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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

GAME THEORY & DESIGN

Pitch Presentations



Overview

- The Purpose Of A Pitch
- Types of Pitch
- Exercise: Elevator Pitch Practice
- Creating a Pitch Presentation
- General Advice for Pitching
- Brian Upton (GDC 2017): *30 Things I Hate About Your Game Pitch*



Pitch Presentations

The Purpose of a Pitch





Pitching ideas happens in many walks of professional life. There are a number of reasons or scenarios in which people may want to pitch an idea, such as:

- To gain the attention of a superior, investor, or publisher
- To make changes to established systems
- To present an idea to an audience



You may find that in life you are presented with opportunities to **share your creative ideas and projects with other professionals or investors** that could help make your idea into a reality.

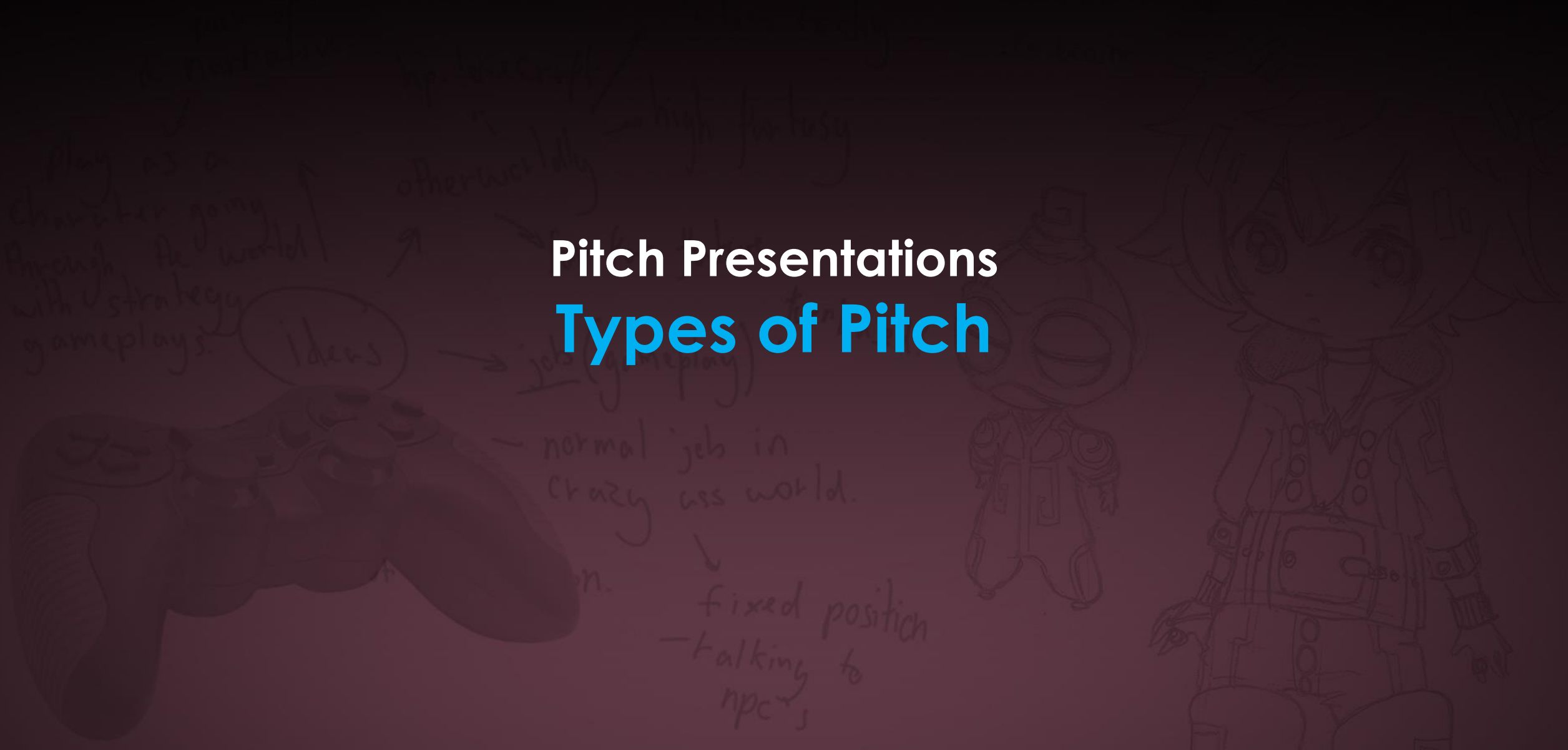
Additionally, you are required to perform these kinds of presentations as **assessment points throughout your University Studies.**

Either way, it is good to be able to practice the ability to pitch an idea. This should help you **develop communication skills** while also building your **confidence.**



Pitch Presentations

Types of Pitch





There are different kinds of pitches for all manner of ideas and scenarios. Some of these will be more applicable to you than others and research obtained through sources will suggest many ways in which to perform them.

The ones we are most interested in for this module are:

- **The 'Elevator Pitch'**
- **Powerpoint Presentation Pitches**



Pitch Presentations The Elevator Pitch





What is an Elevator Pitch?

“An elevator pitch is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced marketing message about your professional self that your mother should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator.”

*“It is a **concise, practiced overview of your idea** put in a way that is **simple and memorable** for the listener to understand” (Chadwick, cited in Leper, 2017)*

(Leper, 2017)



It just takes less than 30 seconds **for someone to form a first impression** when they meet you.

In this short amount of time, you have to be able to introduce your idea in a way that gets people eager to know more about what you have to say. This is where the Elevator Pitch can be useful.

So, how do we create an elevator pitch from our idea?



Pitch Presentations

Exercise: Elevator Pitch Practice



Contributor Video

Message Map: How To Pitch Anything In 15 Seconds

COMMENTARY BY **CARMINE GALLO**, FORBES CONTRIBUTOR



Carmine Gallo uses the Message Map approach to break down a product or service into a **general description** followed by **three essential points**.

This obviously requires some experience with the product, service or idea beforehand – though if you are considering a pitch of your own, you should have already spent some time thinking about what it is you want to achieve.

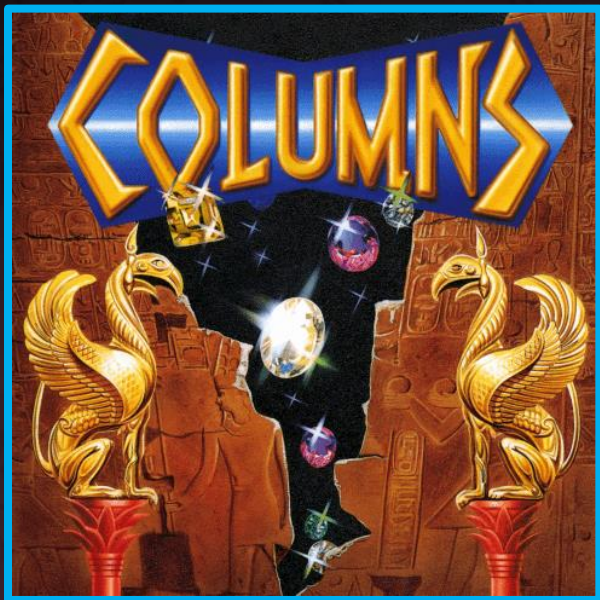


If you experience difficulty using this method, **turn the message map into a full-blown Mind Map.**

After spending time breaking your idea down, **pick the three points you feel provide the best summary** (or make new points from the information you've just created during this process).



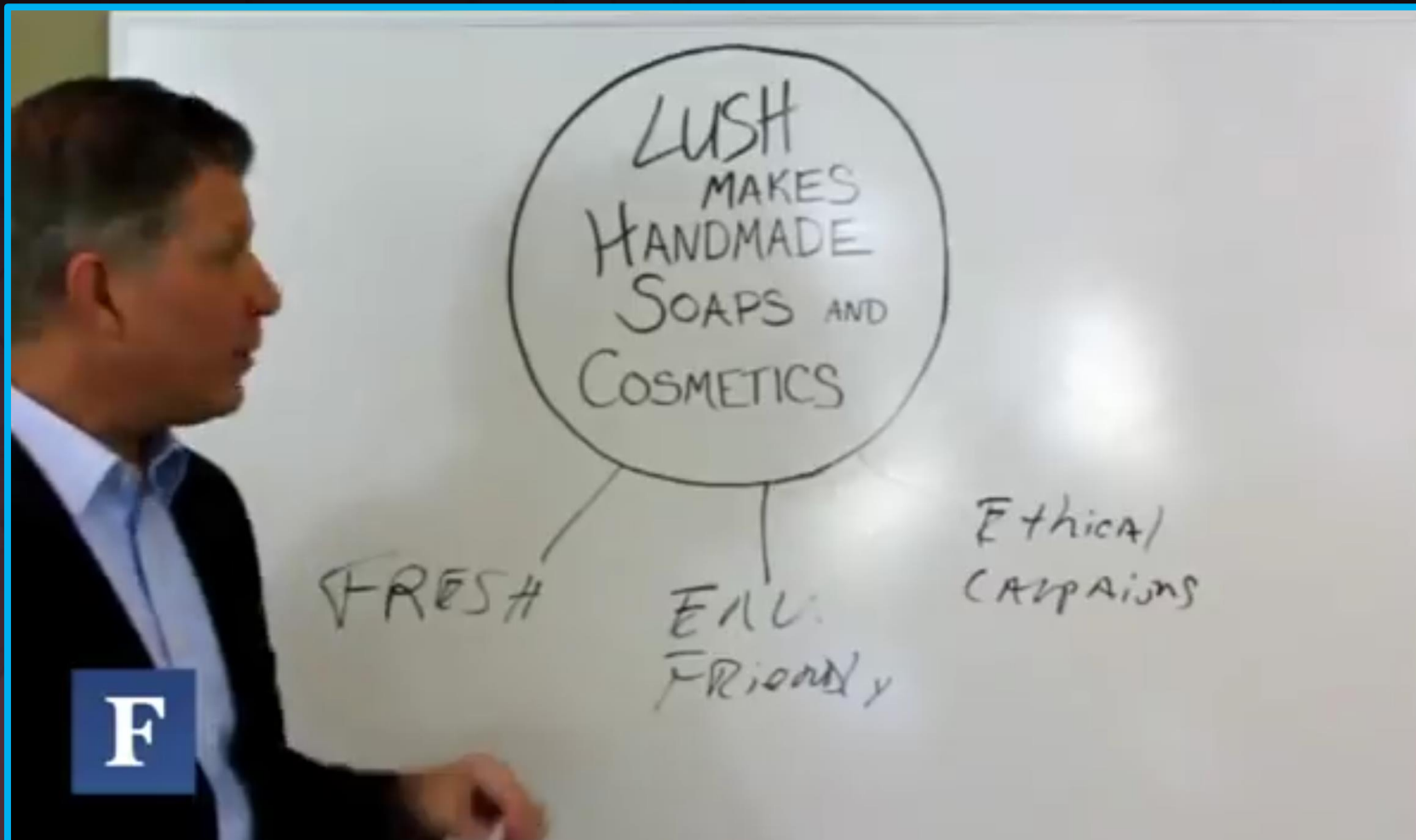
In groups, play these games for **five minutes** and try to summarise the idea in a sentence or two.



Write your thoughts down and then simplify them as this may help you stick to the essential details.



Use the **Message Map** method in **Carmine Gallo's video** to do this.





Pitch Presentations

The Powerpoint Pitch





What is a Powerpoint Pitch?

The Powerpoint pitch is a situation where, unlike an Elevator Pitch, you may have the luxury of:

- Having a dedicated and focused audience
- A sizable amount of time to communicate your ideas
- The luxury of using resources to help explain the idea and engage your audience.





What is a Powerpoint Pitch?

A pitch does not have to be produced strictly as a powerpoint.

This is just a common tool people use to produce visuals that add depth or context to your proposal.



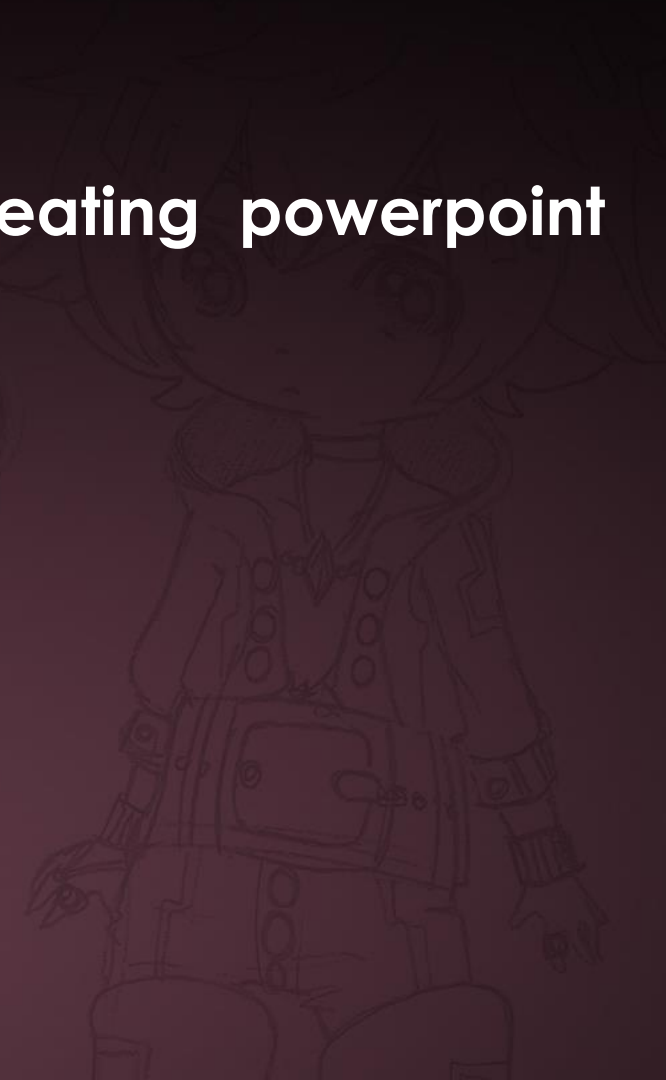


What is a Powerpoint Pitch?

You should consider a number of factors when creating powerpoint presentation in general:

- **Keep it visual**
- **Keep it concise**
- **Timing is everything**

→ job (gameplay) - turn based?
- normal job in crazy ass world.
↓
fixed position
- talking to npc's





Keep it Visual

Bear in mind that your audience often sits through many pitches. You need to ensure yours is memorable and engaging or you won't be successful.

A good way to help this is to provide visuals – mock-ups of ideas, themes, and imagery related to your topic. You do not have to create bespoke, detailed and highly rendered concept work – an idea is all that is often required.

Remember: SHOW, not TELL!



Keep it Concise

Building on the previous point – **keep things simple and memorable**. Do not use slides with huge blocks of unreadable text as this is extremely off-putting.

Slides are better when there are a few bullet points – these act as a summary for the audience, and a prompt for the speaker.

The Powerpoint Pitch





Keep it Concise

Even better is when no words need to be used at all.

Think of presentations such as **TED talks**, where presentations may be no more than a few images.

The Powerpoint Pitch





Keep it Concise: Example (too much text on screen)

The Powerpoint pitch is a situation where, unlike an Elevator Pitch, you may have the luxury of having a dedicated and focused audience, a sizable amount of time to communicate your ideas and the luxury of using resources to help explain the idea and engage your audience. This pitch does not have to be produced strictly as a powerpoint – this is just a common tool people use to produce visuals that add depth or context to your proposal. Bear in mind that your audience often sits through many pitches. You need to ensure yours is memorable and engaging or you won't be successful.

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If you are given five minutes, ten minutes or an hour, you need to consider the material you can cover in that allocated time. You will not be permitted to over-run – time is precious and the people you are pitching to may have a busy schedule. Taking too long or not using much of the time given to you will just undermine your proposal. Your audience may become irritated or bored if you take too long, or feel your idea hasn't been properly thought out if you're too brief. Remember, this is different to an Elevator Pitch!



Timing is everything

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Timing is everything

As a very rough approximation, consider the following:

1 slide = 1 minute

(e.g, when creating a 10 minute pitch, use 10 slides as a rough guide)

Speaking for sixty seconds over a single slide takes a lot of time in reality **and is often not needed** – but this does give you time to deal with unforeseen circumstances such as nerves, technical problems, interruptions or questions.



Pitch Presentations

Creating A Pitch Presentation





The most important thing to remember when you pitch a game idea is the following:

To understand what the target audience is expecting from you.

- You will need to **engage** them.
- You will need to **inform** them.
- You will need to **impress** them.



How?

Your presentation content **does not have to be totally original** – a completely unique or innovative idea delivered poorly can still be easily rejected.

Many people stress the importance of a Unique Selling Point (USP) and while **this is something that should definitely be considered**, it is not the *only* thing to concentrate on during a pitch.



How?

Starloop Studios have published a list of sections to include on your game pitch which can act as a useful guide to start you off.

You can also use other methods to construct a basic pitch framework on, such as **Scott Rogers's One-Sheet and Ten Pager** Game Design Documentation.

There's no specific method required - **the only thing that matters is that it works.**

(Starloop Studios, 2022)



Creating and delivering a **Powerpoint presentation** is the usual method when delivering a game pitch (Starloop Studios, 2022).

Note that a Powerpoint presentation goes beyond the scope of an **Elevator Pitch** – which cannot rely on any supporting material due to its brief nature.

A pitch presentation is mainly intended for an audience that have agreed to look at your idea in a more formal manner, though this method could also help you refine the idea for documents such as a **Game Design Document (GDD)**.

(Starloop Studios, 2022)



Sections to consider including in a Game Pitch

- Game Outline
- Fact Sheet
- References / Competitors
- USP (Unique Selling Points)
- Core Mechanics
- Core Loop
- Metagame / Progression Systems
- Game Economy



Sections to include in a Game Pitch

Game Outline

Give an **overview of what the game is**, what it is trying to accomplish, and explain how it is going to face the challenges. Write 1 or 2 short paragraphs and include images.

Fact Sheet

A breakdown of the **hard facts** (Genre, Demographic, Development Platform) that put the game in context.

(Starloop Studios, 2022)



Sections to include in a Game Pitch

References / Competitors

Write about **what other games are similar**, what is borrowed from them, and what you are improving.

USP (Unique Selling Points)

Make a bullet list of **what makes your game unique**. It doesn't have to be a long list, just around 3-4 points will suffice.



Sections to include in a Game Pitch

Core Mechanics

Explain what the **game mechanics** are, how they help the game achieve its goal, and how will they play out.

Core Loop

Write about how core mechanics and progressions systems **connect**. You can use simplified graphic representation here.



Sections to include in a Game Pitch

Metagame / Progression Systems

Explain **why players will keep playing your game** and how do these systems connect with core gameplay and theme. E.g. Different objectives, Achievements, High Scores, Online Rival Systems, etc.

Game Economy

If it has one - make a brief description of **how the game economy will work**, how it will evolve with game cycles, and how it will affect the gameplay experience.

(Starloop Studios, 2022)



Remember **this is just one method** – there is no definitive right way to structure or deliver your content!

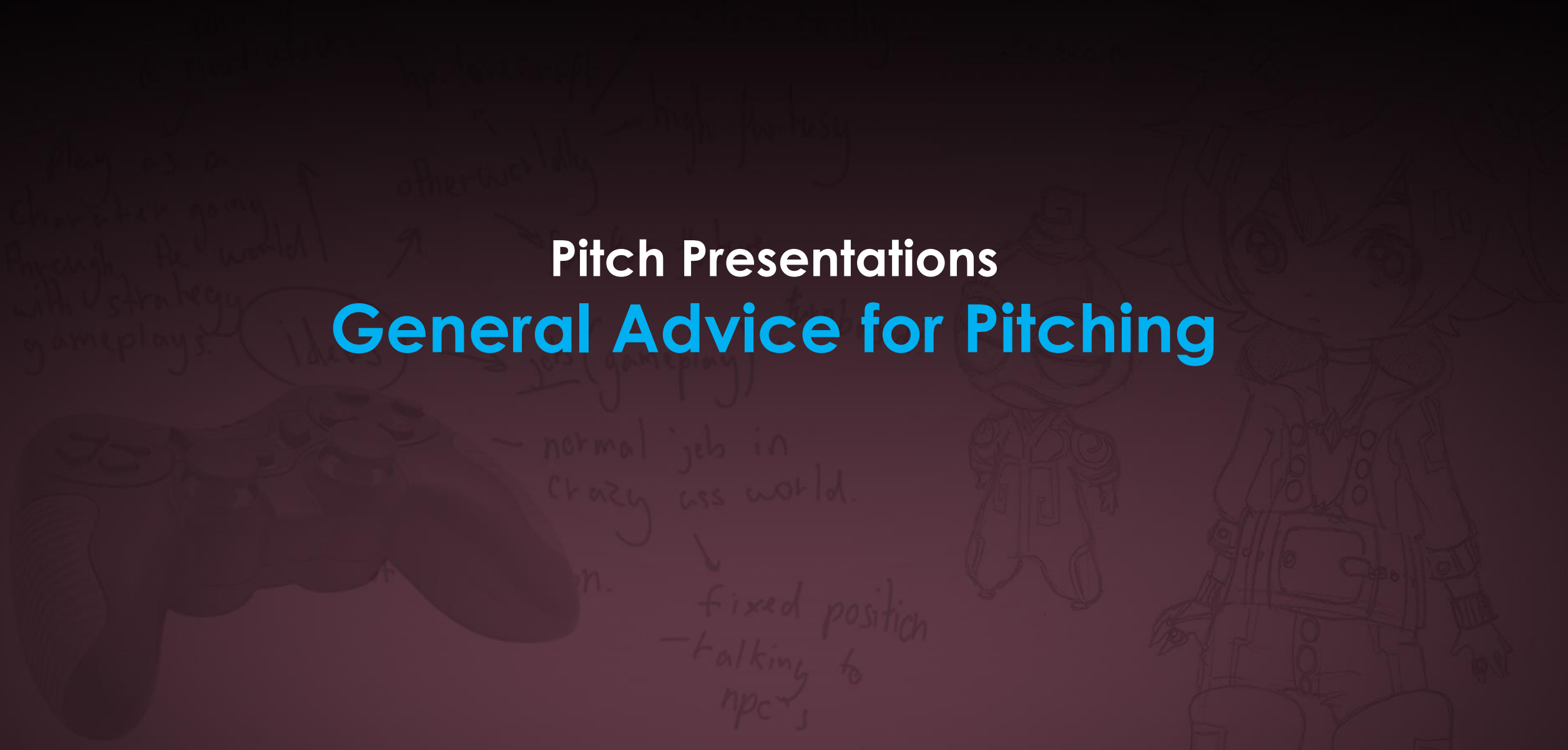
The best approach is to look carefully at what you wish to achieve and structure your presentation around key elements that you feel are the most important.

Though, as ever, **a little research goes a long way**. Conduct your own research into how to deliver presentations and pitches and use what works best for you and your idea.



Pitch Presentations

General Advice for Pitching





Test the Pitch

The longer you spend with an idea, the more vulnerable you are to your own ego. Get out of your office / cubicle / apartment and go find smart people you know to give you feedback.

Ask them to pretend they are whoever it is you plan to pitch to. Then go through your pitch, **responding to their questions.**

You won't always get the feedback you want, but you'll sharpen both your idea, and the way you talk about it.

(Berkun, 2005)



Test the Pitch

If the idea is amazing and groundbreaking and you're afraid to run it by other people, find a close friend or parent and use them.

From your pitch tests, **develop a list of questions** you expect to be asked during the pitch, and **be prepared to answer them.**

(Berkun, 2005)



Deliver

Be calm, be direct, state your case, and then listen.

Like any kind of public speaking type situation, **the more often you do it, the more comfortable it will become.** But there isn't much magic to the actual pitch.

The only people that need to resort to tricks and manipulations are those that haven't worked to understand their audience well, or don't truly believe in what they are pitching.

(Berkun, 2005)



If The Pitch Fails

When things don't go well, your job is to harvest as much value from the attempt as possible. Always leave failed pitches with an understanding of what went wrong.

Which points didn't they agree with?

Which of your assumptions did they refute?

In many cases, you might learn there are criteria for green lighting ideas in an organization that you didn't know about.

(Berkun, 2005)



If The Pitch Fails

It's also possible they objected to something about your approach.

If you can, ask for their feedback. Try to get as much learning out of completed pitches as you can.

(This is obviously a lot easier in University, as we provide feedback on any assessed presentations).

Recoup your investment in the failed pitch by mining any lessons out of it that you can apply next time.

(Berkun, 2005)



If The Pitch Fails

Consider your position from a tactical perspective. **Who else can you give this pitch to?**

Consider compromising on how much power is needed to make your idea happen, or how to split your idea into smaller ideas.

It may be an idea to **focus on the first small piece of your larger idea**, and revisit the rest after you've had some initial success.

(Berkun, 2005)



Pitch Presentations

Brian Upton: 30 Things I hate About Your Game Pitch



Brian Upton: 30 Things I Hate About Your Game Pitch (GDC 2017)

In 2017, industry veteran **Brian Upton** delivered a talk at Game Developer's Conference (GDC) relating to game pitches.

While this GDC talk is focused primarily on industry-facing projects there are a lot of useful points to **bear in mind for your own proposals**, whether they are required to be produced as live projects or not.



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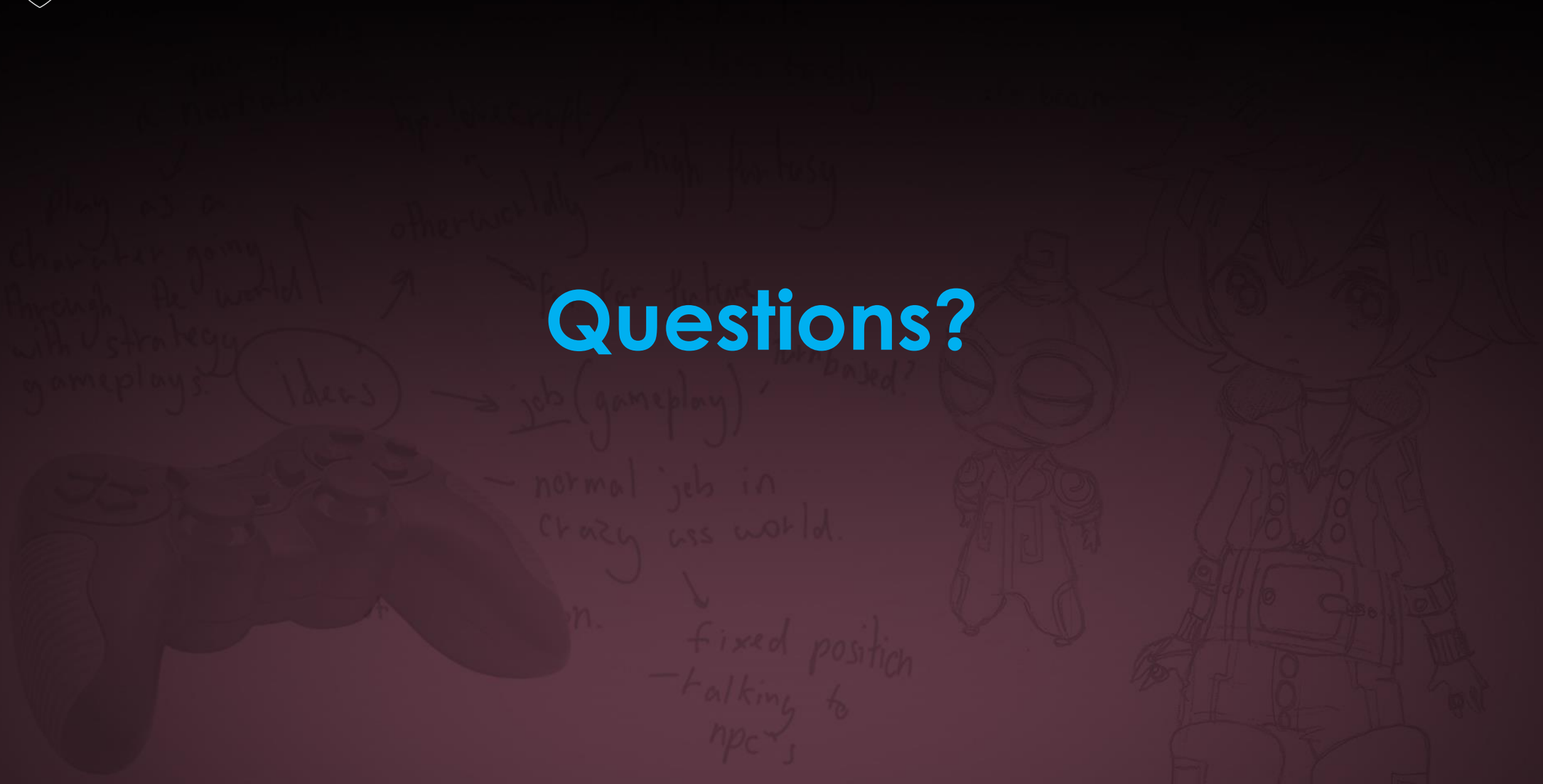
Pitch Presentations

Brian Upton:
30 Things I Hate About Your Game Pitch





Questions?





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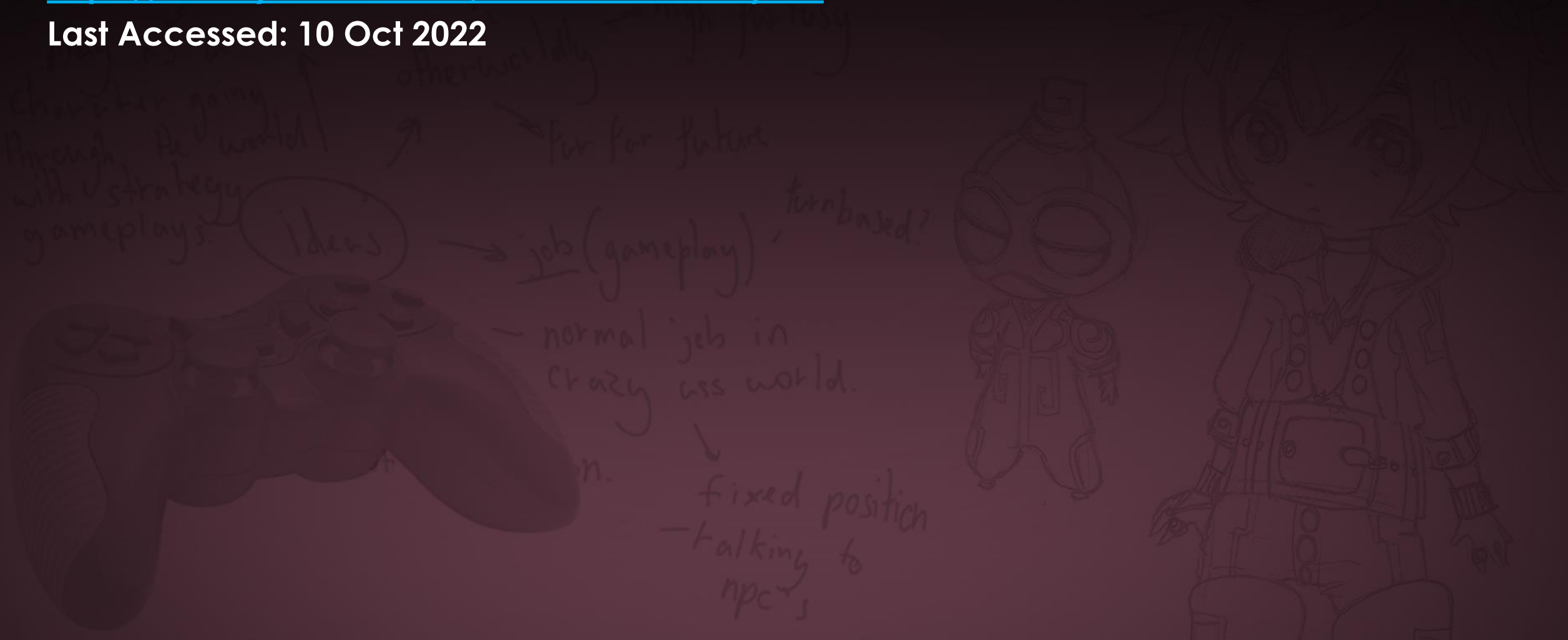
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