

Game Design From an Engineer

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My Background



What do designers do in the industry?

- Adjust numbers in spreadsheets
- Playtest/Gather playtest feedback
- Communicate with other disciplines

Motive-Based AI

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The Game

- Single player
- Narrative driven
- Discovery
- Survival

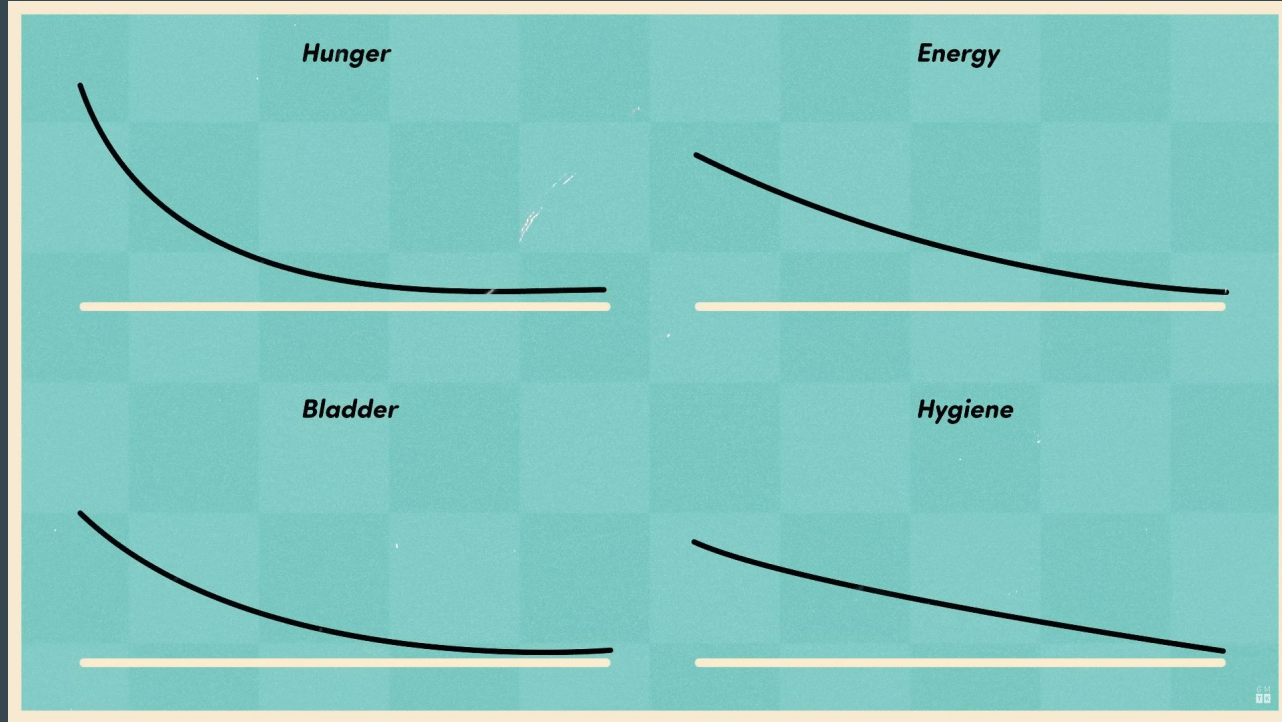
The System

- Personalities/Specialties
- Dozens of active motivations
- Self preservation

The Sims

- List of motives
- Objects broadcast rewards
- Sort motives by weighted curves

Curves



Personality

- Different curves
- Player interaction

Specialty

- Extra motives
- Higher priority

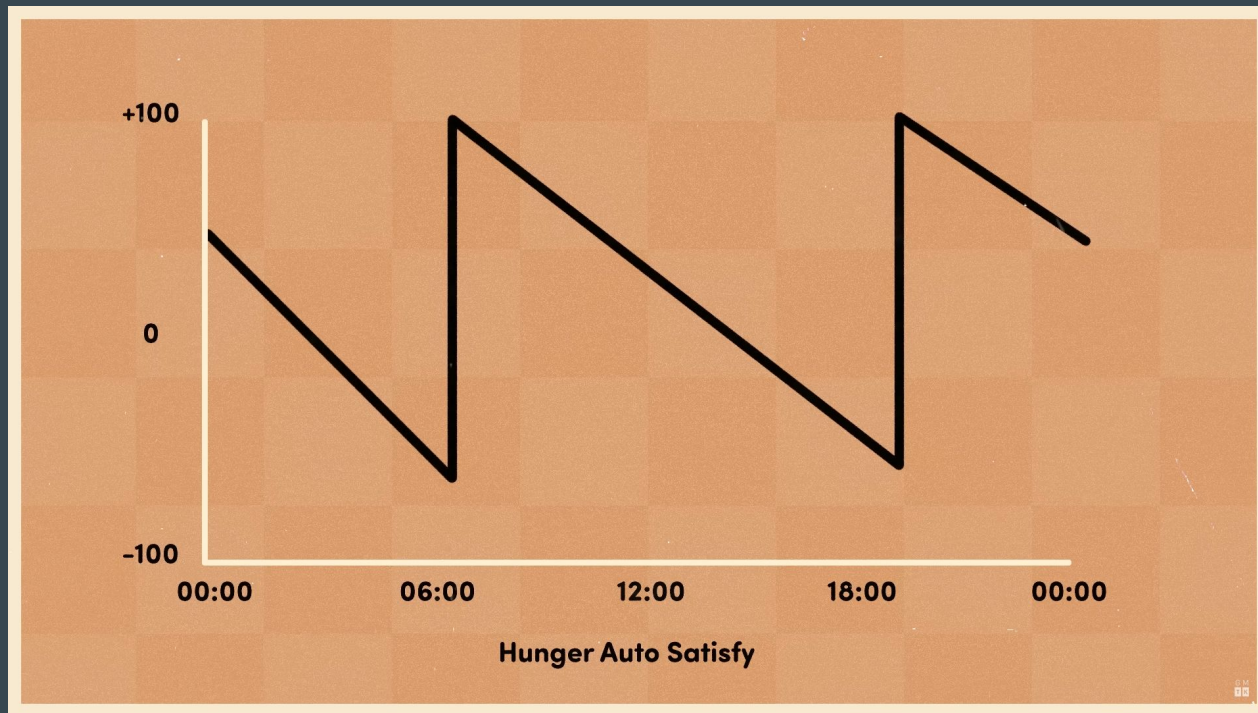
Interactions

- Objects broadcast rewards
- Reward over time vs. immediate
- Satisfaction threshold

Sequences

- Delegates
- Assign next motive
- High priority

Schedules



Engineer Lessons Learned

- Give designers *something* as early as possible
- Debug tools!
- It's ok to cheat

Design Lessons Learned

- Be good at learning how to use tools
- Pitch requirements first
- Communicate effectively

Result

- Systemic
- Data-driven
- Emergent behavior
- Believable

Playtesting

- Tell players what to test
- Surface known issues ahead of time
- A/B test for subjective features

Communication

- Who is in charge of what?
- What level of knowledge do people have?
- Be annoying about recurring issues
- Be friends with your teammates

Dungeons and Dragons

- Tell stories *through* mechanics
- Break your own rules but keep using the same language
- Allowing players to master something is rewarding for the designer
- Trim the fat of your games