Game Design

Lecture 4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 Sharing Focus

02 Iterations

03 Examples

04 Tasks

01

Sharing Focus

The Problem

How can we share Game Focus inside the team?

Possible problems

Ideas can’t be played

Idea → Prototype

Don’t start with the first idea!

Keep writing ideas in some cold storage

When you are prototyping – just do it

Don’t get attached to ideas

What is the Prototype?

Demo?

Alpha?

Single level

Vertical slice?

Single mechanic?

Prototypes answers the question

An experiment that answers the question

Idea, concept, design doc can not convince teams or investor

Idea

Sim City + Tamagochi

02

Iterations

??????????

Is this game fun enough?

Do we need pretty settings screen?

Is this visual style suits my game well?

Is it possible to control planes by drawing lines?

How many objects can we render at 60 FPS?

Bad Question

Too generic
The question is too subjective
Takes too long to check

Good Question

Describes Specific Problem
One day job
Results can be measured

Complicated Questions

Can I build a fun game based on flowers growth control?

What is the geometry of the flower?
How to model the growing?
What animations do we need?
How to render flower?

Formulating a question

Get Game Focus and think about possible failures

List your risks

Find solutions

Prototype solutions

Don’t Spend Too Much Time!

Development has costs

Outcome defines limits for you prototypes

You need just answers

If time runs out

You are building other parts

Forgot the question?

Wrong Prototype?

Game Focus is blurred

There are really hard questions!

Do not build The System

You will never re-use this
But it is hard to throw away
But you will never re-use!

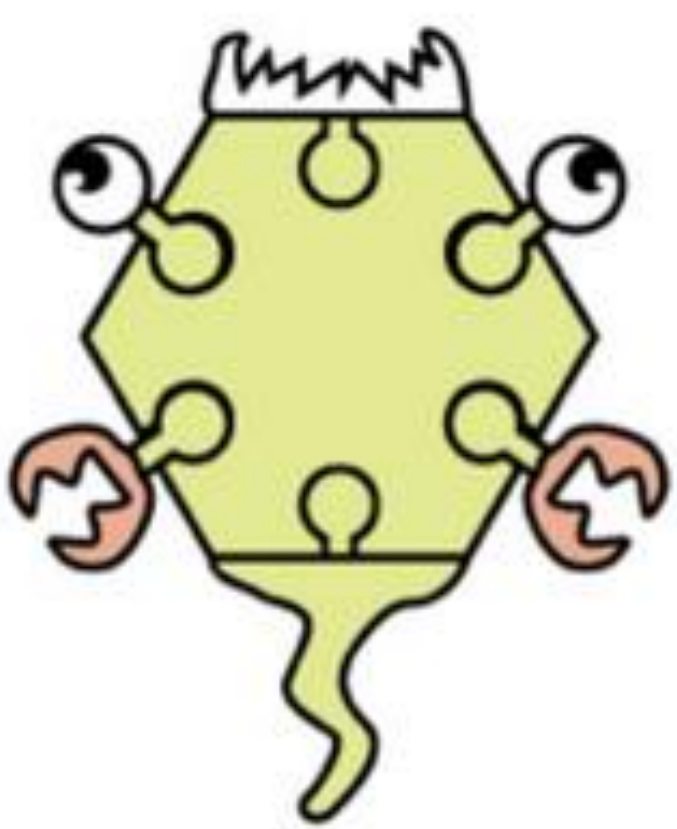
Just at working state
Corner cases, templates, performance - later

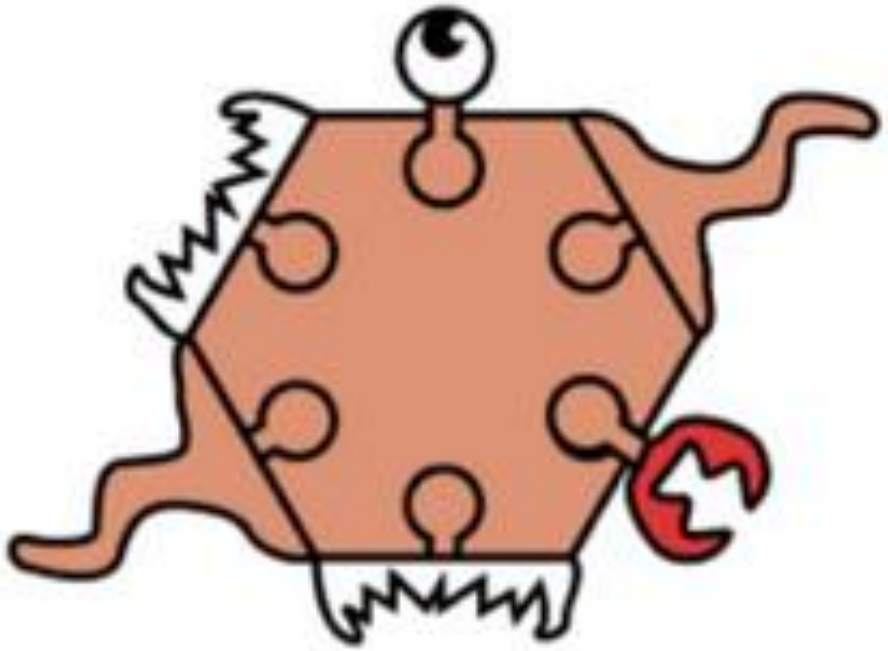
How to Prototype Fast

Get Assets

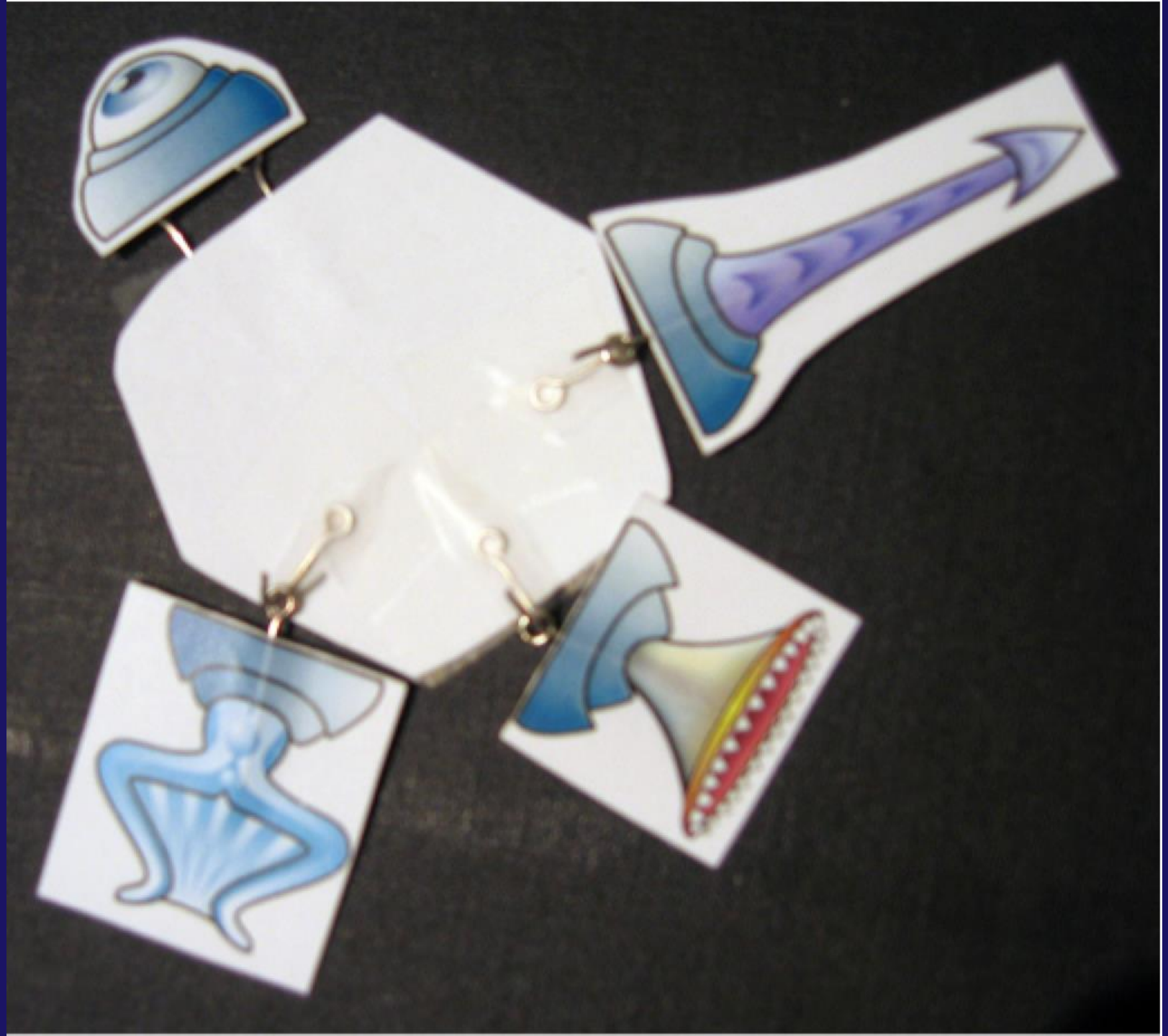
Use known technologies

Don’t use any technologies





- Limbs
- Tails
- Mouths
- Eyes



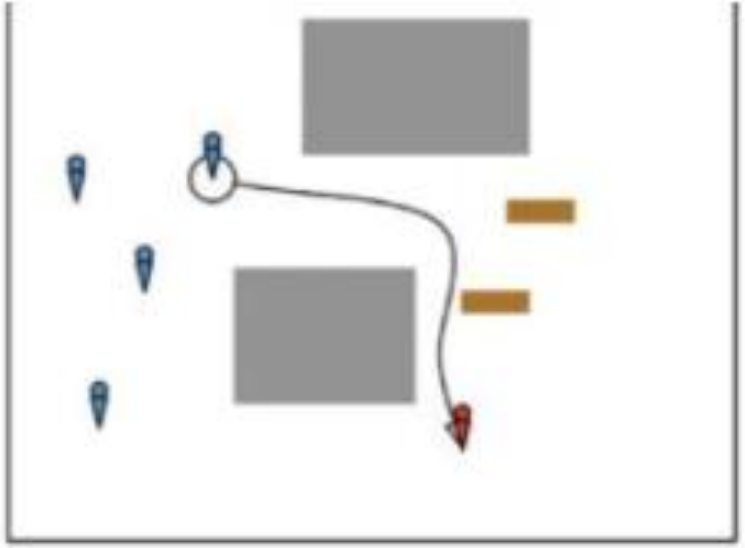
Paper Prototyping

Fast
Fun
Easy to evolve
Whole team can participate (no)

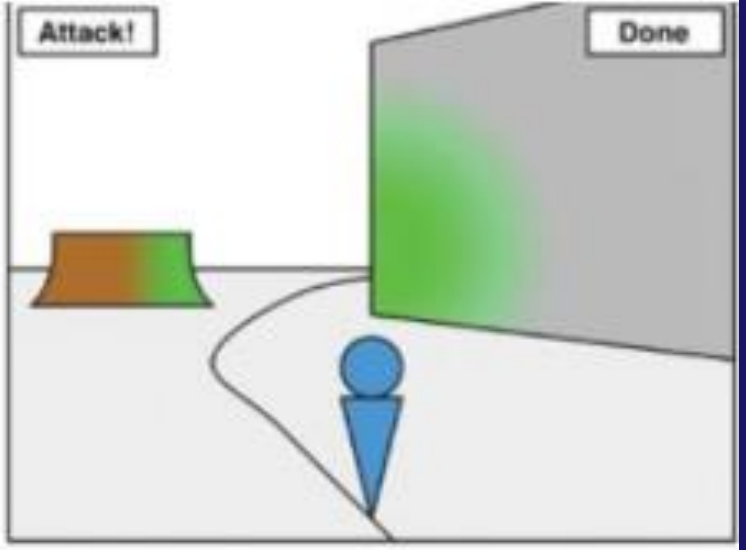
MAGE
WEAPON
ARMOR
RING
RING
RING
RING
AMULET
341
Light Mana
Gladius
Short Bow
Courage Scoll
Double Attack
Heal
Astral Darts
Air Blessing
Thunder Storm
Fire Ball
N

Legend

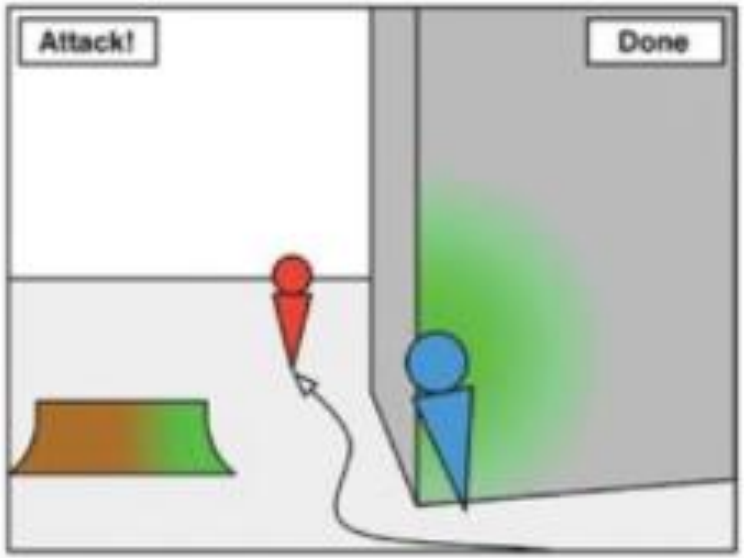
- Ally Character
- Enemy Character
- Building
- Low Cover / Wall
- Path



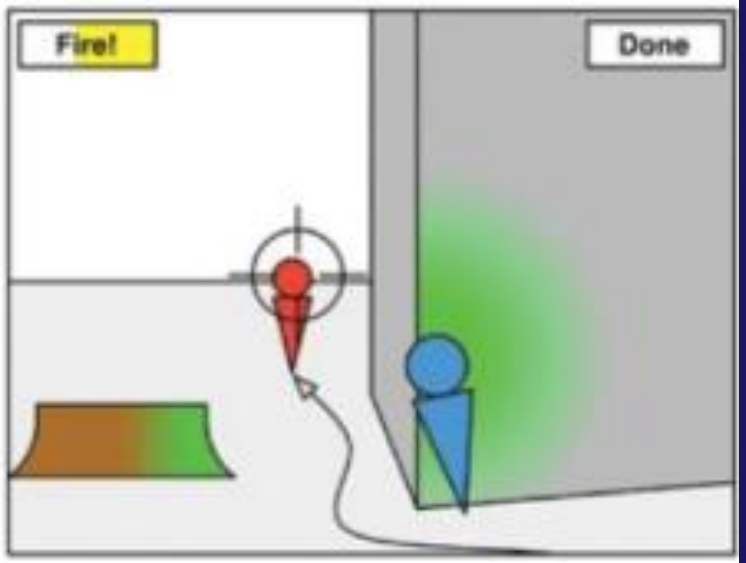
Top-down map view. Player draws a path to set movement for an ally.



As the ally moves, the camera is 3rd person over-the-shoulder. Areas glow green to show possible cover.

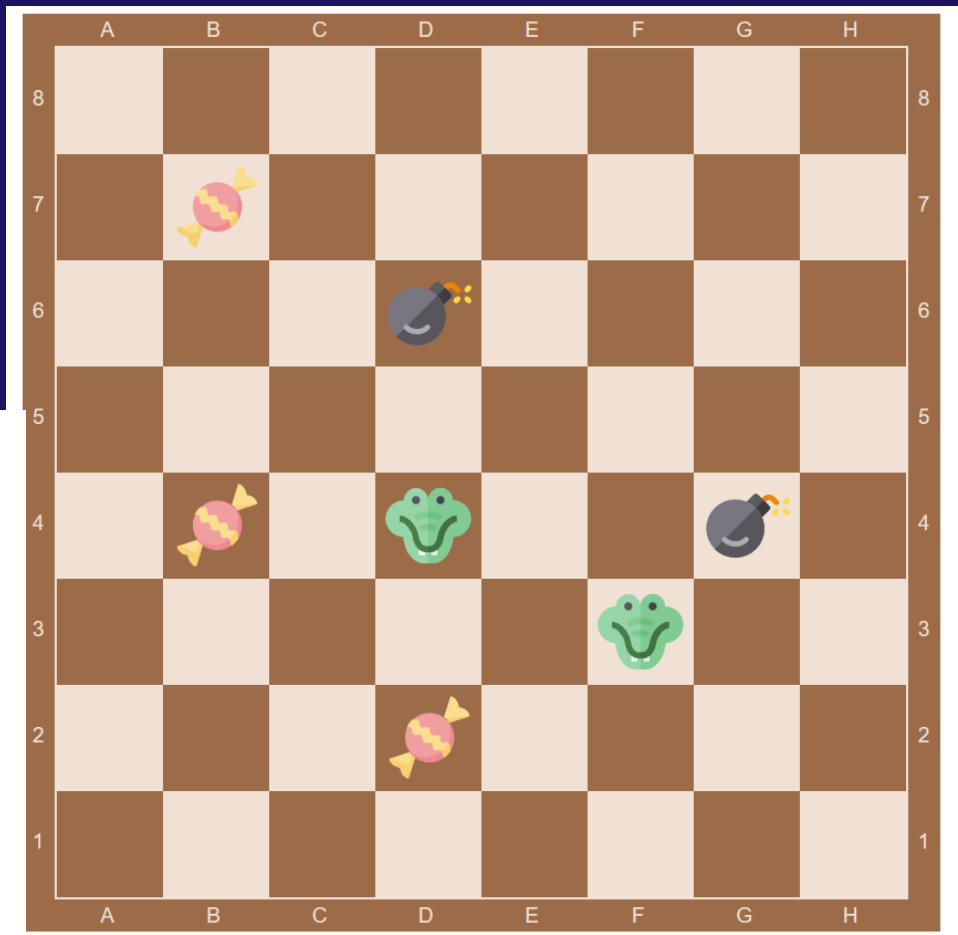


Tapping on a green cover area will cause the ally to go into cover. While in cover, enemy shots will hit less frequently, and the ally can see around corners



Any time during the move, the player can press the Attack! button. Then she has until the yellow timer runs out to line up her shot and press Fire!

Accessible tools



Reaction Time Prototype?

Fighting Prototype?

Fighting Complexity

Use Spreadsheets or Software you know

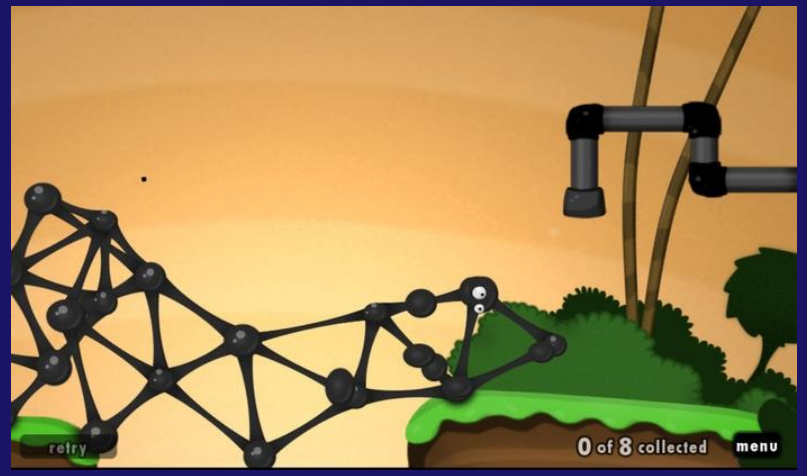
Is computer having more fun?

8 Good Practices

Answer a Question
Forget Quality
Don’t Get Attached
Prioritize Your Prototypes
Parallelize Prototypes Productively
It Doesn’t Have to be Digital
Pick a “ Fast Loop” Game Engine
Build the Toy First

How to Prototype?

1. Each game must be made in less than seven days,
2. Each game must be made by exactly one person,
3. Each game must be based around a common theme i.e. "gravity", "vegetation", "swarms", etc.



Kyle Gray, Kyle Gabler, Shalin Shodhan, Matt Kuc

03

Examples

Early Concept Pitch

CONCEPT phase

- Started 2011, would take~2.5 years
- **Small MULTI-DISCIPLINARY** team
- Make the concept **PLAYABLE**

Early Team Structure ~(8 to 16)

Designers

Artists

Coders

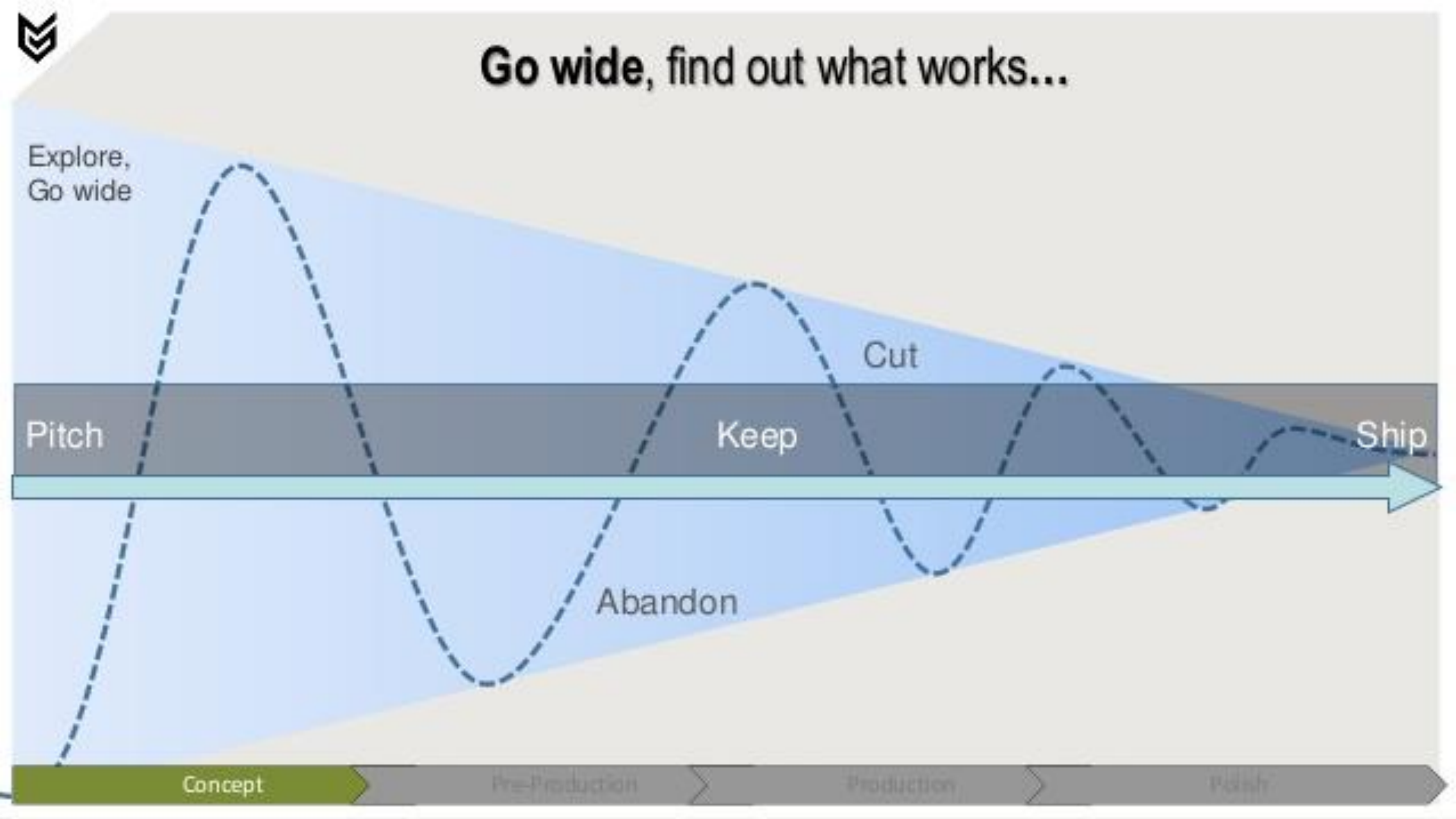
Animators

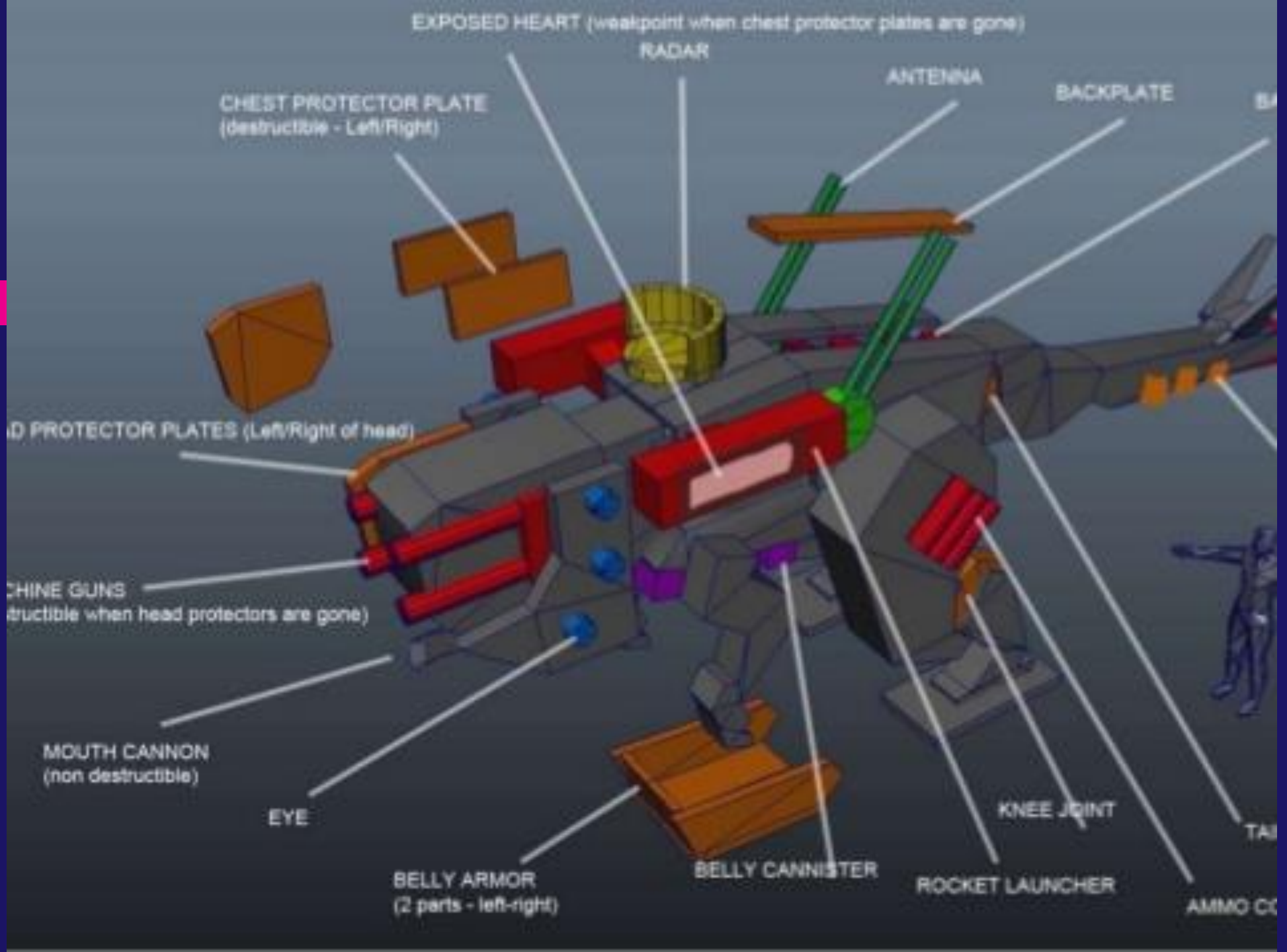
Concept | Pre-Production | Production | Polish

High Level **Questions** to answer in Concepting

…Combat against robots?	?
…Open world?	?
…Player abilities?	?
…Story?	?
…World Interactions?	?

Go wide, find out what works...




EXPOSED HEART (weakpoint when chest protector plates are gone)
RADAR
ANTENNA
BACKPLATE
CHEST PROTECTOR PLATE
(destructible - Left/Right)
D PROTECTOR PLATES (Left/Right of head)
CHINE GUNS
tructible when head protectors are gone)
MOUTH CANNON
(non destructible)
EYE
BELLY ARMOR
(2 parts - left-right)
BELLY CANNISTER
KNEE JOINT
ROCKET LAUNCHER

04

Tasks

What to do?

Present Prototyping Plan For You Game

References

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