

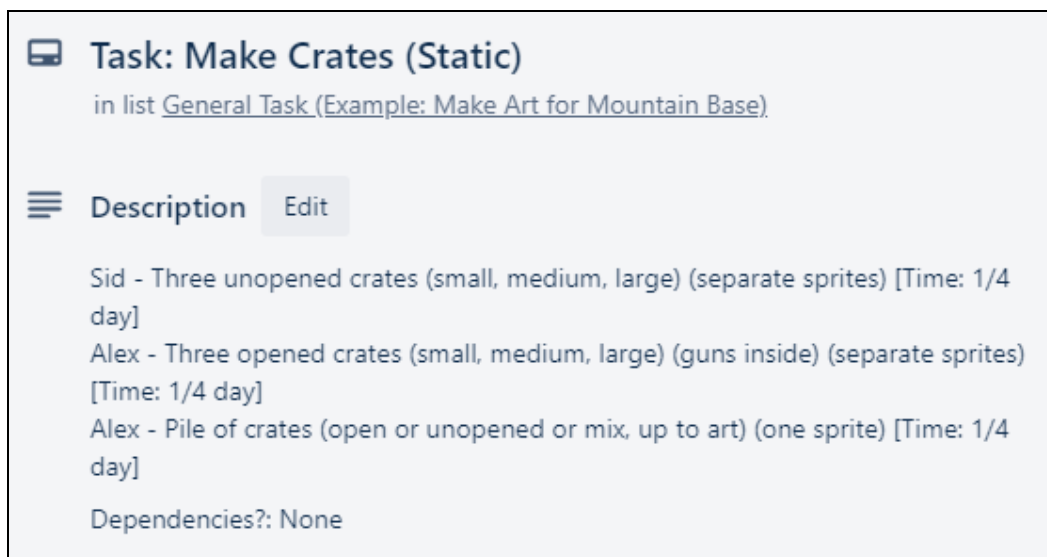
Project Rat's
VS+ Production
Bible

Overview

This document is a direct response to our failure to meet the scope we had envisioned for the USC Games Expo submission of our game. Every section and detail of this document has been written as a direct response to the failures and challenges that have either been brought up to me (Taygh) by other members or I have personally observed. The ultimate purpose of this document is to streamline our production going forward and to reaffirm our commitment to the project (including the responsibilities/obligations that commitment brings). In other words, this is our second chance.

Pre-Planning

One of our biggest issues came in the form of planning out all the work each discipline had. In general, most disciplines did not break down tasks small enough in a way that is entirely trackable by a producer. There needs to be a more comprehensive list of single tasks that can be tracked for this next stretch of production. We will be returning to Trello to post and track these tasks. **It is the responsibility of each discipline to update these tasks as they are added or completed.** The producers will then use this information to build and track micro schedules for the week. Please use the following format when making tasks:



The screenshot shows a Trello task card with the following content:

- Task: Make Crates (Static)**
- in list [General Task \(Example: Make Art for Mountain Base\)](#)
- Description**
- Sid - Three unopened crates (small, medium, large) (separate sprites) [Time: 1/4 day]
- Alex - Three opened crates (small, medium, large) (guns inside) (separate sprites) [Time: 1/4 day]
- Alex - Pile of crates (open or unopened or mix, up to art) (one sprite) [Time: 1/4 day]
- Dependencies?: None

Dependency Resolution

As producers, Alan and Taygh have a responsibility to understand who is relying on others to start or further progress their current work. However, we are **not** the first people you should go to if you are waiting on a given dependency. As a result of planning, you should already have an idea of who to approach. If there is a gray area in terms of what discipline the dependency falls under or you are getting delayed due to being dependent on another discipline, then you should approach the producers. It is **your** responsibility to contact those who can resolve your dependencies in a timely manner to work with them on the issue.

Communication Standards

Availability: Another big problem we had was being able to communicate quickly. Some people would respond to each other within hours, but others would wait a day or beyond to respond to various messages. I understand that we cannot all be available at every moment of the day, but there needs to be a one hour slot each day where anyone can safely get in contact with you. As such, everyone needs to decide what time slot will work for them. Since schedules vary over the week, there can be a different time slot for each day. This hour will not only be used for other members to work with you (on dependencies, getting feedback, etc.), but will also be a time where producers can get an idea of what work you've gotten done for the day. Please fill out the following schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Check-Ins: Up until now, Taygh has been checking in with team leads at the start of sprints (Sundays) to see what work has been done for the week and what will get done for the next one. He then would check-in at midweek (Thursdays) to see how the work is going for the week. However, this led to situations where some teams were not expressing their delays and problems until well into the week. Therefore, there will now be **daily check-ins** with either Taygh or Alan during the aforementioned one hour slot. Furthermore, we will be extending this to non-lead members as well, meaning that all members of the project must check-in with producers each day. This will be a short conversation most of the time (about five minutes).

Sharing Progress: Some members of the team have expressed the desire to know how all other disciplines are getting along with their work without having to ask Alan or Taygh. Up until now, those two individuals have been the only ones making sure that they know exactly who is doing what at any given time. To remedy this, during the one hour slot that members are active, they must share any and all progress they have made for the day (if any). In addition, whenever you complete a task, please share that progress with the team. For example, if engineering finishes a system (say, dialogue), they should immediately post this progress in the Discord. Demonstrations or explanations are not needed, simply the notification that it was completed will suffice. We will be restructuring our Discord server to make one or more channels for this.

Working on the Task at Hand

There were times where certain disciplines were scheduled to do one task and ended up doing another. If there is a reason to change around tasks or you decide to tackle other tasks because you've finished your scheduled ones, **please let one of the producers know. Otherwise, ONLY do your assigned tasks for the week.** It derails our schedules and could potentially affect other disciplines when you do this.

About the Macro Schedules

The problem Taygh had with making a macro schedule was that it was impossible to assign tasks per day (since the tasks on Trello were generally not broken down far enough) and the fact that we were constantly changing the scope of our submission. However, many disciplines still got their work done and operated well on a weekly scheduled basis. As such, we will not be having a macro schedule for tasks per day. Rather, tasks will be assigned weekly to meet milestone goals for the week. The milestones will replace a macro task schedule.

Reconstructing Our Creative Workflow

One of the more creative problems we had was imposing creative restrictions on other disciplines before they had a chance to ideate their own thoughts. While we all deserve to have some input on each aspect of the game, it can be suffocating when others outside of the discipline impose their own thoughts or ideas before said discipline has a chance to conceptualize on their own. To remedy this, we will be creating two distinct workflow categories:

Disciplinary Conceptualization: Each discipline will have an opportunity to make concepts for the weekly milestone without the input of others. This is their opportunity to truly show what they want to make external to any other opinions or ideas. The only limitation is that your concepts must adhere to the fundamental principles of the game.

Review and Feedback: After a concept has been shown to the group (presumably during the one hour time period each day), other members will have the opportunity to give their criticism and feedback on the work shown. This way, everyone can incorporate their ideas into each part of the game without creatively suffocating any other disciplines.

Our Discord server will be modified to have channels for these purposes.

Flow of Meetings

We often get sidetracked or offtopic during meetings, leading to longer sessions with less work done. To fix this, Alan and Taygh will be stricter on the topic of conversation as it relates to the topic at hand. Our goal is to have meetings that are straight to the point and get the most work done. This also means that extended conversations that are going nowhere, even if relevant to the topic at hand, will be cutoff, especially since most conceptualization that requires such conversations is done at this point. We may also time meetings to encourage concise discussion.

Role of Producers

While we have tried to democratize as much of the production as possible, there are certain aspects that producers need the final say on regardless of the team's opinion. Therefore, we have proposed that we should have the power to:

- Enforce scheduled work by any means necessary
- Make decisions for the team when there is no other clear discipline to refer to (such as bringing on new members, which would still be discussed with relevant disciplines)
- Ensure work matches the vision of the project

While this is not a comprehensive list, these are the most important obligations that we want everybody to clearly be aware of. We would also like to make it clear that **removing team members or revoking lead positions will involve the entire team.** For these disputes, we will hold an anonymous vote in which a supermajority (65% or greater) will be required for either of these actions to go through. Of course, there will be discussion and/or other resolution paths that will be explored before we resort to a vote. Since the severity and situation of these problems can be vastly different depending on the circumstances, we will discuss pertinent issues in group meetings and determine if a vote is necessary after discussion.

Alan vs. Taygh

Again, while we like to democratize the creative process as much as possible, there still needs to be a line of quality control that ensures the game is coming together in a way that fulfills our vision. As such, considering Alan is also our Lead Designer, you may think of him as a Creative Producer. He will be the one who looks at every piece of work submitted for the project and will decide whether it meets the goals and quality we are striving for. On the other hand, you may consider Taygh to be a Production Manager. While he has his own creative role (Level Design), his purpose as a producer is to ensure timely creation of content, handle scheduling, and communicate often with team members to keep up with what is being completed. Anything submitted will go through Taygh to make sure it meets the production milestone of the week (in other words, is the full amount of work that was expected) before being handed to Alan for creative approval.

Project Rescoping

The details of rescoping will be detailed at the next in-person meeting. However, as it stands, **we are simply adding that which was cut out in the Expo submission build to our final Expo demo.** There will be no additional conceptualization or content added beyond that which needs to be redone or iterated upon. The only scheduling set right now is that the first 2 to 3 weeks after submission will be a regrouping and preparation phase. That which never was properly planned out or conceptualized will be brought to life during this time. Furthermore, if there is anything that we already know needs to be readjusted (art assets, programming systems, etc.), this is the time to do it. Finally, we will use this time for any additional recruiting if needed. **We will not be recruiting after this to avoid any scheduling confusion or team dynamic restructuring.**

Recognizing These Terms

Following this page is a series of contracts. We have written these as a way of holding each other accountable to the project and to lay out the expectations for each role. Please read and sign each one as they are relevant to you. Afterwards, hand the contracts to Alan or Taygh. You may keep the other pages if you like, but this document will also be available on the Project Rat Google Drive for your reference.

Lead Contract

As a team member responsible for the direction of my discipline, I hereby swear that I will perform the following duties in addition to that which is expected of me as any other team member:

1. Properly plan out **ALL** of my discipline's tasks up until the USC Games Expo, including reaching out to any other members that tasks would be dependent on
2. Communicate regularly with those whom I lead to ensure work gets done at an expected pace with a certain level of quality
3. Delegate a fair amount of work to all members of my discipline to ensure an equal share of tasks and to not rely on any one person
4. Communicate with producers to ensure that our work gets done in a way that meets the objectives of the weekly milestones
5. Come prepared with an adequate amount of progress to share with the team at any given meeting for my discipline
6. Manage my discipline's Trello board, including adding/removing tasks, making sure it accurately reflects the progress of each task, and is representative of **ALL** work needed before the USC Games Expo
7. Review my discipline's work as it is made and will adjust it until it meets the standards of our overall project
8. Will put in **more time** than those I lead as a result of having an extended amount of responsibilities

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Team Member Contract

As a team member on Project Rat, I hereby swear that I will perform the following duties to the best of my ability leading up to the USC Games Expo:

1. Put as much effort as possible into the work I do on this project to create the best quality content possible
2. Time manage **both my professional and personal matters** in a way that allows me to meet my deadlines with quality work, with the knowledge that there will still be occasional delays and mishaps on my part
3. Communicate with any and all relevant parties on a frequent basis as it relates to being assigned tasks, resolving dependencies, receiving feedback, or any other related issue
4. Attend any and all meetings in a prompt manner, barring any extenuating circumstances
5. Provide **unfiltered and honest** critique of work done by other members in a way that is impersonal, constructive, and maintains respect
6. Implement criticism and feedback when relevant
7. Refer to any and all project documents and/or materials that pertain to the work I am doing
8. Improve my skills over the course of the project via iteration, external materials (videos, document guides, etc.), or any other means to ensure quality work
9. Mention any and all personal issues that may affect my performance to the relevant parties (producers and/or leads)
10. Recognize any addendums to this agreement not already stated as they come up and/or become relevant

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Producer Contract

As a producer on Project Rat, I hereby swear that I will perform the following duties to the best of my ability leading up to the USC Games Expo:

1. Lead every member of the team in a way that ensures quality deliverables in a timely manner to meet weekly milestones
2. Create micro schedules each week for disciplines to meet weekly milestones
3. Keep in contact with every member of the team to know what is happening with their work at all times
4. Resolve interpersonal conflicts as a passive mediator, rather than a presumptuous voicebox, with the relevant parties
5. Make production decisions that affect all parts of the team with thought and foresight
6. Encourage our team members to make the best work possible
7. Not let my role as a producer overshadow the quality of my creative deliverables
8. Push team members when needed instead of being passive for the sake of avoiding conflict
9. Make myself available to any and all team members by being reachable at any time of the day (within reason)
10. Thoughtfully address the concerns of my team members as they come up
11. Plan and run meetings to be as efficient as possible without limiting the team's ability to converse about relevant issues

Signature: _____ Date: _____