BLUE SHIFT

SYNOPSIS

BlueShift is an action adventure RPG set in 2197. In 2057, the gradual depletion of Earth's resources and dwindling land mass saw a massive increase of private investment in space exploration. After a catastrophic war over ever-declining resources, ending 10 years prior to the events of BlueShift, Earth's governments were stripped of military power. As a result, powerful corporations exerted control over Earth and the burgeoning space colonies.

The game's protagonist is 'Vonnegut' – an everyman – who undertakes to investigate his sister's suicide, which he believes is a cover up instigated by the TerraCorp group who sanctioned her murder. His sister, a lead biological researcher for TerraCorp, was poised to leak files to a number of rebel factions proving that the corporation had been developing a pathogen designed to wipe out all remaining humans on Earth. TerraCorp executives consider Earthlings an economic 'nuisance' - hindering their goal to make physical contact with an advanced life form on Proxima B. The inhabitants of the game world (including our protagonist), are not aware that radio contact has been made with an intelligent life form. This information gradually comes to light as the game progresses.

'Vonnegut' was a journalist before the war. He has virtually no combat skills, but has excellent investigative skills. The gameplay is therefore stealth based until, later in the game and having picked up combat skills 'by necessity'.

While entertainment remains high on our priority list, we are also drawing upon a variety of philosophical, scientific and academic writings on ecology; social structures; evolution and technology in attempt to create a meaningful and well- informed game. Perhaps creating a harbinger, so to speak, or a warning signal about what could be in the future?

GAMEPLAY

BlueShift aims to combine the following gameplay types:

Stealth
Adventure
Investigation/Puzzle
RPG
Action (Infantry and space craft combat)

In combining these elements, we hope to create a unique gaming experience in a vast scale spanning 3 planets and one moon colony. As the game progresses, the protagonist 'Vonnegut' will acquire skills in hand to hand combat and basic weapons skills using old, rusted and outdated weapons at first – gradually acquiring futuristic military combat rifles and vehicles. This 'learning' of new technology will be a major part of the gameplay – sometimes learning under controlled situations and at other times being thrown in at the deep end.
As the narrative unfolds, the protagonist will encounter like-minded people who want to destroy TerraCorp. There will be a skill-sharing element to the gameplay – the protagonist will learn skills from others and others from the protagonist. It is envisaged that this 'social' element to the gameplay will enhance the experience and allow for many interesting gameplay and story driven elements.
Everything takes place in first person. Our goal is to make every element of extremely high quality – so that when the player is in stealth mode it feels like a high quality stealth game, and

when in space combat mode it feels like a space combat game. In other words, nothing should feel tacked on!

VISUAL LANGUAGE

We seek to create a stylized and rather bleak future. Whilst on Earth, we aim to create an ugly, decaying, mechanized future – rusted metal intertwined with dying trees, uninhabited neighborhoods etc. Visually think Blade Runner mixed with steam punk and a sort of Tim Burton stylization. Almost like a combination of photograph and illustrated fairytale. The overall feel we seek to create here is one of sadness - A yearning for the past... Sepia.

The colonies on Mars will be shiny, modern, hi-tech yet sort of lifeless. The colonists on Mars are largely technologically enhanced and as such are quite emotionless. They are efficient. Here we seek to create something similar to our current situation on earth, but with a creepy lack of conscience in the inhabitants. They are 'company people' in that the success of the corporation is paramount. 'Earthlings' have taken on the lowest class position in the solar system.

The visuals of the Martian landscape will draw upon NASA mapping of the planet to develop key areas. We will take inspiration from the architectural design of various countries and combine with actual NASA concepts for early Martian exploration in order to create a sort of global aesthetic. Our Mars will have been colonized for over 100 years by the time we arrive in game, so cities will have arisen and the geo-engineering means that a breathable atmosphere and functional weather system exist.

On Europa, the player will encounter a frightening product of the human mind – technologically enhanced organisms stripped of the emotive qualities we associate with humans. They are mechanic and obsessed only with scientific 'Truth' – the survival of less advanced humans is un-important to them. They are 'the top brass'. Europa is bleak. Icy. Functional. No beauty. Flat pack buildings constructed efficiently to allow for the next step in exploration – making physical contact with an advanced life form on Proxima B. When the player arrives in Europa – the game transitions to pure horror.

The player will eventually end up on Proxima B, becoming the first in our game world to make physical contact with intelligent life. Our writer is developing a number of plot and narrative situations as to how and why we end up there. Also, as we continue to research philosophy and science, we aim to develop a social background for the life forms of Proxima B.

MUSIC

The musical assets will grow as the game develops. For now, we need the following:

- Ambient Menu Music
- Gameplay One (Action)
- Gameplay Two (Explore)

Menu Music

The menu music should try to summarize the whole game experience. Somehow capturing the inherent sadness of a lost earth, yet the reluctant heroism of the main character. Also it should have a 'futuristic' or 'synthesized' feel to it. It should loop seamlessly as the player works across a number of menu options prior to the game. Maybe it has a musical theme or it is just more ambient? We will discuss with the composer. Can the music be at once ambient and huge?

Gameplay One

We need to demonstrate our space combat 'dogfighting' system and so need music that will fit this. We need something that is robust and action packed, but that also has different dynamics – an up section for more intense parts, and slightly more down section for when the action subsides a little, really intense for when the player is close to death. We don't want to music to feel scripted. We will request that the composer develop loop 'blocks' that we can trigger depending on the situation but which never feel disjointed. Flow is important. Musically we are thinking Jerry Goldsmith meets techno music? Like crazy orchestra and beats combined? Should get the adrenaline going in the player. Also, can the music capture the anxiety of this untrained civilian who is in combat?

Gameplay Two

We want a sort of exploratory track for our Earth demonstration. This music should really capture the sadness and darkness of the situation on Earth. We plan to start the game demo off in Vonnegut's apartment. As he walks outside everything seems fine. But gradually we notice there are no people, no cars. As the player explores we gradually find out that the world is extremely bleak and destroyed – rotting vegetation, destroyed buildings, perhaps we see a city submerged in water? We see Vonnegut's reflection and realize he is wearing a gas mask. We will request that the composer give us stems that we can build upon as the player gradually discovers this bleak world. Starting perhaps with a long note that's held, and gradually layering sounds that induce panic and a sad emotion from the player as he/she discovers what has become of the world. We have discussed something that should have a beautiful sadness. Mechanical and natural at once. Emotive and emotionless at the same time. Maybe here the composer can bring in some more traditional instruments along with the synthesizer elements?