



PROJECT MUSE®

DOOM

Dan Pinchbeck

Published by University of Michigan Press

Pinchbeck, Dan.

DOOM: SCARYDARKFAST.

University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Project MUSE., <a href="

<https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/24184>



Notes

INTRODUCTION

The subtitle is a tagline for an *Ultimate DOOM* publicity poster seen hanging on the wall of id Software's offices.

1. Strafing, for the uninitiated, is just a fancy term for sidestepping. It is one of the fundamental skills to learn if you want to succeed at high levels of difficulty or in a deathmatch.

2. I should note that this isn't mouselook—the avatar's vision is hardwired to its physical orientation. Mouselook, now a standard feature of FPS games, arrived later courtesy of games like *Marathon* (Bungie 1995), via the strange stepping-stone of key-based “vertical look” features. It's an interesting historical case study: playability potentially decreased during this interim period, as the fast-moving nature of gameplay had to factor in what is quite a complicated additional key-binding set. But that's a subject for another book.

3. <http://www.vgchartz.com/game/6232/doom/>.

4. This is from <http://DOOM.wikia.com/wiki/DOOM>.

CHAPTER 1

1. Colley 2004.

2. From a 2001 article, where he also offered five hundred dollars to anyone who could prove him wrong: http://web.archive.org/web/20010410145350/http://www.geocities.com/jim_bowery/spasim.html.

3. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes of John Romero are taken from an interview conducted on June 22, 2010. Throughout, all quotes from that and other interviews are initialized for clarity.

CHAPTER 2

The title is attributed to John Carmack.

1. Given that the focus of this book is on the game itself, Jay Wilbur, as id's business manager at the time, doesn't figure prominently. Let's just confirm his contribution quite simply: no Wilbur, no business, no id, no *DOOM*. Hopefully that clears that up.

2. While writing this book, I attended John Sharp and Richard Lemarchand's 2010 IndieCade panel session, which made a very similar argument for indie development in general.

3. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes of Todd Hollenshead are taken from an interview conducted on March 25, 2011.

4. This is according to Kushner. According to id's website, the company takes "its name from Freud's primal, instinct-driven face of the human psyche," <http://www.idsoftware.com/business/history> (retrieved on August 6, 2010).

5. In a similar vein to Carmack's comment, it is interesting that developers still feel the need to put something approximating a story into what really just amount to arcade twitch shooters. *Painkiller* and *Unreal Tournament III* (Epic Games 2003) are also good examples. *Wolfenstein 3D* is probably as close to the arcades as it gets in terms of just screaming "Maze! Guns! Nazis!" and leaving the player to it, and much as I love *Bioshock*, *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl* (GSC Game World 2007), and *Deus Ex*, it's downright refreshing to not have to bother with any kind of story.

6. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes of John Carmack are taken from an interview conducted on March 24, 2011.

CHAPTER 3

1. Available at <http://5years.doomworld.com/doomBible/>.

2. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes of Tom Hall are taken from an interview conducted on September 3, 2010.

3. According to the Bible, the latter allowed users "to convert captured video images and other NeXT-generated images into a VGA format, move them around, and save them for use on the IBM" (to give you an idea of what that's all about).

4. It's convention that *DOOM*'s levels are referred to by their episode number and then level number. So E1M1 means Episode 1, mission 1. Levels were also named, so while I'll generally use the index code, I will occasionally also use the level name, for readability.

5. In their 2011 *DOOM* postmortem for GDC, available at <http://www.gdcvault.com/play/1014627/Classic-Games-Postmortem>.

6. This remark is all the more interesting when we consider the preexisting structural constraints for the game given its likely distribution through the Apogee model (see chapter 7 for details).

7. As far as academic discussion goes, my recommendation would be Gordon Calleja's *In-Game* (2011).

8. All quotes of Kevin Cloud are taken from an interview conducted on March 24, 2011.

9. <http://toastytech.com/DOOMa/index.html>. You can also download the alphas and betas from here.

CHAPTER 4

1. Most famously, the Phobos Base appears to be located in the vicinity of Yangshuo Cavern, China.
2. Actually, *Mirror's Edge* is better thought of as a driving game with combos.

CHAPTER 5

1. The stats that follow are taken from the *DOOM* Wiki (<http://DOOM.wikia.com>, various contributors and dates) and the *DOOM* Weapon Damage Information page (Bell 1997), <http://www.gamers.org/pub/idgames/lmps/tyson/weapons.html> (retrieved September 15, 2010).
2. Sandy Petersen has said that Romero was fond of breaking whatever rules about item placement (among other things) were agreed by the design team, so the weapon leaking might reflect that as much as anything else. He says that Romero “constantly broke what few rules we had. For instance, I was told early on that we were saving the chainsaw for the later episodes and that the first episode wouldn’t have it. But, of course, John put it in some of his levels (in secret places at least). I’m not dissing him for this—he knew when to break rules, and that was one of his strengths.” All quotes of Sandy Petersen are taken from an interview conducted on February 7, 2011.

CHAPTER 6

1. All quotes of Bobby Prince are taken from an interview conducted on February 9, 2011.
2. Arguably, the two are more related than we might immediately suspect. This kind of interconnectivity forms the basis of Douglas Hofstadter’s classic 1979 work *Gödel, Escher, Bach*, for example.
3. Colleen Macklin, interview at IndieCade 2010, October 9. The mind boggles over what kind of game *DOOM* would be if the dominant musical force was Prince rather than thrash.
4. “The Impossible Planet” (directed by James Strong, aired June 3, 2006), in which the Doctor discovers Satan is chained in a pit at the center of a planet orbiting a black hole.

CHAPTER 7

1. <http://www.humblebundle.com/>.

CHAPTER 8

1. *DOOM* has five difficulty settings: I’m Too Young to Die; Hey, Not Too Rough; Hurt Me Plenty; Ultra-Violence; and Nightmare. The first halves the damage a player takes; the others adjust the numbers and types of monsters. Nightmare disables cheats, increases the speed of monsters, and adds respawning monsters to every level.

2. <http://DooMedsda.us/wad947.html>.
3. <http://speeddemosarchive.com/DOOM.html>.
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KN0K58EfJsg>.
5. Originally in the shape of a swastika. This was changed in the 1.666 patch to enable a German release.
6. <http://www.computerandvideogames.com/58157/features/games-that-changed-the-world-DOOM/> (retrieved January 26, 2011).

CHAPTER 9

1. All quotes of Sandy Petersen are taken from an interview conducted on February 7, 2011.
2. Every monster has a pain chance percentage when taking damage. If pain kicks in, the monster is paralyzed briefly, unable to fire back at the player. This means that high-rate-of-fire weapons like the chaingun or plasma gun are particularly effective when tackling large tough creatures like the Cacodemon, as they reduce the number of projectiles likely to be flying in the player's direction. For example, the Cacodemon has a high chance (50 percent) of being paralyzed for 6 tics (each tic is worth one thirty-fifth of a second). So if it's taking just under 9 hitscans a second from a chaingun, the chances of compromising its attacks with pain responses are actually quite high. Figuring out how the pain responses work was a skill *DOOM* players could learn in order to give themselves a distinct advantage in combat.
3. I'd love to be able to provide a full and definite list of the order of level creation, but as many parts were recycled during early builds and as no official records were kept, all we have to go on are the memories of the designers.

CHAPTER 10

1. In one of those lovely little moments of media crossover, *Slough* is the name of a famously nondescript English town, immortalized in John Betjeman's 1937 poem so titled: "Come friendly bombs and fall on Slough! / It isn't fit for humans now."
2. Other special weapons that did not make it in are the Dark Claw (described as "silent but deadly," which suggests a stealth weapon and, hence, the need for stealth), the Probiecticle (a weapon that yields "minimal damage but gives a read out on the enemy," which suggests a more complex, tactical approach to combat), and the Spray Rifle, which fired multiple shots in a wide arc and may therefore be the true inspiration for the final BFG as found in-game.
3. <http://www.gamers.org/docs/FAQ/bfgfaq/>.

CHAPTER 11

1. One could probably argue, in counterpoint, that Sabre Interactive's *Timeshift* (2007) is a great example of how a pop star mechanic cannot, ultimately, hide mediocrity in the core gameplay. *Timeshift* allowed players to slow, stop, and rewind time in an FPS setting, but this mechanic was ultimately let down by unimaginative de-

sign and lackluster combat. Even with a very smart mechanic at the center, the game quickly dulled into unrewarding and repetitive set pieces.

CHAPTER 12

The title comes from a line in the *DOOM* comic, perhaps the greatest line in a comic ever, courtesy of Steve “Body Bag” Behling and Michael “Splatter” Stewart.

1. In a 1994 interview with *Video Games* magazine, Carmack described SoftDisk as a “klutz of a company who fumbled the opportunity” presented to them with *Catacomb 3D*. Given that take on things, id’s moonlighting is fairly understandable.

2. Unless otherwise cited, all quotes of Tom Willits are taken from an interview conducted on March 24, 2011.

3. There is a limited amount written by academics about modding. Sotamaa 2007 is a good place to start, as is Kücklich 2005. This work all tends to focus on mod culture, rather than mods themselves.

4. Technically, Kanyhalos put a lot of this back in. Blowouts became a feature of the sequel *Clear Sky*, and Burers (and Chimeras) appeared in *Call of Pripayat*. You can get the mod at http://stalker.filefront.com/file/Oblivion_Lost;89584 (retrieved July 28, 2011).

5. <http://www.DOOMworld.com/vb/DOOM-general/3365-list-of-unofficial-DOOM-add-on-packs/> (retrieved December 10, 2010).

6. According to Romero and Hall, id was approached by Twentieth Century Fox in March 1993 but turned down the offer of making a game based on *Aliens*, because they wanted to keep creative control.

7. Interview conducted on March 25, 2011.

8. <http://www.demruth.com>.

9. This is from Doug the Eagle and Kansam’s own website: <http://www.it-he.org>.

CHAPTER 13

1. You can watch the YouTube video of the action as proof: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_PD03V15LY.

2. Note that this is actually less than *Spasim*.

CHAPTER 14

1. The ban on the original and *DOOM II* in Germany was finally lifted on August 30, 2011, after an appeal from id’s new owners, ZeniMax. Source: [http://www.usk.de/en/search-for-title/search-for-title/?tx_uskdb_list\[action\]=search&tx_uskdb_list\[controller\]=Title&cHash=b702b0e569fc0b029fa8a704e0a58d1b](http://www.usk.de/en/search-for-title/search-for-title/?tx_uskdb_list[action]=search&tx_uskdb_list[controller]=Title&cHash=b702b0e569fc0b029fa8a704e0a58d1b) (retrieved September 3, 2011).

2. You can find it at <http://www.gamers.org/docs/FAQ/doomfaq/>.

3. <http://classicdoom.com/doomcomp.txt>.

4. Hall recalls, “My *DOOM* Bible detailed a progression from earth to hell to earth-corrupted-by-hell, which is the most disturbing. . . . And that’s funny since they did finish that arc in *DOOM II*” (TH). This is discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

5. <http://www.vgchartz.com/game/6233/doom-ii/>.
6. Id Games Discussion/ *Ultimate DOOM* thread on rome.ro: <http://rome.ro/smf/index.php/topic,1525.msg31924/topicseen.html#msg31924> (retrieved July 6, 2002).
7. http://rome.ro/lee_killough/.
8. <http://www.idsoftware.com/iphone-games/doom-classic/doomdevelopment.htm>.
9. If you are really desperate, you can find all the proper details in the the further reading section at the end of this book and hunt them down yourself.
10. The full text is available here: <http://www.doomworld.com/files/doom3faq.shtml>.
11. This is according to Steven L. Kent in the id-approved (and co-credited) *The Making of DOOM 3* (Kent 2004, 180).
12. <http://ducttape.glenmurphy.com/>.
13. In fact, id remedied the see-or-shoot in 2012's re-release, the *DOOM 3* BFG Edition by adding an armour-mount3ed flashlight. Even knowing that the original mechanic was a PR spin on an engine limitation, it's difficult not to see this as a big cop out for wimps. For me, see-or-shoot may have been an accident, but it's part of what makes *DOOM 3* work, and the game is significantly less frightening when you've got an always-on flashlight.
14. <http://www.vgchartz.com/game/7289/doom-3/>.

CHAPTER 15

1. I'm not the only one to have suggested using affordances to look at games. Linderoth and Bennerstedt 2007 is worth reading, and it's not a long way from Perron's "gameplay cycle" (2006) or Lindley's "gameplay gestalt" (2002) either.
2. That's not to say it's an easy process. A lot of what follows is based on a very long process of collecting data from a very large number of FPS games over the last six or seven years. Part of that process, along with a big lump of baseline data, an analysis of it, and an argument for why story is best understood as a function of gameplay (based on affordances) can be found in my PhD thesis (Pinchbeck 2009c), available online at <http://www.thechineseroom.co.uk/thesis.pdf>.
3. We could argue that the ability to jump, for example, is actually a huge change in the available affordances in terms of how it lets a player interact with a world, so it may be a mistake lumping *DOOM* and *Quake* together in this instance.
4. Both *Left 4 Dead* and *Counter-Strike* have the capacity for the player to play alone, essentially as a single player, but *Left 4 Dead's* single-player experience is merely an attempt to recapture the multiplayer experience. *Counter-Strike* is entirely geared toward multiplayer gameplay (*Counter-Strike: Condition Zero* [Sierra Entertainment 2004] does contain a single-player campaign, but it's hardly a significant aspect of the franchise).
5. Or, in the case of *Modern Warfare 2*, multiple roles. It is also worth noting that *Modern Warfare 2*, for all its gung ho, guns-and-ammo gameplay, actually has a plot-line centered around an out-of-control hawkish general, a classic "enemy within" story line that is highly critical of "big government."