

Stephen J. Skelton

Game Designer/Writer

Creative Team Leader | Process Improvement Enthusiast
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Summary

Game design professional with over 20 years experience creating compelling gameplay and stories for indie-AAA titles, generating detailed content for original and licensed properties, and working with small and large teams to create unique and realistic game experiences. My broad range of experience allows me to adapt to the unique needs of a team - creative, procedural/process, managerial, or in combination.

Skills

- Unreal Engine
- Jira/Confluence
- Perforce/Github
- Game Design
- Narrative Structure
- Creative Development
- Team Management
- Media Editing
- Power Naps

Experience

Lead Designer

Nov 2023 – Mar 2025

Sphere Entertainment Co.

Burbank, CA

*Lead Designer for the Interactive department at Sphere Studios - development studio for the **Sphere** venue in Las Vegas. 25+ person team built multiple prototypes for interactive experiences with large audiences.*

- **Designed solutions to the big question of how does an audience play a game together on the gigantic Sphere dome.** Built prototypes in Unreal (level construction, blueprints, etc.) while mentoring design team.
- Wrote production-ready documentation on game structure, systems, and narrative used by the team to build prototypes. Wrote concept documents and organized a new idea review process with upper management.
- Revised team documentation & design practices for clarity. Built design process that centered documentation around projects, emphasising team-ownership over individuals or departments.

Head of Game Design/Design Director

May 2022 – Jul 2023

Arrivant

Los Angeles, CA

Developed team-based autobattler with emphasis on shared spaces, including a Web3 component, with the goal of positive social interaction through a balanced game economy.

- Design Director on **StarGarden** project (Unreal Engine 5.2). High-level design planning + hands-on engine work building puzzles, narrative interaction, and audio implementation.
- Project management and long-term production planning with studio leadership. Worked with team members to create transmedia events to enhance ongoing "early access" development.
- **Team built AAA-quality investor demo on an indie-team budget.** Adapted demo into playable week-long community "early access" event.

Senior Designer, Special Projects

Oct 2020 – May 2022

Embodied, Inc,

Pasadena, CA

*Designer for the development, launch, and post-launch support of **Moxie** - an AI-powered robot companion designed to support children with their emotional development and conversational learning.*

- Design, documentation, and implementation of **Moxie** interactive modules using ChatScript and in-house tools. Development of supplemental material for subscription mailings (robot-supported paper activities).
- Supported production in lead up to public launch by tracking task progress across departments and facilitating communication with stakeholders.
- Led internal development of *PlayZone* games web portal for **Moxie** - using a screen with the robot to play enhanced activities like checkers, chess, and guess-the-drawing.

Contractor/Consultant/Writer

Jan 2009 – Present

Independent

Los Angeles, CA

Design consultation & documentation (concept creation, pitch docs, GDDs) - pre-production on licensed and original IP from pitch to story/character development, game mechanic specifications, level design, dialog, etc. Work examples:

- **Melsoft's MyCafe (INLINGO)** - Mobile game dialog rewrite for American audiences, female-centric soap opera style. Over 24,000 words/2,000 lines.
- **Unannounced First Person Narrative (Game Zale)** – Created original IP: Old West-themed horror 1st Person Narrative for PC/consoles.
- **SKILL RANGE (skillrange.com)** – Game design consultation for interactive business simulation software. Provided feedback/solutions for interaction loops, progression, user experience (UX/UI).

Creative Director/Producer

Nov 2012 – Jun 2014

CI Games

Bydgoszcz, Poland

*On site with 25+ person team in Poland as Creative Director bringing Unreal Engine Sci-Fi FPS game **ALIEN RAGE** to Alpha & Beta, followed by remote direction from Los Angeles through launch on Steam.*

- Feedback/direction for all departments, cutscene direction. Wrote game system specifications (scoring, weapons, audio log functionality, etc.). Recruited external designers to build multiplayer maps.
- Redesigned game objectives/plot & achievements to fit console requirements. **Designed player perk system which increased EEDAR Lasting Appeal score by 30%.**
- Provided marketing support (title options, "back of box" copy, etc.). Represented game and CI Games upcoming slate at company-wide reviews/presentations, E3, gamescom, PAX Prime.

Lead Game Designer/Writer

Aug 2002 – Nov 2008

Spark Unlimited

Sherman Oaks, CA

*Independent studio founded to create the first **Call of Duty** console game. Worked with multiple publishers to develop original and licensed IP. Developed/managed the 13-person design department and methods.*

- **Legendary (Xbox 360, PS3, PC)** Lead Designer/Writer. Managed design/design department. Created story with Design Director, wrote game script. Managed balancing: controls, difficulty, AI, player weapons, etc.
- Lead Designer/Writer, Studio Development. Franchise "World Bible" development of original IP with publishers. Pitch development and presentation of original and licensed IP concepts.
- **Call of Duty: Finest Hour (PS2, Xbox, GameCube)** Designed: *Breakdown, Into Red Square, Come Out Fighting, First City To Fall, Underground Passage, Surrender At Aachen* (layout, scripting, story, characters).

Game Designer

Jul 2000 – Aug 2002

Electronic Arts/DreamWorks Interactive

Los Angeles, CA

AAA console and PC development using in-house engine and tools as well as Unreal Engine. Supported the design team and took ownership of large sections of gameplay development.

- **Medal of Honor Frontline (PS2, Xbox, GameCube)** Levels: *Several Bridges Too Far, Yard By Yard, Arnhem Knights*. Implemented all gameplay using map layouts and basic scenarios provided by the Lead Designer.
- Developed studio management-requested pitches for potential existing IP and original projects. Worked independently and with external partners (IP owners, screenwriters, etc.).
- **Clive Barker's Undying (PC)**. Supported design team across all levels/maps in Unreal Engine. Implemented game objective/waypoint system.

Education

B.A. Theater & Drama, Indiana University | Bloomington, IN

Training & Awards

ScrumMaster | Thea Award For Outstanding Achievement Immersive Technology & Production (Sphere)