



GUIDELINES FOR CREATING A LOCATION-BASED GAME (LBG) FOR THE COMPETITION

“SCHOOLS IN ACTION FOR DAYLIGHTING RIVERS”

Final submission: 30th of April 2020

CREATING A LOCATION-BASED GAME (LBG) FOR DAYLIGHTING RIVERS

The process of creating the Daylighting Rivers game includes three main stages: the preparatory work, the actual game design, and the playtest and refinement.

STAGE A. Preparatory work

STEP 1: WRITE A BACKSTORY

Having an overall backstory will help the LBG designers to create a narrative and, later on, the characters of the game.

The Design Project Report of the competitors will be used as a starting point and the game designers can exercise their imagination to give shape and provide examples on the theme they have selected.

STEP 2: FIND A LOCATION

Identify a minimum of ten spots along the river/stream you have selected where people can sign up for challenges. Make sure these locations are safe to play (e.g. away from car traffic, in places accessible to all) and provide the needed infrastructure (e.g. WIFI access, GPS reception while offering the fitting background ambience for the storytelling).

STEP 3: BRAINSTORM

The designing team should gather together to brainstorm the Daylighting Rivers game ideas that match the location and the backstory created during the initial step of the game design preparation.

STEP 4: CHOOSE (non-playing) CHARACTERS

Some characters should be chosen by the team to be the “main actors” of their story (according to the actors named in the Design Project Report). These characters will give players their reaction or advice to the challenges presented in the game.

STEP 5: CHOOSE A PLATFORM

We recommend 3 platforms that are free, simple and suitable for LBGs:

- the EnigmApp platform, <http://www.enigmapp.fr/>
- the ARIS platform, <https://arisgames.org/>
- the TaleBlazer platform, <http://taleblazer.org/>

Project participants can use any other LBG platform they prefer, **or even QR codes**



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STAGE B. Game Design

1. GAME DESCRIPTION

This is what players will see when choosing the game on the selected LBG Platform. A short description that would have the place of an introduction to the LBG.

2. GAME ARCHITECTURE:

a) Goal

The architecture of the game defines the goal of the game and the means the players can use in order to win. At this point the designing team should also consider several alternatives that may make the game more interesting: whether the game will be for single players or for groups of 2+ players; how the players can compete between themselves and how they can compare scores to determine eventually the winner.

b) Rules

Define what players can and cannot do, and consequently, how the game works. The rules should be set clearly as instructions and will determine the options the player will have when entering various “missions”.

c) Challenges

Each of the “missions” included in the games should be clearly described on the basis of a challenge.

3. DIALOGUES WITH THE CHARACTERS (MAIN ACTORS)

The dialogues with the main actors (non-playing characters) should be written down or spoken, with a clear objective to help the player undertake and finish each mission. Once the non-playing characters have been defined during the preparatory stage of the game, then their role in unlocking and successfully completing each mission should be defined. Fun and informative dialogues should be included to stimulate the players.

4. GAME ASSETS

The images and art for the game are assets that contribute greatly to making the game look attractive or not. Several types of assets can be used (e.g. photos, videos, drawings, cartoons etc).

STAGE C. Playtesting

Once a first version of the game is shaped, the team should make sure to playtest it on actual location, amongst themselves and with friends and fellow students, to see what works and what doesn't, and how to improve it.

**ANNEX FOR THE TEACHERS: A SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF TEN STEPS TO HELP STUDENTS
CREATE THE GAME**

1. Introduction to game design concepts. The teacher/facilitator guides the students to play a simple group game and then to incrementally improve it and playtest the improved version to increase the game's interest, competitiveness, complexity.
2. The students gain practical experience of quick development of a game and of playtesting it.
3. The students learn to recognise the mechanisms of a game and improve their skills for making new generations of improved game prototypes.
4. The students are guided to understand and practice game hacking as an important mechanism for developing their own location-based games.
5. They may start from popular negotiation and challenge games (e.g. monopoly) and create their own prototypes by “hacking” the known games.
6. The students have to change the game rules and mechanisms, and then define the structural elements of the game:
 - Name
 - Aim
 - Rules
 - Location
 - Number of players
 - Materials needed
7. Development of the scenario
 - Create a story as the basis for the scenario
 - Provide first ideas about the “missions” (mini-games/quests) and tasks the player performs in the mission
 - Define the non-playing characters
 - Define the logical steps of the scenario – the storyboard
 - Connect the storyboard to the River map and to the selected points of interest
 - Content development: an important task that includes the composition of texts, the formulation of dialogues, taking and using photos, drawings, video; doing some art work (drawings, sketches, cartoons etc)
 - Introduce the content into the selected gaming platform



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- Prepare a draft game prototype. At first, choose a small “preview” of the game to be playtested (e.g. a selection of three stations with different play activities, but in close proximity to each other).
8. The game prototype is ready for playtesting
 9. After playtesting, write down all observations in relation to timing of missions, the suitability of the chosen points along the River route, obstacles present – physical or technological etc
 10. Go back to the classroom for adaptations and improvements on:
 - Structural elements of the game, mechanisms
 - Addition or removal of certain elements
 - Adjustment of the quest to the physical space