



Game Over, Before You Start: Avoiding Traps in Pre-Production

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Outline

1. Marketing
2. Target Platforms
3. Input Methods
4. Displays
5. Accessibility
6. Localisation
7. Save Files
8. Multiplayer & Online Services
9. Progression & Monetization





Tasks & Questions

TASK: Implement this before you write your game logic and content

QUESTION: Have an answer before you start developing.

These apply to your **game project**. Not your **prototypes**!

Hack them together as fast as you can, but don't forget to "throw them away"!



Plan Marketing Before Development

- **QUESTION**: Is your game **marketable**? Do screenshots show enough variety?
 - If not: Re-iterate on that design!
- **QUESTION**: When will you finish the project?
- **QUESTION**: Define marketing milestones. Development follows your marketing plan.
 - Steam Page Go-Live (first trailer, screenshots, game is identifiable)
 - Private Demo Access (at IndieTreff, online via Steam Keys, Conventions)
 - Demo Release (should feel good and look good)
 - Gather Feedback! Add a link to your feedback form in your demo!
 - Last “Steam Next Fest” before your Release Date
 - Press Version (nearly finished version for Press, Streamers, Conventions)
 - Final Release

=> Aim for the vertical slice for the demo first!



Target Platforms

- Desktop (Steam), Consoles, Mobile
 - Screen Size & Distance
 - Aspect Ratio
 - Input methods

- **QUESTION**: What platform will you start on? (I recommend Steam)
- **QUESTION**: What platforms will you support later?
- **QUESTION**: What platforms will you never support? (this can make the project cheaper)



Input Methods

Consider all Input Methods when designing your Game and its UI. Optimize it later, but support it in a basic form.

- Mouse & Keyboard
 - Gamepads
 - Gamepads with fewer buttons (joycons)
 - Touch
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- **QUESTION:** What input method will you start with?
 - **QUESTION:** What input methods will you fully support later?
 - **QUESTION:** What input methods will you never support? (this can make the project cheaper)

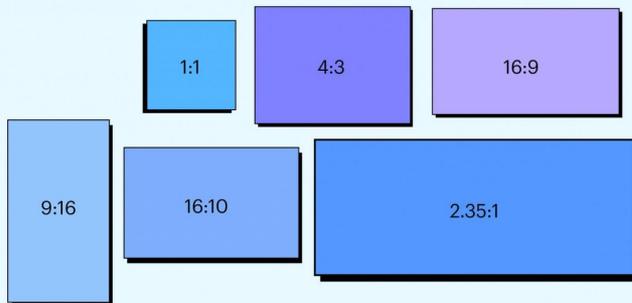




Displays

- **TASK:** Design your UI with safe areas in mind!
- **QUESTION:** In which aspect ratios must your game be functional?
- **QUESTION:** In which aspect ratios must your game look good at?
- **QUESTION:** Screen Sizes and Distance? (Desktop, TV, Steam Deck, Mobile)
- **QUESTION:** Mobile port with portrait mode coming later? Keep that in mind when designing UI
 - It's okay to have multiple UI versions (e.g. one for touch, one for all others).

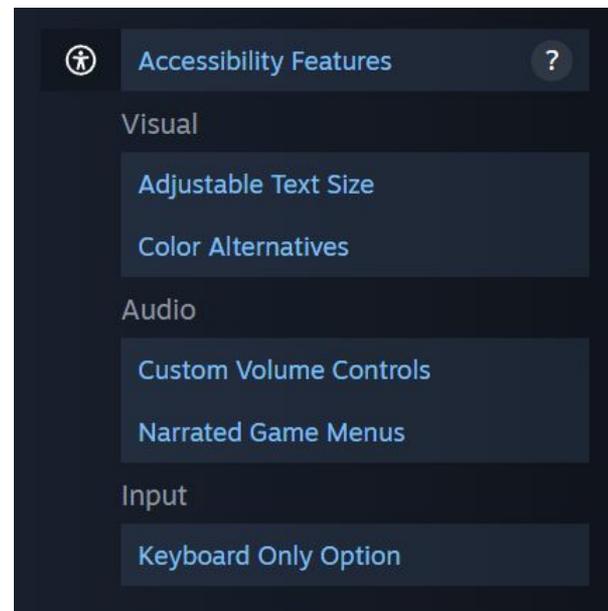
Aspect Ratios





Accessibility

- **TASK**: Resizable Text? Implement it as soon as possible
- **TASK**: UI Scaling? Implement it as soon as possible
- **QUESTION**: Are Camera Settings supported?
- **QUESTION**: Color Blindness: Will you address this? How?
- **QUESTION**: Difficulty: Is it adjustable? Does it scale?





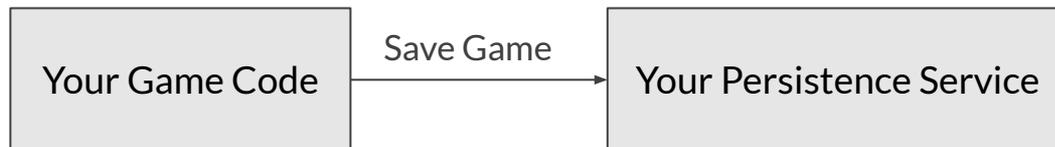
Localisation

- **TASK**: Immediately use a Localisation System
- **TASK**: Start with only 1 language (adding others later is technically easy)
- **QUESTION**: What fonts are relevant for character sets? Add them very early!
 - Changing fonts late may degrade your UI
- **QUESTION**: How does the UI behave with very long text (Russian, Greek, German, etc)



Save Files

- **TASK**: Storage: Build an abstraction layer. This differs by platform.
- **QUESTION**: Some platforms have no file system access (AppleTV has a key-value store instead)
- **QUESTION**: Cloud Saves? (Steam, Apple, etc offer them. Just use their stuff.)





Multiplayer & Online Services

Any form of multiplayer is much more expensive later on.

Like localisation: Build “multiplayer with 1 player” at first and ensure everything works with multiplayer when building it

- **TASK**: if you have multiplayer, build it before your project grows
- **QUESTION**: How will you implement Steamworks and other platform SDKs?
 - Build an abstraction: `SocialService.UnlockAchievement(id)`

Ніхто не може зазнавати безпідставного

鉴于对人类家庭所有成员的固有尊严及其

人類社会のすべての構成員の固有の尊厳と平等で譲る



Progression & Monetization

- **QUESTION**: Do players unlock content? How? When?
 - Make it part of your design
- **QUESTION**: How do you make money? Premium? In-App-Purchases?
 - Make it part of your design
- **QUESTION**: Do Progression & Monetization match?
- **QUESTION**: Do they match with your platforms?





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Image Sources

- <https://clan.akamai.steamstatic.com/images//39983882/d0adfa4f00eff82145bfd0f352050fd05ee0c6c4.png>
- <https://castr.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Resolution-02-1-scaled.jpg>
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