

Initial Project Proposal
CMSC 498M – Game Programming
Spring 2010
Due 3:30pm, February 8, 2010

Submissions should be emailed as an attachment to varshney@cs.umd.edu

Late policy: Up to 24 hours late: 10% off, and 20% for every additional 24 hours late.

Overview. The goal of this assignment is to produce a high-level proposal for a computer game for your final project.

Constraints. There are no official constraints. You are free to propose any general structure you like (2D/3D, single/multi-player, online). The only pragmatic constraints are that (a) you will need to be able to demo your program in class or in my office, so it should run on a laptop (and the computers of your group members), and (b) you need to consider the available tools at your disposal (which are largely limited to freely available libraries and software systems).

Proposal Elements. Please submit a short document (1–2 pages of text) along with any artwork you would like to include with a rough sketch of your game proposal and the team members. At this stage the emphasis should be on the broad outlines and ideas. The components of your game proposal:

- **Description of the Game:** This is the main part of the proposal. Describe the game at a high level. How many players will play? What will the players see and how will play proceed? Provide sketches of sample screens. (I can provide help in scanning documents.)
- **Assessment:** What do you view as the main strengths of the game you propose. (That is, What do you see as being the cool elements?)
- **Development Resources:** To the best of your ability, indicate what tools (graphics, modeling, physics, audio) that do you anticipate needing in order to complete the project?

Words for the Wise. Consider what you can achieve in a semester, given your limited tools and resources.

Think Small: Most of the games you buy in the store involve six to twelve months of work by twenty to one hundred trained professionals involving full-time programmers, artists, and sound designers. Keep your design simple, but allow scalability if time permits.

Do One Thing Well: Doing a good job on one or two aspects will get you a better grade than doing a mediocre job on a lot of things.

Understand the Limits of Your Chosen Tools: The tools that are available for game development have different strengths and weaknesses. Take this into consideration in your design.

Plan in Layers: You can't accurately anticipate how long each step in your project is going to take. Consider your functional minimum, your low-target, and your high-target. Plan to develop each before moving on to the next phase. Plan how to partition the work so that team members can coordinate their work harmoniously.