttons were mapped to various actions.
 - [Go to Synthesis Tier Seven \(3.9\)](#)

2.0– Research

2.1 Research Tier One

2.1.1– What makes a platform game?

- Games are categorised into different genres based on their content.
- By modern videogame standards, the very term “genre” is subjective, with so many titles now hybridising their core components the very term “genre” can be considered archaic.
- The group began by attempting to define the nature of “genre” within the scope of video games, and then expanding this to the “platformer” genre.

- **Definition of Video game “genres”**

“Video games are categorized into genres based on their gameplay interaction.[1] Thus, genres are based on "underlying similarities rather than their superficial visual or narrative differences".[1] On the other hand, there is a general lack of commonly agreed-upon genres or criteria for the definition of genres. Within game studies there is a lack of consensus in reaching accepted formal definitions for game genres, some being more popular than others.”

Definition of video game “genres”. [Online] Available from: <
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_genres > [Accessed October 31 2008].

- **Definition of platform game / platformer**

“Platform game, or platformer, is a video game genre characterized by jumping to and from suspended platforms or over obstacles. It must be possible to control these jumps and to fall from platforms or miss jumps. The most common unifying element to these games is a jump button.. Platform games originated in the early 1980s, and 3D successors were popularized in the mid-1990s. The term itself describes games where jumping on platforms is an integral part of the gameplay.”

Definition of video game “genres”. [Online] Available from: <
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platform_game > [Accessed October 31 2008].

- The next step was to investigate successful and innovative platformers throughout history.

2.1.2- Rocket Knight Adventures

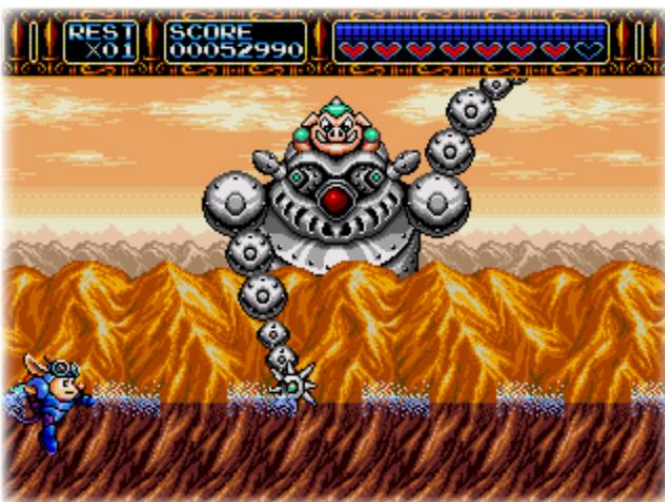
- Release: May 1993
- Platform: Sega Mega Drive/Genesis
- Players: 1
- Developer: Konami
- Publisher: Konami
- USP: Jetpack allows player to gain huge height advantage to scale otherwise impassable terrain.



- A varied array of environments and challenges are hurled at the player
- Flight-only sections allow for spontaneous variety to core platforming gameplay.
- Levels allowed the player to proceed through the background as well as the foreground.



- Detailed 2D sprites illustrate the importance of humour in character and enemy design.
- The pig enemies, once defeated, are stripped of their clothes and try to escape in a cloud of smoke.



- Featured both traditional side on platforming, swimming, jetpack-only flying sections and even one-on-one gigantic robot duels.
- Enemies' facial expressions change after scoring a hit against the player.
- Huge bosses impede the player at several points throughout each level.

2.1.3– Dynamite Headdy

- **Release:** August 1994
- **Platform:** Sega Mega Drive/Genesis
- **Players:** 1
- **Developer:** Treasure
- **Publisher:** Sega
- **USP:** Varied power-ups, detailed backgrounds, and spectacular bosses.



- There is always a lot going on in the background.
- The game was packed full of secrets that could easily be missed, fulfilling these conditions rewarded the player with “secret bonus points”.



- Innovative power up system consisted of changing Headdy’s head into various themed objects – hammers, bombs etc.
- This worked well due to the appealing design of the characters and larger than life boss characters.



- The game neatly sidestepped stereotypical jumping by allowing the player to attach Headdy’s head onto various pieces of scenery and pull his body toward it

2.1.4- Flashback – The Quest for Identity

- Release: July 1993
- Platform: Multi-platform
- Players: 1
- Developer: Delphine Software International
- Publisher: US Gold
- USP: Action / Adventure platforming hybrid.



- Levels are spread over a series of different planets, allowing considerable variety in the locales the player could explore.
- Graphically impressive, screen-by-screen puzzle/platform/action hybrid.



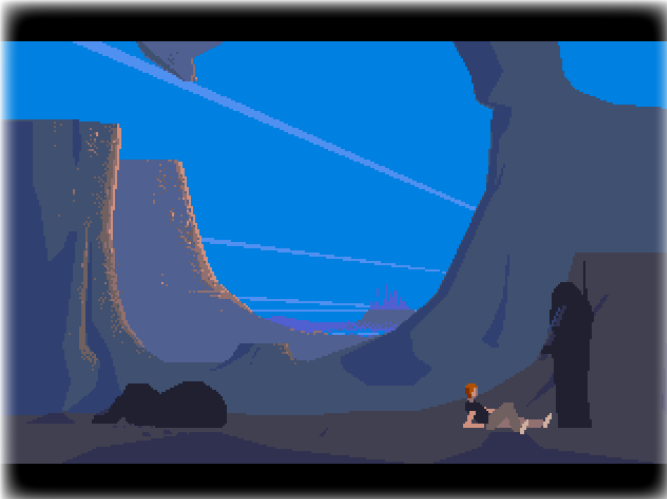
- Traps such as landmines and fire litter the levels.
- No weapons are allowed during particular sections to encourage intuitive thinking.
- Enemies had different modes of movement/attack. Each requiring a different response from the player/



- Rudimentary FMV sequences are sprinkled throughout to help advance the overall plot.

2.1.5- Another World/Out of this World

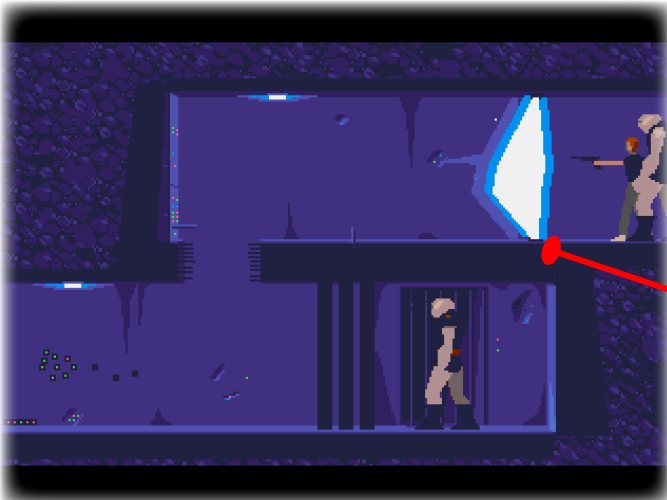
- **Release:** 1993
- **Platform:** Multi-format
- **Players:** 1
- **Developer:** Eric Chahi
- **Publisher:** Console versions published by Virgin Games
- **USP:** Action / Adventure platforming hybrid featuring strong puzzles, highly stylised graphics and an intuitive approach to the genre.



- Levels are spread over a series of different planets, allowing considerable variety in the locales the player could explore.
- Similar to Flashback - graphically impressive, screen-by-screen puzzle/platform/action hybrid.



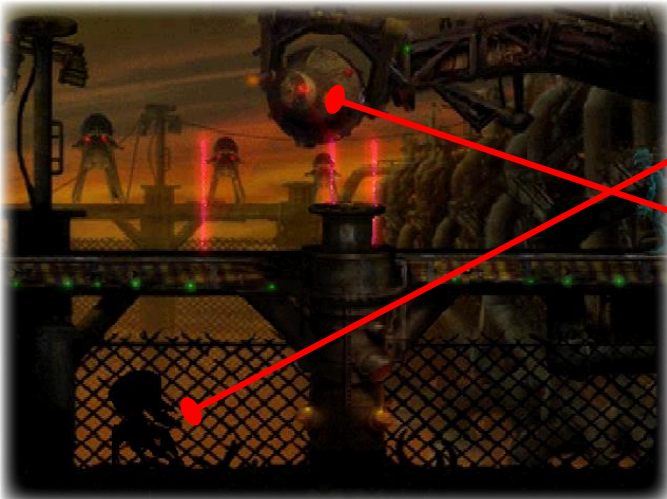
- Interactive environment, the player can leap and grab for this vine to evade his attacker.
- Context-sensitive controls.
- Player must navigate through an expansive alien world.



- The gun had several different functions to encourage the player to think outside the box. It was able to fire standard shots, project a defensive barrier to shield the player or destroy scenery.
- Shown here, where the player destroys a door that impedes progress.

2.1.6- Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

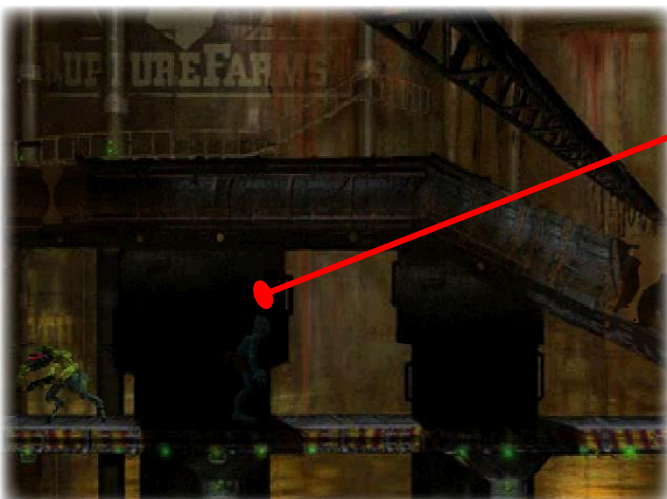
- Release: September 1997
- Platform: Playstation 1
- Players: 1
- Developer: Oddworld Inhabitants
- Publisher: GT Interactive
- USP: Possession allows the player to take control of his enemies/ GameSpeak allows the player to interact with particular NPCs.



- Intricate puzzles and varied obstacles for the player to overcome.
- Unique graphical style and overall approach to the genre.
- Full use of both background and foreground planes. (These foreground motion-detecting lasers are projected from the background plane.)



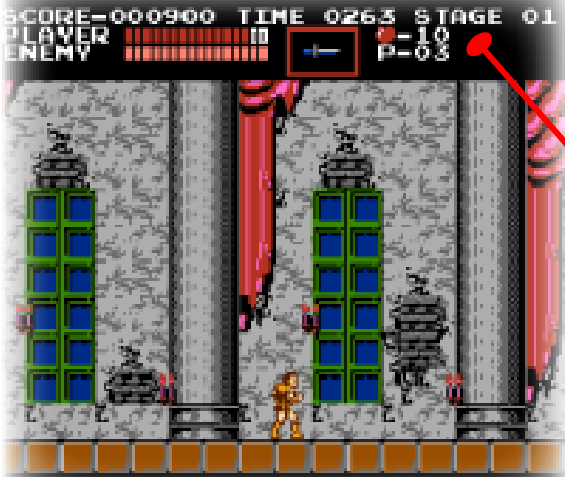
- "Gamespeak" feature allows player limited communication with NPCs of the same race.
- No weapons except grenades.
- Focus is on the player using their environment to outwit adversaries. For example, this switch operates the meat grinder. The grinder descends on whoever is beneath it. The idea is to lure foes underneath the grinder.



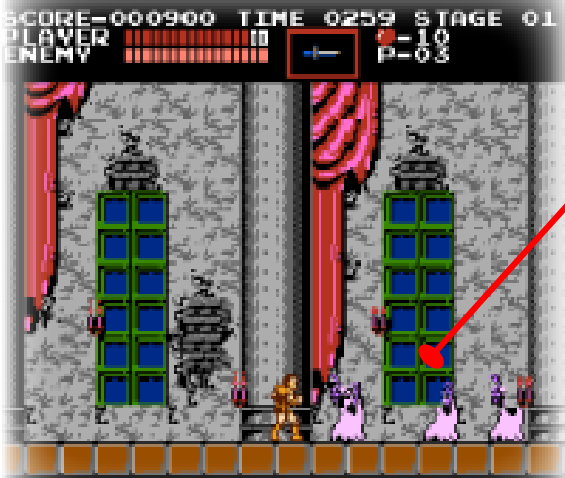
- Considerable depth within 2D space.
- Darker, shadows areas of the environment are used to hide from enemies.
- Player can use elements of foreground scenery for cover when enemies in the background shoot at them.

2.1.7- Castlevania

- Release: September 1986
- Platform: Nintendo Entertainment System
- Players: 1
- Developer: Konami
- Publisher: Konami
- USP: Action / Adventure / RPG / Platforming hybrid.



- Castlevania games tend to be kind of an open world, (i.e. not separated into selectable levels like Mario) with exploration as a significant feature.
- All the player's stats, such as health, time, score, stage and number of hearts, as well as his enemy's health are located at the top of the screen.



- High number of enemies
- Most enemies are simple and just walk or rush at the player, and can be dispatched quickly with his whip.
- Defeating an enemy, or even destroying a destructible object such as the candles, will reward with a random item, like a heart or a weapon.

2.1.8- Mario Bros

- **Release:** 1983
- **Platform:** Arcade / Nintendo Entertainment System
- **Players:** 1-2
- **Developer:** Nintendo
- **Publisher:** Nintendo
- **USP:** One of the first platform games created



- The idea was to defeat all of the enemies during a phase.
- As the game progressed, more enemies appeared on screen.
- Enemy movement and appearance rates increased exponentially as the player progresses.
- Defeating enemies and collecting coins, awarded additional points would be added to the player's score.
- Enemies were not directly attackable. Enemies had to be kicked to be defeated, and could only be kicked after being flipped over.
- One way to flip an enemy over was to jump and hit the platform they were walking on. This flipped them over for a short duration of time.
- Another method was to jump and hit the POW box. This would cause all enemies to be flipped. But it could work both for and against, as enemies that were already flipped would be flipped right side up.
- Mario Bros. is about avoiding enemies and using indirect attacks to incapacitate them, ie: using the environment to your advantage. Going all out on attack is not a viable method. If an enemy is heading Mario, the best course of action is to turn the other way and attack them from underneath or head for the POW box.

2.1.9- New Super Mario Bros

- Release: 2006
- Platform: Nintendo DS
- Players: 1-2
- Developer: Nintendo EAD
- Publisher: Nintendo
- USP: Modern outlook on the original Super Mario Bros. games, major Nintendo DS platform game



- New Super Mario Bros. is the latest instalment in the Super Mario Bros. franchise and it mixes classic elements with some new ones.
- There were vast and varied types of enemies, power-ups that would help Mario and Luigi on their adventure and enthralling boss fights.
- Graphically a lot of the game is in 3d, but plays like a 2d platform game. Even the map is a mix of new and old, with it being in 3d, but being reminiscent of map from Super Mario Bros. 3.
- The game utilises an overall progression map/chart to chart player progress. It also shows the player score, stored power-ups and lives.
- The objective is to play through a level, collecting coins and defeating enemies.
- Worlds will have multiple varied levels with a boss mid way through and at the end.
- Mario has an expanded repertoire of combat abilities borrowed from the 3d Mario games, such as Ground Pound and the Mario Tornado.
- The only real use of the touch-screen is to select stored power-ups, and bring them onto screen.
- The game is a perfect example of old school platform games existing in the modern market. Although the popularity of the platform genre has decreased in recent years, (especially 2d ones) it is clear they can still sell.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier One \(3.1\)](#)

2.2 Research Tier Two

2.2- Combat

- The group chose to analyse the notion of combat within several different games in order pick out commonalities and also to identify any unique takes on combat. By doing this group aim to pin down whether or not to include combat within the game.

2.2.1- Combat: Devil May Cry 4



- DMC combines gun and swordplay into a sleek interface.
- Combat is flashy and beautifully visceral.
- Player can use the new “Devil Arm” feature to grab enemies who are either near him or at a distance.
- This grants the opportunity to jump into the air, grab an enemy from below and toss them continuously onto the ground.



- “Style Points” measure how successfully the player can chain their attacks together.
- “Devil Trigger” mode enables the player to become godlike and deal additional damage when engaged in battle against larger foes or when surrounded by tough / hard to reach enemies.
- Devil Trigger state is managed by a separate “health bar” giving the player the indication of how much devil power he has left, before Devil Trigger/Bringer Mode is diminished.



- Devil Trigger state is managed by a separate “health bar” giving the player the indication of how much devil power he has left, before Devil Trigger/Bringer Mode is diminished.
- Juggle enemies using bullets/projectiles.
- Vast arsenal of guns to choose from to allow various styles of combat.
- Intuitive combat: overall fighting style can be changed on the fly using the direction-pad, with a different style mapped to each direction.
- Player can choose how he wants to develop; he can spend points on guns, special moves, empowering equipment, etc.

2.2.2- Combat: Mass Effect



- The combat in Mass Effect is real-time, meaning that the player can give orders to team mates without the use of stopping the actual battle
- The player and his team mates use various weapons which are modifiable with various upgrades purchased and picked up throughout the game.



- Players can use a variety of tech abilities which can interrupt/disrupt enemy vehicles and weapons, players also have “Biotics” to fight their enemies.



- There are many races and types of enemies – aliens with reinforced skin and regenerative capabilities, and androids weak to electricity/hacking abilities.
- Players can take direct control over their characters actions and states as well as their team mates’ attacks, but not their movements, but the player can issue orders using the D-pad.
- The abilities available to the player are determined by the skill sets assigned at the beginning of the game and many experienced points have been allocated over the game.
- The player accesses these abilities through a overlaid menu which pauses gameplay until the player chooses an action.
- Some of these special abilities include a psychokinetic lift that can be used to pick up and throw enemies and objects, and a tech ability which reduces the shields of enemies.



- The environment also comes into play, with the player able to duck behind pillars and crates to evade enemy attacks.
- Barrels can be targeted to release explosions of plasma, flames etc against enemies.
- The player can pause the game and change their weapons and their equipment used by the team members.

2.2.3- Combat: Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee



- The player does not have any type of hit points, so if the player is killed by an enemy he dies instantly. If the player dies he re-spawns at the beginning of the level.
- At certain key points in the game the player gains the ability to turn into the Shrykull, a supernatural demigod. With the ability, the player can vaporise everything on screen, but only once before needing to recharge via another key event.



- "Possession" is the player character's ability to take control of enemies in the same screen by chanting. As Abe doesn't carry any weapons, in order to successfully eliminate enemies the player was able to turn their own weapons against them.
- The downside of "Possession" is that the player becomes immobile and vulnerable to incoming attacks, when the player regains his own body, the enemy's body bursts into pieces.



- "GameSpeak" is one of the core abilities in OddWorld. At the press of the button the player's character will speak out a short phrase that can be used to direct allied NPCs or issue other commands.



- Enemies in the game primarily consist of Sligs, semi-robotic creatures armed with automatic shotguns. Sligs can be possessed by the player who can then control the Slig and utilises its weapon. Sligs cannot see in dark shadows.
- There are several other races with unique traits and behavioural patterns.
- Since the player has no weapons per se, he must use the environment to his advantage. Leading the enemy into traps, and activating a switch when the enemy walks in the trap's effective range.

2.2.4- Combat: Donkey Kong Country



- Tag-based gameplay.
- Two characters which the player can switch between by pressing the “tag” button.
- Each character can only take one hit from an enemy, before being sent out of play.
- When both characters are out of play the game ends and the player loses a life.

- Each character has their own strengths.
- Donkey can slap the ground and unveil secrets, as well as defeat stronger enemies.
- Diddy is a fast and more athletic.
- Various pickups can grant the player extra life points.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier Two \(3.2\)](#)

2.3 Research Tier Three

2.3- Graphics

- In order to choose and develop a graphical style for the game, it is necessary to gain an understanding of some of the graphical styles currently in use across several platforms.

2.3.1- Realistic: Resident Evil: Deadly Shadows on Nintendo DS



- Depending on choice of console, realistic may or may not be a good choice.
- On the Nintendo DS, realistic graphics cannot truly be achieved due to its lack of power.
- The texture resolution and model quality is relatively low.

2.3.2- Realistic: God of War on Sony Playstation Portable



- The PSP and Wii are capable of stronger and more convincing realistic graphics.
- Realistic graphics on PSP and Wii are passable but under close scrutiny are nowhere near perfect.

2.3.3- Realistic: Uncharted: Drake's Fortune on Sony Playstation 3



- The 360 and PS3 are the strongest consoles technically, and they can portray realistic graphics to a much higher standard.
- Games typically feature highly advanced lighting and shadows, married with high resolution textures for models/scenery.
- The graphics do not look perfectly realistic, but with some smoke and mirrors they come very close.

2.3.4– Cel-shaded: Zelda: Wind Waker on Nintendo GameCube



- The Legend of Zelda – The Wind Waker on the Gamecube is perhaps one of the better-known cell-shaded games.
- There are many variants within the remit of cel-shaded visuals.
- Each style is distinct, helping to create a memorable game experience.

2.3.5– Cel-shaded: Eternal Sonata on Xbox 360



- The best example of cel-shading in gaming is probably Eternal Sonata, on the Xbox 360.
- The power of the 360 has allowed developers to push cel-shading to the next level - looking almost like a hand drawn picture.
- Emotive facial expressions matching / surpassing realistic visuals are entirely possible.

2.3.6– Cel-shaded: Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne on PS2



- The Shin Megami Tensei series boasts a distinct style of cel-shading, one which goes a long way in setting the mood of the game.
- Dante's surprise appearance in Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne demonstrates the increasing viability of cel-shading.
- With photorealism becoming achievable, cel-shading is fast becoming the graphical style of choice for developers seeking to move games in a new direction.

2.3.7- Cel-shaded: .hack//G.U Vol.1//Rebirth on Sony Playstation 2



- Many Japanese RPGs have adopted a cel-shading style to closely mimic that of animes.
- This style is extremely effective in portraying emotions such as anger, as seen in this screen.
- Due to the break from realism, highly stylised character designs are possible.

2.3.8- Cel-shaded: Zelda: Phantom Hourglass on Nintendo DS



- Cel-shading is not just limited to home consoles.
- Both the DS and PSP have cel-shaded games.
- The Legend of Zelda: The Phantom Hourglass and Viewtiful Joe both showcase cel-shading as a medium on portable consoles.

2.3.9- Cartoon style: Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island on SNES



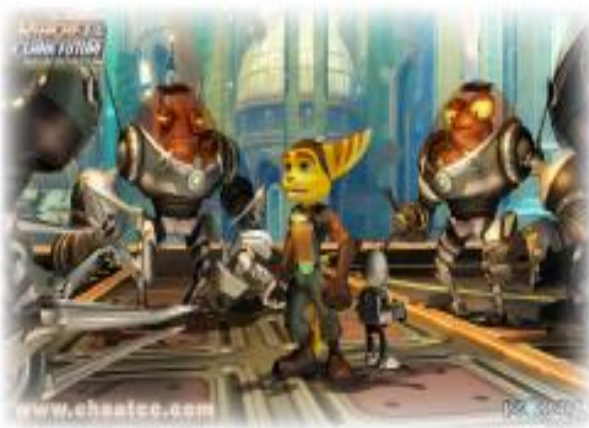
- Instead of aiming for mimicry of real life, each game is graphically unique.
- Emphasises fun factor through amusing visuals and unique characters.

2.3.10- Cartoon style: Super Mario Galaxy on Nintendo Wii



- It is easier to make a game with cartoon graphics look great than it is to make a game with realistic graphics, as shown in Galaxy's vivid game world.
- Proportions of characters/environments don't have to look correct or even be physically possible

2.3.11- Cartoon style: Ratchet & Clank: Tools of Destruction on Sony Playstation 3



- Cartoon graphics allow the artists to employ their own artistic flair to the graphical style.
- This style doesn't have to try and mimic/recreate real-life, which can be a difficult task.
- This in turn allows for more abstract and memorable character/enemy designs as seen in Ratchet & Clank.

2.3.12- Abstract style: Vib Ribbon on Sony Playstation 1



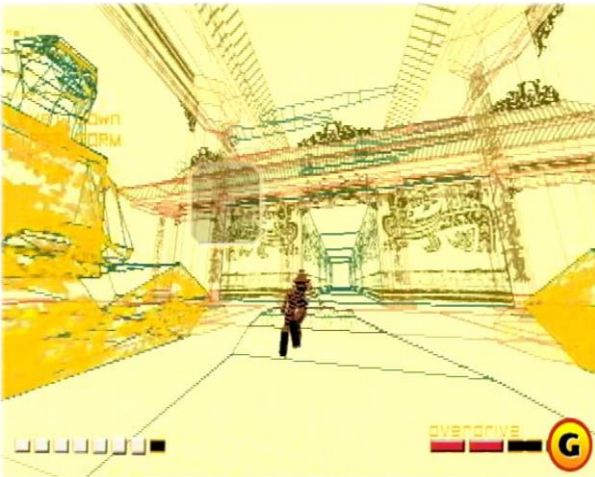
- Deliberately simplistic graphics which emphasise gameplay.
- The graphics are dynamic - the white line that the player travels along is stable when the player performs well, and becomes unstable and wobbly if the player performs poorly.
- The player character also undergoes a similar transformation dependant on player performance.
- Generated considerable hype around its release due to unique graphics.

2.3.13- Abstract style: Okami on Sony Playstation 2



- Okami is known for its watercolour painting style graphics, itself a subset of cel-shading.
- The game looks like a form of art by itself.
- The abstract/unique art style sets the game apart from its closest competitors.

2.3.14- Abstract style: Rez on Sony Playstation 2



- Rez's graphics epitomise insanity.
- Both meaningful and meaningless simultaneously.
- Immediately draws the player in simply because it's a break from the norm.

2.3.15- Abstract style: MadWorld on Nintendo Wii



- An avant-garde graphical style that emphasises bloodletting.
- The game is immediately memorable due to its graphical edge.
- Marries the simplistic nature of comic book style with the Wii's controls to produce a unique experience.

2.4- Environment

- The overall setting of a game is crucial to player immersion. With this in mind the group analysed various game settings and environments, taking note of not only their visual appearance, but also the overall tone and mood of the game world.

2.4.1- Happy / Upbeat – Zelda / Sonic the Hedgehog



- Generally these environments bear little threat to the player.
- Environments usually consist of grassy plains, hills and mountains, dotted with trees or other foliage.
- Promote a relaxed feeling within the player.



- Can be used for giving the player a sense of freedom.
- Any emotional response is likely to be player-instigated rather than inherent to the environment.

2.4.2- Real life – Resistance



- Aim to recreate real-life places to a particular degree of accuracy.
- Can also potentially court controversy, as with Resistance: Fall of Man.

2.4.3- Tension / Fear inducing – Silent Hill



- The familiar location of a town is used to introduce the player to the game.
- Fog is used to mask the sinister enemies that stumble around the streets.



- The environments are threatening, and become increasingly hellish & oppressive as the player progresses.
- Darkness also plays a key role in furthering the pervading air of menace, allowing for the introduction of dynamic user-directed lighting.
- Lighting, such as the flashlight can be used to give the user a sense of direction and limited sense of safety.

2.4.4- Fantasy - .hack//G.U



- Fantasy worlds cover a broad spectrum.
- They can take whatever form the creator envisions and can be tailored to fit any mood.
- For example, .hack G.U featured a bustling central hub for players to interact in.
- Later games in the .hack G.U series introduced “player killing” into safe, hub areas to turn established rules on their head.



- Commonly used to facilitate swords and sorcery settings.
- Effective for giving the user a sense of scale, with sprawling castles and cities spread out before them.
- Useful for creating mystical worlds that make the player want to explore.
- Escapism is most usually associated with fantasy worlds, particularly RPGs.

2.4.5- Sci-Fi / Futuristic - Mass Effect



- Demonstrates an idyllic picture of the future.
- Immense scale of structures within the “Citadel” inspires a sense of awe.



- The introduction of alien species allows for considerable variety in architectural design.
- Use of water provides a sense of familiarity to the player in this strange city.
- Water also provides impressive reflective effects.

2.4.6- Post-apocalyptic - Fallout 3



- Post-fallout city.
- The devastated urban environment immediately draws upon the player’s survival instinct.
- “Raiders” that roam the wasteland promote a dog-eat-dog mantra within the game world.



- The ferocity of enemies and the harsh environment inspire the need to become better than others within the game world.
- Might makes right theme within the game world.
- A “tooled up” and fully equipped player is their own proponent of self satisfaction within the game world.

2.4.7- Post-apocalyptic – Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne



- SMT:Nocturne was based in post-apocalyptic Japan, with its ruined cities now populated by demons fighting for power.
- Featured both real world locations and buildings, mixed in with surreal architecture.
- The game world drives the player to become stronger.



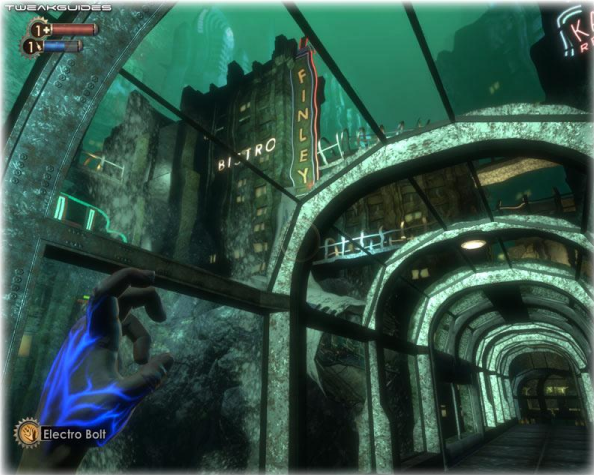
- The crippled cities and rampant anarchy make the player feel insignificant in the grand scheme of things.
- The harsh environment was married to the game's steep learning curve, but by overcoming these difficulties players had a greater sense of achievement.

2.4.8- Cityscapes – The World Ends with You



- Competently reproduced and portrayed a stylised version of the Japanese shopping district of Shibuya.
- Interesting methods of handling and displaying many separate NPCs across the DS screens.
- The familiar setting of a city provides something for the player to immediately relate to – buses, etc.

2.4.9- Cityscapes – Bioshock



- Bioshock featured a unique underwater art deco world.
- The surreal underwater city inspires a sense of marvel and wonder within the player/



- Strong and unique characters stalked the halls of the submerged labyrinth.
- The unsettling / foreboding lumbering of “Big Daddies” and haunting voices of the “Little Sisters” did much to add to the games atmosphere.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier Three \(3.3\)](#)

2.5 Research Tier Four

2.5.1- Oppressive settings – Beyond Good & Evil, Mirror's Edge



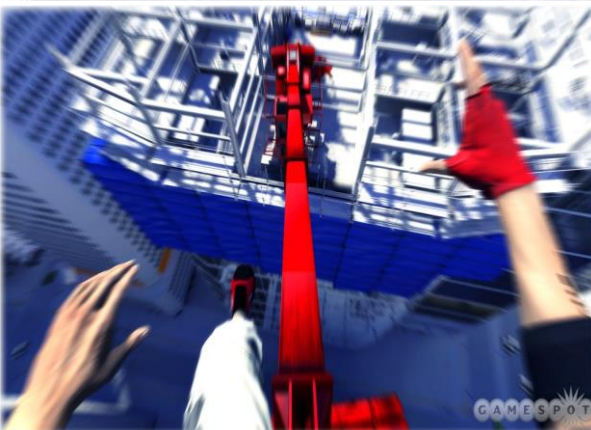
- Beyond Good & Evil demonstrated a city until martial law.
- Troops patrol the city streets and the player must use wits and cunning to progress.



- Jade, the heroine was not well versed in combat, which led to some climactic chase sequences through the city.
- Enemies are heavily equipped in comparison to the game's protagonist.
- Ally characters assist the player at certain points.



- Mirror's Edge is set in an oppressive environment, one where information is closely monitored and "runners" transport sensitive data discreetly for a price.
- Incredible pace, a refreshing take on exploring a city environment.



- The game does a good job of showing just how bleak the city's outlook is simply through its use of bland, white skyscrapers.
- The "white" environment epitomises how cold and uncaring society has become, with the player character being the only truly "alive" being in the game world.
- Lack of peripheral vision alleviated somewhat through a widened field of vision.

2.5.2- “Living city” settings – Yakuza 2, The World Ends with You



- Authentic reproduction of a Japanese city.
- Features dynamic crowds, ambient noise and text boxes that display dialogue snippets as the player travels through the city.



- Each area of the city is brimming with life.
- The sheer number of people on screen coupled with the ambient crowd noise adds to the believability.
- Randomised crowd generation.



- Reproduces a living city on the small screen of a portable.
- Also features dynamic crowds, with characters walking on and off the screen.
- Ability to “read the minds” of various NPCs around town provides limited level of interactivity.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier Four \(3.4.1\)](#)

2.6 Research Tier Five

2.6.1- Theme: Oppression

- The group decided to investigate the theme of oppression within the scope of films.

2.6.2- Theme: Oppression: Saw

- **Release: 2004**
- **Genre: Horror**
- **Director: James Wan**
- **Producer: Gregg Hoffman, Oren Koules, Mark Burg**



- Saw's story revolves around kidnapped victims who are placed in traps by the sinister "Jigsaw Killer", who claims to be teaching them to appreciate their lives. The traps are usually symbolic and reflect the victim and the reason the "Jigsaw Killer" chose them.
- There are currently five movies in the Saw franchise and they all have similar plots. The traps and how victims interact with them are the best parts of the Saw films. Each film tries to outdo the last with more shocking and bizarre traps.
- To escape the traps and regain their freedom, the victim usually has to do something terrible or outrageous. It often requires quick thinking and co-ordination if there are multiple people. Each of the traps is designed to teach a moral lesson to the individual and nearly always ironic.
- Each trap is timed, and the victim is able to witness their impending doom unless they take some action. This provides an escalating sense of involvement and tension in the viewer.
- Saw utilises not only oppressive environments, but also employs a psychological assault on the victim, which is conveyed to the viewer, who imagines themselves in the room.
- The films have a dark and glum style. The traps are located in abandoned buildings, meaning the environment is wrecked and run down – the kind of places where few would venture. Darkness is used well to add to the atmosphere and induce more uneasiness and horror.

2.6.3– Theme: Oppression: Blade Runner

- **Release: 1982**
- **Genre: Science Fiction**
- **Director: Ridley Scott**
- **Producer: Michael Deeley**



- Blade Runner is set in Los Angeles in the year 2019, it follows Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) in his pursuit of illegal “replicants”. Replicants are biologically engineered humans, who are primarily used for dangerous and degrading work. Essentially humans use them as slave labour.
- The film’s setting is very dark and grim. The city is very futuristic in its design, yet still gritty in some areas. Some places are run down and dirty, they look neglected and of a lower class to other parts of the city, which, in comparison, are hi-tech and of a higher class.
- Overall it looks more like a dystopian future, rather than a utopian one.
- Blade Runner also deals with oppression in a way, since the replicants are used like slaves. They are not considered to be human, although they can potentially indistinguishable from a human. They have “fail-safes” (a four year lifespan) to ensure that they would never develop emotions or seek independence from their human masters. Essentially, they are designed to be more like machines than humans. In the film, four replicants escape and the main focus of the film is a “blade runner” hunting them down.
- The film raises interesting moral questions as to who really is “inhuman”, is it the replicants that are incessantly hunted and simply desire freedom and respect, or is it their human oppressors that seek to decommission them?
- The infamous twist at the end of the movie is that Rick Deckard himself may actually be a replicant.

2.6.4– Theme: Oppression: Equilibrium

- Release: 2002
- Genre: Action / Science Fiction
- Director: Kurt Wimmer
- Producer: Jan de Bont, Lucas Foster



- Equilibrium is set in the city-state of Libria, after an apocalyptic World War III. Fearing that the human race could not survive a fourth World War, humanity sought to build a new society that would be free of conflict, (Libria is the result of this).
- The governing council of Libria, believing that emotion is the cause of conflict, bans anything that could evoke emotion in a person (e.g. art, music, literature). Additionally, all citizens of Libria are required to take daily injections that suppress emotions.
- The film follows Grammaton Cleric Preston (Christian Bale) as he struggles with his emotions after he fails to take his injection. Overwhelmed by these emotions, he begins to aid an underground movement that hopes to restore emotion to humanity. Preston's inner conflict is the driving force of the movie. In a way the governing council oppresses the citizens of Libria, since taking away emotion allows them to be controlled and manipulated.
- The design of Libria and its people is very bland. There is a noticeable lack of colour and flair; everything looks clean and simple. It is set in a distant future, and the technology and architecture shows this. It works well with the notion that without emotion, humans lack creativity. Essentially, the human psyche has been oppressed and shattered.
- The flag / logo of the city of Libria bears a striking resemblance to swastika from Nazi Germany and is used to further the notion of totalitarian state.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier Four \(3.4.2\)](#)

2.7 Research Tier Six

2.7.1- Theme: Struggle

- The notion of a “struggle” is a common theme in all types of media. It is what character/characters go through when they attempt to overcome an obstacle. That obstacle can take many forms. From a personal problem, an evil presence, and even an oppressive government or epic quest. There are a myriad of different possibilities. Some examples are as follows.

2.7.2- Theme: Struggle: Final Fantasy VI



- The games in the Final Fantasy series are rather generic in the fact that the main characters will always struggle against the main villain. Some large obstacle will face the main characters and it will be the objective of the game.
- Slowly throughout the game the party will grow, gaining new members to help overcome and defeat the problems that occur. The size of the party will usually grow to mirror the impending threat that faces the player.
- In Final Fantasy VI for example, the Empire, lead by Emperor Gestahl, are the dominating presence in the world.
- The main goal is to stop the Empire from harnessing the power of the Espers. Terra is the first character in the party and then Locke joins, followed by Edgar and Sabin and it continues throughout the game until the party is full.
- Additional allies support the player’s cause and allow them to overcome the Empire that they are struggling against.

2.7.3- Theme: Struggle: Phone booth



- In the film “Phone booth”, Stu Shepard (Colin Farrell) struggles to survive against a sniper (Kiefer Sutherland) who has him trapped inside a phone booth.
- The vast majority of the film takes place in the phone booth with Stu on the phone to the sniper, trying to convince him not to kill him.
- The sniper holds all the power in the film. He can kill Stu at anytime. He has even placed a gun in the phone booth and shot a passer by so that Stu has the police against him too. As a result, Stu is fighting a battle on several fronts, this presents the viewer with a barrage of different emotions, they empathise with Stu but the sniper also represents an interesting moral standpoint.
- Stu demonstrates an “impotent rage” throughout the film; he is a smarmy man who wins his battles using wordplay. Unable to reason with the sniper he is rendered powerless.
- The film demonstrates how effective a relatively small scale struggle (two men against each other) can be portrayed in a limited environment.

2.7.4- Theme: Struggle: Grand Theft Auto IV



- In Grand Theft Auto IV the main character, Niko Bellic, struggles against his past which has come back to haunt him.
 - Before coming to Liberty City he had done a lot of bad things and had left so he could have a new beginning and escape his life of crime, but things only get worse.
 - The game is very much about his struggles against the various people who wish to hurt him and his family.
 - The player is faced with several moral choices as the game progresses, letting him decide whether or not to forgive various people or punish them.
 - At the start of the game Niko is new to Liberty City, owning nothing but the clothes on his back. Throughout the game Niko must battle through various conflicts and eventually rise to the top.
-
- After having gained a greater understanding of the theme or notion of a “struggle” the group was now in a position to refine the city into a harsher environment.
 - [Go to Refinement Tier One\(4.1\)](#)

2.8 Research Tier Seven

2.8- Decide on the platform

- In order to choose a development platform that best meets the needs of the game, research must be conducted into the current generation consoles on the market. This would simultaneously narrow the scope what was achievable within the game environment based on the power of the platform.

2.8.1- Nintendo Wii

- 36.61 million consoles sold.
- The Wii could be considered a casual console. It gets a lot of family orientated and party games, such as Wii Play, because Nintendo sells itself as a family company.
- **Some of the casual/family oriented titles sales figures:**
 - Wii Play - 16.39M
 - Wii Fit - 10.34M
 - Mario Party 8 - 5.72M
 - Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games - 3.33M
 - WarioWare: Smooth Moves - 2.37M
 - Carnival Games - 2.41M
 - Rayman Raving Rabbids - 1.39M
- **More traditional/core gamer titles sales figures:**
 - Mario Kart Wii - 9.72M
 - Super Smash Bros Brawl - 7.35M
 - Super Mario Galaxy - 7.30M
 - The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess - 4.88M
 - Resident Evil 4: Wii Edition - 1.59M
 - Metroid Prime 3: Corruption - 1.43M
 - Resident Evil: The Umbrella Chronicles sold 1.26M

2.8.2- Microsoft Xbox 360

- 22.93 million consoles sold.
- The Xbox 360 is definitely a hardcore system. It has been criticised in the past for being shooter heavy.
- **By looking at the sales of games on the 360 the truth can be seen:**
 - Halo 3 - 8.43M
 - Gears of War - 5.39M
 - Grand Theft Auto IV - 6.22M
 - Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare - 6.60M
 - Forza Motorsport 2 - 4.13M

- Bioshock - 2.04M
- Marvel: Ultimate Alliance - 2.51M
- Gears of War 2 - 2.68M

2.8.3– Sony Playstation 3

- 16.89 million consoles sold
- Moving into this generation with the PS3, Sony have lost a fair number of exclusives, but still aim for a wide audience of gamers.
- **The PS3 sales show this:**
 - MotorStorm - 3.63M
 - Metal Gear Solid 4 - 3.48M
 - Resistance: Fall of Man - 3.26M
 - Grand Theft Auto IV - 4.90M
 - Gran Turismo 5 Prologue - 2.28M
 - Uncharted: Drake's Fortune - 1.97M
 - Heavenly Sword - 1.23M
 - Ratchet & Clank Future: Tools of Destruction - 1.41M

2.8.4– Nintendo DS

- 85.86 million sold
- **Similarly to the Nintendo Wii, the DS has a perceived casual audience in general:**
 - Nintendogs - 20.12M
 - Brain Age - 14.64M
 - Brain Age 2 - 12.47M
 - Animal Crossing: Wild World - 9.87M
 - Big Brain Academy - 5.38M
 - Mario Party DS - 4.61M
 - Cooking Mama - 3.09M
- **Similarly to the Wii, some hardcore games, usually those developed/published by Nintendo, do sell well:**
 - New Super Mario Bros. - 16.16M
 - Mario Kart DS - 12.41M
 - Super Mario 64 DS - 6.24M
 - The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass - 4.33M
 - Final Fantasy III - 2.24M

2.8.5- Sony Playstation Portable

- 39.96 million sold.
- The PSP is the DS's rival in the handheld market. It sells itself as an entertainment device and probably has a more mature audience compared to the DS.
- The PSP is similar to the PS2 in a lot of ways, and is known to get a lot of PS2 ports.
- There are also numerous titles developed solely for PSP that have enjoyed success:
 - Monster Hunter Portable 2nd G - 2.56M
 - Dexter - 2.08M
 - Monster Hunter Freedom 2 - 2.25M
 - Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories - 5.06M
 - Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII - 1.75M
 - Monster Hunter Freedom - 1.41M

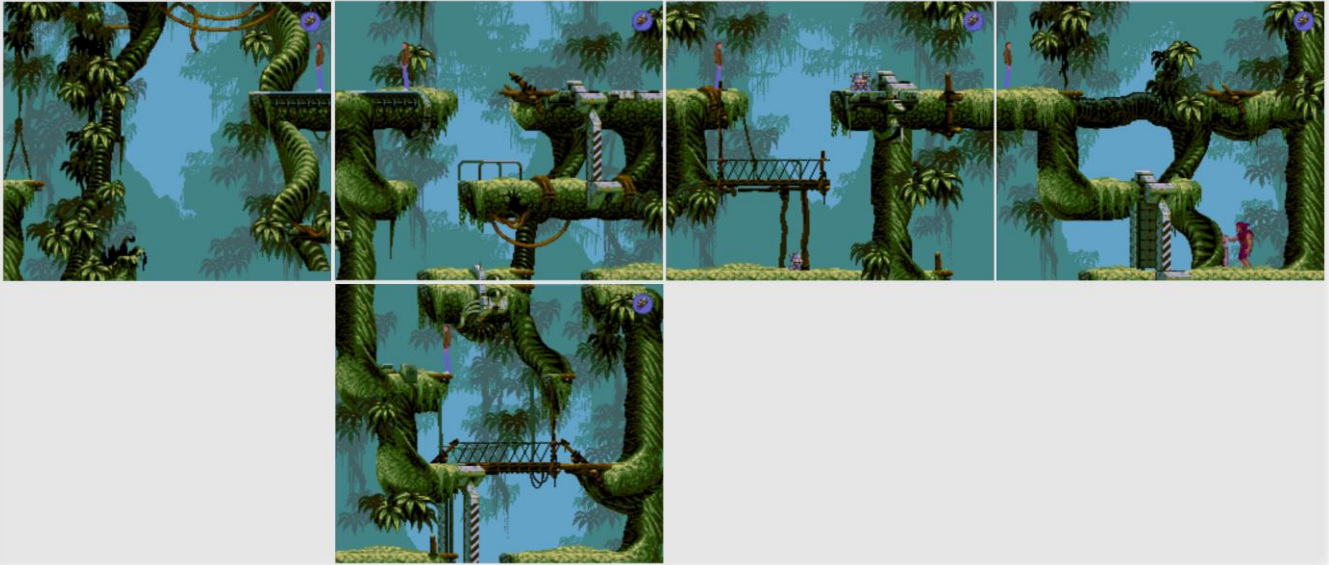
2.8.6- PC

- Games on the PC are generally that of certain genres.
- Particular genres tend to sell well because they work well with a keyboard and mouse setup:
 - The Sims - 16.08M
 - The Sims 2 - 5.21M
 - World of Warcraft - 9.19M
 - Half-Life - 7.85M
 - Myst - 7.79M
- All sales figures obtained from VGChartz:
[VGChartz console sales comparison. 2008. \[Online\] Available from: <http://www.vgchartz.com/> \[Accessed November 22 2008\].](http://www.vgchartz.com/)
 - [Go to Synthesis Tier Six \(3.6\)](#)

2.9 Research Tier Eight

2.9.1- Focus.

- The group decided to analyse how some past 2D innovative platformers have operated in greater depth.
- Flashback best illustrates the screen-by screen gameplay that the team wanted to develop for the game.
- The expansive game worlds were split up across multiple screens.



2.9.2- Finalising the overall direction the game.

- The team began by taking another look at some of the gameplay mechanics of Another World:
 - The player was expected to use both wits and a gun to progress through the game, and the gun is another significant area to note within the game. Unlike most games, the gun in Another World had three separate functions. From left to right:
 - Standard shot to inflict damage on foes.
 - Barrier to absorb enemy attacks.
 - Charged shot to destroy walls / enemy barriers, etc.



The team noted this as particularly innovative, and plan to consider giving objects uses beyond what is immediately obvious.

- Oddworld demanded the player think outside the box and use the environment to his advantage.
- The special skills of “Possession” and “Gamespeak” were implemented to be used to that end.
- The player was able to use Abe’s psychic abilities to “possess” and control the bodies of his foes.
- To accomplish this, the player must “chant” for a certain period, which causes enemies to panic and run. If the enemy is unable to escape within a few seconds the player can take control of his body.



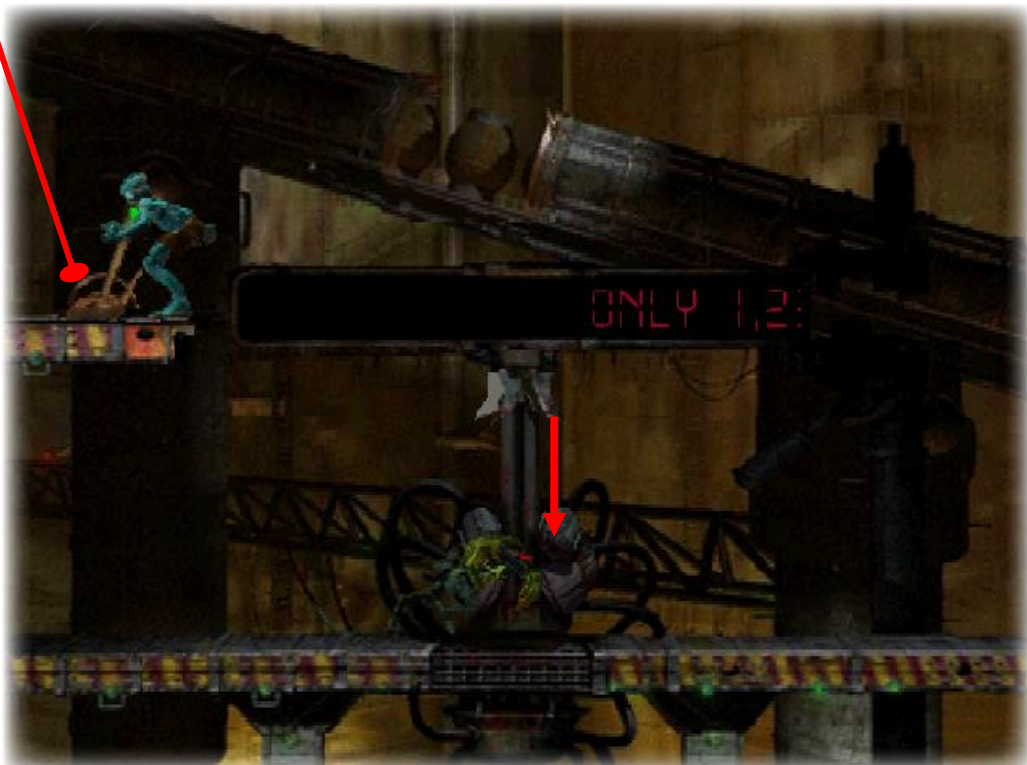
- Oddworld cranked up the threat rating to new heights, with each area a literal minefield for the player to navigate through.



- Gamespeak™, shown below, was a system that allowed a player to communicate with and give commands to members of Abe's race. The idea of this was to lead Abe's friends past traps and help them escape slavery through magical portals that could teleport them to safety. The team noted this as an intriguing possibility for further development, especially considering the DS's touchscreen and microphone.



- Traps worked both ways in Oddworld and the player was encouraged to think about how to turn the environment to their advantage. Here the player operates a lever, causing a meat grinder to descend on the enemy..



2.9.3- How will graphics apply?

- Since the game would be taking place in a 2D world, it was decided to take a closer look what impact the graphics would have on gameplay.



- Oddworld's graphical environments blended together seamlessly.
- The unique cartoon-style character sprites complimented the gritty factory backgrounds.
- Due to the shading, objects are given a 3D-esque appearance, bringing a sense of depth to the 2D world.



- The graphical style used in Oddworld allowed the player to interact with both the foreground and background, adding further depth to 2D space.
- Each individual "interactive layer" is clearly shown to the player, yet still blends seamlessly together.
- Oddworld is an example of how a highly complex world can be realised effectively within the confines of 2D.

2.9.4- Target Audience

- As the dominant force in portable console gaming, the Nintendo DS has attracted a whole new breed of gamers, who after being conditioned to the concept of gaming will be looking to sample new and unusual titles.
- Consideration was also given to the growing number of female gamers attracted to the pastime by the Nintendo DS, with the team noting the need to appeal to as broad of an audience as possible without being overtly
- While both Playstation era Oddworld titles feature some rather explicit scenes of violence, blood and gore (particularly when a character is killed) both were released to market with an ELSPA advisory rating of 11-14+ years old. Both games featured violence, death, use of alcohol and explicit language yet the realism was offset somewhat by the cartoon-like tone of the graphics.
- With titles such as “Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars”, an infamously adult-oriented franchise, on the horizon, Nintendo is proving its intent to further broaden the appeal of the Nintendo DS to a wider range of people.
- This represents an opportunity to garner the attention of a huge portion of gamers worldwide, provided the title comprises both quality and innovation.
 - [Go to Synthesis Tier Seven \(3.7\)](#)

2.10 Research Tier Nine

2.10.1- NPC Interaction

- In order to facilitate a “living, breathing” city the player would need some method to effectively communicate with its population. With this in mind, the group decided to focus on researching various innovative methods of npc interaction across several titles.

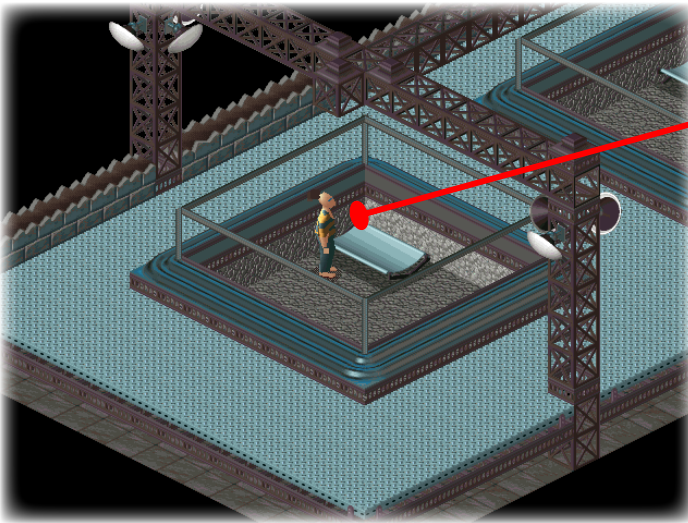
2.10.2-NPC Interaction: Little Big Adventure / Relentless

- Little Big Adventure is an isometric platform/puzzle adventure game. A quirky cult classic which demonstrated considerable competence in the area of NPC interaction. The player controlled Twinsen, who was imprisoned for having prophetic dreams.
- Taking place in a totalitarian domain; the game was surprisingly dark considering the graphical style in use. The group conducted an in-depth analysis of the game to understand how it handled NPC interaction, and how it was integrated in gameplay terms:
- Twinsen has four different “modes” which affected his immediate behaviour / actions. These are:
 - Normal – used for talking to other characters and walking.
 - Athletic – used to run and also execute jumps.
 - Aggressive – used for combat and to display aggression.
 - Discreet – used to move quietly to avoid detection.
- The player accesses these modes by holding CTRL and choosing from this popup menu.

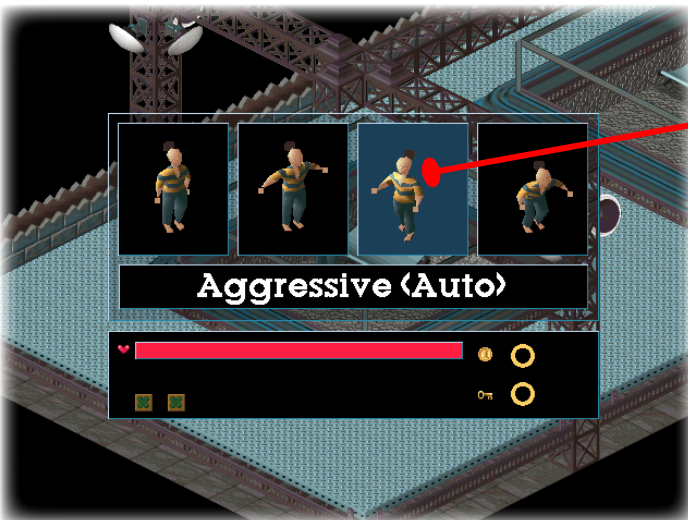


- NPC interaction in Little Big Adventure is deep. The player can interact with NPCs in any of the above modes. NPCs can also interact with each other and also the environment, such as switches and buttons.
- How enemies react to the player depend on many things, such as plot context, the clothes the player is wearing and whether the player character is acting aggressively.

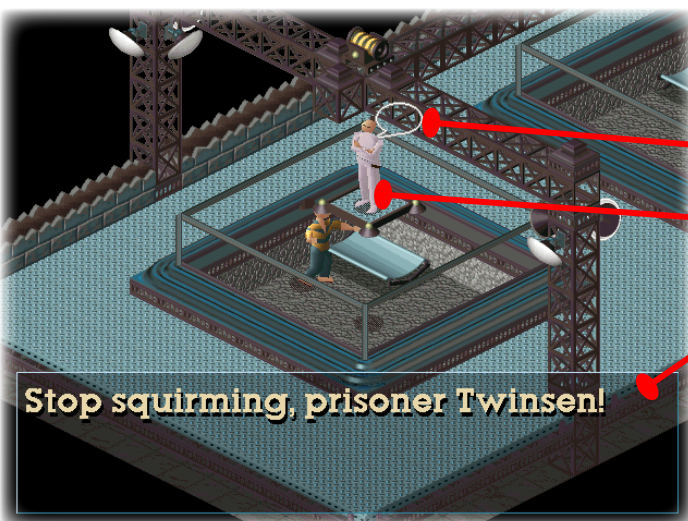
- **Short gameplay example: Escaping the citadel**
- The player has broken out of their jail cell and navigated through the corridors of the inner citadel. He has acquired a nurse uniform to slip past the nurses/doctors undetected.



- The player begins locked in a cell with no way out.

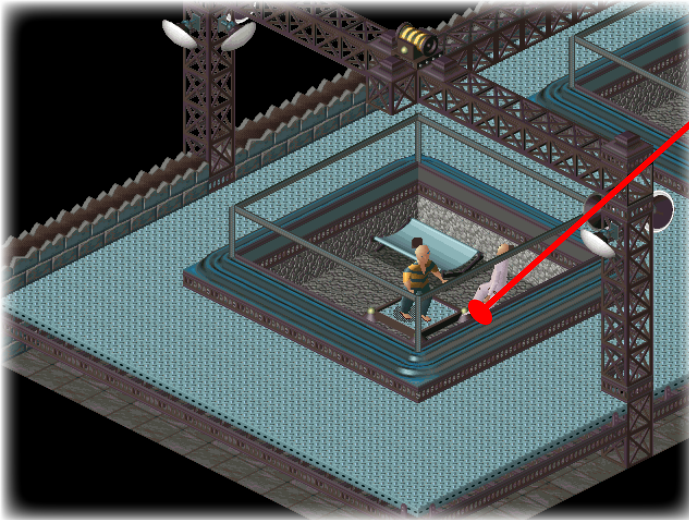


- The player brings up the "mode" menu and switches to Aggressive mode.
- This causes the player character to begin acting in an aggressive manner, creating a ruckus in the prison cell.



- (A speech bubble indicates who is speaking.)
- A prison nurse comes to investigate on a floating platform.
- Gameplay pauses, a textbox appears and the nurse speaks.

Stop squirming, prisoner Twinsen!



- Still in Aggressive mode, the player attacks and defeats the nurse and is able to steal his floating platform.



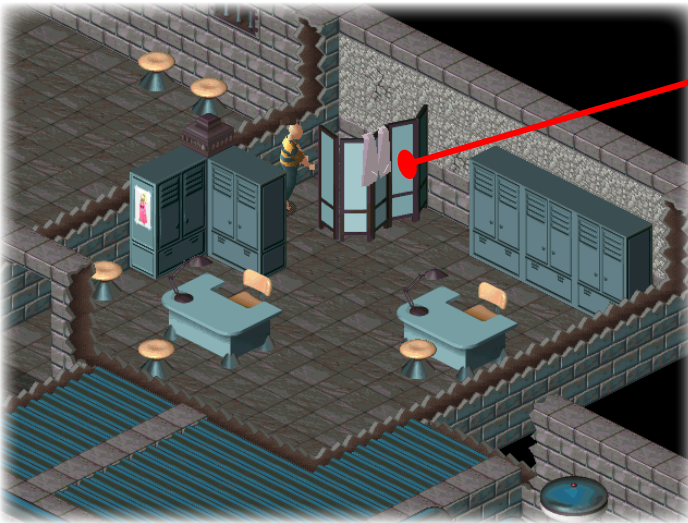
- The platform transports the player to the next room.
- A doctor immediately notices the player and shouts for assistance.
- The player must defeat the nurse (who is armed with a baton) before he hits the red alarm button.
- The red alarm summons an invincible enemy who will incapacitate the player, forcing him to restart the level.



- The next obstacle is a patrolling nurse in the next room. The nurse circles the room in a set pattern.
- If the nurse spots the player he will rush over to the red alarm button.



- The next obstacle is a patrolling nurse in the next room. The nurse circles the room in a set pattern.
- This allows him to sneak past the nurse without being seen / heard.



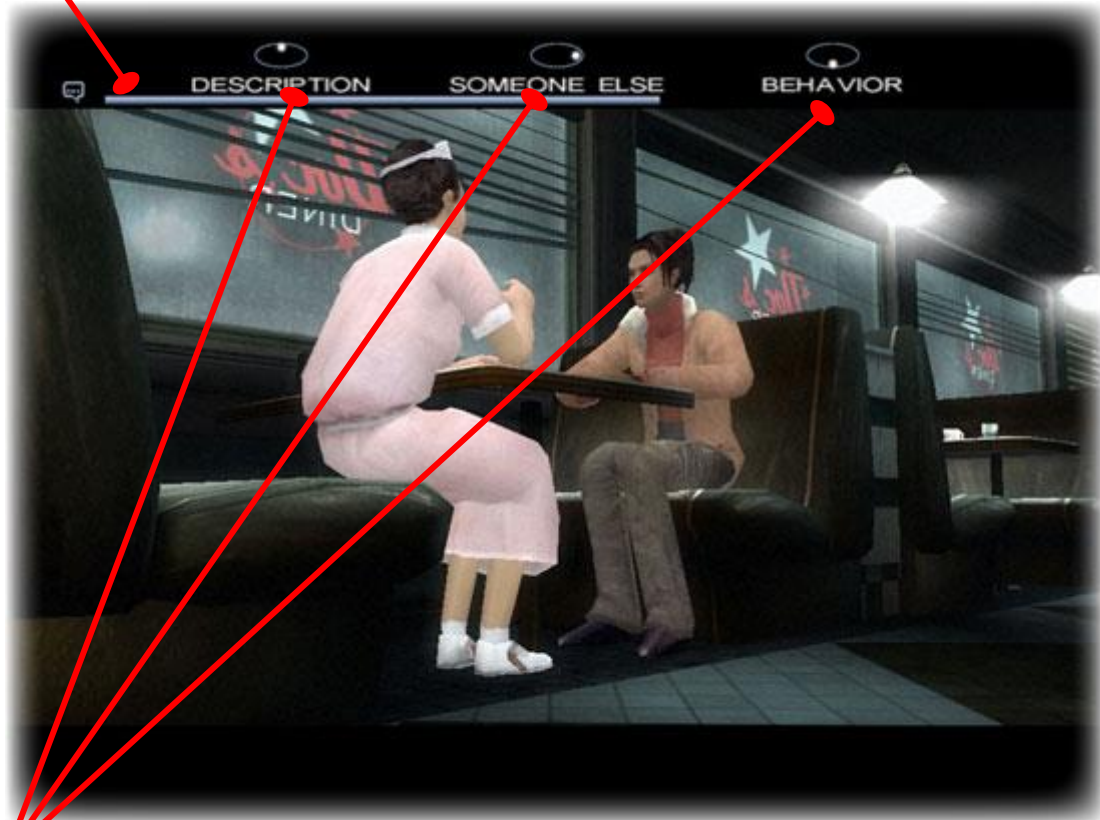
- In the next room, the player finds a nurse outfit.
- By walking behind the folding screen, the player changes his outfit to that of a nurse.



- This allows the player to masquerade as a nurse, and make good his escape.
- While dressed as a nurse, the player is able to talk to nurses, who will not attack him unless the player acts aggressively.

2.10.3–NPC Interaction: Fahrenheit

- Fahrenheit demonstrates a different approach to conversations.
- Instead of gameplay pausing to allow the player to select their response to NPCs.
- In the screen below, Carla, a police investigator and one of the game protagonists is interviewing a waitress at a diner following a murder.
- Each segment of conversation is “timed” with a bar that empties over the course of a few seconds.



- The player must move the analog stick in the direction of a particular dialog branch before the time runs out or the game will automatically default to a particular dialogue branch. In the above example:
 - Moving the analog stick “up” will trigger a question regarding “description.”
 - Moving the analog stick “right” will trigger a question regarding “someone else.”
 - Moving the analog stick “down” will trigger a question regarding “behaviour.”
- This system is intended to mimic conversation in real life, to a certain degree, with naturally pauses and a constant flow.
- The system is expanded later, requiring the player to mimic a pattern demonstrated on screen with the stick.
 - [Go to Refinement Tier Three \(4.3.2\)](#)

2.11 Research Tier Ten

2.11.1- Mechanics Analysis: Displaying information to the player

- In order to effectively communicate the technical side of enemy moods to the player, the group analysed two games that deal with a lot of information and present it to the player in a concise, straightforward manner.

2.11.2- Mechanics Analysis: Displaying information to the player :Metal Gear Solid

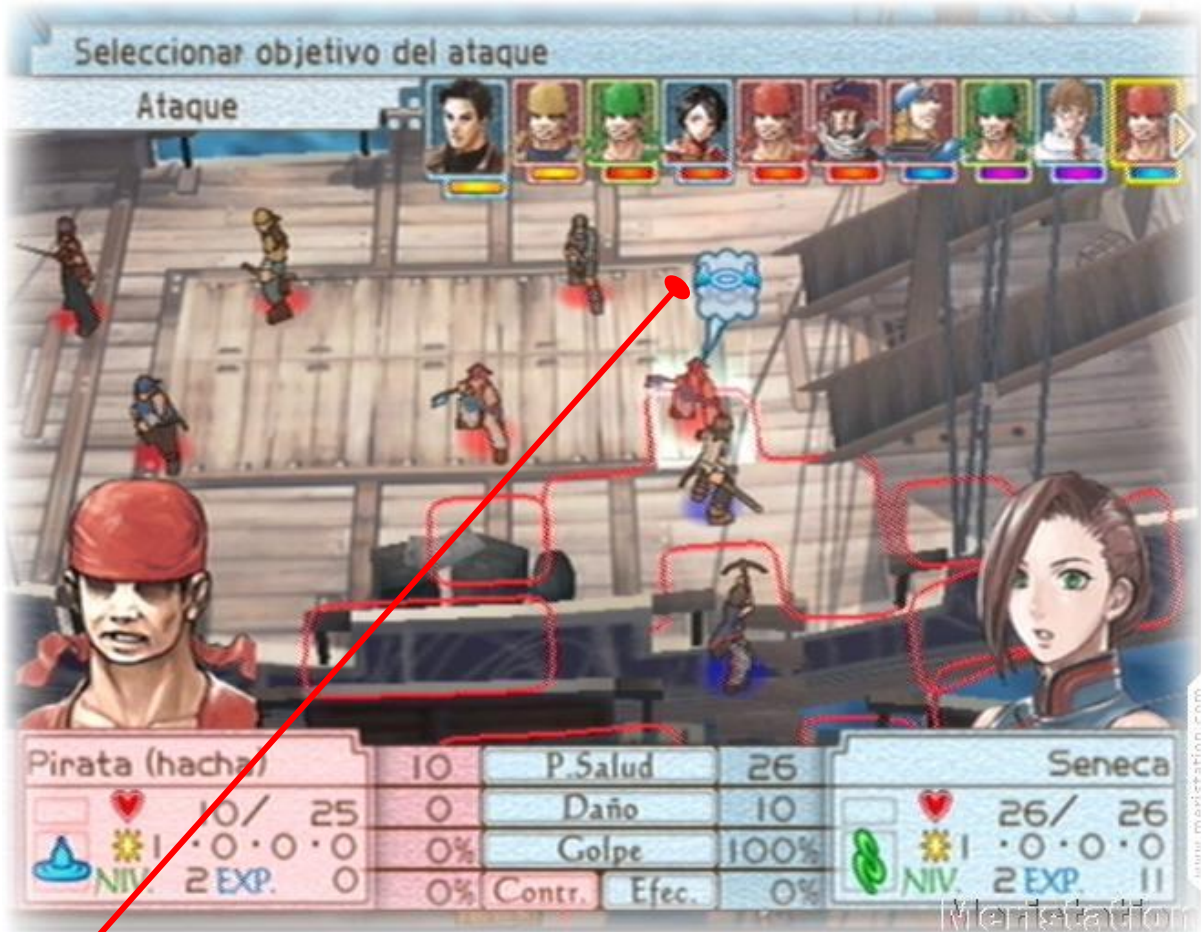
- The enemies in the Metal Gear Solid series are complex, with many different factors that can cause them to deviate from their core patrol route. The game displays the current status of enemies through a series of icons that appear briefly over an enemy's head.



- There are several different icons that can be displayed:
 - ! – Alert (the guard will pursue and engage the player).
 - ? – Suspicious (the guard has heard or seen something but has yet to determine what it is.)
 - Zzz – The guard is sleeping.
 - * - Knocked out (the guard is currently incapacitated).
- This system effectively deals with a lot of different factors and conveys the information to the player.

2.11.3- Mechanics Analysis: Displaying information to the player: Suikoden Tactics

- Tactical RPG that was very user friendly. The game simplified the intricacies commonly associated with tactical RPGs, such as hit percentages, elemental resistances etc by implementing an emoticon system.
- The system displays Happy, Normal, Sad faces in a small bubble over the head of the targeted enemy. The icon displayed indicates how effective a particular attack will be against an enemy (a way of seamlessly & simply integrating information into gameplay.)



- A “halo” icon is display in the above image, indicating that the attack against this enemy will be the killing blow.

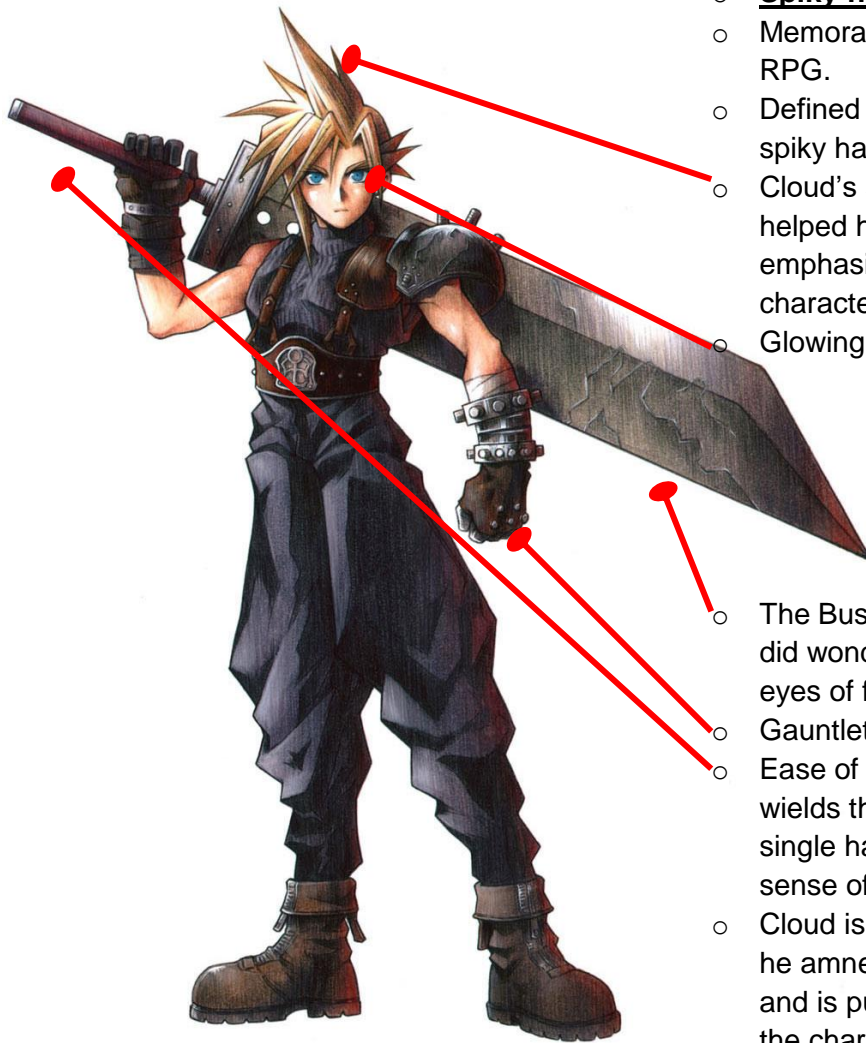
- [Go to Synthesis Tier Eight\(3.8.7\)](#)

2.12 Research Tier Eleven

2.12.1- Character Analysis: Males

- The group decided to focus on researching strong / memorable male characters.
- Since the group were aiming for a game with an in-depth and detailed world, it made sense to investigate complex characters, such as those found in roleplaying titles. The complexity of such characters could then be scaled back as required to match Alkaid's requirements.

2.12.2- Character Analysis: Cloud Strife from Final Fantasy VII



- **Spiky-haired amnesiac,**
- Memorable hero from Playstation era RPG.
- Defined by huge “Buster sword” and spiky hair.
- Cloud’s spiky, bright-coloured hair helped him to stand out from the crowd, emphasising his role as the lead character.
- Glowing eyes add to air of mystery.
- The Buster sword may be impractical but did wonders for defining Cloud in the eyes of fans worldwide.
- Gauntlet and bracelet portray power.
- Ease of use, in this character art, Cloud wields the enormous sword with a single hand, immediately inspiring a sense of wonder in the player.
- Cloud is confused and conflicted since he has amnesia. The player relates to this and is pushed onwards to find out why the character has lost his memory and how to restore them.
- Unlike his counterpart, Sephiroth, Cloud is not incredibly powerful and must rely on the support of his friends to progress.
- Cloud has a hidden past which the player discovers during the course of the game, such as why he left the SOLDIER unit and joined the AVALANCHE unit.
- Initially, Cloud is confused and conflicted, possessing an arrogant attitude and a cool disposition. He remains aloof until a traumatic experience in the Lifestream helps him discover his lost memories and true calling. This event answers some key questions and reinvigorates his character at a mid to late point of the game.

2.12.3- Character Analysis: Sephiroth from Final Fantasy VII



- **Silver haired antagonist,**
- Memorable villain from Playstation era RPG.
- Long silver hair adds to overall character style.
- Glowing eyes present similarities to Cloud Strife.
- Overall cold image and manner.

- Long black coat
- The impossibly large sword “Masamune” is now sybiotically linked with the character of Sephiroth.

- Sephiroth becomes the main antagonist which the player must take down.
- Crucially, during a particular part of the game, Sephiroth is part of the player’s battle for a brief period. This satisfies the player’s curiosity regarding the character and inspires a sense of awe at his raw power.
- Having the antagonist accompany the player is an effective method of developing their character and making them a more effective villain later on.
- The antagonist kills a key support character (Aerith) who was the key to saving the world. The player is forced to find another way to destroy Sephiroth in order to bring peace to the world.
- Aerith’s death took place at a “disc change” fuelling the player’s rage toward Sephiroth and provided a climactic conclusion to the first disc.

2.12.4-Character Analysis: Vincent Valentine from Final Fantasy VII



- **Dark & brooding test subject,**
- Memorable side character from Playstation era RPG.
- Badass image.
- Ragged mess of raven hair gives a beast-like quality.
- Crimson cape contrasts the dark theme of his character.
- Mechanic claw adds variety to character.
- His abilities allow him to transform into various demons.
- Having been subjected to various experiments by a mad scientist, Vincent now possesses many strange abilities – he doesn't age and has developed superhuman capabilities and characteristics.
- Vincent was popular enough to warrant his own spin off game, which developed his back-story and further stylised his character.

2.12.5-Character Analysis: Yuri Volte Hyuga from Shadow Hearts series



- **Man with the power to shapeshift into a demon.**
- Unique anti-hero.
- Confident in his own abilities.
- Yuri's pose and general demeanour do much to convey his mood.
- Strong.
- Dark and brooding.
- Martial artist.
- Sleek character design that demonstrates overall strength of the character.
- Leather belts & buckles add detail to overall design.

- Yuri isn't an ordinary hero, at first he is an impolite and reluctant person who doesn't take his powers seriously, the player is lead by a mysterious voice, but follows its commands anyway.
- At a key point in the first Shadow Hearts title, Yuri loses control of his demonic abilities and ends up attacking his friends. Events such as these provoke an immediate and varied emotional response from the player.
- Yuri is accompanied by a woman called Alice Elliot who rescues him by sacrificing her soul for his. With this Yuri's attitude changes and he finally realises that he must act mature and use his powers to avenge Alice.
- After losing his lover during the first game, and has to deal with this emotional baggage during the second game.
- A limit is imposed on his lifespan in the opening scenes of the second game. Yuri proceeds through the game knowing that he will die soon. The player can immediately understand his plight and feels much closer to him as a character because of this.

2.12.6– Character Analysis: Yuri Lowell from Tales of Vesperia



- **Affable ex-knight.**
- Former member of the Imperial Knights.
- Passion fuelled by anger toward corrupt knights and politicians.
- Long hair and slightly effeminate features.
- Confident.
- Self assured.
- Sense of humour.
- Tassels attached to sword sheath add a sense of elegance to his attacks.
- Black clothing emphasises his abilities as a swordsman.
- Yuri has a more fully-formed personality; he is extremely empathetic, choosing to solve smaller problems from individuals, particularly those of the poorer citizens to larger problems.

2.12.7- Character Analysis: Evil King Stan from Okage: Shadow King



- **Evil shadow who possesses the shadow of main character “Ari.”**
- The player takes the role of Ari, a young boy so timid and inconsequential that he is in danger of being overshadowed by all around him. This paves the way for Stan to dominate Ari’s shadow and use him as a puppet.
- Bullies/enslaves the weak-willed protagonist.
- Comedy value – Stan makes many references to pop culture and his character alone “makes” the game.
- Stan berates, moans and pokes fun at others throughout the game, a complete contrast to the player’s character, his shadowlike form often butting in and rising up to towering heights mid-conversation.
- No-one ever takes Stan seriously, and his constant proclamations of being the “Evil Shadow King” fall on deaf ears, much to his irritation.



- [Go to Research Tier Twelve\(2.13\)](#)

2.13 Research Tier Twelve

2.13.1- Character Analysis: Females

- Next, the group focused on researching strong / memorable female characters.
- Again, as the group were aiming for a game with an in-depth and detailed world, it made sense to investigate complex characters, such as those found in roleplaying titles. The complexity of such characters could then be scaled back as required to match the Alkaid's requirements.

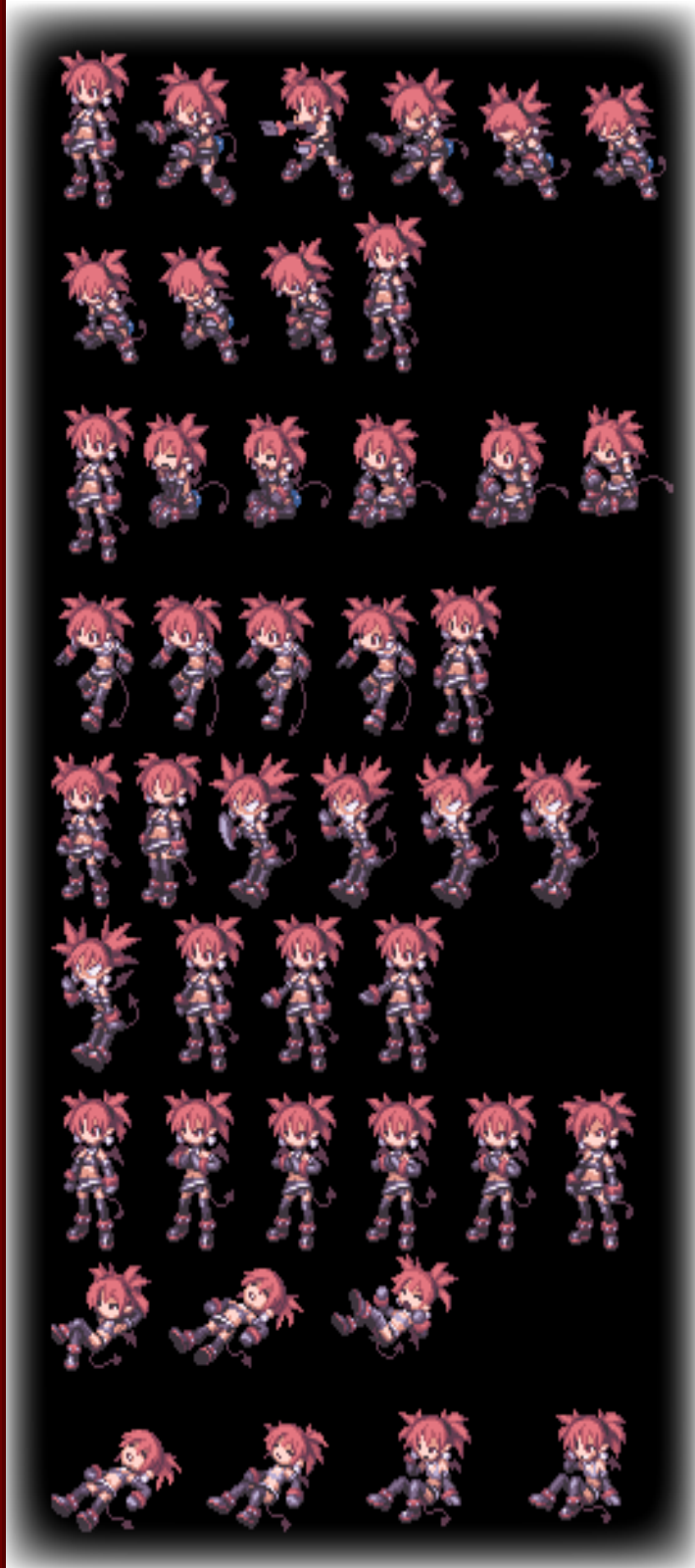
2.13.2-Character Analysis: Etna from Disgaea series



- **Disgaea series regular Etna,**
- Fan favourite Etna displays a confidence somewhat unbefitting her proportions.
- Her sarcastic demeanour and quick-witted retorts were a hit with fans.
- Wild, fiery hair adds to her sense of passion.
- Red eyes, elfin ears and skull earrings portray a “bad girl” image.
- Sultry and Sassy.
- Collar around her neck, which she has a habit of playing with (character habits.)
- Domineering, sadistic and ruthless, Etna never hesitates to bully the weak.
- Flat-chest brings inherent humour to her character (long running series joke.)
- Scantly clad with a distinct S & M theme, she is essentially a pre-pubescent succubus.
- Long, demon’s tail and bat wings add variety to her character.
- Trademark weapon: Spear (highly stylised and unrealistic) – as noted in earlier graphics research, non-realistic allows for greater artistic scope.
- An ambitious demon with a fiery personality, she has designs on snatching power for herself.
- Very much larger than life, Etna is defined by her looks, sass and one-liners.

2.13.3- Character Analysis: Etna from Disgaea series – Sprite sheet example

- Etna is a prime example of how easy it is to successfully characterise sprite-based graphics. Her in game sprites below successfully convey a series of emotions & feelings to the player without being graphically intensive.



- Various character motions

- Lazy

- In motion

- Enraged

- Gesticulation

- Threatening – cracks knuckles

- Lazy / relaxed / tired.

- Defeated / Sulking

2.13.4- Character Analysis: Motoko Kusanagi from Ghost in the Shell series



- **Motoko Kusanagi – Section Nine Squad Leader**
- Serious, does not suffer fools.
- Deadly.
- Practical & level-headed, she does whatever it takes to get the job done.
- Intelligent & extremely competent.
- Cyborg.
- Complex.
- Bisexual.
- Believable.

- Respectable, no-nonsense attitude.

- Sex appeal increased in more recent iterations of the animated series – larger bust.
- Sleek design of female form compliments the car in the background.

- Long trench coat used to add to character’s appearance, increasing “style” and masking her true abilities.
- Held in high regard by colleagues – comes across in both the animated series and mangas and is conveyed and projected onto the viewer/reader.



2.13.5- Character Analysis: Jeannette / Therese Voerman from Vampire: Bloodlines



- **Owner of "The Asylum" in Santa Monica.**
- Vampire twin sisters.
- Though it's not immediately apparent to the player, Jeanette and Therese are actually one and the same.
- Therese developed multiple personality disorder from childhood abuse from her father.
- The two characters are very well developed and fleshed out.
- Female sexuality is central to both sisters.



- Jeannette is a bisexual woman "liberated by un-death". Her actions, speech and mannerisms are wild and capricious.
- Her character design emphasises the eyes and lips.
- Vampire heritage denoted by pale skin.
- Pigtails emphasise faux-innocence.
- Jeanette shows off a lot of skin and will bed anybody.
- Liberal dress sense.
- Flamboyant personality



- Therese is the complete opposite, preferring a measure of structure within Santa Monica.
- The idea of multiple personas residing within the same body is rarely executed as well as it is here, during a heated exchange the camera switches to emphasise which sister is dominant. (Note the pigtail on one side of her face.)
- Calm and calculated, Therese is the flipside to her sister's skittish behaviour.
- Quick to anger.
- The player's actions can influence which will be dominant, even making them kill each other off.
- Dress sense is reserved.

2.13.6- Character Analysis: T-ELOS from Xenosaga Episode III



- **T-ELOS- Android/Cyborg**
- T-ELOS exudes pure power within the female form.
- Telos is the Greek word for “purpose”.
- Serious and deadly, she poses an immediate threat to the player.
- A visor can mask her eyes, hiding her intentions from the player.
- As a sci-fi android of the future, she is heavily armed and no mind is paid to realism with regard to her character design.
- Arms can transform into guns/cannons and an energy blade.
- Flowing hair helps to mask the power she wields.
- Carries a blaster gun at her hip.
- Long legs to accentuate beauty of the female form.



- T-ELOS' visor is used to disguise her identity somewhat during her introduction. It also masks her eyes.
- She possesses a far more human personality than KOS-MOS (the player's android companion), even going so far as to smirk and laugh at the weakness of the player's characters.
- During her first appearance, T-ELOS decimates the player's team, destroying the android companion that accompanies the player. This deals a tremendous psychological blow to the player.

2.13.7- Character Analysis: Gwendolyn from Odin Sphere



- **Daughter of Odin**
 - Valkyrie Princess.
 - Wears a crown and ornate headdress.
 - Wields a mystical “Psypher” spear.
 - Crown and intricate headdress.
 - Feathered wings blend seamlessly with character art and armour. Wings also symbolise freedom.
 - Loyal.
 - Sense of mystique.
 - Powerful.
 - Lightly armoured.
 - Conflicted.
 - Troubled.
-
- In-game sprite demonstrates how easily the concepts are transferred to in-game graphics.



- Also displays a weaker side to the player during the game as she is married off to black knight, Oswald.
- Determined look in her eyes is altered to a more melancholic look to achieve a sense of longing.
- Long, flowing hair traditionally associated with the princess in a castle.
- Corset style clothing replaces the battle-ready image of battle goddess.
- Wings are removed in while this state – possibly to highlight her loss of freedom.

2.13.8– Character Analysis: Da Ji from Warriors Orochi



- **Snake-girl (Adapted from real life historical figure)**
- Sassy and self-assured, Da Ji’s speech and movements display a confidence in her own ability. She “struts” around the battlefield and sees those around her as lower beings.
- She is intelligent, cruel and calculating, and enjoys devising schemes to defeat her foes.
- Long fingernails further add to her “demonic” nature.
- Turncoat – she is quite flippant and won’t hesitate to switch sides if she spots an opportunity.
- Mystical.
- Sadistic and ruthless, she enjoys making former allies fight against each other.
- Ostentatious dress sense, Da Ji dresses to impress.
- Intricate clothing adds to sense of mystique.
- Shows off a lot of skin.
- Uses magic.



- Da Ji fights using magical orbs with physics that behave like a yo-yo. These orbs deal devastating damage to crowds of enemies.
- The floating orbs add to the magical notion and appeal of her overall character.
- Her appearance and overall demeanour are that of a laid back individual, as though to her, everything is a game.

2.13.9- Character Analysis: Lucy / Nyu from Elfen Lied



- **Girl with a split personality.**
- One half is a deadly killing machine without remorse.
- The other is a naïve, cheerful young girl.
- Horns demonstrate that she is not human.
- The theme of darkness and light is used to add to overall style and demonstrate the shift in personas:
 - Nyu's face is displayed in light
 - Lucy's face is usually darkened.
- Split personality can make the same character appeal to two different people.
- Split personality can also show us different sides of a character beyond the immediately obvious.
- Lucy – extreme example of an anti-heroine.
- Note the character's hair is down, covering her face. Her overall character is shadowed.
- Commands a mysterious power known as "vectors". These take the form of ethereal arms, invisible to the naked eye, but able to rip apart the human body or anything else that gets in the way.
- Usually manifests herself in scenes of nudity / graphic violence and can be thought of as a harbinger of death.
- She is sadistic, cold and feels absolutely no remorse.
- She has ambitions to slaughter the human race.
- Her character is very deep and possibly a reflection of the darker facets of human nature, this makes her more than a remorseless killer.
- Despite the fact she is a ruthless killer, she is still portrayed as "more human" than her pursuers, who seek to destroy her and enslave those of her race.

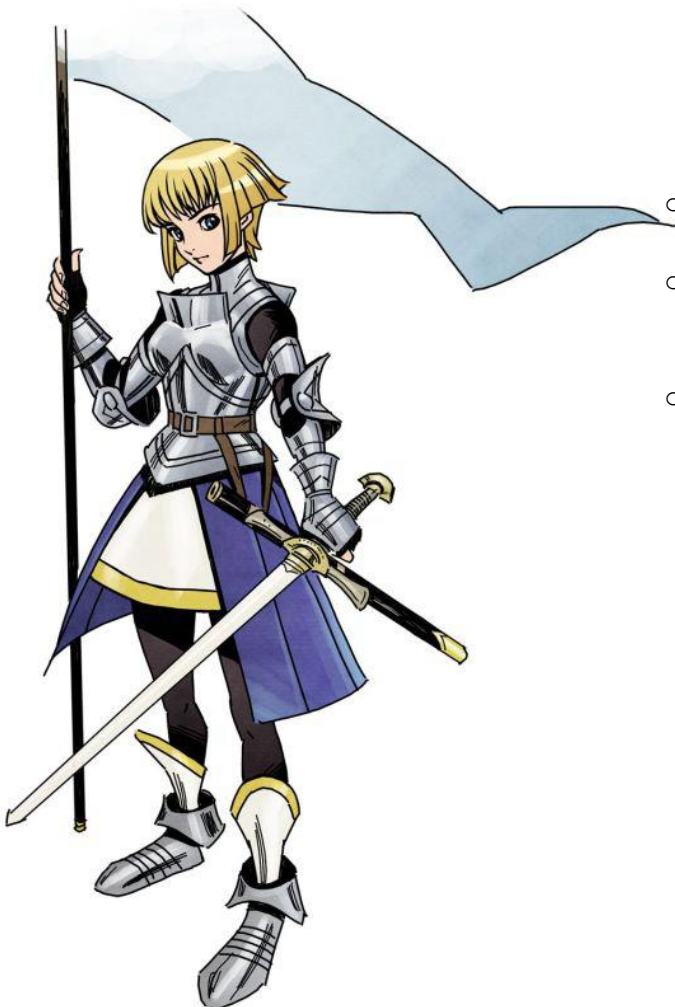


- Nyu – polar opposite of Lucy.
- Juxtaposes child-like innocence and inquisitive nature to Lucy's murderous intent.
- Childlike naivety, eyes of wonderment.
- Incapable of acts of aggression, if faced with a dangerous situation her persona shifts to that of Lucy as a sort of defence mechanism.
- Lacks spoken communication skills initially.
- Note the character's hair does not cover her face as much as with Lucy; Nyu's eyes are wider in comparison to Lucy's characteristic look of abject hatred.

2.13.10- Character Analysis: Jeanne from Jeanne D'Arc



- **Loosely based on Joan of Arc.**
- Jeanne is a relatively normal girl gains powers of “God” enable her to defeat the English.
- She is not inherently a strong individual, but is forced to become so to defend her country.
- Jeanne changes her look several times during the game - > player is able to visually see their progression.
- Jeanne cuts her hair quite early on – breaks away from the female stereotype of long, flowing hair and clothing and becomes slightly tomboyish.



- It is unusual to see armour-clad females as the lead protagonist.
- Being fully clad in iron arguably detracts from her femininity, however it adds to originality and uniqueness.
- Jean wields a large sword and the “magic bracelet” she acquires is used to explain how she is able to move around in all her heavy armour.

2.13.11- Character Analysis: Tear Grants from Tales of the Abyss



- Elite member of the Order of Lorelai who is trying to kill her brother,
- Motivated.
- Masks her emotions.
- Highly skilled.
- Magic & mystique.
- Long flowing hair, flowing clothes accentuate femininity.
- Cold, demure personality.
- Mainly fights using a staff and magic.
- Also utilises throwing knives holstered on her thighs.
- Internal monologues show other sides to her character.

2.13.12- Character Analysis: Franziska von-Karma from Ace Attorney series



- **Elite prosecutor out to avenge the defeat of her father in the courtroom.**
- Began her career as a prosecutor at age 13.
- Haughty overall look.
- Passionate.
- Driven, she wants to defeat the player character, Phoenix Wright at any cost.
- Always seems to have the upper hand.
- Wields a whip, and uses it to attack and punish people within the courtroom.
- Self assured, her speech is cold and cutting.
- Revels in making fools out of others.
- Larger than life.

2.13.13- Character Analysis: Amanda Young from the Saw series



- **Troubled drug-addict.**
- Amanda is given a twisted sense of direction by her mentor.
- Unhinged.
- Obsessive.
- Her eyes are often those of a child, a child lost in a world she doesn't truly understand.
- Jealous and twisted.
- Emotionally unstable - her face quivers during many scenes in the film as she is assailed by various emotions.
- Deceives those around her to accomplish her goals.
- A quintessential pawn in her mentor, Jigsaw's larger game world.



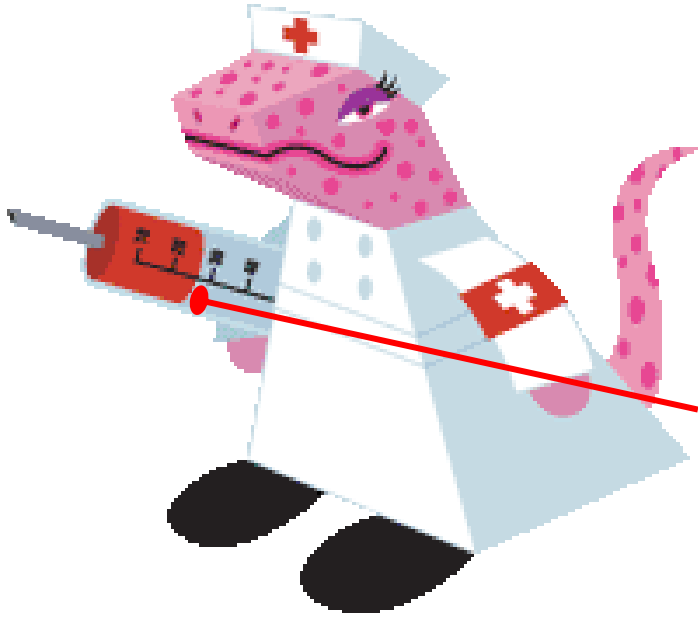
- Creates unsolvable "death traps", and enjoys slaying people, punishing members of society. A society she feels has wronged/failed her in some way.
- Amanda is highly dependant on her mentor (who suffers from cancer), and will kill without question to meet with his approval. Here she kidnaps a doctor, and demands that she keeps him alive until his final game unfolds.
- This adds to her character and the notion of Amanda as a pawn in Jigsaw's game world.

2.13.14- Character Analysis: T-X from Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines



- Robotic assassin who adapts to the world around her,
- An android on a mission.
- Determined and driven.
- Typifies the notion of femme-fatale.
- Sleek.
- Beauty.
- Deception, the T-X is able to imitate anything it touches and can masquerade as other people.
- Extremely effective killing machine.
- Adaptability – the T-X can transform parts of its body in various weapons.
- Powerful and relentless.

2.13.15- Character Analysis: Catherine from Gregory Horror Show



- **A pink female lizard intent on harming the protagonist**
- Catherine is a guest in the twisted hotel known as “Gregory House.”
- Paces the halls intent on drawing blood from guests.
- Takes pleasure in the suffering of others.
- Highly original and unique character design.
- Wields a gigantic hypodermic syringe.
- Cube-like character design is intriguing to the player.
- The cartoon-like look of the characters betrays the game’s violent undertones.



- Cartoon/abstract design makes it easy to convey
- A psychopathic lizard-nurse who is both clumsy and constantly irate toward the protagonist.



- Catherine spends her spare time practicing her blood-drawing skills by attacking the nearest object.

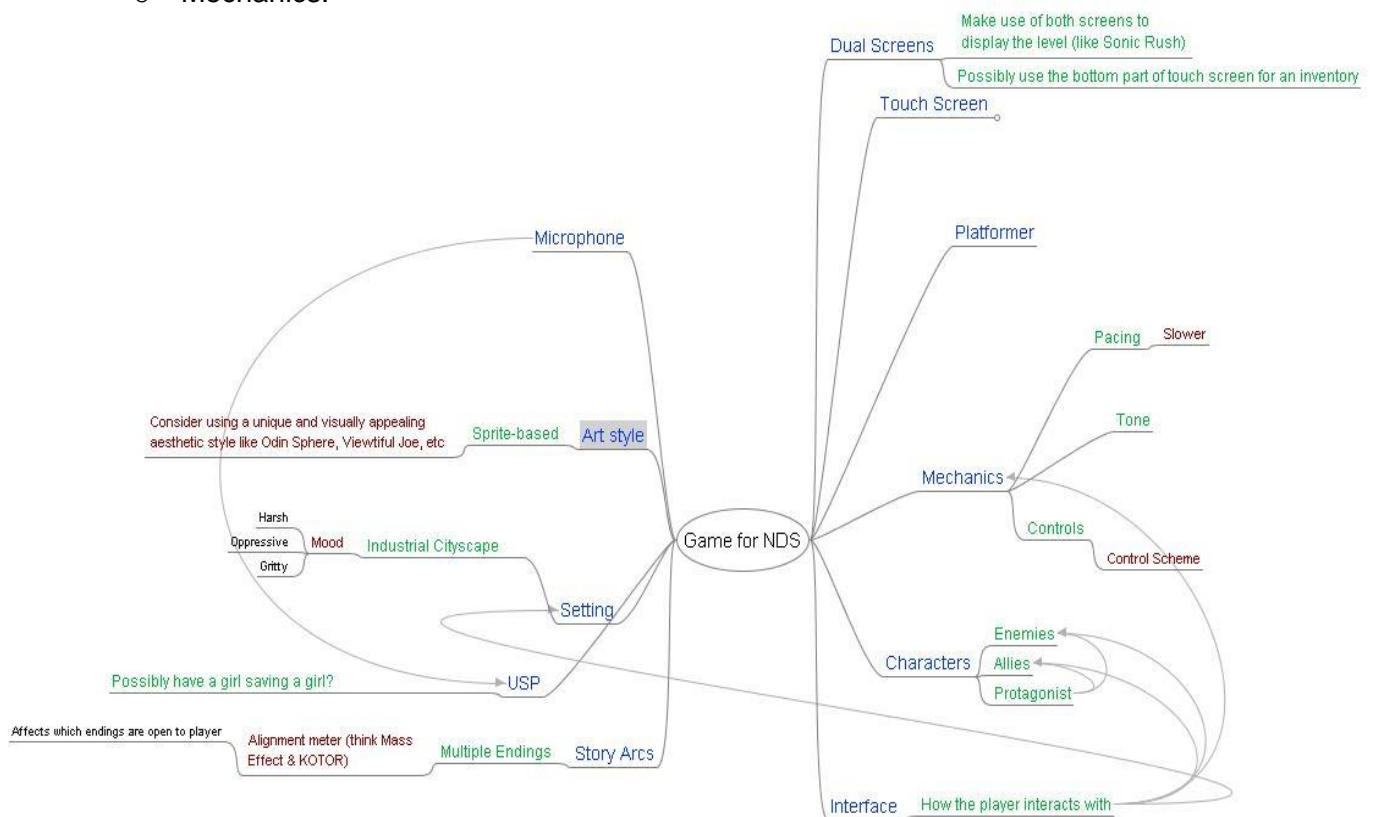
- [Go to Synthesis Tier Eight\(3.8.10\)](#)

3.0– Synthesis

3.1 Synthesis Tier One

3.1– What makes a platform game?

- The research conducted allowed the group to gain an understanding as to what core components make up a platform game.
- The group identified aspects of a “stereotypical platformer” that are archaic, and certain components may be removed depending on the direction the game takes.
- The group also started to gain an understanding of particular products USPs.
- The group identified some key areas to focus upon, which would be spit into tiers and tackled systematically:
 - Combat.
 - Graphical style.
 - Environment.
 - Characters.
 - Enemies.
 - Story
 - Pace.
 - Target Audience.
 - Mechanics.

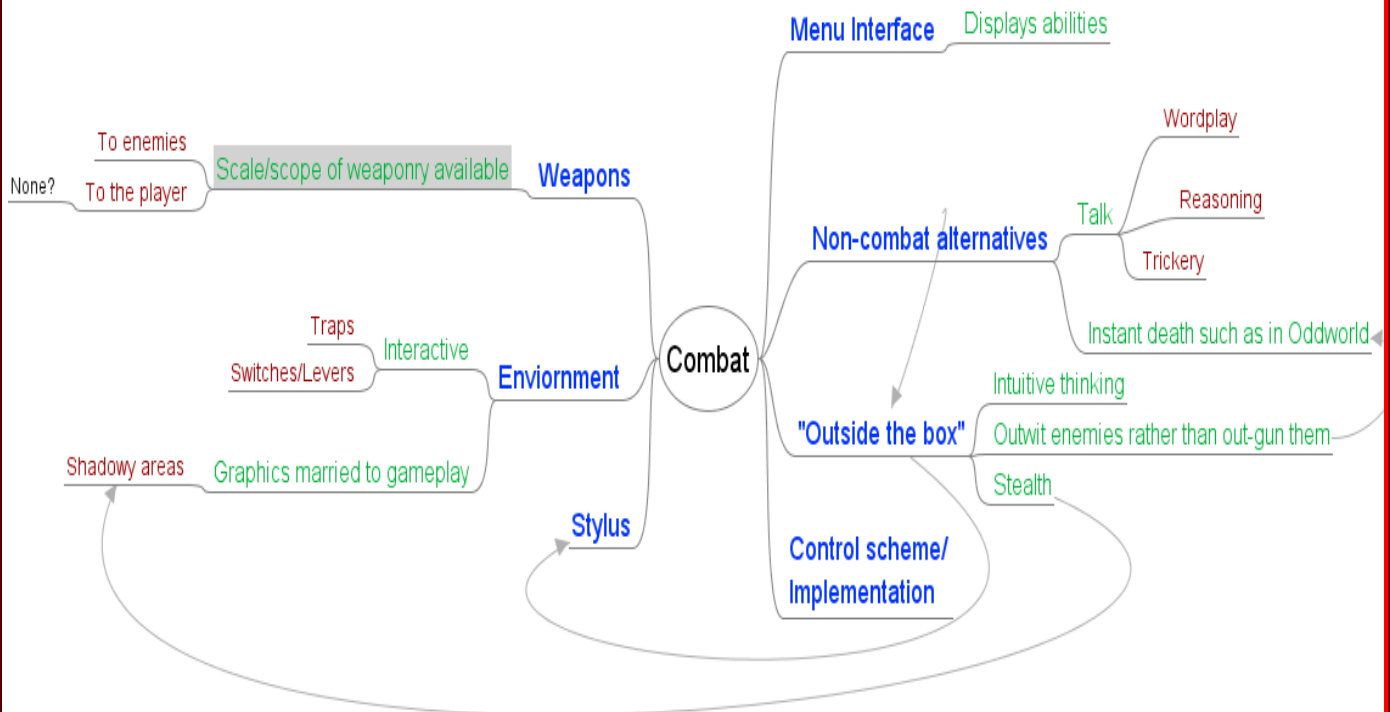


- The group mind mapped their initial thoughts regarding some of these areas before tackling the identified problems.
 - [Go to Problem Tier Two \(1.3\)](#)

3.2 Synthesis Tier Two

3.2.1- Combat mind map

- The group began by mind mapping the initial findings and thoughts on combat.



3.2.2- Combat

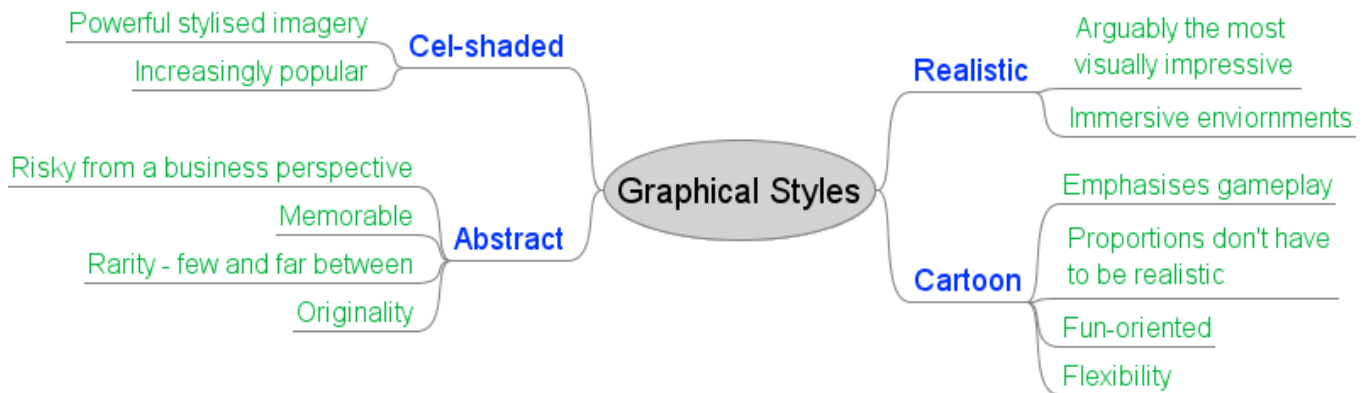
- The group's research into various combat systems in various genres highlighted the common elements centric to combat such as the need to overcome one's adversary.
- The research also notes alternate approaches to the notion of combat, such as in Oddworld, where any kind of combat is an immediate and deadly risk to the player.
- Mass Effect displayed an interesting way of giving the player access to special abilities through its "ring menu" interface.
- The group noted Oddworld's "GameSpeak" as a potential method of avoiding combat and attempting a different and more diverse approach.
- Sneaking in and out of shadows was also noted as a feature that could be adapted to de-emphasise combat.
- The group liked the idea of utilising the environment to outwit adversaries, allowing players to think outside the box rather than tackling all problems head-on.
- Coupling this with previous research done into innovative titles such as "Flashback" and "Another World" the group were already leaning away from incorporating traditional combat.

- Before making a decision on which path to choose, it was necessary to decide on both the graphical style and setting of where the game would take place.
 - [Go to Problem Tier Three \(1.4\)](#)

3.3 Synthesis Tier Three

3.3.1- Graphical style mindmap

- The group began by mind mapping their thoughts on the various graphical styles.



3.3.2- Graphical style synthesis

- The group discerned that games aiming for realistic visuals were actually constrained by the very reality they are attempting to recreate. Truly realistic visuals are not particularly appropriate for games within the platformer genre.
- Impressive and stylised visuals can be achieved through using cel-shaded graphics, the style is rarely used in platformers.
- Cartoon style graphics have perhaps the most flexibility and lends itself well to the prospective platform game.
- Abstract graphical styles are few and far between, but are usually symbiotically linked to the game's name, ie: Rez is memorable for its unique look, as is Okami, and their names are forever tied to their respective visual style.
- Abstract visuals go hand in hand with originality, and are seen by many as too great of a risk from tried and tested established styles. A game's success by and large depends on how the prospective audience will respond to the style and so the group deemed the style to be too hit and miss for the game.

3.3.3- Environment mind map

- Next, the group mind mapped their thoughts on the various environments that had been researched in order to identify the best choice for an immersive game experience.



3.3.4- Environment synthesis

- Having analysed several games, the group decided to focus on creating an abstract, unusual game world with strong character archetypes forming the backbone of what was to be a vivid game world.
- The group had already identified Oddworld as one area of reference, with a well realised game world within a 2D setting.



- *An example of Oddworld's gameplay and aesthetic look, which mixed platforming, action and puzzle solving. Here the player must get past a gun-toting "Slig" by utilising the mine on the ground. The player is unable to use the "possess" ability (one of Oddworld's USPs) here due to the floating orb interfering. By dividing the platform game into "screens" the group feel that they can better sculpt the game and challenges the player will face.*
- With this in mind the group laid out some initial thoughts for the game setting, before long a singular vision started to form.
- The group formulated an idea for a huge citadel-esque city. The initial ideas for the city were broken up as follows:
- **Overall Setting**
The game will take place in a huge citadel-esque city, with walls that tower over the buildings and completely surround the place. It is a monstrous edifice; a blight on the already desecrated landscape.
- **Inside the city**
The environment is harsh, gritty and oppressive.
The city will be under a permanent state of martial law.
The city is highly industrialised - lots of smog and a generally gritty, bleak outlook.
The city is divided into different sectors.
- **Sectors within the city**
Slums - many poor people and a dangerous place to live
Industrial - lots of factories working day and night
Commerce / Market - Middle class workers and tradesmen reside here
High-class sector - unpolluted, clean air, possibly surrounded by some sort of dome to keep the air clean.
Underwater area / Aqueduct – The area of the city where water is handled.
Badlands - An area of wasteland immediately outside the city.
- **Outside the city**
There is a lack of water both in the city and the surrounding area, and its through this that the main antagonist has managed to muscle his way into power, and now oppresses the masses.
Water is pumped into the city from underground pipes, stretching for miles underground.
The immediate area around the city is devoid of vegetation.
- **About the city residents**
The denizens of this city (and the whole game world) will not be human.
- **Transportation within the city**
There are no cars, however there will be some kind of transportation system, if only to be utilised by the enemies.

- While the group was pleased with the initial thoughts and concept, it was necessary to further research oppressive game settings and cityscapes before moving any further into synthesis and refinement.
 - [Go to Research Tier Four\(2.5\)](#)

3.4 Synthesis Tier Four

3.4.1- Planning the city

- The group began by briefly mind mapping their thoughts with regard to a “living city” setting”.

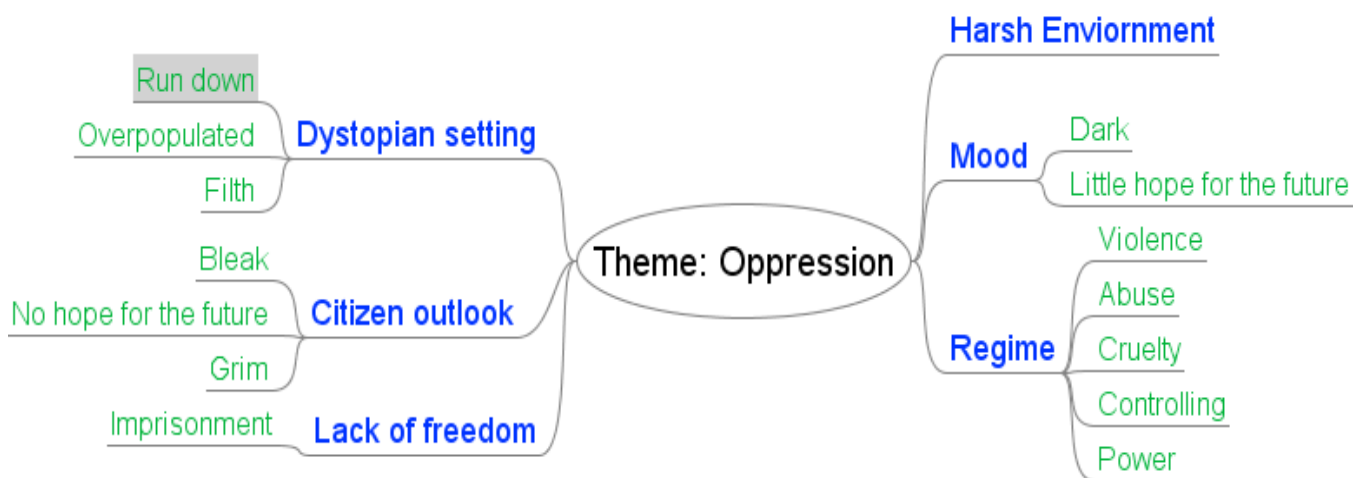


- Having done research into oppressive and “living city” settings the group were nearly in a position to bring life to their initial plan for the city.
- The group identified the need to conduct deeper research into the overall theme of oppression, in order to create a suitably oppressive environment.

- [Go to Research Tier Five \(2.6\)](#)

3.4.2- Mind mapping on the theme of oppression

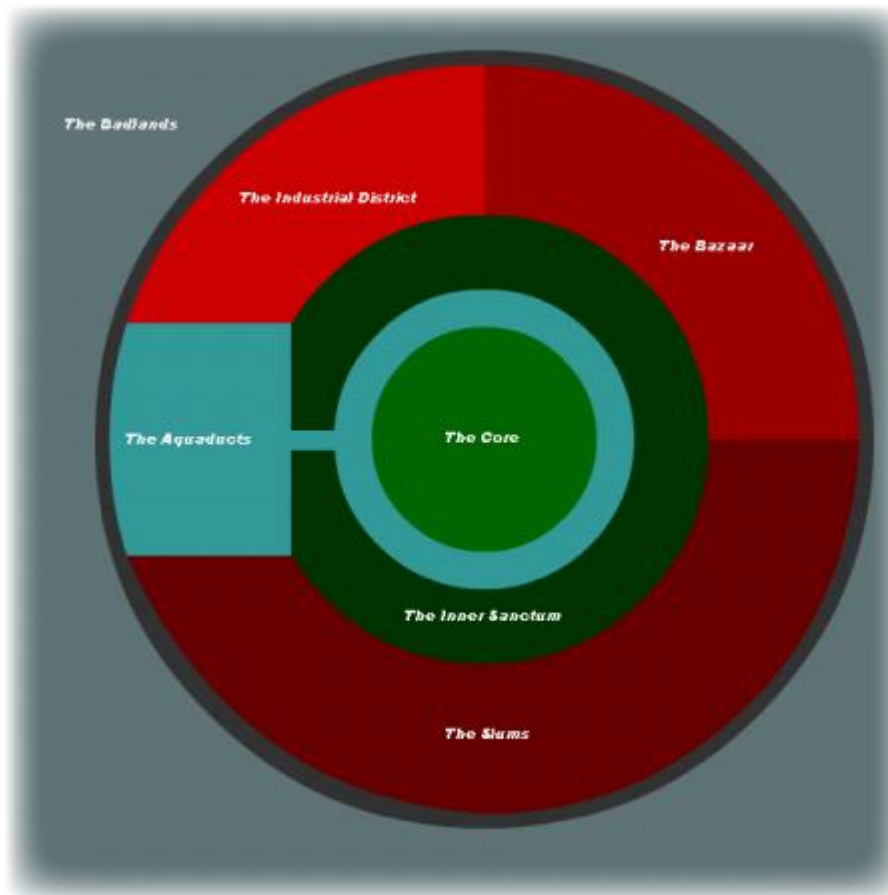
- The group began by briefly mind mapping their thoughts with regard to a “living city” setting”.



3.4.3- Creating the city

- The group developed a deeper understanding of the theme of oppression from the research and were able to start applying that understanding to the setting.
- The city was taking shape in the mind of the group yet required visual representation and clear organisation in order to be developed further. To achieve this, an initial plan view of the city was produced to produce a clear-cut representation of the city.

- **Initial plan view of the city:**



- The city is separated into 2 main areas; the Outer Ring and the Inner Ring. The Outer Ring is home to working class citizens, which makes up about 90% the city's population.

The Outer Ring:

Within the Outer Ring, there are four districts; -

- **The Slums** – The residential area for the vast majority of people, it is vastly over populated. Although the government provides some maintenance and services to the district, for the most part is a lawless place. Visually, it looks run-down. Many buildings lie in ruins and the streets are covered in filth. It is ripe with disease and plague.
- **The Bazaar** – The city's trade district. Working class citizens deemed unfit to serve in the Industrial District make their living here. There are generally two types of people you will meet here, Merchants and Bandits.
- **The Industrial District** – The city's industrial district, it supplies the city various resources. A thick cloud of smog lingers throughout this district. The turning of gears, and clashing of metal can be heard all day, every day.
- **The Aqueduct** – The city's source of water, the station that maintains the aqueduct lies deep underwater. From the outside world, far past the Badlands, fresh water is pumped into the aqueduct, where special operators maintain it 24/7.

The Inner Ring:

- **The Inner Ring is home to the middle class and upper class citizens of the city. It is a complete parallel of the Inner Ring. It has two districts.**

- **The Inner Sanctum** – The residential area for the middle class citizens, which make up around 9% of The city’s population. It is a well-maintained, well-ordered district, with a thriving community. The Inner Sanctum has its own smaller trade and industrial areas.
- **The Core** – The residential area for the upper class citizens and the headquarters for The city’s government. At the very heart of the core, a large tower rises far into the sky.

Outside the City:

- **The Badlands** - An area known as the Badlands surrounds the city. A cruel and harsh land, devoid of life, it is one of the reasons nobody ever leaves the city. What lies beyond the Badlands is unknown, but many assume it to be a utopia.

- It was noted that the initial plan for the city bore an uncanny resemblance to “Midgar” from “Final Fantasy VII.” To sidestep this issue the idea was suggested to transform the shape of the city to a triangle or at least something more “abstract.”

- The group also wanted to investigate the theme of a struggle, in order to determine how to refine the environment to give the impression of citizens struggling to survive.
 - [Go to Research Tier Six \(2.7\)](#)

3.5 Synthesis Tier Five

3.5- Naming the city & Producing a logo

- With the city that was to form the setting and backbone of the game taking shape a name was required to unite the group under a single product vision and start working toward a strong final product.
- It was decided that the city and game would share the same name. Several prototype ideas for game logos had been created as well as conceptual front cover art:



Initial concept game logo incorporated the city as a central part of the logo.



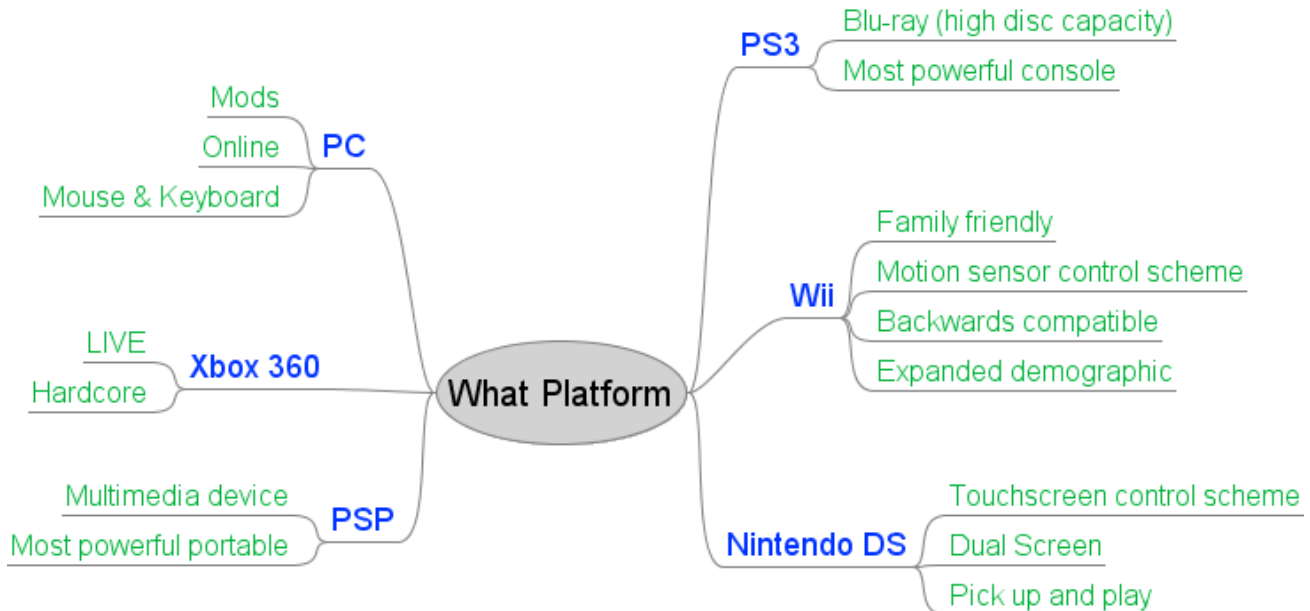
3D conceptual box art – (free building models were downloaded from: <http://artist-3d.com>)

- It was felt that without a product name, the product felt bland. The game needed a title.
 - [Go to Refinement Tier Two\(4.2\)](#)

3.6 Synthesis Tier Six

3.6.1- Mind mapping factors to consider for each platform

- The group mind mapped their findings and drew upon their own knowledge to discern the most important factors to consider on each platform.



3.6.2- What Platform?

- After researching the various current generation consoles and trying to establish which particular demographics are traditionally associated with each console.

Wii

- Sales figures show that it is obvious that casual/party games sell well on the Wii.
- Sales also show that it is not just party games that sell on the Wii.
- If a hardcore game is marketed well, it too can sell on the Wii.
- One worrying aspect is that it seems that only games developed a first party by Nintendo sell well on the Wii, which can be discouraging for 3rd party developers/publishers.

Xbox 360

- It is true that big sellers on the 360 are shooters.
- It seems to be that the audience of the 360 enjoy those types of games.
- Quite a few sports and racing games also seemed to sell over 1 million.
- 3rd party developers do very well on the 360, especially when compared to the Wii.
- Most of the big sellers are 3rd party games, a lot of which are exclusive to the 360, (or just 360 and PC).
- The impression given from sales is that the 360 is the “18-30 male” console. But it is clear that Microsoft are trying to appeal to other audiences.
- They have tried to appeal to the Japanese market with exclusive JRPGs such as Blue Dragon and Eternal Sonata.
- They bought Rare in 2002, who are known for more colourful cartoon games, such as Banjo-Kazooie and Conker’s Bad Fur Day.

- Since being bought by Microsoft, Rare have made games such as Viva Pinata and Kameo, which appeal to different audiences.

Sony Playstation 3

- The Sony PS2 from the last generation of gaming had a very wide audience and dominated the gaming market.
- The PS2 before it covered pretty much every genre.
- It can be seen that the PS3 plays host to a large range of game types
- Software sales on the PS3 are not as impressive as the 360 or Wii.
- The PS3 still had a good range of games in development/recently released, such as Little Big Planet, Final Fantasy XIII and God of War 3.
- The PS3 might be more dependable for a non-shooter/racing/sports game.
- Higher price tag and inferior multiformat titles leave a negative stigma in the mind of many.

Nintendo DS

- A lot of casual games sell well on the DS.
- Games like Brain Age and Big Brain Academy have a strong audience.
- People who aren't usually interesting in gaming seem to be interesting in the DS, with older people and females being viable target audiences.
- Similarly to the Wii, some hardcore games, usually those developed/published by Nintendo, do sell well.
- Touchscreen and dual screens are USPs.
- The DS does have an audience for a lot of games, perhaps the widest audience, making it a really viable option to develop for.

Sony Playstation Portable

- It is true that big sellers on the 360 are shooters.
- The software sales aren't too great, especially when compared to the DS.
- There are many reasons for this, but it isn't too encouraging for developers.
- The fact that some games do sell well on the PSP shows that there is potential, but it could potentially be a high risk endeavour for developers.
- No unique features to exploit, like its rival the Nintendo DS.

PC

- Games on the PC are generally that of certain genres. Shooters, strategy, RPG's and simulation games tend to sell well because they work well with a keyboard and mouse:
- Tricky to market games for due to broad nature of user configurations.

With the overall setting laid out, the group deduced that the platform the game was most suited for would be the Nintendo DS. There were several reasons for this choice:

- The Nintendo DS is the most successful portable console at the moment which is shown both in its sales and worldwide popularity.

- The console's name and image are known and recognised worldwide.
- By developing for this platform the group would have the opportunity to market the game to the largest, growing market that Nintendo has attracted to gaming.
- Nintendo's move away from the negative "Gameboy" connotations was noted early on; they wish to diversify from their core established market and have experienced considerable success in this endeavour.
- With this in mind, the group felt that Nintendo's changing image and subsequent success was something that could be utilised in the game design.
- With the current influx of new gamers, there is an opportunity to reinvigorate classic genres such as the platformer with a new lease of life, taking advantage of the DS's control system.
- By developing a unique and compelling product, the game could build on the growing successes of Nintendo.

The group refocused their efforts on bringing a living, breathing city of oppression to the small screen.

- [Go to Problem Tier Five\(1.6\)](#)

3.7 Synthesis Tier Seven

3.7.1- Defining the game's focus

- Having reanalysed exactly how screen-based platformers are able to break up their complex game worlds across a series of small screens, the group felt assured in their thinking that producing a 2D platformer with their own unique twist was a viable option. The mantra of keeping things simple would remain central to the creative process.
- The game will be a “screen based” platformer. When the player reaches the right or left edge of the current screen the display moves to the next screen.
- Each “gameplay screen” occupies the entirety of the bottom DS screen.
- The top DS screen will be used to display information on the city and player.
- By creating a 2D platformer for the Nintendo DS, the group can:
 - Keep things simple.
 - Craft intricate and challenging trials for the player to overcome to make the game special.
 - Focus on gameplay over graphics.
 - Concentrate on fleshing out the core pillars that will support the overall game structure.
 - Deliver a powerful product to an established and growing demographic.

3.7.2- Finalising the overall direction the game.

- Having looked at the core innovations of several titles, the group identified several areas that need to be tackled in order to fully flesh out the game world.
 - No player weapons / no way of directly fighting back
 - Traps
 - Characters
 - Enemies
 - Story
 - USPs
 - Mechanics

3.7.3- How will graphics apply?

- The group had identified a cartoon-like graphical style as the most appropriate choice; titles such as Oddworld have demonstrated how to produce a complex world within the remit of 2D movement.
- The need for at least two levels of depth (background and foreground) was noted to make the game area seem less “flat.” Having an interactive background layer would also provide the player with alternatives in deciding how to proceed in the game world.
- There was a need to set out the basic outline of exactly how game “screens” would look on the DS. This will be tackled in the mechanics section.
- The group also want to bring in some of the “living city” style environments to the game.

3.7.4- Target Audience

- Taking into account the research conducted and considering that the violence level of Oddworld could be considered positively tame here in 2008, the group defined their audience as:
- **Male / Female Teenagers 11+**
 - [Go to Problem Tier Six\(1.7\)](#)

3.8 Synthesis Tier Eight

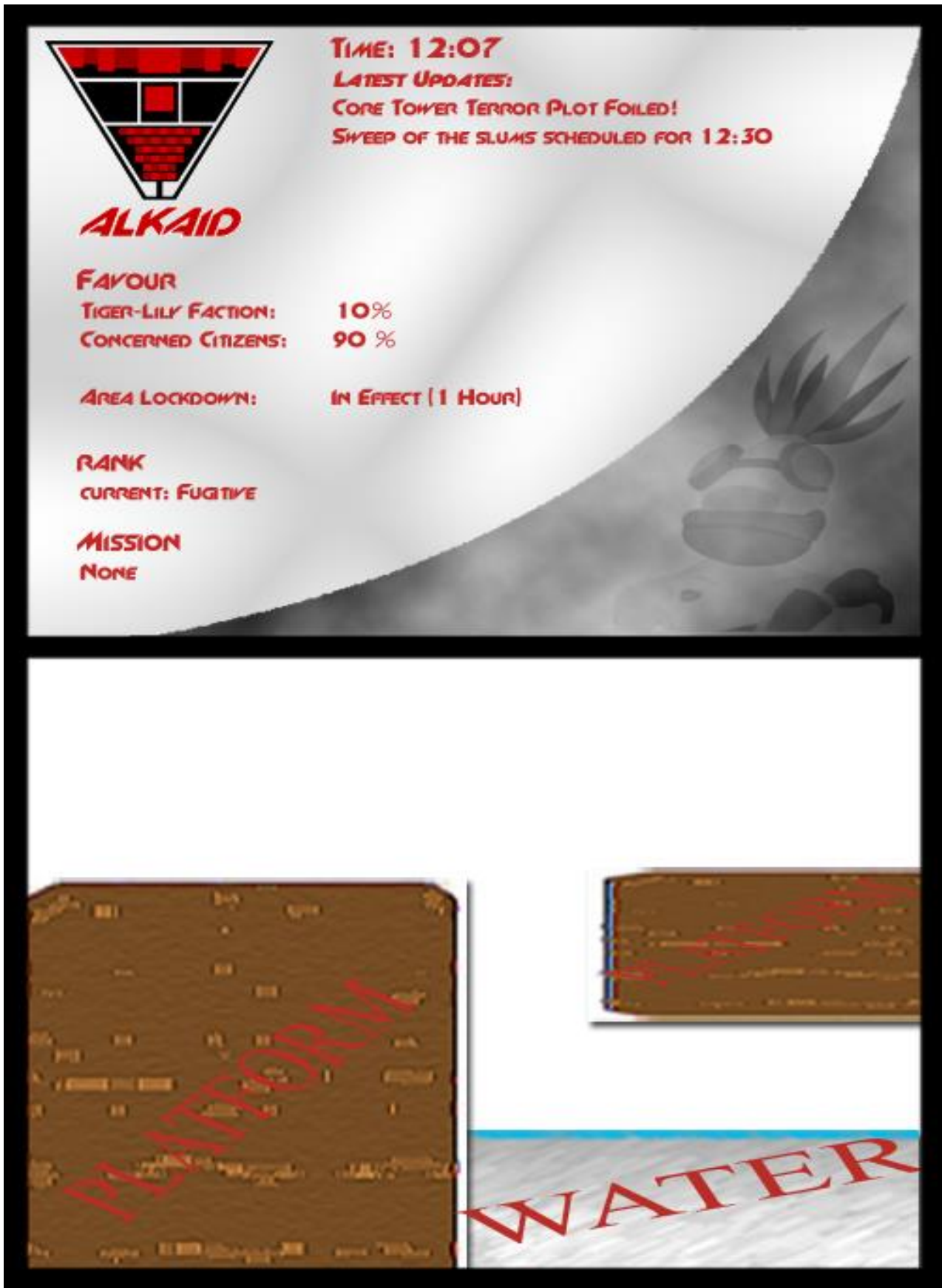
3.8.1- Mechanics: Overall gameplay

- In order to effectively realise the vision of a “living city” and include platforming sections, gameplay will be broken into two distinct styles:
 - **2D Side-on platforming sections** – *the majority of the gameplay comprises these segments.*
 - **2D Side-on exploration sections** - *these sections act as “area hubs” which the player uses to access the 2D Platforming sections.*
- Each style will be addressed separately.

3.8.2- Mechanics: Platforming sections

- 2D side on platforming sections form the main substance of the game.
- **Actions the player can perform:**
 - Walk
 - Run
 - Swim (paddle only)
 - Short hop (small jump while standing still)
 - Running jump
 - Run into a roll
 - Hoisting up onto platforms
 - Lowering oneself down from a ledge (hang and drop)
 - Freefalling (from any height, ie: walking off a ledge)
- **Overarching game rules:**
 - The player has no weaponry, he cannot pick up enemy weapons.
 - When the player dies, everything is reset back to the state it was in when the player passed the last save point / checkpoint.
 - Alkaid is a “screen based” platformer. When the player reaches the right or left edge of the current screen the display moves to the next screen
- **Control nuances:**
 - The player will have two movement speeds – walking and running. Walking will be the default type of movement, running will be achieved by holding the R trigger.
 - The player will also be able to crouch (by pressing down the player will switch into a “crouching state”). From this state the player can roll along the ground. This can be used to evade certain attacks and to get through narrow spaces.
 - The player is also able to enter the “rolling” motion from a run.

- Basic outline of a game screen:



- Basic outline of player progression through a game screen:

ALKAID

TIME: 12:07
LATEST UPDATES:
CORE TOWER TERROR PLOT FOILED!
SWEEP OF THE SLUMS SCHEDULED FOR 12:30

FAVOUR
TIGER-LILY FACTION: 10%
CONCERNED CITIZENS: 90%

AREA LOCKDOWN: IN EFFECT (1 HOUR)

RANK
CURRENT: FUGITIVE

MISSION
NONE

Player approaches the gap

Player can either hop across the gap

Or fall down onto the next screen.

Player paddles / swims to next screen

Player moves to the next screen

WATER

- **Each “gameplay screen” (bottom DS screen) will feature a combination of the following elements:**
 - Background image.
 - (Foreground) platforms, which will match the theme of the background.
 - Background platforms – enemies situated on these platforms will be scaled down in size so they look further away. (Enemies on background platforms will be able to shoot at objects on foreground platforms.)
 - Water hazards.
 - Bottomless pit hazards – player will fall to his death.
 - Interactive scenery – machinery / switches etc that the player is able to interact with by pressing a button.
 - Enemies.
 - Allies.

- **The information screen (top DS screen) will display the following elements:**
 - Current time.
 - Latest updates (provide hints and reminders to the player) at various intervals.
 - Favour with various factions (would tie in with side quests and how inclined particular individuals are to assist the player).
 - Area Lockdown (whether or not a lockdown is in effect, and how long it will last).
 - Player’s current Rank
 - Mission (shows whether or not the player is currently assigned a mission)

3.8.3- Mechanics: Hub exploration sections

- Hub Sections operate in a similar manner to those seen in “The World Ends with You”, with the player exploring a bustling city environment. The main differences are the player would use the directional pad for movement, the stylus would function the same as in the 2D platforming sections, invoking the E.R.I.X communication axis when the player places the stylus over an NPC.



<http://dsmedia.ign.com/ds/image/article/859/859808/the-world-ends-with-you-20080314040016815.jpg> accessed 07/11/08

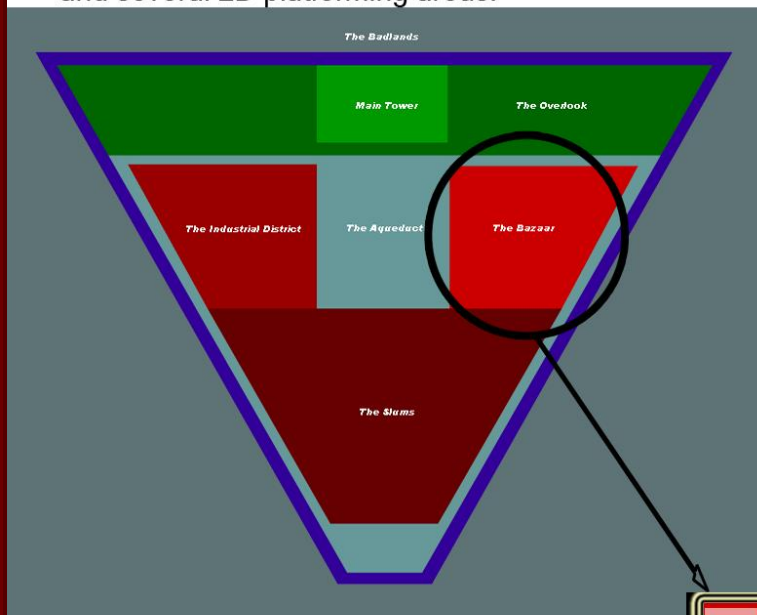
- **Hub section overall concept**

- These sections are used to provide a change of pace to the player, and also facilitate side quests.
- The player uses the “hub” area in each city sector to access one of the many “platforming” levels associated with that sector.
- They allow the player to gain information about the city and learn about which routes are currently open to them.
- Hub sections are also the staging point for many of the game’s scripted cutscenes.

- **An overview of the hub system is below:**

City Sectors explained

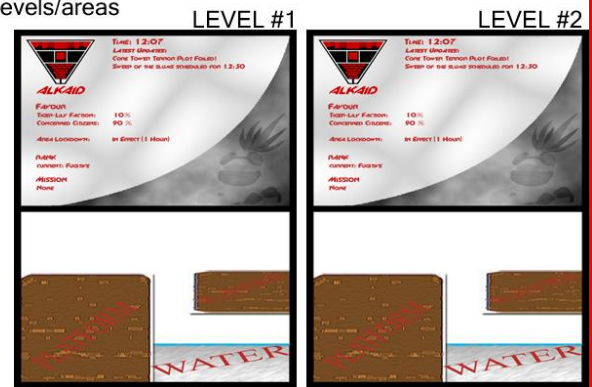
Each “sector” within Alkaid comprises a single “hub” and several 2D platforming areas.



Each sector also contains 1 central “hub” from which the player can begin sidequests and gain information on the city.



Each individual sector contains many 2D platforming levels/areas



The player uses the “hub” in each area to access the various platforming levels

In this mock up “hub” screenshot, the top screen of the DS is used to display a map of the hub, with the players position indicated by an arrow.

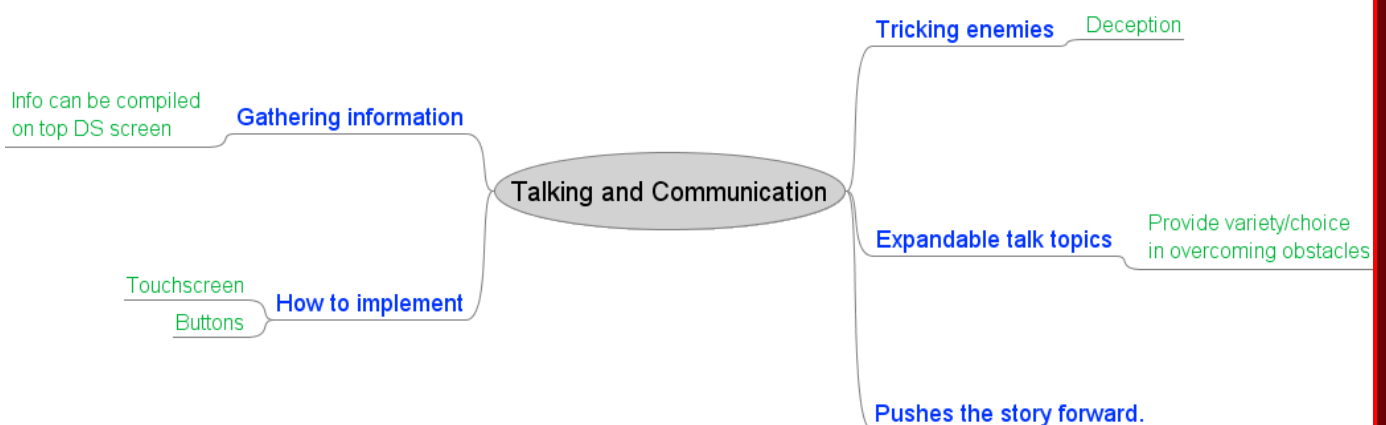
The bottom screen, purely for illustration shows how the bustling central hub would look. Bottom screen is from the game “The World Ends with You.”

3.8.4– Mechanics: USP

- The group developed three primary USPs to compliment the core gameplay.
- This section focuses of some of the primary USP mechanics of the game, the three are interlinked and can be used in conjunction for a completely different experience each time the user plays the game.
- These core mechanics are unique and central to gameplay in Alkaid:
 - Talking and communication.
 - Enemy moods and states.
 - Day and night system.
- Each mechanic is detailed and addressed separately in its own section.

3.8.5– Mechanics: Talking and Communcation within Alkaid

- The group had noted earlier the alternate approaches to dealing with enemies, as seen in Oddworld. This was highlighted as a potential area for development.
- The group had also noted the successful implementation of a city environment in the “Yakuza” titles and “The World Ends with You.”
- The hub system was developed to better simulate a “living city” environment, so therefore a functional system is required to allow the player to interact with enemies and allies both during platforming sections and whilst in “hub” sections.
- The communication system must function identically in both platforming sections and also “hub” areas.
- The group mind mapped some thoughts on how these ideas could be applied:



- [Go to Refinement Tier Three\(4.3.1\)](#)

3.8.6– Mechanics: Enemy Moods & States – How to present information

- The group wanted to give enemies different moods and states to randomise their behaviour somewhat in an effort to expand replayability. To successfully implement such a system, the group researched games that convey complex factors and variables to the player in a simplistic format.
 - [Go to Research Tier Ten \(2.11\)](#)

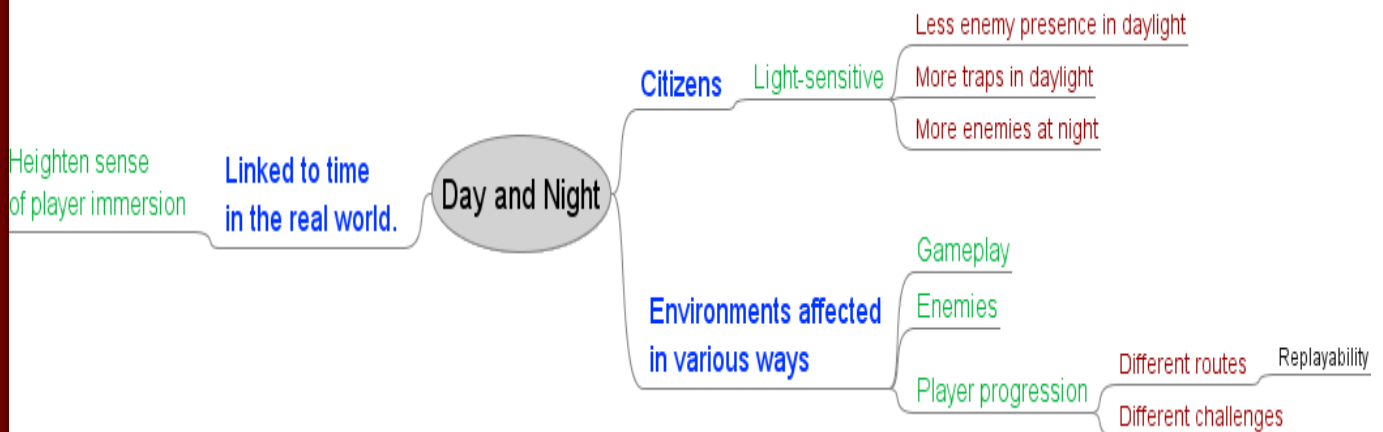
3.8.7– Mechanics: Enemy Moods & States

- After conducting research the group were now able to plan out a system that could convey the complexity of randomised enemy behaviour to the player in a concise and clear format. After a discussion and planning session, the group laid out the following concept:
 - Enemies have different “moods” and “states.”
 - **Enemy moods**
Enemy moods affect their receptiveness to the players “talk topics.” The player can taunt an irritable enemy to change their “state” to berserk. Moods lead into states, but do nothing on their own. Moods are the “gateway” for the player to exploit via “talking” to drive the enemy into a given state.
 - **The possible enemy moods are:**
 - **Normal** (tied with the normal state)
 - **Angry** (can be taunted into a “berserk” state)
 - **Sad** (can be goaded into the “depressed” state through talk options)
 - **Excitable**
 - **Worried** (can be forced into the “frightened” state through talk options and environmental conditions.
 - **Enemy states:**
The “state” of an individual enemy is indicated by an emoticon like system which will “float” just above the respective enemy. By looking at this icon, the state of an individual enemy will be immediately obvious to a player.
 - **The possible enemy states are:**
 - **Normal** (No icon displayed)
 - **Tired** (Tired face icon displayed)
 - **Sleeping** (Zzz icon displayed)
 - **Drunk** (Glass of beer displayed)
 - **Berserk** (Angry Red face)
 - **Depressed** (Sad face displayed with a teardrop)
 - **Frightened** (Pale white ghost face displayed)
 - **States affect enemies in the following ways:**
 - **Normal:** No changes

- **Tired:** Enemies will move slower overall and will take longer to attack.
 - **Sleeping:** Enemies will take no action provided player moves quietly.
 - **Drunk:** Enemies are drunk. If the player “speaks” to them, they can be colluded into performing various actions.
 - **Berserk:** Enemies will behave erratically and aggressively. When in this state it is much easier to lead enemies into traps, etc.
 - **Depressed:** Enemies take no action against player and have an emotional breakdown. Player can pass by unchallenged for a set time.
 - **Frightened:** Enemies will run from the current screen in fright, once on the next screen the “Frightened” state will be downgraded to the mood, “Scared.”
- Further refinement was necessary to effectively convey this information to the player within the game.
- [Go to Refinement Tier Four\(4.4\)](#)

3.8.8- Mechanics: Day & Night in Alkaid

- Day and Night in Alkaid is determined by the DS's internal clock. The group decided to link the time in the real world with the time in the game. Many of the inhabitants of Alkaid are sensitive to light - almost nocturnal in nature, and are reluctant to come out in the daylight.
- What this means in gameplay terms is during the daylight hours 6am - 6pm, Real-Life time, there will usually be fewer enemies/goons inhabiting the levels.
- During night hours 6pm - 6am, real-life time, there will be a greater presence of enemies inhabiting the levels.
- The possibility exists to have traps, routes, etc that only become active during a particular time (day or night.)
- For example: heavier enemy presence at night, but more traps in the daytime. There may be a route that is completely "locked down" at night, forcing the player to go a different way, etc.
- The group mind mapped some thoughts on how to adapt the day and night system into an integral part of gameplay:



- Further refinement was required to advance this idea beyond being a mere gimmick.
 - [Go to Refinement Tier Five\(4.5\)](#)

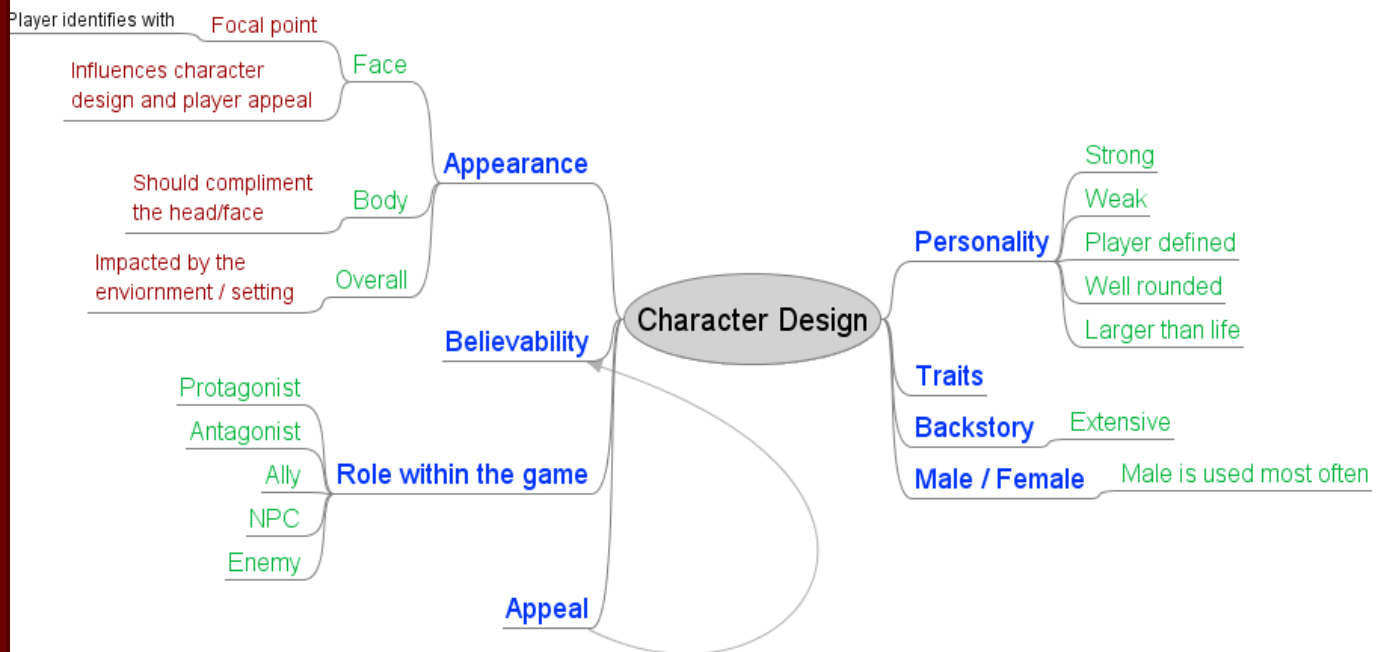
3.8.9– Character Design: Understanding what appeals

- Before designing any characters, the group began by conducting research into memorable / strong male and female characters across several types of media.
- The group wanted to get a sense as to what particular character traits, personalities and appearances appeal to the player.
- Research will also be conducted briefly into the characters backstory and role within their respective product.

- [Go to Research Tier Eleven\(2.12\)](#)

3.8.10- Character Design: Understanding what appeals

- After conducting research the group determined several points of interest that will be of assistance when designing/planning the characters.



- There is a definite trend in that the most memorable female characters are self motivated, competent and able to stand on their own two feet. The old notion of the damsel in distress is clearly a thing of the past, and may actually cause annoyance with some audiences. A strong female character can appeal to both males and females.
- There also seems to be a trend towards well-developed characters in modern games, even outside of the roleplaying remit the group noted characters are now given extensive back story, with their traits fleshed out in order to create a well-rounded, more believable character.
- The group noted that female characters are becoming increasingly prominent as both protagonists and antagonists across many forms of media, and their character's need to be stronger than the old damsel in distress routine to be accepted by the audience.
- As a counterpoint to this the group found that few platformers featured a female protagonist.
- The group noted that a character's face is something that the player immediately looks at and identifies with. This was illustrated during T-ELOS' introduction in Xenosaga Episode 3. The group intended for the faces of the player character to be a focal point of the conceptual designs.
- The group noted that even minutia such as a character's sexual preference may be incorporated into their character design in modern games/media.

- The tone of the game obviously defines just how well developed an individual character needs to be.
- Some characters break away from stereotypes, some play to them.
- With these points in mind the group mind-mapped their initial thoughts for some characters.
- The inhabitants of Alkaid fall into one of these categories:
 - **Main Character**
 - The character the player controls.
 - **Ally Characters or NPCs**
 - Characters that assist the player during particular sections of gameplay.
 - Non-threatening characters that the player can interact with. The generic citizens of Alkaid fall into this category.
 - **Enemies**
 - Characters that will impede the player.

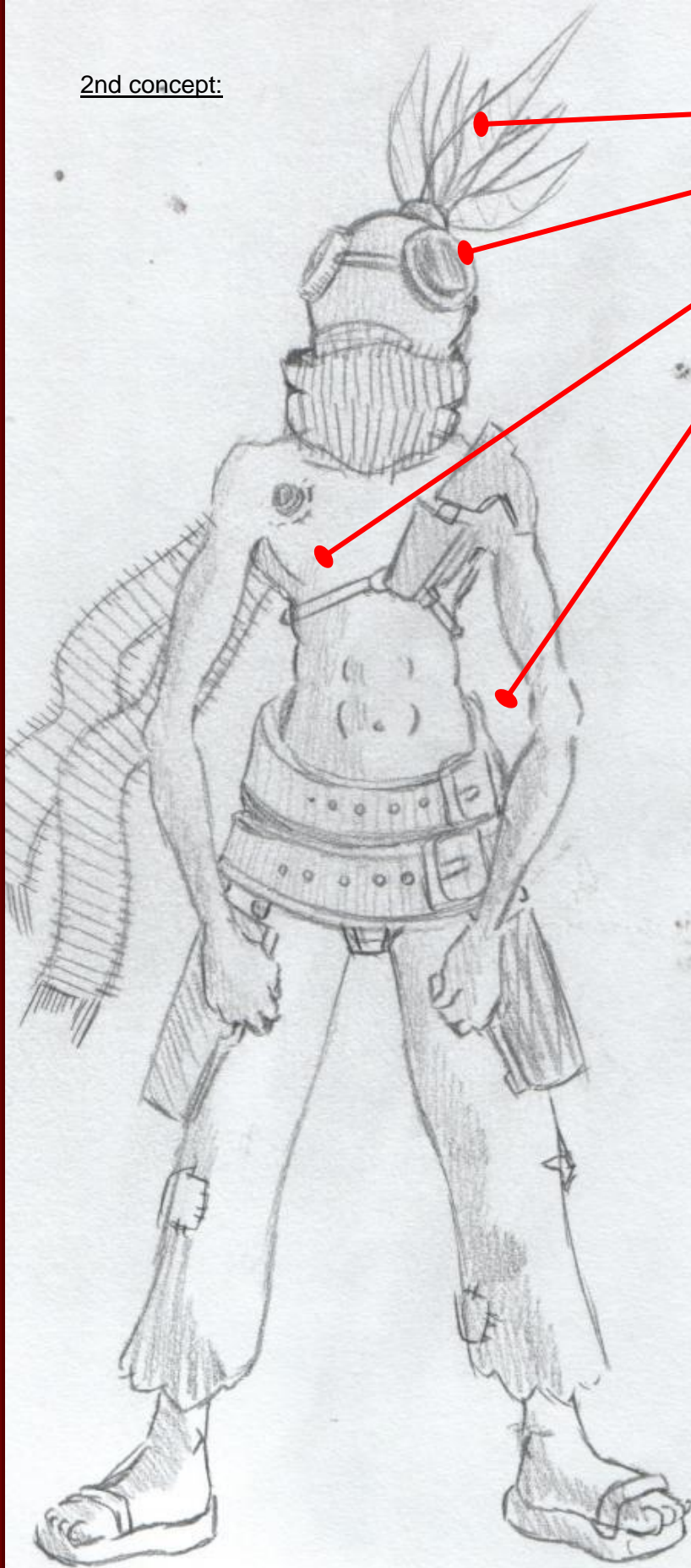
3.8.11- Characters: Conceptual Protagonist & Allies

- **Player character: Hiro**
- **Age: ??**
- **Weapons: None**
- **Special skills: “Silver Tongue”**
- A long time resident of Alkaid. He becomes swept up in the tumultuous events gripping Alkaid and seeks to escape the city.

1st concept:



2nd concept:



- Long hair Spiked up
- Goggles to prevent smog from damaging eyes.
- Lung filtering device
- Peasant clothes to keep a low profile.
- Quiet.
- Clever.
- Sense of humour.
- Motivated by revenge of the death of his mentor Thax.
- No weapons, he uses the environment to his advantage.
- Fuelled by the death of his former mentor, Hiro steps up centre stage in a game where your his wits will be tested and whether he's fighting oppression for his own revenge or for the cause his mentor would have wanted

Actions Hiro can perform: Run



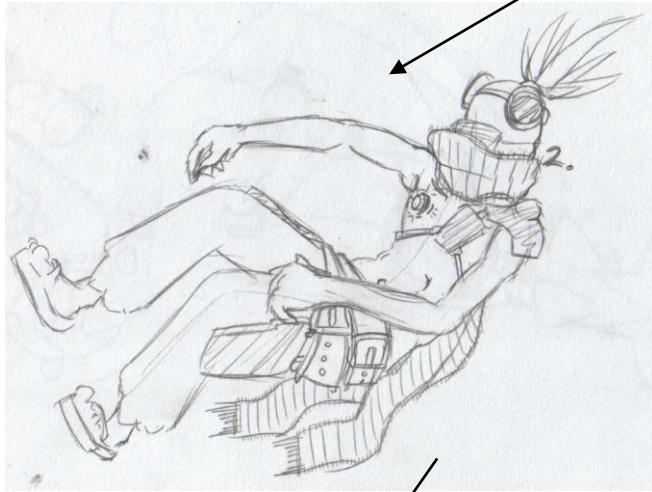
Actions Hiro can perform: Hop



Actions Hiro can perform: Hanging from ledges.



Actions Hiro can perform: Roll animation



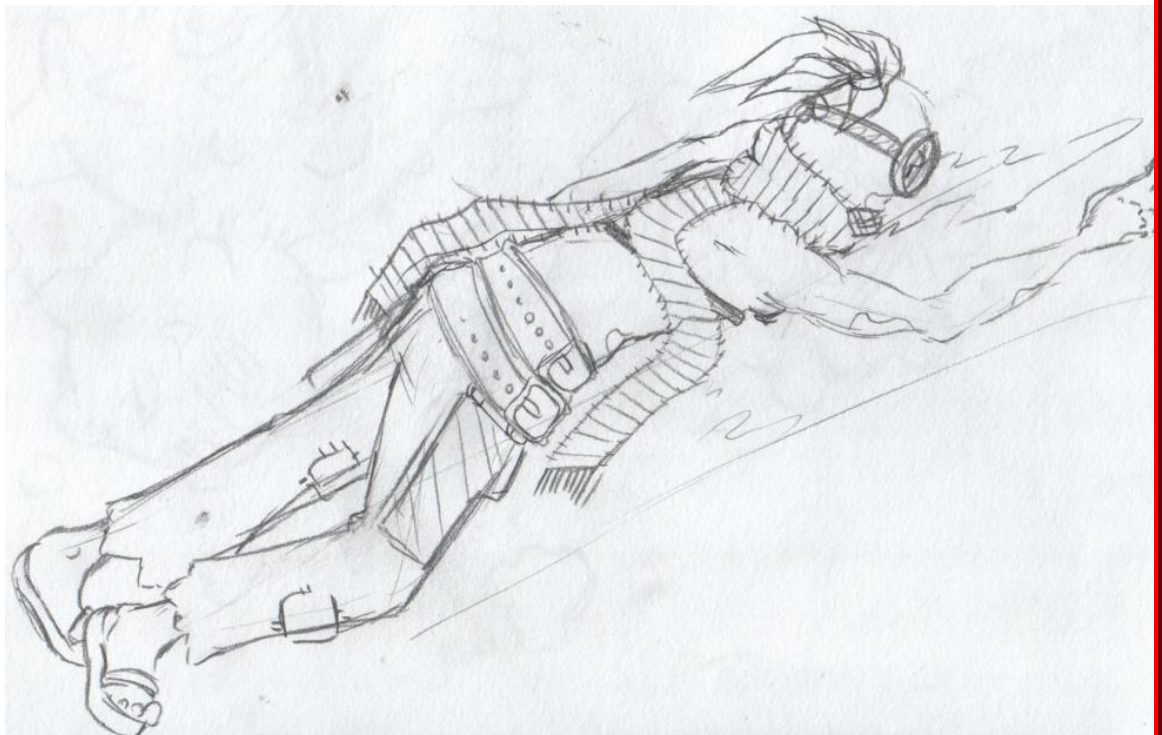
Actions Hiro can perform: Freefall



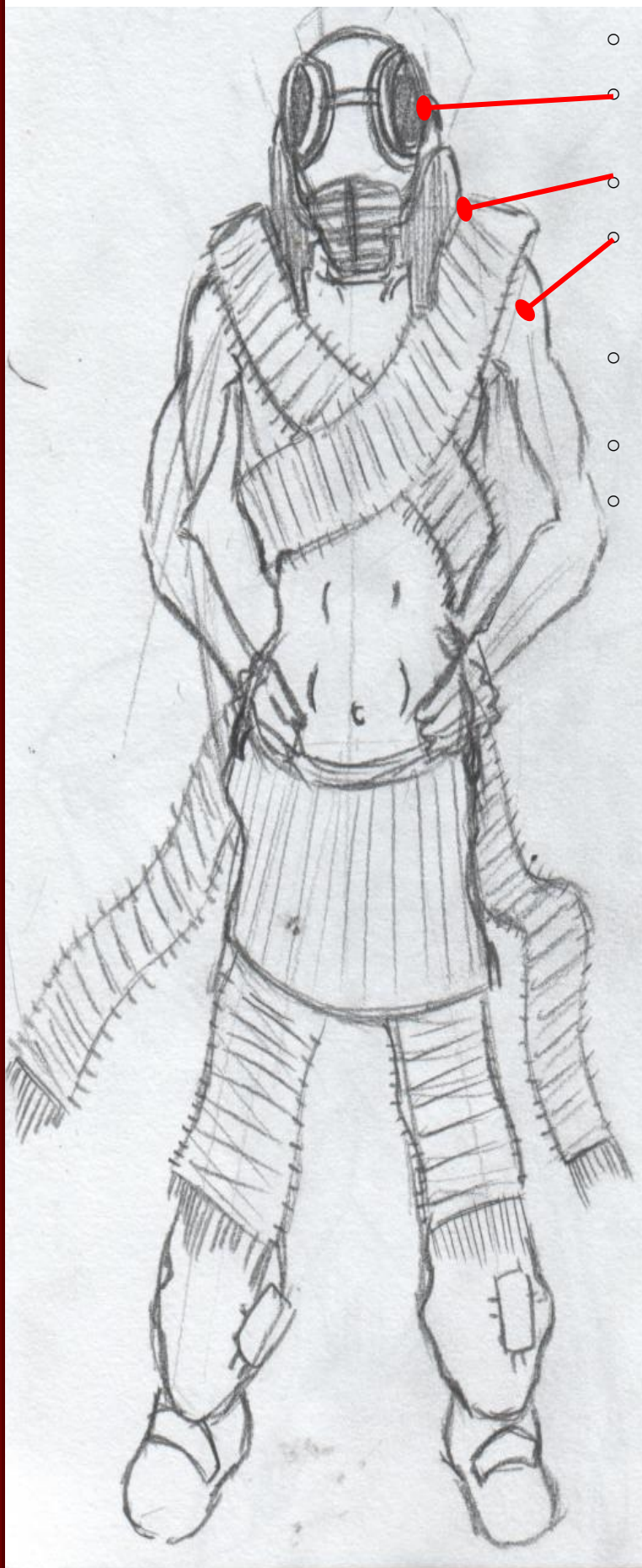
Actions Hiro can perform: Swimming



Actions Hiro can perform: Death animation



Ally character / NPC: Thax



- **Calm minded Mentor**
- Thax wears goggles much like most of the inhabitants of Alkaid.
- Light neck guard
- Wears cloth which he wraps around his body just like his mentor before him, no one quite knows why.
- Dresses down as he isn't a materialistic person.
- Proficient in martial arts
- Not much else is known about Thax, he was Hiro's mentor and the leader of the Resistance against the Alkaid military.

Ally character / NPC: Shmeep

1st concept:



2nd concept:

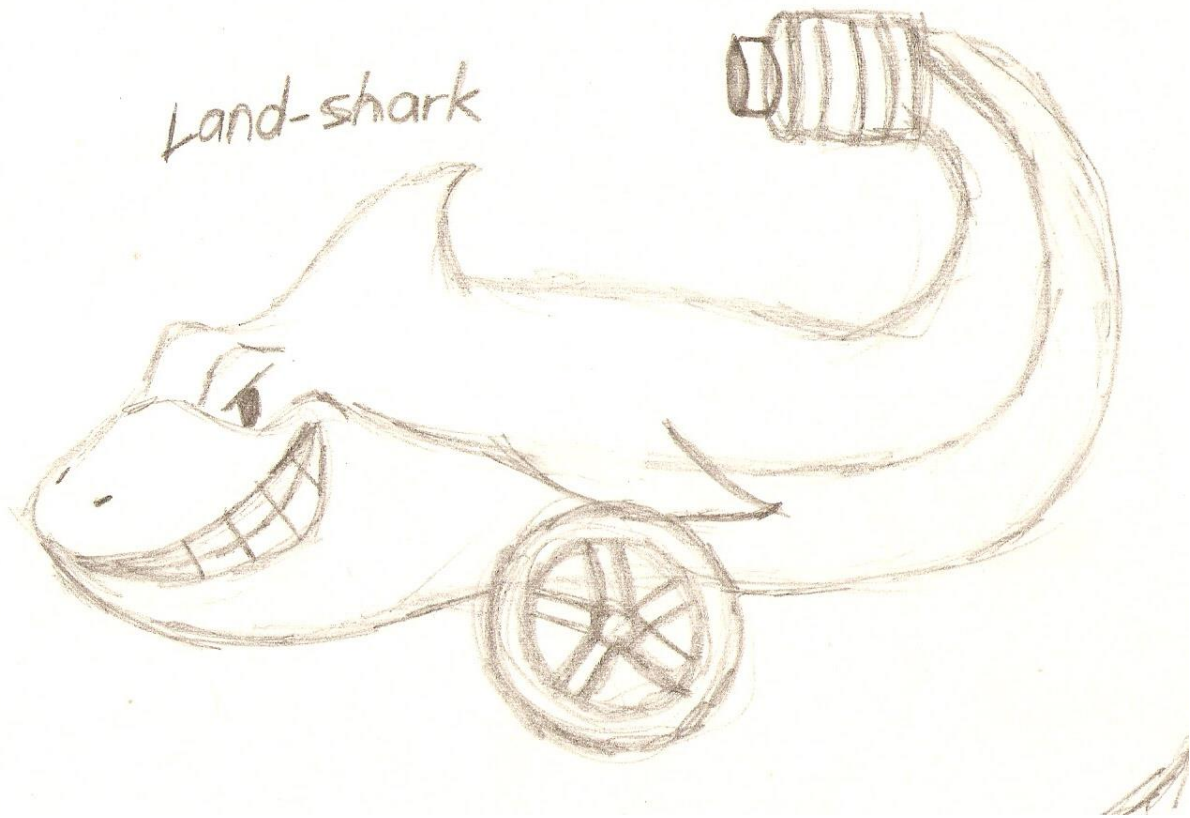


○ **Quiet and Clever...**

- Fin which adorns the top of his skull.
- Only race in Alkaid which is fully immune to the smog.
- Still where a lung filtering device as their race is have become addicted to pure oxygen over the years.
- The race of Schmeep is spread even throughout Alkaid
- Clever.
- Sense of humour.
- Motivated by personal goals
- Proficient in hand to hand combat
- The Shmeep race is long and spindly in build, usually developing a slight hunch back while travelling around Alkaid.

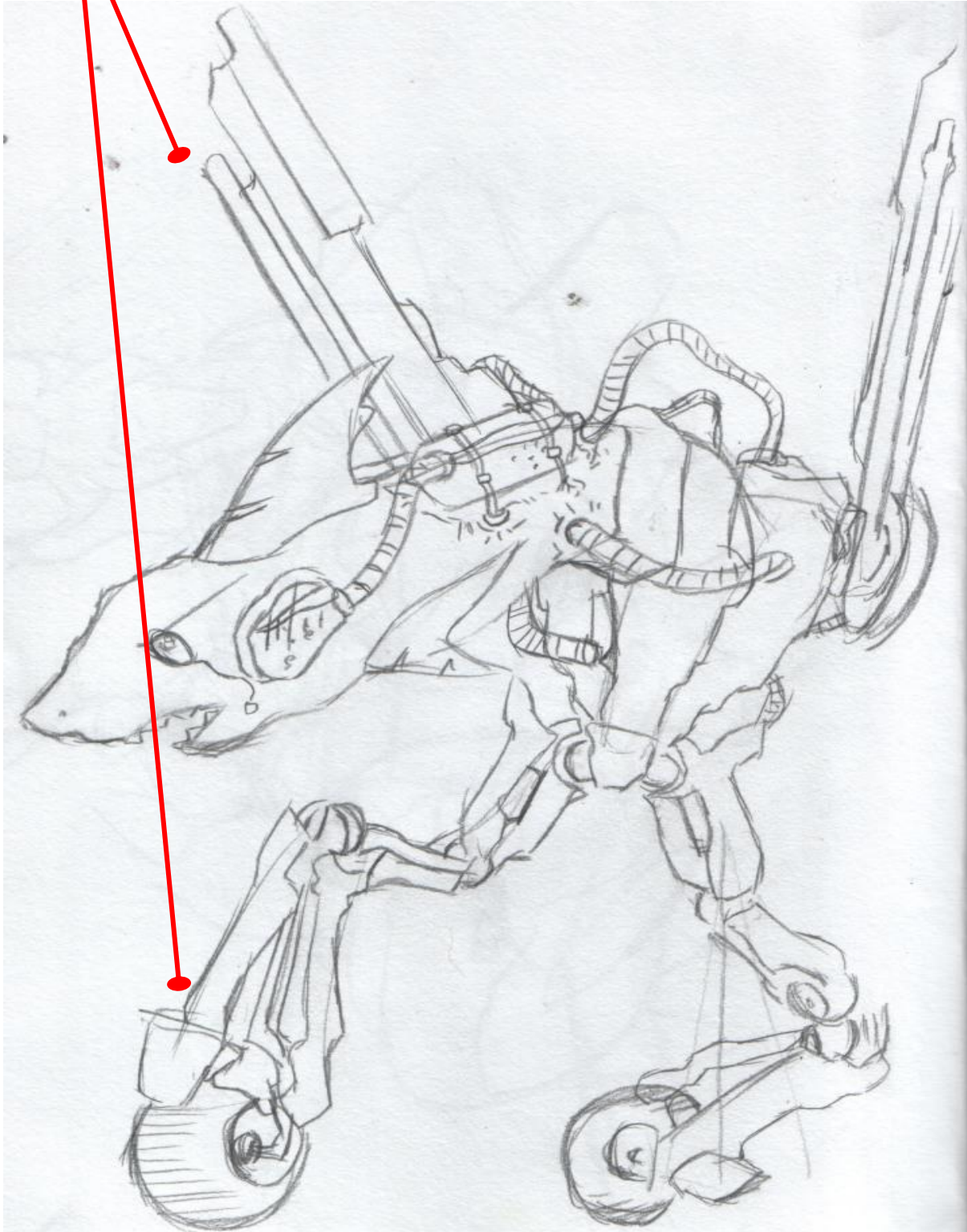
Ally character / NPC: Land-shark

1st concept:



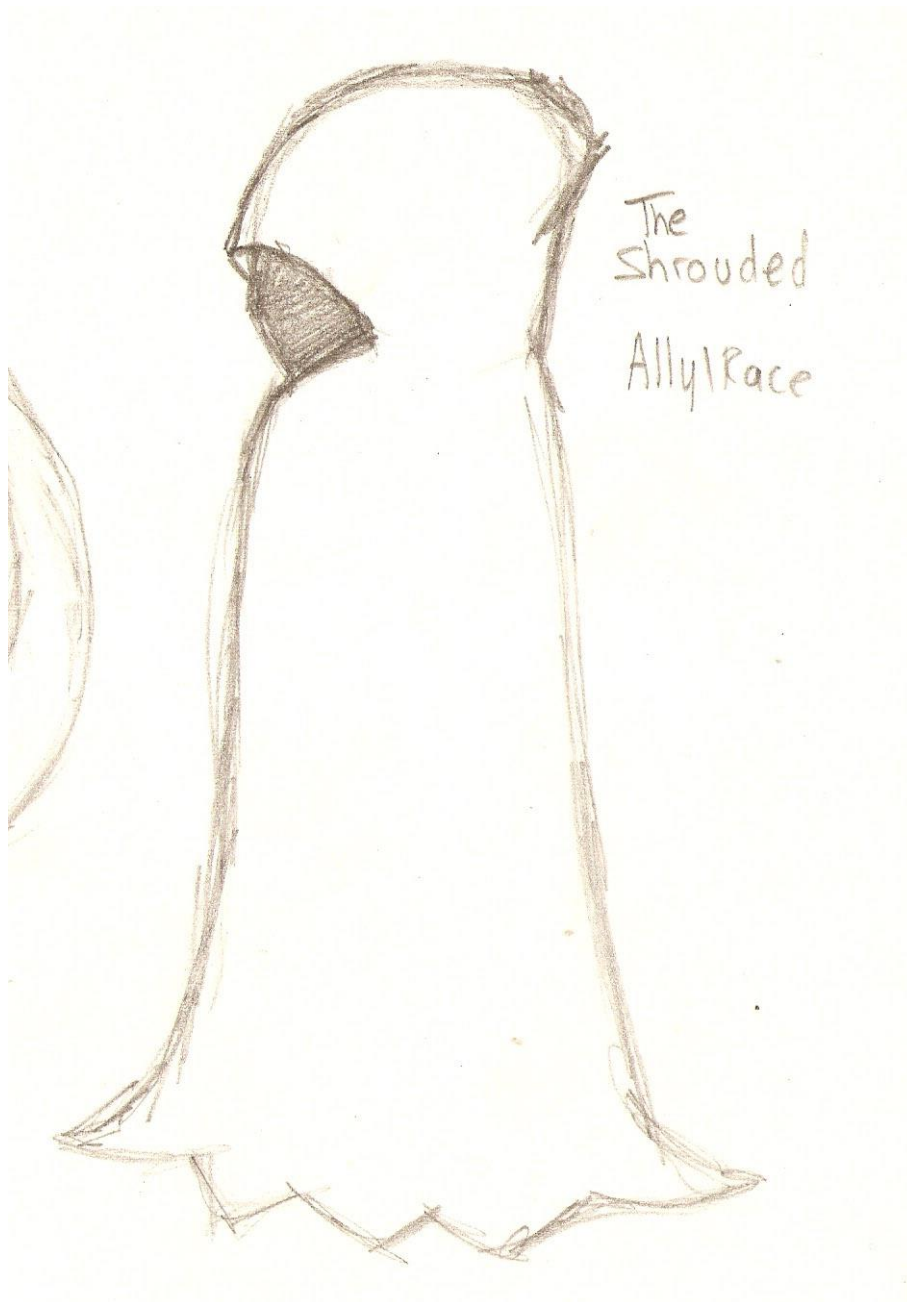
2nd concept:

- Large rail cannons
- Wheels provide Increased mobility
- Powered legs provide flexible and fluid movement.



Ally character / NPC: "The Shrouded"

1st concept:

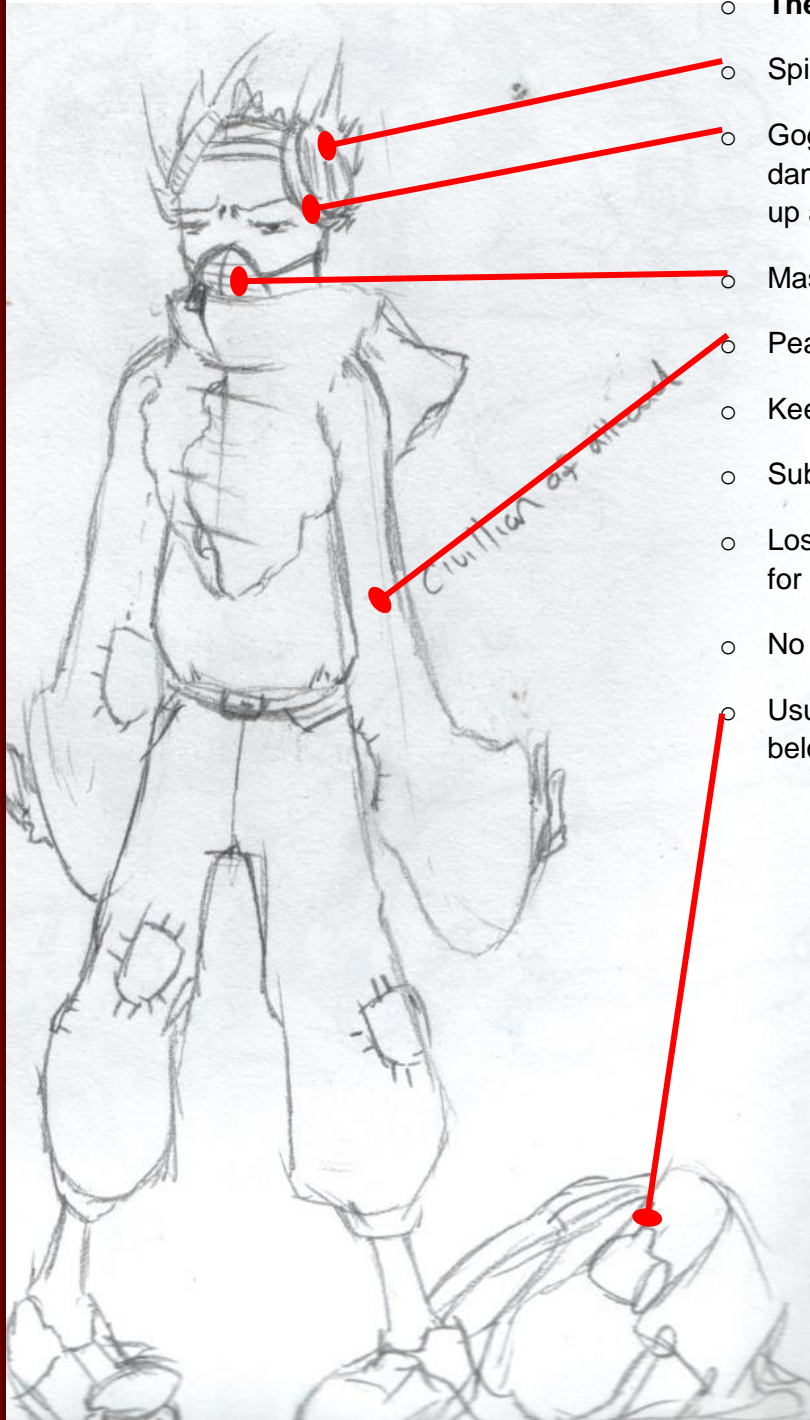


2nd concept:



- **Mysterious Beings that inhabit Alkaid**
- Wears a long black cloak
- Regularly seen smoking a pipe of anti-smog, a product that helps built the immune system in Alkaid.
- Quiet and keep to them self.
- They never put their body on show.
- Not much else is known about the Shrouded other than they deal in drugs that help improve the players performance throughout the game.

Ally character / NPC: Generic Alkaid Citizen



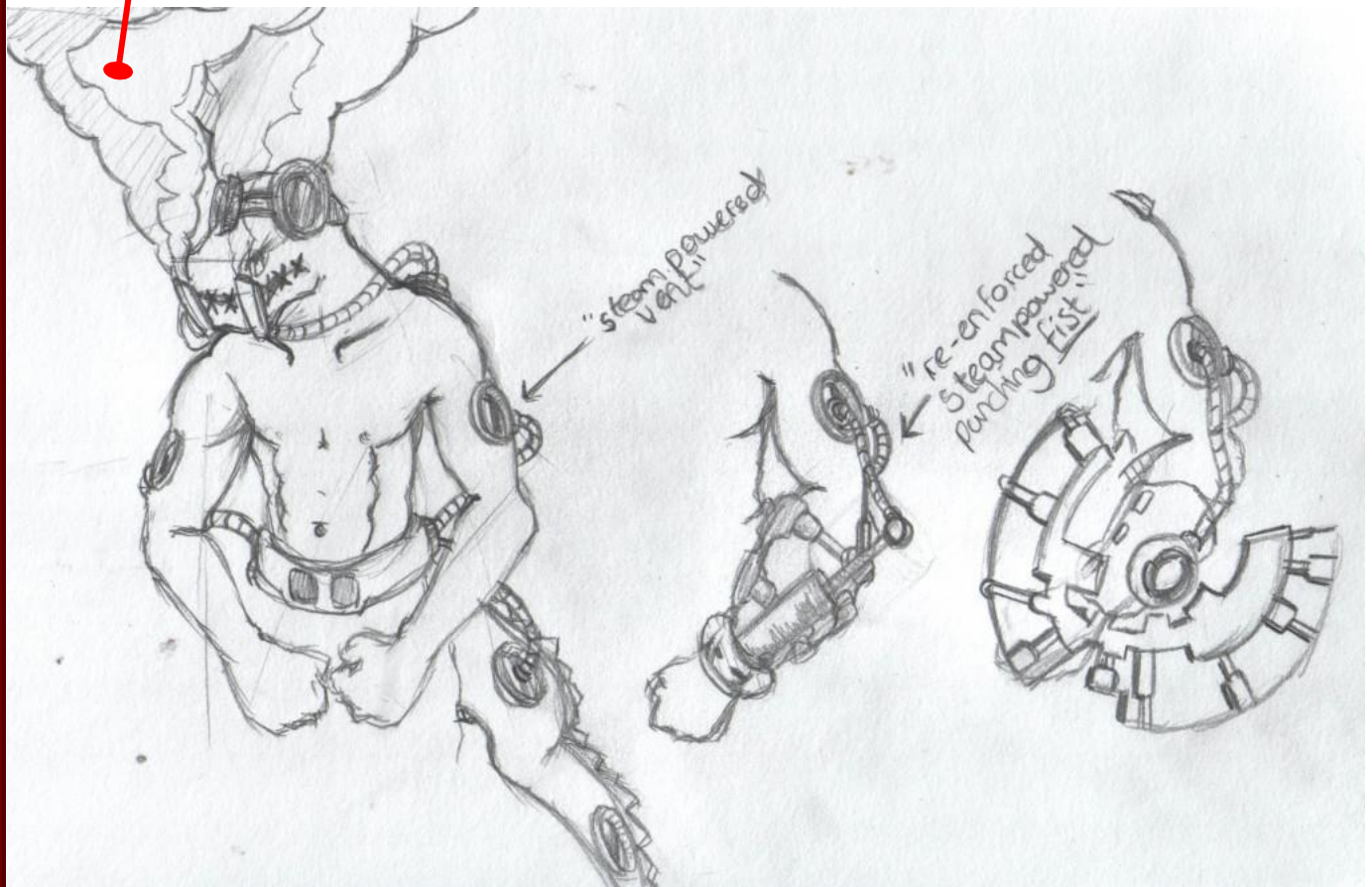
- The guy that blends into the crowd...
- Spikey hair
- Goggles to prevent smog from damaging eyes, some species have built up an immunity to the smog.
- Mask to stop smog from entering mouth
- Peasant clothes, torn and old.
- Keep to themselves.
- Submissive in nature.
- Lost all sense of humour and enjoyment for life.
- No weapons
- Usually homeless they take their belongings everywhere they go

3.8.12- Characters: Enemies

- After analysing enemies across several different titles, the group came up with some initial ideas for the various enemies that would impede the player.

Crocdillis

- The muscle men who attack the player using charged punching attacks.
- Slow moving.
- Sensitive to light.
- Uses the steam created naturally by his body to power his varied weapons.



Crocdillia

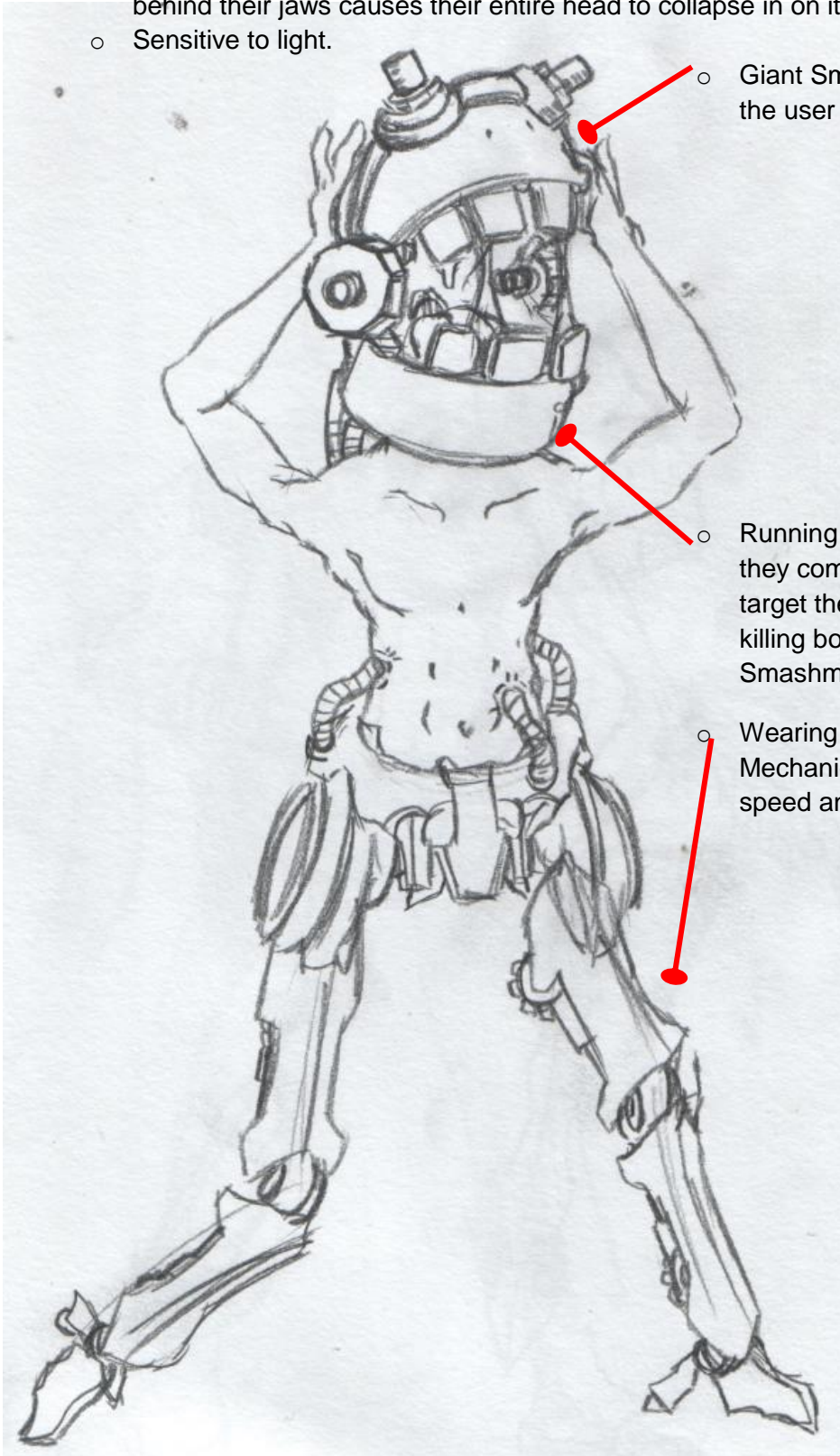
- Weedier versions of Crocdillis.
- They perform various maintenance operations around the city.
- Agile.
- Sensitive to light.
- Attack by throwing various implements, such as wrenches and saws at the player.
- Jack of all trades, found in many areas of Alkaid doing jobs from engineer to night guards and infantry in the Alkaid military.
- When confronted Lil'Crocadilla's will generally fight in numbers unless they are caught off guard on their own making them easy pickings for the player.
- Uses the steam created naturally by his body to power his varied weapons.



- Crocdillis and Crocdillia make up greater part of the enemy population in the city, from engineers to guards patrolling the streets at night.

Smashmouth

- The ironically named and ill-fated sacrificial lamb of Alkaid.
- Part of the Alkaid Suppression Squad, they are deployed to quell troublemakers and riots within the city.
- Smashmouths hunt their enemies with incredible speed and deliver their attack with pinpoint accuracy.
- Unfortunately for them they can only deliver a single biting attack as the sheer power behind their jaws causes their entire head to collapse in on itself on impact.
- Sensitive to light.



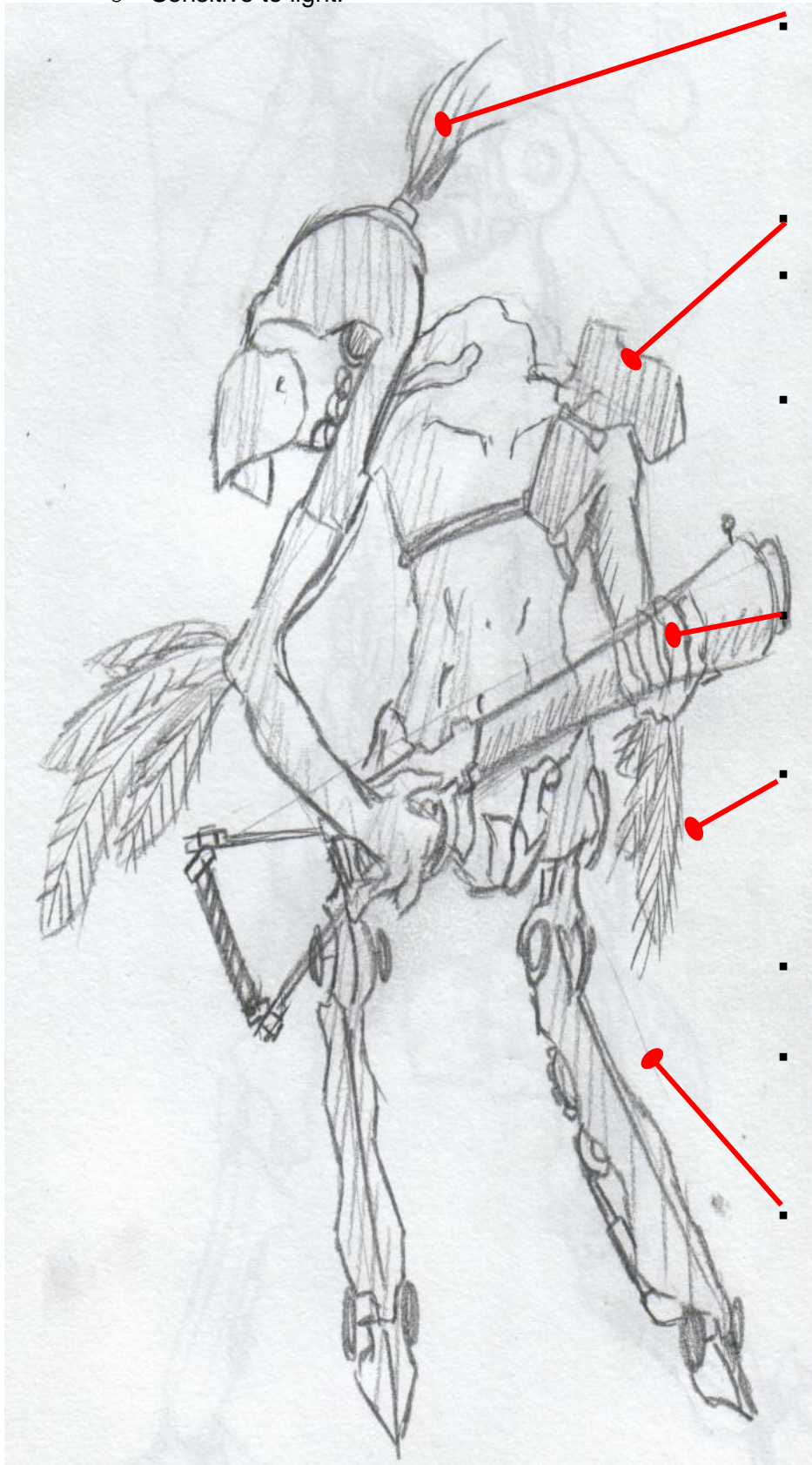
○ Giant Smashmouth trap that kills the user instantly.

○ Running around aimlessly when they come within contact of their target their large jaw slams shut killing both the target and the Smashmouth.

○ Wearing an advanced set of Mechanical legs for advanced speed and movement.

Strawk

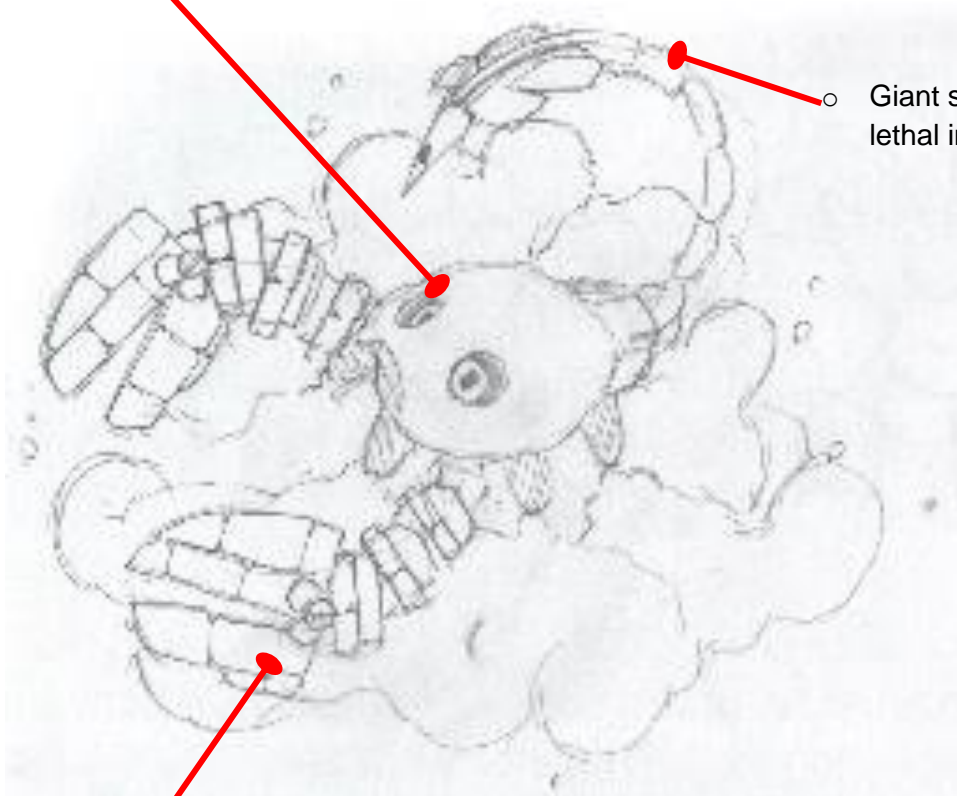
- A blunderbuss-wielding hybrid bird/machine.
- They can take flight for short periods to deliver powerful, yet inaccurate aerial assaults.
- Sensitive to light.



- Simply headdress showing the citizens of Alkaid that these guys aren't to be messed around with.
- Light guards armour
- Standard Buster Rifle used by all of the Strawk regiments.
- Generally Strawks are cool and won't attack unless you come in range of them.
- Using the Buster Rifle Strawks tend to attack from a distance with their imprecise aim.
- Feathers that adorn their arms, some believe them to be an evolutionary throwback from creatures they had evolved from.
- Enjoys mocking their enemies.
- Strawks pride themselves in being cogs in a bigger machine working together as one.
- Strawks have never had strong legs, so once they enrol in the Alkaid military they are fitted with mechanical legs giving them greater mobility.

SmogScorp

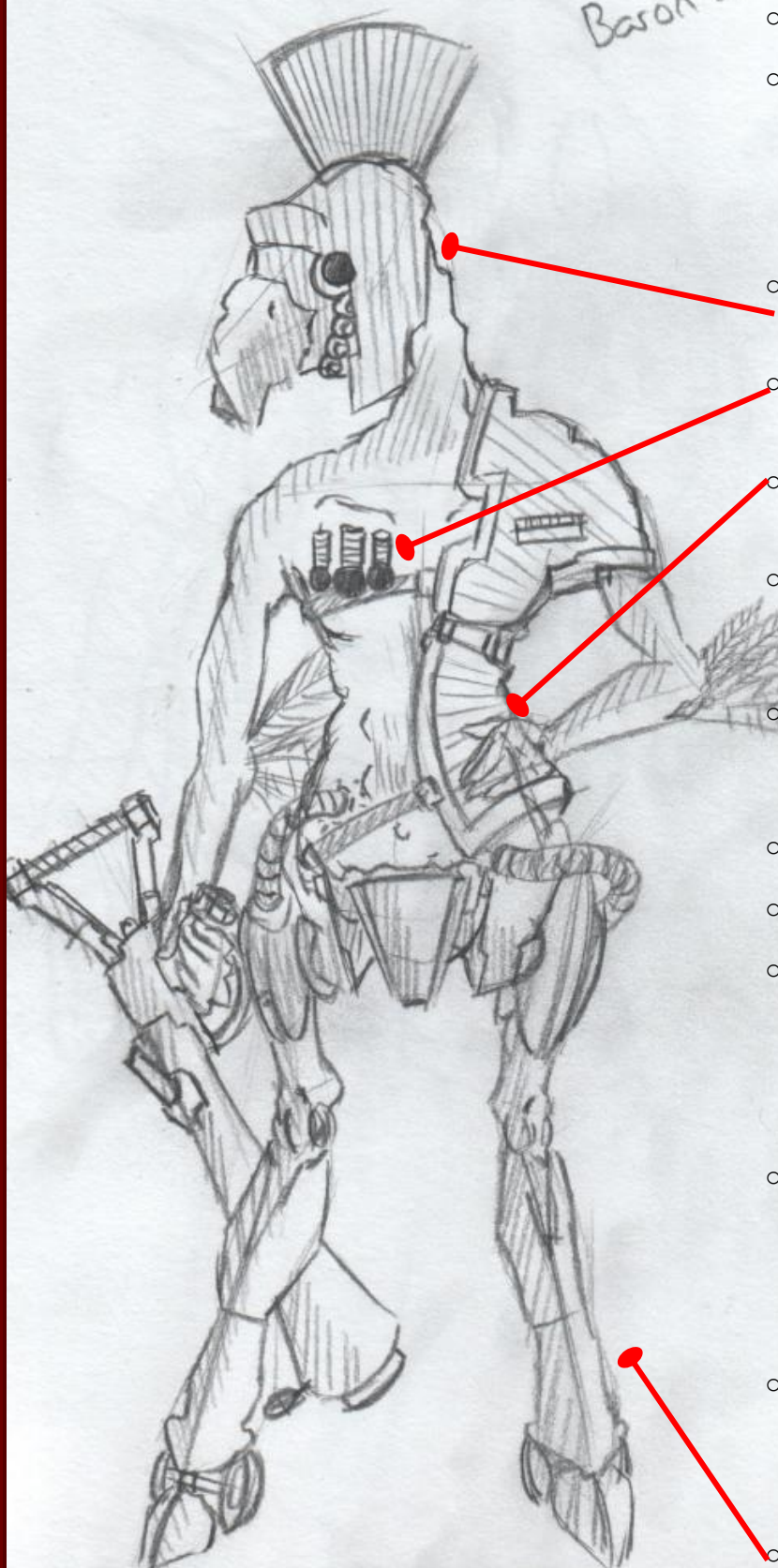
- A small creature that disguises itself in the smog throughout the Slums & Industrial districts. The SmogScorp grabs the ankles of its enemies, restricting their movement before delivering a lethal injection.
- Produces a toxic gas underneath its shell.
- Shell made of brick and mortar.



○ Giant stinger to deliver a lethal injection of toxins.

○ Giant pincers to grab enemies.

Baron Talon



- **The loud mouthed General**
- A high ranking Strawk general, he is a cunning adversary and a staunch supporter of Tiger-Lily. His aerial combat skills are unmatched.
- Large warrior helmet showing his rank within the Alkaid military.
- Medals and badges awarded for service in the Alkaid military.
- Power armour that adorns the left side of his body.
- He uses a standard Buster rifle which he has carried his whole life in the Alkaid military.
- Quick to anger, however has a knack for always coming out on top.
- Shy when it comes to females.
- Likes to toy with his enemies.
- Baron Talon has complete control of the Alkaid military service, more so than Tiger Lilly as each request must pass through Baron Talon.
- Secretly he wished to one day be ruler of Alkaid but is disliked by the habitants of Alkaid for his harsh sense of humour when it comes to serious matters.
- Born in poverty Baron Talon worked his way up through the ranks to become what he is today.
- Wearing an advanced set of Mechanical legs that lower ranking Strawks only dream about.

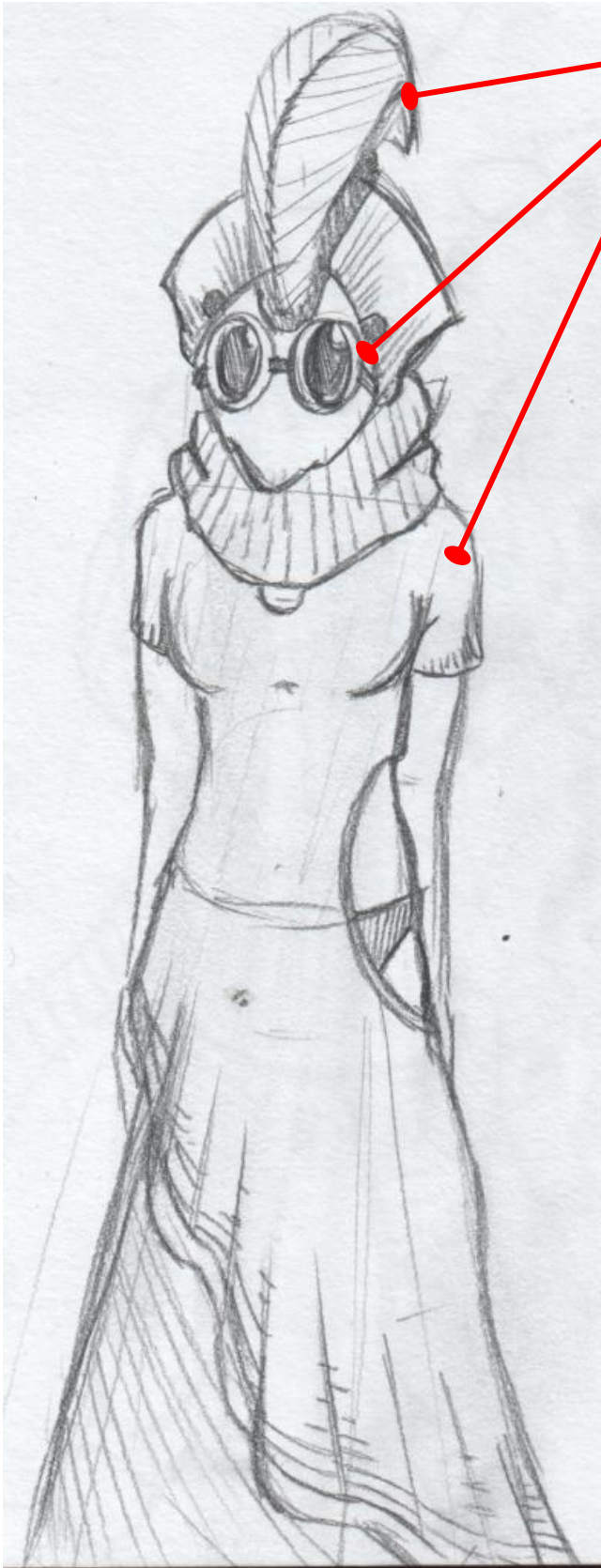
Tiger Lily

- The femme fatale (in her eyes at least) politician cum megalomaniac who holds Alkaid in the palm of her hand.

1st concept:



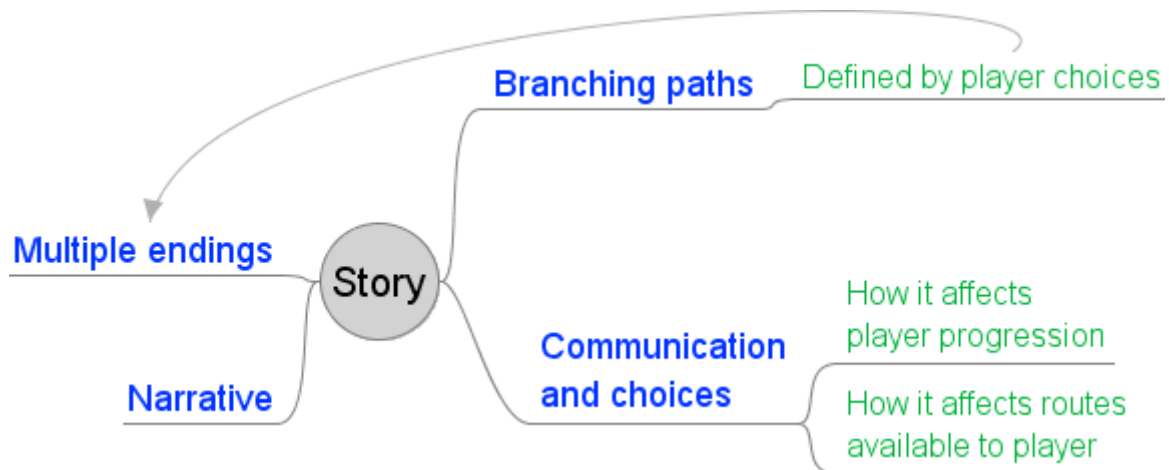
2nd concept:



- **Cold and Calculating Antagonist**
- Large ceremonial feather
- Goggles to prevent smog from damaging eyes.
- Elegant dress however not too flashy
- Speaks her mind
- Quick witted.
- Cold, harsh and unforgiving.
- Troubled by the resistance which is met by the workers in the slums of Alkaid.
- She controls the military forces of Alkaid through Baron Talon.
- Born into wealth, Lilly as she is known to her family ruthlessly rules over the settlement of Alkaid.
- Willing to go to any lengths to take out anyone in her way of complete power this makes her extremely dangerous.

3.8.13- Story

- After several discussions and drawing upon all the research previously conducted, the group began to set out the groundwork for the story of Alkaid. The first step was to mindmap the overall idea of how different gameplay elements would fit into the story:



- Alkaid, a dystopia filled with mutants, freaks and monsters. Situated in an area known as the Badlands, the city stands as the final sanctuary for all walks of life. But the ruthless Tiger-Lily, one of the upper echelons of the Alkaid Preservation Society, has become drunk on power. Systematically ousting her political enemies from power she now reigns over the city, controlling Alkaid's key resources from her lofty perch atop the Core Tower, to further her own selfish ambition.

Tiger-Lily's iron-fisted/despotic rule over the city is not without opposition. The Concerned Citizens of Alkaid, an organisation comprised of those no longer willing to bow down to Tiger-Lily's rule works in the shadows of the city, seeking to restore the harmonious balance that once existed within Alkaid.

The recent death of Thax, leader of Concerned Citizens of Alkaid has struck a decisive blow to the organisation, and has left its remaining members in turmoil. One such member, Hiro, former apprentice to Thax, is now on the run from the authorities.

With a crack team hot on his heels, Hiro must decide whether to stand and fight or run for his life.

- The next step was to start building elements of the story into actual gameplay. The group had identified the possibility of employing story arcs and player choices within the game and wanted to define how these would fit into the game.

3.8.14– Story Arcs

- The group noted the idea of utilising story arcs to allow the player a different experience with each playthrough of the game. Possible ideas for this were levels, characters and areas that were completely unique to each individual “arc.”

- **Choices**
To facilitate the multiple endings / story arcs system the player will be able to make many choices throughout the game. Some scripted and some passive/incidental. Some examples:
 - to kill the boss, or to forgive them.
 - to save the girl, or save oneself

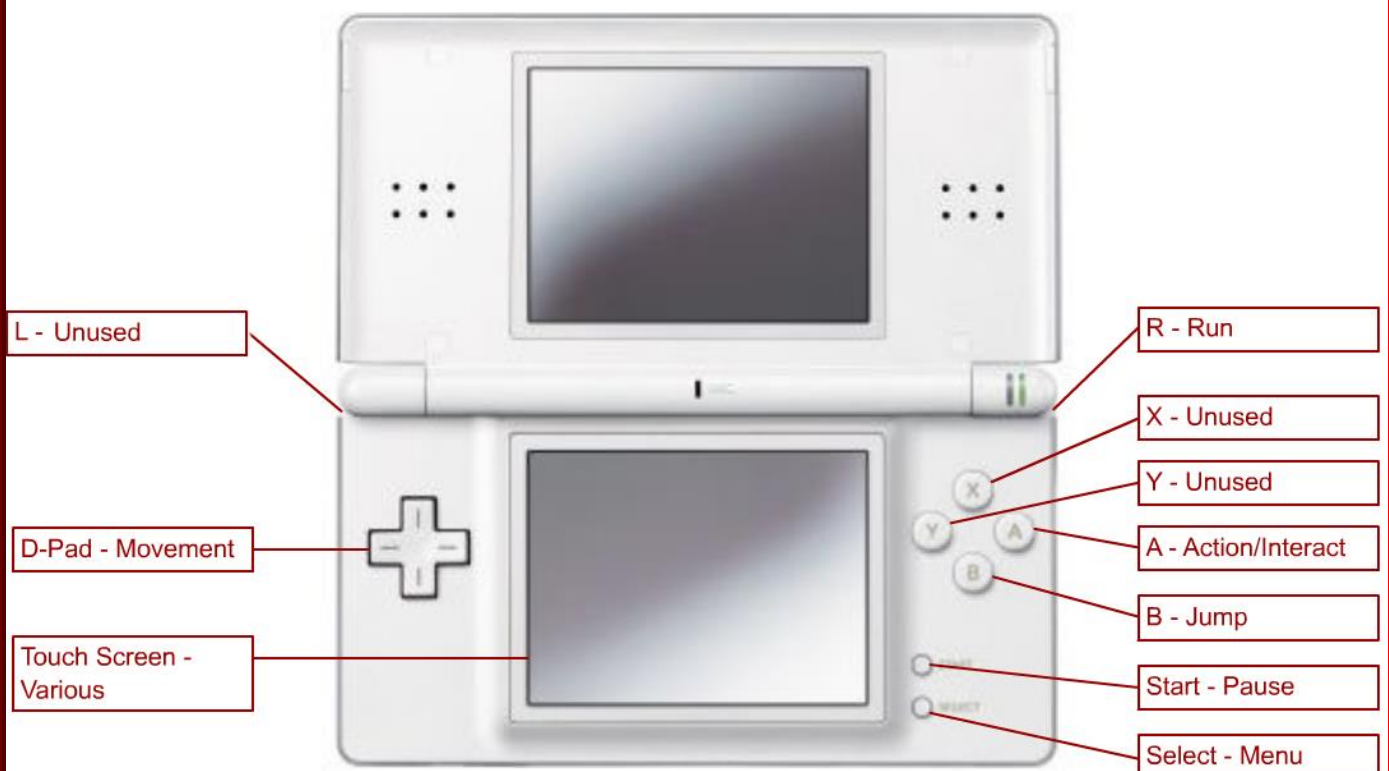
- Part of the idea behind this is to bring some elements of big-name games like “Fable II” to the small screen and downscale appropriately.

- The group were initially considering the use of an “Alignment Meter” which tracked and measured the player choices but this was dropped as it was considered too far outside the remit of this genre and generated unneeded complexity.

- **Endings**
- The following endings have been identified:
 - A: Escape - The player escapes the city
 - B: Overthrow - Player defeats the primary antagonist
 - C: Tyrant - Player assumes control of the city after defeating tyrant.
 - D: True Ending

3.8.15- Controls

- How the player controls the protagonist:
 - **D-Pad** – Character Movement, Crouch, Hoist, Lower self, Menu Navigation
 - **A** – Action, Interact
 - **B** – Jump
 - **X** – Unused
 - **Y** – Unused
 - **L** – Unused
 - **R** – Run
 - **Start** – Pause game
 - **Select** – Menu
 - **Touch Screen** – Various
- **Control map:**



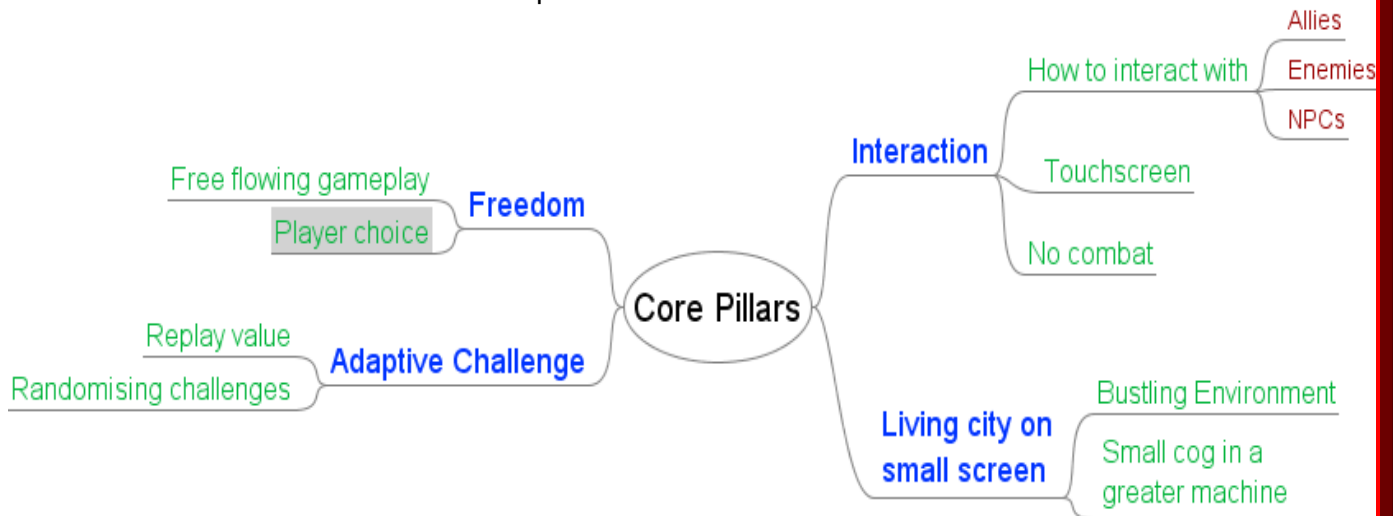
3.8.16– Controls in-depth / Control nuances

- **D-Pad** – Character Movement, Menu Navigation
 - **Left** and **Right** on the D-Pad move the character left or right respectively.
 - **Left** and **Right** can be used in tandem with the R trigger to cause the player character to run. Whilst running, the player character moves faster but it takes longer to slow to a stop, potential the player could fall off a ledge.
 - While in a **crouching state**, **Left** and **Right** will cause the player character to roll in that direction.
 - While in a crouching state, pressing **Up** will cause the player character to return to a standing position.
 - Pressing **Up** on the D-Pad will execute a hoist maneuver. The player character will attempt to grab any ledge that is directly above him.
 - Pressing **Down** on the D-Pad will cause the player character to enter a **crouching state**.
 - While positioned **near the edge of a ledge**, pressing **Down** on the D-Pad will cause the player character to **lower himself** and **hang from the edge of the ledge**.
 - While **hanging**, pressing **Up** will cause the player character to climb up onto the ledge.
 - While **hanging**, pressing **Down** will cause the player character to let go of the ledge and freefall.
- **A** – Action, Interact (interactive with scenery such as levers and switches etc)
- **B** – Jump (executes context sensitive jump.)
 - If the player is stationary a “short hop” is executed
 - If the player is walking a “short hop” is executed
 - If the player is running (holding **R**) a **running jump** is executed (running jump will automatically grab any ledge the player character comes into contact with.) The player character then hangs from the ledge as per hoisting.
- **X** – Unused
- **Y** – Unused
- **L** – Unused
- **R** – Run (hold the trigger button to run)

- Start – Pause game
- Select – Menu (accesses the options menu)
- Touch Screen – Various (E.R.I.X, etc.)

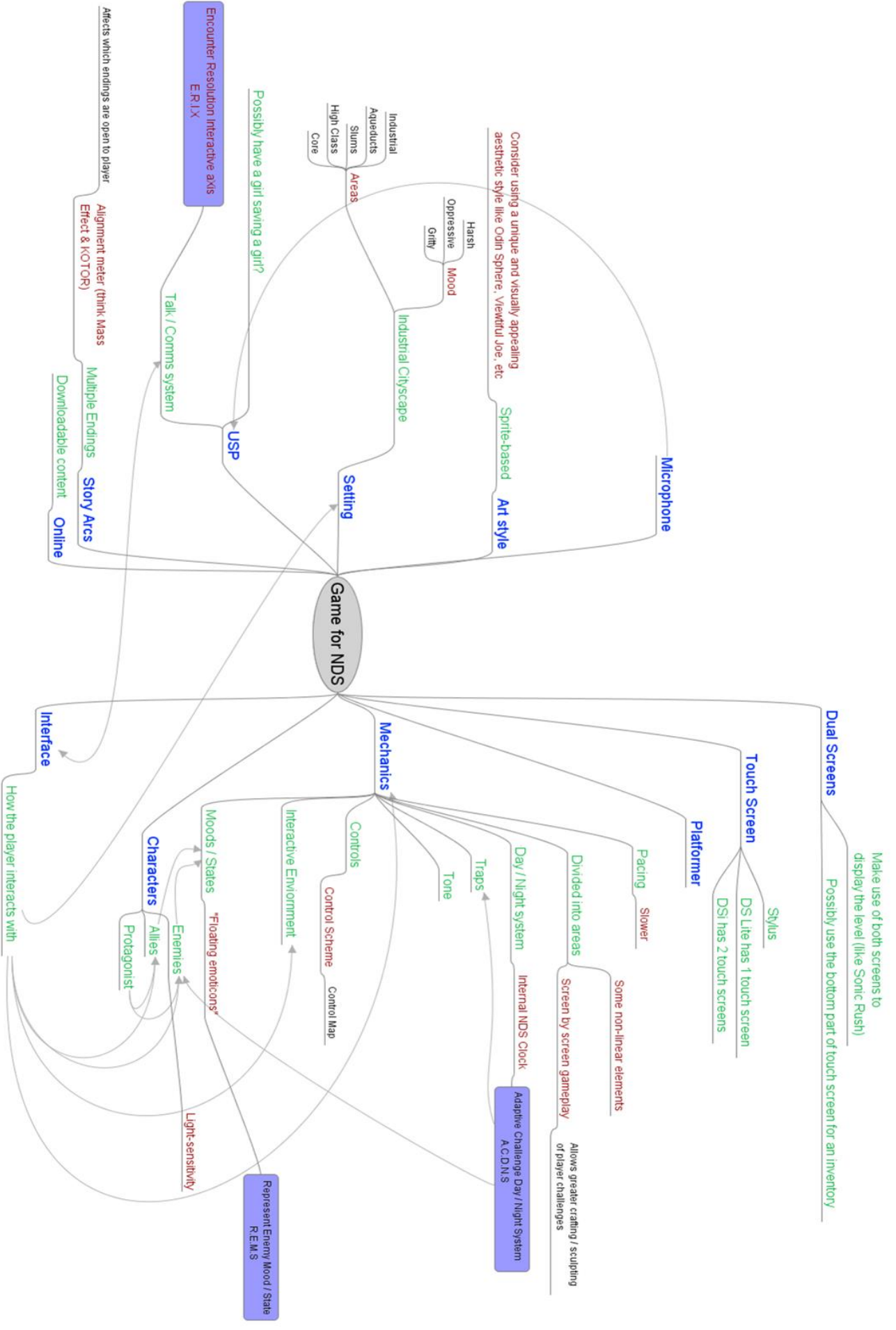
3.8.17- End of synthesis mind mapping the core pillars

- The group proceeded to define the core pillars that the game would be built upon and charted them on a mind map:



3.8.18- End of synthesis mind mapping overall functionality

- Having now mapped out and detailed each of the core pillars of the game, an updated mind map was required to reflect the fleshed out ideas and mechanics developed during the Synthesis cycle:

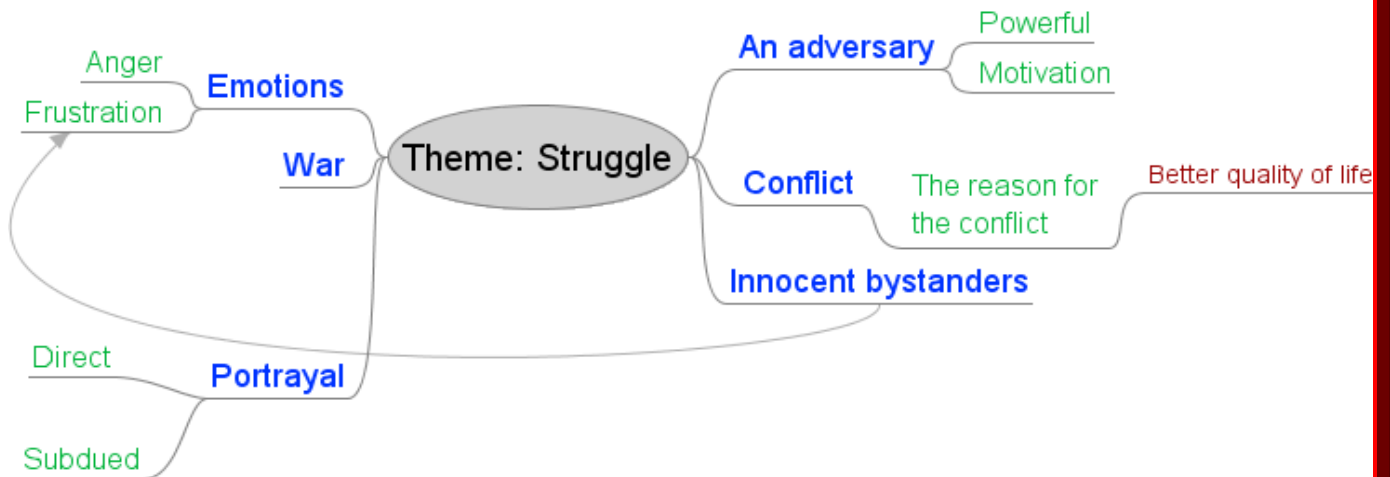


4.0- Refinement

4.1 Refinement Tier One

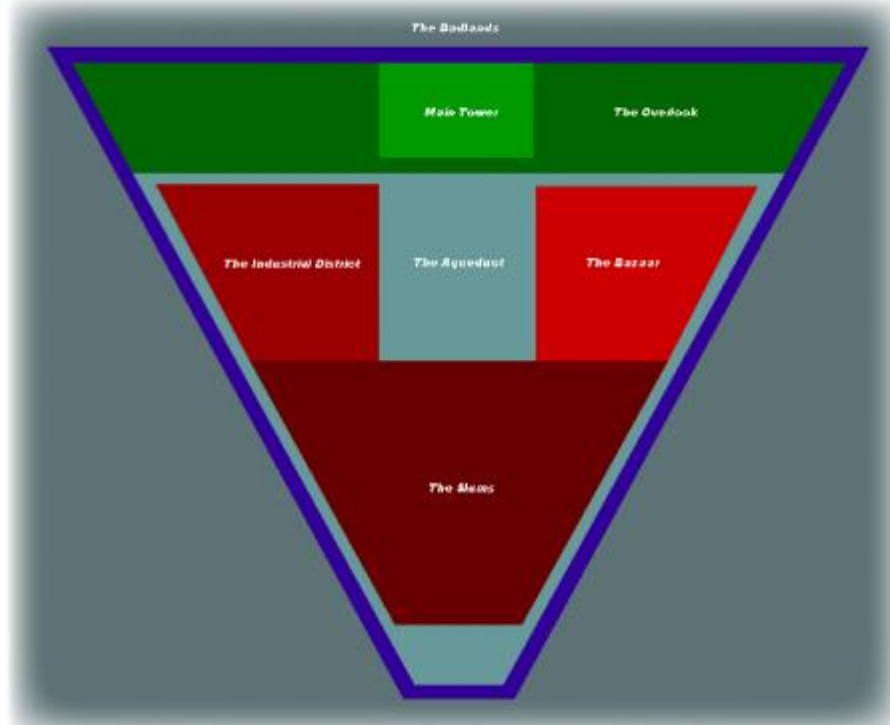
4.1.1- Mindmapping thoughts on the theme of struggle

- Next, the group mind mapped their thoughts on the theme of a struggle.

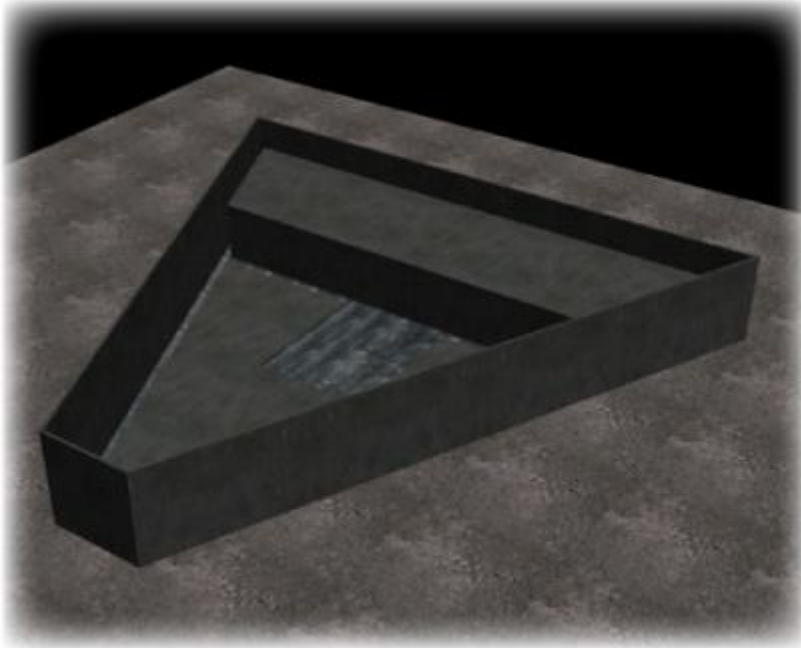


4.1.2- Evolving the city's design

- With the city now refined into a number of districts, the next step was to work on feedback that it was too reminiscent of Final Fantasy VII's Midgar and also apply some of the factors identified during the group's research on the theme of a "struggle."
- Based on the previous suggestion of adopting a triangular shape, the city design morphed into a sleek, contemporary design.
- This design fully realises the central theme of water within the city, whilst maintaining the idea of "sectors" conceptualised earlier.



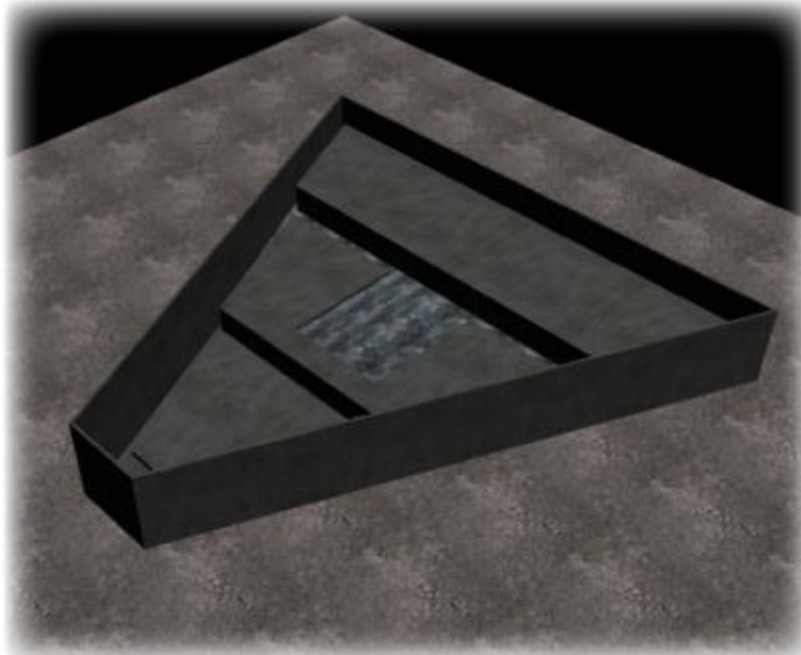
- The “Slums” section was intentionally “sandwiched” and squashed into the tip of the triangular layout. This served the purpose of a group of oppressed citizens being “pushed out” or backed into a corner. Their living conditions are poor, and people in the rest of the city look down on them. Daily life is a struggle at the best of times, and with the government offering little to no support, the outlook is bleak.
- A 3D representation was produced as a purely illustrative concept. The fully realised city would feature towering skyscrapers, refineries and industrial chimneys, enveloping the city in a perpetual veil of smog.



The first 3D concept for the city, with a single elevated level

4.1.3- Adding depth to the city

- The city was then given more depth, and “layered” across three separate levels of elevation, as shown in this concept image:



The second 3D concept for the city, with three elevated sections

- The move to the triangular layout abolished the **Outer** and **Inner Rings** that were present in the original circular design. These were adapted into an elevated multi-tiered layout, with the poorer sections of the city living at the lowest elevation, and the Overlook section being the highest.
 - The Inner Sanctum became “The Overlook” to reflect its position within the city.
 - The Core was renamed the “The Tower” though this is subject to change.
- Taking into account the new city layout, it is now divided like so:

Level 1 – The lowest elevation

- **The Slums** – The residential area for the vast majority of people, it is vastly over populated. Although the government provides some maintenance and services to the district, for the most part is a lawless place. Visually, it looks run-down. Many buildings lie in ruins and the streets are covered in filth. It is ripe with disease and plague.

Level 2 – Mid level elevation

- **The Bazaar** – The city’s trade district. Working class citizens deemed unfit to serve in the Industrial District make their living here. There are generally two types of people you will meet here, Merchants and Bandits.
- **The Industrial District** – The city’s industrial district, it supplies the city various resources. A thick cloud of smog lingers throughout this district. The turning of gears, and clashing of metal can be heard all day, every day.
- **The Aqueduct** – The city’s source of water, the station that maintains the aqueduct lies deep underwater. From the outside world, far beyond the Badlands, fresh water is pumped into the aqueduct, where special operators maintain it 24/7.

Level 3 – The Overlook & Tower

- **The Overlook** – The residential area for the middle class citizens, which make up around 9% of the city’s population. It is a well-maintained, well-ordered district, with a thriving community. The Overlook has its own smaller trade and industrial areas.
- **The Tower**– The residential area for the upper class citizens and the headquarters for the city’s government. At the very heart of the core, a large tower rises far into the sky.

Outside the City:

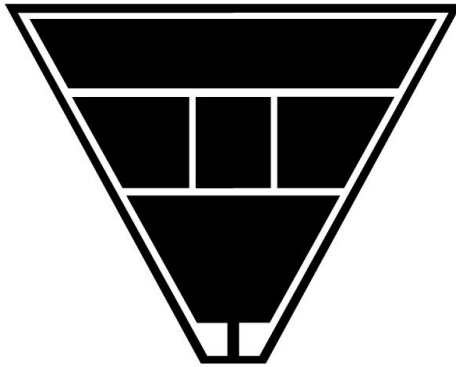
- **The Badlands** - An area known as the Badlands surrounds the city. A cruel and harsh land, devoid of life, it is one of the reasons nobody ever leaves the city. What lies beyond the Badlands is unknown, but many assume it to be a utopia.
- With the setting largely finalised it was necessary to name the city before moving further forward with the design.

- [Go to Synthesis Tier Five\(3.5\)](#)

4.2 Refinement Tier Two

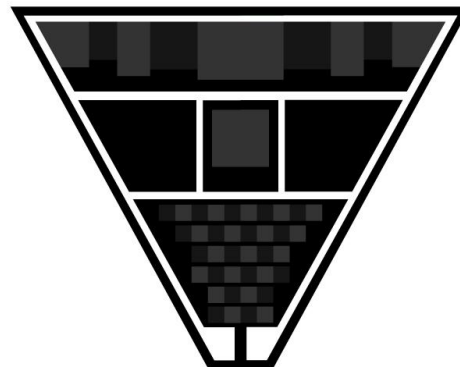
4.2.1- Finalising the city name & logo

- The name “Alkaid” was put forward to lukewarm reception and a short while later the following three logos were produced at the designer’s request. Immediately, there was an apparent change in the group, who had universally warmed to the name and also bore renewed enthusiasm for the game.



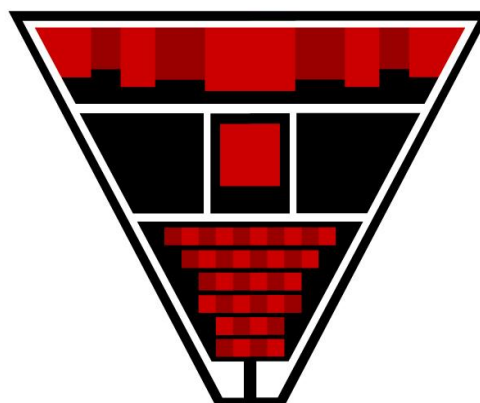
ALKAID

1st concept logo using “Alkaid”



ALKAID

2nd concept logo using “Alkaid”



ALKAID

3rd concept logo using “Alkaid”

The third logo was adopted and the group were ready to decide which platform would accommodate the prospective city they had designed.

- [Go to Problem Tier Four \(1.5\)](#)

4.3 Refinement Tier Three

4.3.1- Researching NPC interaction

- The group decided to research NPC interaction across several titles to gain a greater understanding as to what features constitute a successful system and how these could be applied to the game.
 - [Go to Research Tier Nine \(2.10\)](#)

4.3.2- Adapting the Talking & Communication idea into a USP – E.R.I.X

- After having examined successful implementations of communication across several titles, the group were in a position to plan how communication would work. Taking into account the requirement for the communication system to function in both platforming and hub gameplay sections, the group came up with the concept of E.R.I.X, as detailed below:
 - **E.R.I.X - Encounter Resolution Interactive aXis**
 - **What is E.R.I.X?**
 - E.R.I.X is a system by which the player is able to communicate with the inhabitants of the city. This includes NPCs, allies and enemies.
 - By pressing and holding the stylus over a character a “branched menu axis” will appear showing the possible communication options available to the player.
 - While the E.R.I.X axis is displayed, all other gameplay is paused until the user removes the stylus from the touchpad.
 - **Marrying the notion of E.R.I.X to actual gameplay**
 - E.R.I.X is more than a shallow gimmick; successful use of the E.R.I.X communication system is centric to the game.
 - **E.R.I.X – Side-quests**
 - The player may find themselves having difficulty progressing through heavily patrolled areas, this is where side-quests come into play.
 - Sidequests allow the player additional flexibility and choice when deciding how to proceed.
 - **Gameplay example**
 - The player is unable to exit the “Slums” area due to a heavy enemy presence during both day and night. However by finding and befriending a corrupt officer within the Slums “Hub” area the player is able to lessen security for that particular “game night.” Befriending the corrupt officer would first involve “talking” to him and completing the side-quest he mentions.

○ **E.R.I.X – Evolution of communication**

As the player gets further into the game they will be given the opportunity to upgrade” their repertoire of “talk topics.” At the beginning there might only a few topics available – basic greetings, etc.

○ Later in the game the player may acquire ability to:

- throw their voice and confuse enemies.
- imitate other characters / enemies (impersonate an officer)
- imitate a dangerous creature to scare away lesser enemies

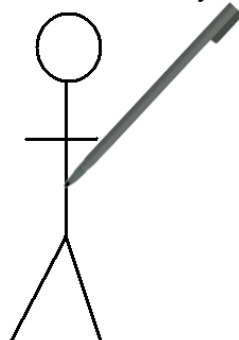
○ **E.R.I.X FAQ:**

○ Q: Can the player communicate with “every” creature in the game.

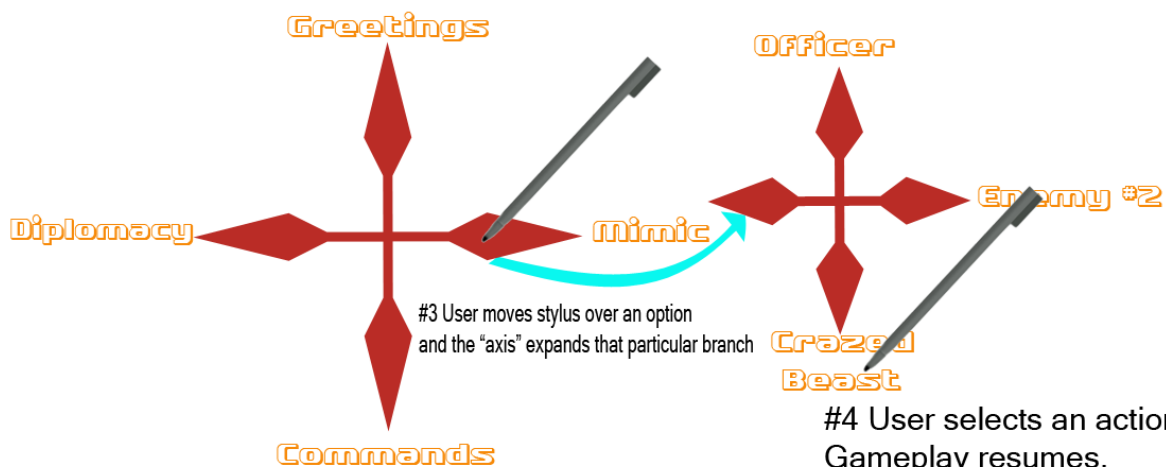
A: Yes and no. While the player can communicate with every creature, not everyone will be able to understand what the player is saying. Things may be misinterpreted or misunderstood by different races (particularly if the target character is in a “tired” or “drunk” state) and continually pestering these individuals may provoke a hostile response.

E.R.I.X Communication Axis

1 User presses and holds the stylus on any character



#2 E.R.I.X Axis appears, gameplay pauses



#3 User moves stylus over an option and the “axis” expands that particular branch

#4 User selects an action
Gameplay resumes,
the action is executed.

- With the communication system now finalised the group moved back to synthesis to work on the next USP.
 - [Go to Synthesis Tier Eight \(3.8.6\)](#)

4.4 Refinement Tier Four

4.4- Adapting the Moods & states idea into a USP

- **R.E.M.S - Represent Enemy Mood / State**
- **What is R.E.M.S?**
- R.E.M.S is a system for managing and displaying the moods and states of the inhabitants of Alkaid. Moods and states affect all creatures within the game world and are changed daily based on the Nintendo DS's internal clock.
- An enemy's mood and state may cause them to deviate from their standard set of actions, and provide a means for players to deploy various E.R.I.X communications options to proceed through the game.
- An enemy's "mood" is shown subtly – the player will need to watch their actions and listen to the sounds they make to gauge their "mood."
- Conversely, an enemy's "state" will be immediately apparent to the player as it is displayed by the emoticon system.
- **Marrying the notion of R.E.M.S to actual gameplay**
- R.E.M.S ties in closely with the E.R.I.X communication axis. An enemy who is in the "sad" mood for example could be goaded into the depressed "state," allowing the player to pass by.
- With the enemy mood / state system defined, the group returned to synthesis to work on the Day / Night concept.
 - **[Go to Synthesis Tier Eight \(3.8.8\)](#)**

4.5 Refinement Tier Five

4.5- Adapting the Day & Night system into a USP

- **A.C.D.N.S - Adaptive Challenge Day / Night System**
- **What is A.C.D.N.S?**
- A.C.D.N.S is a system that links time in the real world with time in Alkaid.
- The system ties in with R.E.M.S and is strongly linked to enemy presence, area “lockdowns”, and traps.
- The system uses the Nintendo DS internal clock to randomise certain elements of levels, vary the number of enemies and traps encountered and provide the player with numerous routes to reach their end goal.
- In addition to variance the system also aims to enhance the sense of immersion for the player, helping create the illusion of a living, breathing city.
- **Marrying the notion of A.C.D.N.S to gameplay**
- Due to the fact that many inhabitants of Alkaid abhor light, security overall is more lax during the daytime, with fewer patrols etc.
- To counterbalance this, certain areas may be “locked down” during the day, forcing the player to take a trap infested alternate route or follow a sidequest to unlock further routes.
- Aqueducts become more “flooded” at particular times of day – perhaps even completely inaccessible.
- Lockdowns – certain high profile areas may be completely “locked down” during particular parts of the day.
- **A.C.D.N.S FAQ:**
- **Q:** Does Alkaid run through the complete 24 hour clock cycle?
- **A:** Yes, the defined timeframes are:
 - Morning
 - Afternoon
 - Evening
 - Night
- With the Day/Night system fully realised the group returned to synthesis to develop the story.
 - [Go to Synthesis Tier Eight \(3.8.9\)](#)