

# Reawakening a Classic

## Prince of Persia Case Study

## Plan

- Anatomy of a 15 y.o. success
  - brand attributes identification
- Challenges
  - Keeping up the brand attributes
  - Production challenges
- Backbone methodology
  - Conception
  - Preproduction
  - Production
- Short Post Mortem
  - What went right
  - What went wrong



## Anatomy of a 15 y.o. success (1/3)

- What would become the fundamentals of the license
  - High level:
    - Creating the Action / Adventure genre (Appeal through genre)
    - A game that talked to everyone (Exotic fantasy of collective cliché in Realistic treatment)
    - A game that was telling a story (Involvement)

→ "I wish it could be ME !"



## Anatomy of a 15 y.o. success (2/3)

- What would become the fundamentals of the license
  - Low level:
    - Easy to get in (Appeal through controls)
    - Technological breakthrough embedded in gameplay mechanics (Realistic treatment)
    - Believable character / Immediate closeness (Involvement)

→ "Hey, it could be ME !"

## Anatomy of a 15 y.o. success (3/3)

- Fun... through a well thought game design:
  - Game structure
  - Learning curve
  - Rewards
  - Level design ingredients
  - Simple but intense fights

**FUN !!**

## Challenges (1/2)

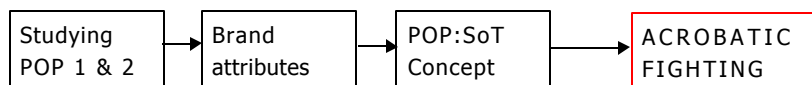
- Keeping up the brand attributes
  - What worked so well 15 years ago...
  - ... COULD work today.
- What we decided to focus on:
  - Appeal through genre
  - Easy to get in (controls)
  - Technological breakthroughs:
    - Rewind system
    - Dynamic loading
  - Realistic treatment through animations
  - The same well thought game design

## Challenges (2/2)

- Production challenges:
  - AAA game in a time to market scheme
    - Initially defined release date
    - Creation of an established brand for Ubisoft
    - 90 + review target
  - No engine
  - Multiplatform !

## Backbone methodology (1/6)

- Conception: **visualizing the concept**



- [Gameplay concept 1](#)
- [Gameplay concept 2](#)
- [Gameplay concept 3](#)
- [Walling prototype](#)

## Backbone methodology (2/6)

- Preproduction: **idea = nothing, playable idea = value**
  - Goals:
    - Complete character behavior
    - Complete Macro design
    - Complete level design ingredients
    - Complete tools

## Backbone methodology (3/6)

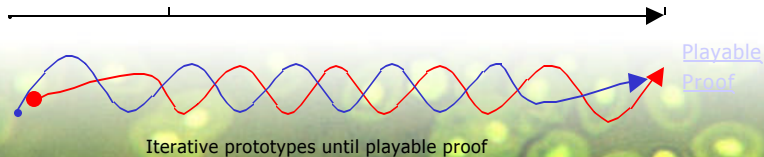
- **C**ontent preproduction
  - Traditional game designers work
  - Story writing
  - ... [the Blueprint process](#)
- **T**echnology preproduction
  - Get an engine !
  - Start with the hardest
    - Rewind feature
    - Animation tools
    - Customization

## Backbone methodology (4/6)

- Workflow and Communication
  - [Twiki](#)
  - Creative Director position
- Most valuable duo: Lead AI & Lead Animator

Conception =  
4 months

Pre-prod =  
14 months



## Backbone methodology (5/6)

- Production
  - The biggest challenge for production was the simultaneous development of all platforms:
    - Continuous porting:
      - instead of throwing a 15 team members at 4 months before main master, we started GC with one 3D programmer from the beginning.
        - » Each milestone was hit twice.
        - » Graphics enhancements on both platforms.
        - » 50 % cost reduction.

## Backbone methodology (6/6)

- Production
  - [Continuous animations reviewing](#)
  - Staffing
    - 20 to 35 gradually (3 months)
    - 35 to 55 in 6 weeks

• **FUN !!**

## Short post-mortem

- What went wrong:
  - Very late art direction
  - Fuzzy validation process
  - Prince overwhelming enemies
- What went right:
  - Risk management
  - Animation & AI duo
  - Team motivation and 'will to achieve'

## Opening

- Hollywood is cashing big on remakes, in every genre:
  - Titanic: 1,835 M\$
  - *LOTR*: 950 M\$ + 820 M\$ + 930 M\$
  - Pearl Harbor: 200 M\$
  - You've got mail: 115 M\$

## Opening

- What's a remake ?
  - A need:
    - to explore familiar ground with new eyes or to transform the original version with updated directing, editing, writing and acting styles fused with current technologies to enhance a new vision.
    - the prospect of money.
  - For POP, on the production side (without the money question), we felt the game was deserving its remake on 128bits consoles, and we did our best !