More Post-Mortems, Shareware CMPUT 299 Winter 2005 *February 16* 



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## The Sims 2

- What went right
  - Prototyping
  - Understanding the audience
  - Kleenex testing
  - Custom content and community
  - SWAT Teams



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# The Sims 2

- What went wrong
  - Noisy feedback
  - That's a lot of content
  - New engine, new pipelines, learning curve
  - Sequelitis
  - Big team communications





## Neverwinter Nights



## Neverwinter Nights

- What went right
  - Constant communication
  - Extensive tool effort
  - Multiplayer integration from the outset
  - Experienced team members focused on quality
  - Sharing resources with other projects



#### Neverwinter Nights



- What went wrong
  - Resources added at non-optimal times
  - Incomplete prototypes
  - Delayed rule implementation (including tools implementation delay)
  - Late feature additions; innovation for its own sal
  - A lot of demos





# Shareware



- How many people have played shareware?
- How many people have bought shareware?

# First Shareware - 1981



- PC Talk
  - Andrew Fluegelman
- Easy-File
  - Jim Button

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# First Shareware

- 1. Reference each others programs in their documentation
- 2. Changed Easy-File to PC-FILE
- 3. Voluntary donations of \$25.00





# More Software

- 1983 PC Write, Bob Wallace
- 1983 Public Software Library, Nelson Ford
  - Contest for general name for new software
  - Shareware coined by Bob Wallace

#### Shareware and Games

- Many different uses
  - Game demos
  - Playable game minus full content
  - Crippled game



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## Commander Keen

You play the role of Billy Blaze, eight year-old kid genius who builds an interstellar ship when not working at home on his college fast-track degree. Among other household objects, Billy uses his Nintendo joystick for flight control and his mom's vacuum cleaner (heavily modified) for his ship's ion propulsion system (with pile height adjustment). At the hint of galactic trouble, Billy dons his brother's football helmet and becomes "Commander Keen"--defender of Earth! Ever on the side of justice, Keen dispenses justice with an iron hand. "Marooned on Mars" is episode one of the Commander Keen trilogy. Only part one is available via shareware distribution, the other two episodes ("The Earth Explodes" and "Keen Must Die!") may only be purchased from Apogee.

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#### Wolfenstein 3D - 1992



#### Methods of Distribution

on

- Word of mouth (disk)
  - Copying for friends
  - Distribution services
  - Magazines
- BBS
  - Other early online games (Trade Wars)
- FTP
- WWW

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# Speed of Distribution

- Word of mouth
  - Days, weeks
- BBS
  - Days, hours (limited users/access)
- FTP
  - Days, hours (increased users)
- WWW
  - Immediately (increased users)

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# My own experiences

 From Asteroids to Vectrex (GCE's system), vector graphics have a special place in the history of gaming. First pioneered by Cinematronics in the 1977 game "Space Wars", the method of drawing sharp geometric shapes with straight lines harks back to the days when "simplicity and intense gameplay" were the mantra of game players and developers. For the next 21 days, iDevGames invites Mac developers to go retro by developing a game that captures the glory and spirit of vector graphic gaming.

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Game Postmortems

# SV Racer

- What went right?
  - Learned OpenGL
  - Good initial code design
  - Object system allowed innovative levels

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MIDI sound/music









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