

Written by Billy D. Spelchan for www.BlazingGames.com

Copyright © 2003-2005 Blazing Games Inc. Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License, Version 1.2 or any later version published by the Free Software Foundation; with no Invariant Sections, no Front-Cover Texts, and no Back-Cover Texts. A copy of the license is included in the file called fdl.txt

Chapter 34

Where to go from here

Contents

Now that we have covered everything, I am going to present you with some additional ideas of where to take what you have learned in this book. As many of you already know, the Blazing Games website (www.BlazingGames.com) has games grouped into four broad categories. We will look at each of these four categories.

- Action Games
- Brain Games
- Story Games
- Table Games

Action Games

I group both arcade games and sports games into this category. While no sport games were created in this book, we have created some arcade games. The games that were created in this book were on the simpler side so one obvious thing that could be done is to create more sophisticated games.

When creating arcade games, you should have a minimum system in mind and do a lot of testing using that computer. This way you can get the game running at an acceptable pace on the test machine (even if it is slightly slower than faster machines). Of course, you want to test on the fastest machine possible to make sure that you don't have problems with the game running too fast on higher end and future hardware. While this tip is probably applicable to all the categories of games, it is most appropriate for action games as the speed of the game is very important to the overall experience of the game.

While my tile set scheme will work, I have noticed that on older windows machines, it runs slowly. If you are not worried about older systems for your game, the tile scheme can really be expanded by having scrolling and multiple layers. This can lead to some really good platform games.

For those who want to make sure the game will work on slower machines, tiles can still be a useful technique. Instead of having the tiles actually be part of the image, you can use the tile as a non-visible reference to screen information while having the actual playfield as a single graphic layer. This gives you information when playing the game while taking Flash less time to render the display. It also gives you a bit more flexibility in the look of the playfield.

As for future projects, I would look into creating more complex arcade games, such as those that have scrolling levels and platforms. In fact, one project that I am currently working on in my spare time (in other words, not very often) is a series of 52 games loosely based on classic arcade games. In other words, an ultimate retro project for arcade games.

Brain Games

Brain games cover the broad category of games that require you to think in order to solve the game. This includes puzzle games as well as the huge category of strategy games. Within the book we created the simple logic puzzles Nim and Bomb Nim.

As the brain games were the first games created in the book, the games were the simplest games in this book. Many of the techniques developed over the remaining chapters of this book could also be applied to brain games.

The tile set portion of the arcade game section could really be useful for a strategy game. Many strategy games take place on a map, and tiles are a very useful way of building maps. In fact, by adding some information to the tile movie, you can easily have properties added to the tile. This way you can have units that act differently based on the type of terrain that they are on.

For my own personal project within this category, I am considering creating the deluxe version of Tanks for the Memory (Ultimate Retro Project episodes 11 and 12) in Flash. There are all sorts of other strategy games that could be converted to Flash and of course there are all sorts of puzzle games that could be created in Flash.

The biggest thing that needs to be worked out is how to handle the computer AI. As we had discovered in an earlier chapter, Flash has distinct time limits on how long a script can run. I am hoping that a future version of Flash will allow for threading, but for current versions of Flash, the best technique is to break the AI task down into smaller tasks that can execute in a short period of time.

Story Games

Adventure and Role-playing games make up the Story Game category. The engine that we created for Dragon and the Sword is a really good starting point for larger adventure games. By having the rooms as separate movies, the main movie file is significantly smaller. One thing to consider is the pre-loading of nearby rooms so room transition can be more seamless. Another addition to the adventure game engine that would improve it is the addition of a character that the player can move around the room with. While creation of the character and all the animation needed to move the character would be a lot of work, it would also help put the player into the game.

The Flash story game that Blazing Games Inc. Is working on is One of those Weeks, which uses a bunch of smaller episodes to form a larger story. The first episode of this series was created in this book. All the episodes try to show the world from a first person perspective. This adds a lot of restrictions on what can be done with the game, but is still a fairly effective way of telling the story.

Role playing games share a lot of the same properties of adventure games so much of what was learned can be used. There tends to be a lot more movement in RPGs so a decision on how to handle large maps and exploration would need to be worked out. Visitors to my site will have seen that I have created simple first-person mazes (OOTW episode 6, Preview Adventure) so this problem is quite solvable in Flash. If you don't want to create a first person perspective display, the tile map used in the arcade chapters could be of great use in creating the map that the player plays on for the game. Maps created using the tile set technique don't have to be overhead, but can be drawn from a slight angle that can help give the world more of a three dimensional feel to it.

Table

Card and Board games are fairly common game fodder, so not much further information is really needed. What I would do is focus on improving the Card classes that were created in the card game section of the book and use those classes.

I could probably go on for many pages just listing all the different board and card games that are out there. One thing that would be interesting to see would be for a trading card style card game done up in Flash. In fact, by combining a trading card game with an adventure game could lead to a very interesting game indeed.

At the moment I have no plans for any board or card games to be created in Flash, as I already have a large number of these games that have not yet been released on the site. Still, with there being so many different board and card games in existence, I am sure that the average reader has a lot of ideas for games that would fall under this category.