Financing & Producing of PC Games

- Teut Weidemann
- Managing Director
- Wings Simulations GmbH
- A JoWooD company
- **teut@wingssimulations.com**
- www.wingssimulations.com

Development Studio Types

- Independent: Creatives
  - Overextend schedules
  - Difficult to control
  - Have problems selling/pitching products (risk projects)
  - But: biggest hit potential here (The Sims, Rollercoaster, Battlefield, Black&White, ...)

- Independent: Commercial
  - Exact scheduling
  - Can deliver on multiplatforms, some demand deals on multiplatforms only
  - Quality usually average
  - Exact budgeting

- Dependent: from Investors
  - Close to identical with creative indies
  - But: work for profit, not for quality and creativity (there IS a difference)
  - Pressure from investors difficult to forsee by customers
  - Advantage: indpendent financing <-> minimizes risks

- Dependent: from Publishers (internal/external)
  - Production centers, usually sequels (Fifa2000, 2001, 2002, 2003…)
  - Usually on time (sports is seasonal, missing season means death of product)
  - Partially huge budgets and manpower, pure production machinery (EA)
  - Partially huge money sinks due to unexperienced developers or leads (UBI)
  - Change of resources (personel) daily business

Indy Team: Product Masterplan

1. Idea
2. Rough Concept
3. Prototype
4. „Pitching“ Docs: „Design“, Demo, Budget, project planning
5. Deal?
6. Pre Production
7. Production
8. QA, Mastering
9. After Release Support, Patches, Add-On
10. Repeat

The Idea

Idea, Basics?

Ideas are cheap, it is execution which is key

Market demands

Target audience -> Audience size -> Profitability

Competition now and in 2 years -> Industry Research

Sales History of the genres (be careful though!)

Platform: what sells on it? Limit of platforms known in this genre?
Mixing genres good or bad?

-> Prototype Design Doc

Maket Data: Games per year per Genre

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Games Released:	300	251	255	256
Original Games:	61%	50%	57%	48%
Sequels:	22%	33%	29%	29%
Add-ons:	7%	6%	7%	11%
Bulk Packs (Gold Editions and the like.)	10%	11%	5%	7%
Collector's Editions (Released simultaneously with original)	.5%	2%	1%	2%

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Strategy:	18	13	38	33
Turn Based Strategy:	15	16	8	9
Real Time Strategy:	24	22	31	24
War Games:	18	8	11	9
Sports:	35	27	14	18
Flight Sims:	12	11	10	3
Role Playing:	15	17	15	14
Action:	72	65	60	64
Adventure:	5	8	19	22
Family:	20	15	6	11
Racing:	20	13	10	11
Misc:	9	6	15	18
On-line Only: (Includes "Monthly Fee" Games as well as MP Only)	4	6	10	12

Quelle: www.gonegold.com

Rough Design

- Scribbles, Idea collections
- Research: how does it the sucessful (!) competition
- Minimum Specs: what is minimally demanded by the market?
- Technology: whats possible? Demands too high?
    - high end technological games (HL2, Doom3)
    - content games (The Sims, Tycoons)
    - incremental genre games (most RTS)
- rough concept should be loose collection of ideas and scribbles, plans, sketches
- so it can be changed anytime anywhere
- rough dependencies should be visible

Prototype

- demonstrates feasibility of idea and/or technology
- demonstrates new concepts and ideas
- shows first glimpse of „why is this special“
- prototype should be:
    - selfrunning if possible
    - simple to install and run on all machines
    - simple to use (can it be used by your mom?)
    - should alone be able to sell idea and game (ie. This is it!)
    - remember end screens, readmes, concact in the demo!

- But: prototypes usually are thrown away when development starts as they are quick and dirty

„Pitching“ Docs: „Design“, Demo, Budget, Project Planning

The only thing decision makers see is your prototype and pitching doc!

- First page ultra important
    - Salespoints (USP‘s)
    - Target Audiance
    - Contact data (full details)
    - something for everyone: Director, Marketing, Sales, Tester!

- More than 4-8 pages aren‘t read!
- Less is more (but what isn‘t?)
- Professional Design and Packaging. It shows you really care. Color copies with standard bind is a no go. But: don‘t overdo, this thing has to fit into standard shelves ☺
- Project plans: see Excel
- Budget: see Excel

Deal?

Missed the market?

- A customized pitch doc for every publisher? Ie.
    - Know his portfolio of the past years
    - Know if it sold at all
    - Know what he has in development

- Viewer publishers mean viewer deals
- Pitching takes time: up to one year …
- Shotgun Approach: 2-3 titles to all publishers? Don‘t you know what you want?
- How to finance prototypes and pitching time?
- Ideal: 2-3 titles in development, but this is tough to accomplish

Contract Types

- Usually:
  - Advance against Royalities
  - Milestone driven
  - Advance Against Royalities, average 10-25%
  - IP usually inclusive
- Rarer:
  - Accelerating Royalities (+x% at 100.000 etc.)
  - Monthly Payments + Milestones
  - License Deals, usually 7 years

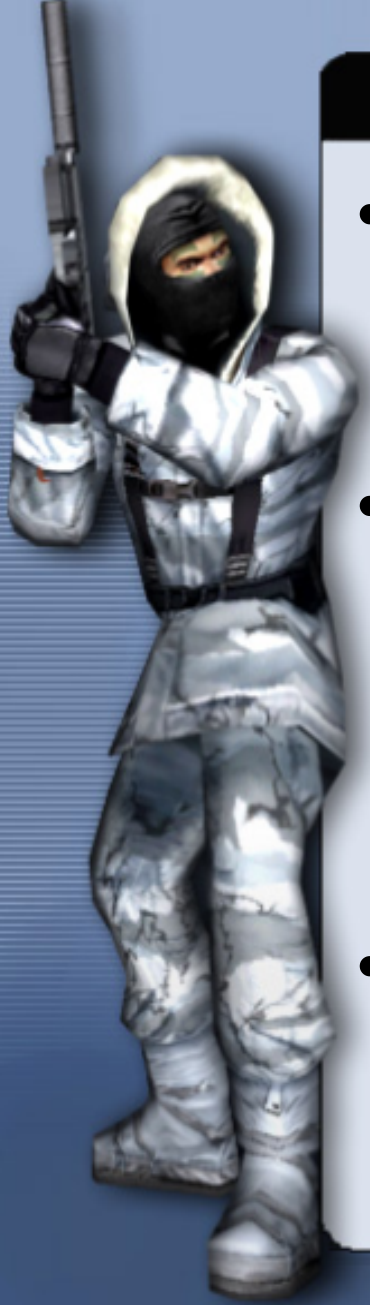
Break Even?

Commercial Games: €45

€45:	end user price
€38:	- 16% VAT
€26:	- Retail margin
€23:	- distribution (~10%)
€20:	- cost of goods (COG‘s)

Royalities:	Break Even at*:
20%: €4	250.000
25%: €5	200.000
30%: €6	166.660
50%:€10	100.000

(*at €1 Mio development budget (thats not enough!))



Alternative Financing

- Banks
  - Forget it, they rather finance brothels
  - Personal responsibility!
- Investors
  - Pissed of by IT crisis
  - Same with Venture Capital (Discreet Monsters)
  - Privat Investors?
- New Form?: Game Fonds
  - www.ceggames.com/
  - www.fund4games.com/

Pre Production

- Lasts about 2-3 months
- serves exact planning and design creation after deal
- project will be thought through 100%
- Risks will be analyzed and backup plans being made
- Plan:
    - Detailed Design
    - Technical Design
    - Project Plan (+20%, or x2?)
    - Full Art List
    - Full Sound List
    - Budgeting
    - Risk Analysis

- But: is this always possible?
- Yes: for standard products (production developer)
- „YesNo“: for new ideas and technology (creative developer)

Production

The best plan lasts until first enemy contact is being made ☺
- Fast decisions, replan
- Balance design, time, money (see Magic Twin Triangle)
- Programming cannot be scaled by money
- but graphics can: external resources (if master art is present)
- missed Milestones cannot be caught up
- mistakes at start cause 10x worse effects at the end
- Early Warning: saves time (see ChangeDrama)
- If money wouldn‘t exist....
    - 5000 euro per manmonth is good rule of thumb
    - 24 months, 12 men = 1.440.000 million average
- redundant design: know from the start what can be cut, otherwise cuts rip your design apart
- Read the Project Survival Guide
- But: project experience can‘t be replaced by theory and books

Project Planning

Project lengths: meanwhile 18-32 months on PC

Design creates content, content creates workload

Separate plans for:

- Program Modules (coding)
- Art (graphics, animationa, textures)
- Content (Level, Dialogue, Scripting)
- Sound (Effects, Music, Voice overs)

Tools:

- Project, Excel. Doesn‘t matter: main achievement should be to have completely thought through the project
- But: see nextslide
- Remember: dependencies of tasks important!

Project Planning ??

Project plans have to be updated constantly

- Therefore loads of work for control, planning and verification
- When changing stuff during the first part everything following has to be updated
- Danger: plan becomes reality for decison making on higher levels (reality of project can‘t be mapped into a plan?)
- Plan becomes truth, not the project
- Cause: games simply change too often during development

Solution?

Project Planning !!

Solution for „Project plan rulez“ symptoms: Fog Planning

- Plan in broader steps, plan rough
- Super Detail the first 3-4 modules
- Start the first and assign tasks and resources
- After this task is done replan and verify:
  - Evaluate and Verify
  - Update
  - Revise
  - Repeat
- Plan the next step (ie. step 4) in super detail

Advantages:

- Work for changing plans and detailing is optimized
- Still the plan shows dependencies and critical paths
- Fast reactions on changes as details are planned when the decision factors are known

We haven‘t talked about: finance details inside the project

Please read if interested in project planning:

Software Project Survival Guide, Steve MacConnell (and all other of his books)

Teams and Costs

Common team structures

- Producer + Designer
- Lead Programmer + Programmers
- Lead Artist + Artists
- Content: Level Designer, Scripter, Writer
- Sound & Effects Engineer

Teams and Costs

Sample Minimalistic Team:

Producer/Designer (in one person)
1 Lead Programmer
3 Programmer
1 Lead Artist
4 Artists
2 Level Designer
Sound: External
= 12 men

(note: teams range from 10-120 people for a single game!)

What does it cost?

Teams and Costs

Common rule: €5000 per man month
(incl. rent, hardware, taxes etc.)

Quick calc: 12 men = €60.000/month
12 months project = €720.000
24 months project = €1.440.000
32 months project = €1.920.000

Break Even?

Commercial games sell at: €45

€45:	Customers price
€38:	- 16% VAT
€26:	- Retail
€23:	- Distribution (~10%)
€20:	- cost of Goods (COG‘s)

At €1.440.000 breakeven is at 72.000 units

- no marketing spend
- No administration and finance costs
- No support

Playing Lottery?

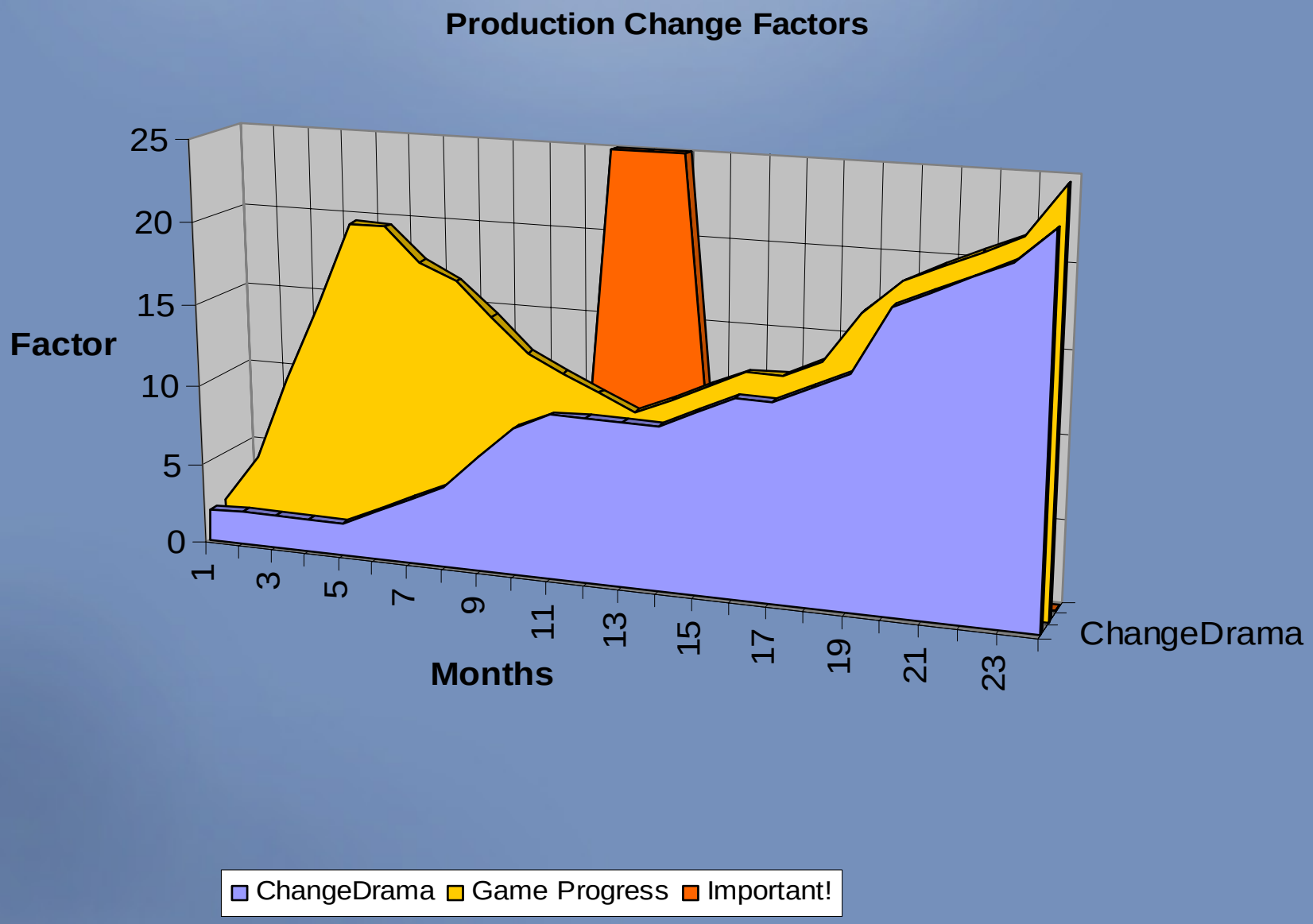
5% of games pay for the rest 95%

Without worldwide publishing its tough to turn profitable

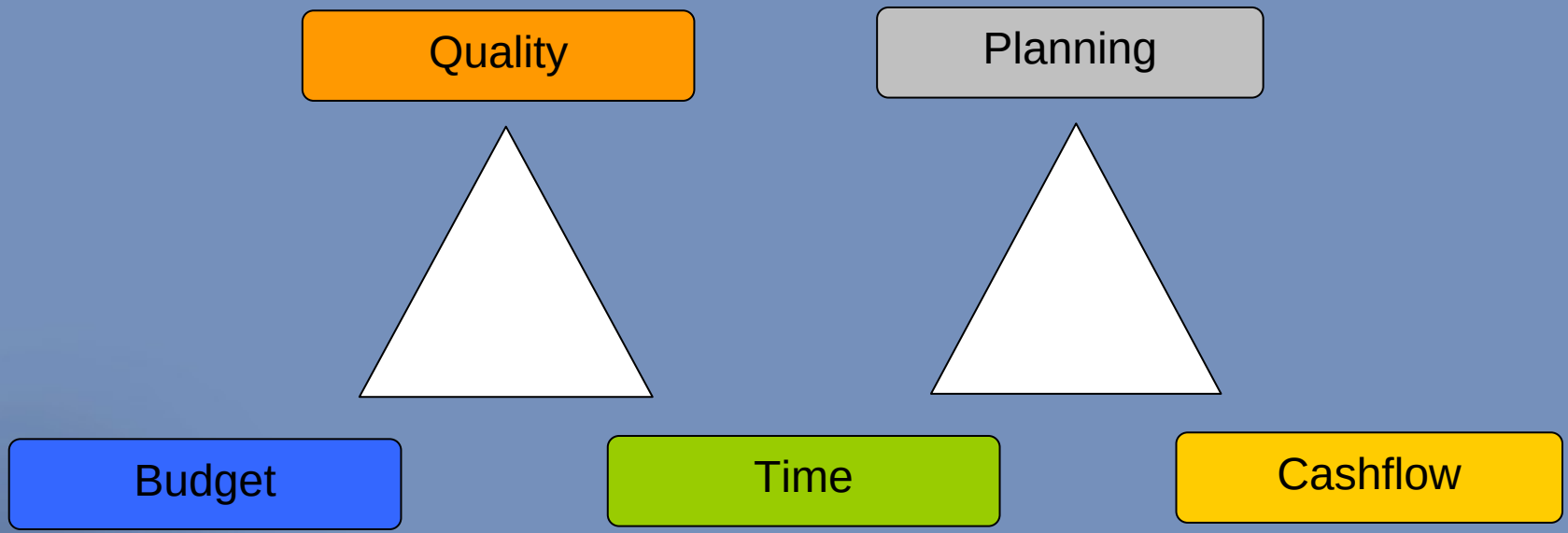
Problems

- „Time of Change“ big problem
- As: Demand for changes is usually high at end of project
- This can be only balanced with experience
- Result: takes time, thus costs money

„Change Drama“



„Magic TwinTriangle“



But is it Fun?

QA and Mastering

QA (Quality Assurance)
- Do not only find bugs (but dream about designing games themselves)
- game enhancements cost time (feature creep)
- QA = your best friend at the publisher
- But: Hardware QA is better at external services
- Master = should be played all the way through (takes time!)
- therefore: tools neccessary (cheats, levelskips, debug etc.)
- But 20.000 customers find bugs easier than 20 testers

Mastering:
- You will spent some nights at the office
- some masters were brought to the production plant with helicopters
- planned, early QA will lessen crunch time (=master phase)
- Be extremely cautious with last minute play balance changes

After Release Support, Patches, Add Ons, Localisations

Support:
- Marketing, Advertising, Screens, Interviews
- Forum: technical Support
- Forum: Community Management (=Feedback)

Patch:
- Not only removes bugs but also improves game
- Patch as sales force: Mini Add Ons (with copy prot.)

Languages:
- Some languages hard to implement
    - German: 26 letters
    - Russisch: more
    - Chinesisch: too many
    - Jowood localises into 23 languages (!)
    - Patch? Support? Versionconflicts? Multiplayer?

Repeat?

Master = last Payment
- If it takes one year…. See Excel
- Black hole between master and new project
- Trick: never release ☹ (some teams...)

Lets look into Excel….

(I skip this as it would take too long, maybe at end of session)

Problems Indies face

- Quality, Budget, time: pick two to optimize
- Money management is the biggest friend of production
- Money buys resources and thus planning security
- But too many Resources are too hard to manage and cost overhead = time
- You can never catch up if you‘re late
- Licensed engines get you security, but rarely time savings
- Cashflow planning gets you time assurance, Careful: Cashflow Problems come delayed!

- Royalities are the dream of most developers
- External resources: the only weapon in hand is money
- E3, Demos, PR work cost time, plan them in!
- Plan the project so that you can pull a version any day
- Do not underestimate QA. Discipline, Reports, Logs, Autopatch & Co
- Define Alpha, Beta and other words in the contract

- Milestone only model costs time and is dangerous
- Better: Monthly + Milestones, but only a view publisher do this

Problems Indies face

- Publisher is the only customer of the developer, not the gamer!
- Thats why developers create games they can sell to publishers, not neccessarily to gamers
- Publisher wants what very rare: Best game for no money in 3 months
- This contradiction is cause of the biggest internal problems of this industry
- Publisher/Entwickler rarely see each other as team, more as „customer/sales"
- This causes financial pressure which cost time, which cost...

- Publisheer rarely take the risk of new themes or game types
- Examples: Rollercoaster Tycoon, The Sims, Sim City, Commandos, C&C
- Publisher say that developers can only live due to their money
- Reverse thats true too: publisher live from products the developer creates

- As explained already: commercial vs. creative developers

Probable Solutions

-Cyclic Production on basis of „Fog Planning“

-Redunant design (know cuts beforehand, Teut: 200%)

-Finish modules always with a playable version

-Re-plan, Re-design, Re-evaluate (QA!)

-Repeat until Game finished

- Advantage:

-Stop when „Ship It!“ possible without much trouble

-Changes are possible in a better way within one cycle

-Finished modules shouldnt be changeable by the customer (wishful thinking)

-Always keep a playable version ready from the last module for marketing, Reselling, PR, etc.

USA Sales Charts 2001

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1	**Title**	**Publisher**	**Format**	**1stApp**	**Category**	**SubCategory1**	**SubCategory2**	**Summe**	**2001**	**2000**	**1999**
2	The Sims	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Feb 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2643558	1185770	1457788	
3	Roller Coaster Tycoon	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Feb 99	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2396510	763161	1038745	594604
4	Harry Potter & The Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	694023	694023		
5	Diablo 2 Expansion Set: Lord of Destruction	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Jun 01	Games	Role Playing	RPG	687795	687795		
6	The Sims: House Party Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Mrz 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	674918	674918		
7	The Sims: Livin Large Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	1146547	654887	491660	
8	The Sims: Hot Date Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	643441	643441		
9	Diablo 2	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Jun 00	Games	Role Playing	RPG	1193827	413629	780198	
10	Sim Theme Park World	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 99	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	966353	411429	454720	100204
11	MS Age Of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	CD Win 95/NT	Aug 99	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	1256034	382845	487588	385601
12	Black & White	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Mrz 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	371459	371459		
13	Frogger JC	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Okt 00	Games	Arcade	Classic Arcade	445227	364748	80479	
14	Roller Coaster Tycoon Loopy Landscapes Expansion Pack	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	631077	360683	270394	
15	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Okt 00	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	567850	291524	276326	
16	Backyard Basketball	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95/Mac	Okt 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	282563	282563		
17	Sim City 3000 Unlimited	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Jan 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	498573	270893	227680	
18	Backyard Baseball 2001	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95/Mac	Jun 00	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	485767	266140	219627	
19	MS Age Of Empires 2: Conquerors Expansion Add-On	Microsoft	CD Win 95/NT	Aug 00	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	560365	253045	307320	
20	Starcraft: Battlechest	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Dez 98	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	646317	249014	223973	173330
21	Max Payne	Gathering of Developers	CD Win 95	Jun 01	Games	Shooter	Other Shooter	240625	240625		
22	MS Zoo Tycoon	Microsoft	CD Win 95	Okt 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	236942	236942		
23	Civilization 3	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Okt 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	235872	235872		
24	Who Wants To Be A Millionaire JC	Disney	CD Win 95	Aug 00	Games	Family Entertainment	Games Shows	383114	231683	151431	
25	Sierra Sports: NASCAR Racing 4	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Feb 01	Games	Racing	Sports Oriented Racing	230834	230834		
26	MS Combat Flight Simulator 2.0	Microsoft	CD Win 95/NT	Okt 00	Games	Simulation	Air Combat Simulations	382195	228581	153614	
27	Sim City 3000	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Apr 98	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	1051833	227144	302454	522235
28	Myst 3 Exile	Ubisoft	CD Win 95/Mac	Mai 01	Games	Adventure	Adventure	225791	225791		
29	Wheel Of Fortune JC	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Family Entertainment	Games Shows	291392	216774	74618	
30	Backyard Football 2002	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95/Mac	Sep 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	209975	209975		
31	Driver JC	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Okt 00	Games	Racing	Combat Oriented Racing	255544	204778	50766	
32	Return To Castle Wolfenstein	Activision	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	203093	203093		
33	Half-Life Counter Strike	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Nov 00	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	250240	197280	52960	
34	Atari Arcade JC	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Mrz 00	Games	Arcade	Classic Arcade	293494	197218	96276	
35	Tribes 2	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Mrz 01	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	196055	196055		
36	MS Flight Simulator 2000	Microsoft	CD Win 95/NT	Sep 99	Games	Simulation	Flight Oriented Simulati	479655	193766	148848	137041
37	Hoyle Casino 2001	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Family Entertainment	Casino Games	321285	191650	129635	
38	Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Aug 01	Games	Sports Games	Football	188811	188811		
39	Games Just For Kids	Encore	CD Win 95	Nov 99	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	323506	187810	134662	1034
40	Half-Life: Game Of The Year Ed	Vivendi Universal Publishing	CD Win 95	Jun 99	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	520432	184580	211592	124260
41	Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows Of Amn	Interplay	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Role Playing	RPG	345914	180613	165301	
42	EverQuest: Shadows Of Luclin Expansion Pack	Sony	CD Win 95	Dez 01	Games	Role Playing	RPG	178361	178361		
43	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	CD Win 95	Okt 00	Games	Sports Games	Extreme Sports	259066	177472	81594	
44	Millennium Game Pack Gold JC	Valusoft	CD Win 95	Dez 99	Games	Other Games/Compilation	Bundle/Compilations	224933	176076	48797	60
45	Bob the Builder: Can We Fix It	THQ Inc	CD Win 95	Aug 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	175237	175237		
46	Survivor: The Interactive Game	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Family Entertainment	Games Shows	174772	174772		
47	100+ Great Games JC	Valusoft	CD Win 95	Jan 00	Games	Other Games/Compilation	Bundle/Compilations	263122	174157	88965	
48	Monopoly JC	Infogrames Entertainment	CD Windows	Apr 99	Games	Family Entertainment	Traditional Board Game	253792	172447	69553	11792
49	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2 Yuri's Revenge	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Okt 01	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	166365	166365		

USA Sales Charts 2002

	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	**Title**	**Publisher**	**Format**	**1stApp**	**Category**	**SubCategor**	**SubCategory2**	**Year**	**Units**
2	The Sims: Vacation Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Mrz 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	771054
3	The Sims: Unleashed Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Sep 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	721437
4	Warcraft III: Reign Of Chaos	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Jun 02	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	656343
5	Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Jan 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	563471
6	The Sims	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Feb 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	510223
7	The Sims: Hot Date Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	505450
8	The Sims Deluxe	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Sep 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	493118
9	MS Zoo Tycoon	Microsoft	CD Win 95	Okt 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	488657
10	Harry Potter & The Sorcerer's Stone	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	458869
11	Roller Coaster Tycoon 2	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Okt 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	411804
12	Harry Potter & The Chamber Of Secrets	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 02	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	399168
13	Roller Coaster Tycoon	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Feb 99	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	394153
14	Neverwinter Nights	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Jun 02	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	330726
15	Star Wars: Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	CD Win 95	Mrz 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	292466
16	Backyard Basketball	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95/M	Okt 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	291946
17	Dungeon Siege	Microsoft	CD Win 95	Mrz 02	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	286358
18	Grand Theft Auto 3	Take 2 Interactive/Roc	CD Win 95/M	Mai 02	Games	Action	Action	2002	277199
19	Backyard Football 2002	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95/M	Sep 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	276198
20	The Sims: House Party Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Mrz 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	273310
21	Backyard Baseball 2003	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Jun 02	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	267113
22	Backyard Hockey	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Okt 02	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	259124
23	Sponge Bob Square Pants: Operation Kra	THQ Inc	CD Win 95	Sep 01	Games	Childrens	Childrens Games	2002	249524
24	MS Age Of Empires 2: Age of Kings	Microsoft	CD Win 95/N	Aug 99	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	244878
25	MS Age Of Mythology	Microsoft	CD Win 95	Okt 02	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	243291
26	The Sims: Livin Large Expansion Pack	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	237229
27	Diablo 2 Expansion Set: Lord of Destructic	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Jun 01	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	235420
28	Sim City 3000 Unlimited	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Jan 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	226110
29	Battlefield 1942	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Sep 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	219387
30	Mall Tycoon	Take 2 Interactive	CD Win 95	Feb 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	214304
31	Starcraft: Battle Chest	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Dez 98	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	210911
32	Sim Theme Park World	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Nov 99	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	210116
33	Civilization 3	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Okt 01	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	198021
34	Adventure Workshop 1st-3rd Grade	Riverdeep Interactive	CD Win 95/M	Sep 99	Education	Bundle	Elementary	2002	195429
35	Empire Earth	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Nov 01	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	185380
36	Adventure Workshop Preschool-1st Grade	Riverdeep Interactive	CD Win 95/M	Sep 99	Education	Bundle	Kindergarten	2002	183013
37	Unreal Tournament 2003	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Sep 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	181171
38	EverQuest: Planes Of Power Expansion P	Sony	CD Win 95	Okt 02	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	180971
39	MS Zoo Tycoon: Marine Mania Expansion	Microsoft	CD Win 95	Okt 02	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	179914
40	Elder Scrolls 3: Morrowind	Bethesda	CD Win 95	Apr 02	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	176767
41	Instant Immersion Spanish JC	Topics Entertainment	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Education	Foreign Langu	Spanish	2002	173617
42	Roller Coaster Tycoon Loopy Landscapes	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95	Sep 00	Games	Strategy	Life Simulation	2002	169622
43	Diablo 2	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Jun 00	Games	Role Playing	RPG	2002	168105
44	NASCAR Racing 2002 Season	Vivendi Universal Publ	CD Win 95	Feb 02	Games	Racing	Sports Oriented Racing	2002	166742
45	Command & Conquer: Renegade	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Feb 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	165271
46	Soldier Of Fortune II: Double Helix	Activision	CD Win 95	Mai 02	Games	Shooter	1st Person Shooter	2002	162716
47	Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing 12.0	Riverdeep Interactive	CD Win 95/N	Jan 01	Education	Typing	Middle/Jr. High	2002	157654
48	Dora The Explorer Backpack Adventure	Infogrames Entertainm	CD Win 95/M	Aug 02	Education	Critical Thinki	Preschool	2002	153704
49	MS Age Of Empires 2 Gold	Microsoft	CD Win 95/N	Aug 01	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	151518
50	Command & Conquer: Red Alert 2	Electronic Arts	CD Win 95	Okt 00	Games	Strategy	Real-Time Strategy	2002	150404

Case Study: Panzer Elite

- Decisions
- Prototype
- Sold!
- Failure!
- Resold!
- Production
- Release
- Failure
- Re-Release

„Desert Fox“: The Beginning

- Research und Prototype:
  01/96-04/96
- Tradeshow E3:
  05/96
- Contract (SSI/Mindscape):
  06/96
- Founding of GmbH: 07/96
- Cancel SSI: 07/96
- 2nd contract (Acclaim): 09/96
- Cancel Acclaim:
  10/96
- New „Pitching“: 11/96
- Negotiations Psygnosis: 11/96-03/97
- Pre Production: 01/97-03/97
- Signed on my way to honeymoon:
  London Heathrow (!)
  15.03.97

From prototype to contract: 15 months (!)

„Desert Fox“: The Production

1997:

- Primary Contact: Producer
- First major Task: Marketing Meeting End of 97
- 1st problem: Alpha/Beta definitions
- This causes a delay of 3 months
- 2nd delay: 3d Hardware comes fast and furious

1998:

- 05/98: 1st show of Panzer Elite E3 Expo in USA
- 2nd delay of 6 month
- Reason: Underestimation of Content Design
- Release now planned Q1/99
- 09/98: ECTS London, Psygnosis in trouble
- Payment stop #1 at Wings
- fired QA -> Wings had to organize QA themselves

„Panzer Elite“: The Production

1999:

- Payment on external resources delays plans
- Producer change 1: New orientation
- Continnued payment problems by Psygnosis
- Producer change 2: New orientation
- New negotiations, rescheduled to 10/99
- Release 10/99 !! Yepeeh!

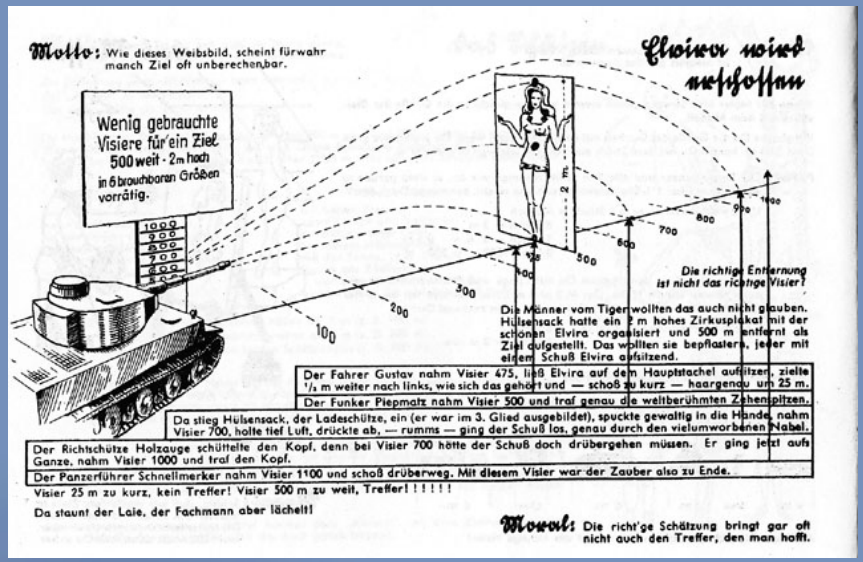
2000:

- 03/2000: Psygnosis closes german office
- PC products sold for flat fee
- Psygnosis HQ closed
- Panzer Elite sold out, no new production

01/2000:

Wings looks for new Publisher for next projects

„Panzer Elite“: The Production



2000:

- 07/2000: fusion of Wings and JoWooD
- New Projects: Söldner and MMO
- 10/2000: negotiations about buying back rights of Panzer Elite
- Reason: ebay auctgions of original Panzer Elite sell for $200!

2001:

- 09/2001: finally rights are bought back!
- 11/2001: Re-Release „Panzer Elite Special Edition“, 2 years after 1st release
- Until then over 130.000 units sold
- And still selling, a 3 year old product!

„Panzer Elite“: The Production

2002:

- 11/2002: Earnings Warning of JoWooD
- 12/2002: Restructuring anounced
- 2003: jowood closes international offices
- Deja Vu?
- Plans: Panzer Elite 2?

Nice to read

General
www.gamasutra.com (basic knowledge …)

GDC Archive
http://www.gdconf.com/archives/2000/index.htm
http://www.gdconf.com/archives/2001/index.htm
http://www.gdconf.com/archives/2002/index.htm

Bücher
Game Architecture & Design
Software Project Survival Guide
Secrets of the Game Business

Marc "MAHK" LeBlanc Articles
http://world.std.com/~mahk/algorithmancy/

Greg Costikyan Articles
http://www.costik.com/articles.html and
http://www.costik.com/weblog/

Noah Falstein
http://www.theinspiracy.com/

And many more cross reference links on those sites.

Questions, Answers & Discussions