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The Babbage Engine

Prepared for: UDS

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Proposal status: Rejected



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1 Introduction

1.1 PROJECT TITLE

“Working title” would be “The Babbage Engine”.

1.2 GAME GENRE

Adventure Racer – Gentleman Spy kind of game with elements of puzzle solving, racing, and fighting in an even mix. Basic storyline will be important for the gameplay. Third person action game/ RPG, with options for online gaming.

1.3 SIZE & SCALE OF GAME

Experience several European and American cities in a sort of “what if” setting. Basic maps from the 19th century could be used with some modifications.

Example:

- London
- Paris
- Berlin
- New York
- Boston
- Rome
- Barcelona

Missions connected to the storyline:

- A set number of missions correlating to the storyline. Somewhere between 20 – 30 missions.
- Secret missions – missions that are unlocked in different stages of the game, not necessary in order to complete the game.
- Possibly randomly generated missions, diplomacy, brawling and racing.

Other gameplay issues:



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- The option to rebuild and refine a basic automotive engine
- Racing the engine against other engineers (other online players or AIs)

Types of races:

- Ground races, this is where the basic automotive engine comes into the picture.
- Air races, these should be conducted with rocket packs and zeppelins.
- Underwater races, conducted with submarines and diving packs of different kinds.
- Arenas for racing should be built into the cities, enabling the player to access them as he progresses through the game.

1.4 WHO WOULD WANT TO PLAY THIS GAME AND WHY?

Adventure/ Steam punk/ RPG-players.



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2.0 GAME CONTENT

2.1 GAME STORYLINE

This game is set in the late 19th century, with a few historical modifications from our own world. There are three factions of power in Europe, France, United Kingdom and Austria. Events in the world are influenced greatly by the construction of Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine (Note: In 1821 Babbage invented the Difference Engine to compile mathematical tables. On completing it in 1832, he conceived the idea of a better machine that could perform not just one mathematical task but any kind of calculation. This was the Analytical Engine (1856), which was intended as a general symbol manipulator, and had some of the characteristics of today's computers. He was never able to finish the Analytical Engine, since it was far too demanding when it came to construction precision), and it has paved the way for many new innovations, not in the least within vehicle construction. (Most modern vehicles are equipped with a small steering engine, into which punch cards are fed. The punch cards represent maps over different cities and countries, and depending on the level of engine, the vehicle can arrange to take the traveller to the general neighbourhood or even to the correct address.)

Anyway, the Analytical Engine has produced quite a lot of changes in the Victorian society. Steam engines were built to increase the precision of the machinery at hand and those changes led to even more accurate engines, which led to even more accurate precision. Thus the game takes place in a society undergoing rapid change, and as a result, political turmoil. The three factions within Europe have their own specific agendas, none more so than the underground movement plotting to restore Germany to its former glory, and perhaps even more than that.

The player will take the role as an agent for either one of the three ruling factions of Europe. None want to see the Germans succeed with their plan, and has therefore sent an operative to thwart the plans of the underground movement. Conspiracy theorists flourish, and it is up to the player to decide what information he can, or cannot trust.

The game will play out similar to that of Grand Theft Auto III, that is, there will be both elements of racing and missions for the player to complete. However, the setting and the missions will not be the type of missions and setting as GTAIII. Instead the player will receive typical spying missions, combined with assignments such as attending a dinner reception or a diplomatic assembly.

There will be at least three different characters to choose from, one representing each of the three political factions within Europe. At least one of these characters will be female. All of the characters will have typical strength and weaknesses, and they start out with different equipment and skills depending on where they're from.

The vehicles will be steam engines of different types. The character should have a land vehicle that follows him throughout the game, an engine which he can improve as he goes along. The water and air vehicles will present themselves in the missions where they are called for, and should be a mix of steam engineering and steam punk science fiction.



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The game should be a single player game, with options to oppose one another on-line.

The goal of the game is to take the player on an amazing ride through a Europe that never existed, a “what if” experience. The less lofty goal is to stop the German underground movement from seizing power and start a world war.

Besides amazing journey that the game should offer, it should also contain a background story that feels believable enough to involve the player. A game that is a homage to writers such as H.G. Wells and Jules Verne, and explores un-travelled avenues of Europe’s past. In short, a high quality adventure game, with elements of racing and problem solving.



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3.0 PRODUCT ANALYSIS

3.1 COMPETING TITLES IN THE MARKET PLACE

Arcanum – a role-playing game from Sierra

3.2 WHAT MAKES THIS PRODUCT DIFFERENT FROM THE ABOVE

The world of Arcanum focuses on Fantasy Steampunk, while the concept presented here is more of a Science-Fiction Steampunk. There will be no elves, dwarves or dragons running around in the game. There will however be a bunch of mad geniuses, creating amazing racing machines and the like. The Arcanum concept is also firmly based in the role-playing genre, while this concept is a combination of problem solving and high speed steam engine chases.

3.3 INFLUENCES

- Castle Falkenstein
- H.G. Wells
- Jules Verne
- Disney's Atlantis
- Bruce Sterling and William Gibson's "The Difference Engine"
- L.E. Modesitt's "Of Tangible Ghosts" and "The Ghost of the Revelator".
- Player characters are inspired by Charles Beuregard in Kim Newman's "Anno Dracula", James Bond (of course), and the hero of Barbara Hambly's "Those Who Hunt the Night".
- http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Phil_Masters/steampnk.htm
- <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/9094/STEAM.html>
- GTAIII

3.4 REFERENCE MATERIAL

- Castle Falkenstein – Role-playing game
- The Difference Engine by Bruce Sterling and William Gibson
- Disney's Atlantis – The Lost Empire
- Anything by Jules Verne or H.G. Wells