

## The Week in Review

As most of our team returned from a week in California at the Game Developer's Conference (GDC), we found ourselves working hard to prepare our interactive storytelling exhibit for our first full playtest (scheduled for this Sunday at the Carnegie Science Center).

Part of this meant performing a little triage. GDC had taken its toll on our team: team members were sick, injured, and delayed in traveling, which meant lost work hours. Considering this, we decided to cut back on the number of assets in our experience: where we had originally planned to have nine options at every choice point (for example, where the story occurs and who the villain is), we chose to have only our six best options.

These cuts let our artist and animator finish the remaining content in time for our programmers to add them into the system. By the week's end, for the first time we had a version of the build that was "content complete." While there is more refining work to be done, we would be able to present kids with a fairly complete version of the experience.

At the same time, we faced story challenges. After having seen a digital version of the experience in its entirety for the first time before we left for GDC, our clients, the San Antonio Children's Museum and Argyle Design, told us the experience, which we've tentatively titled "My Hero Journey" didn't feel "heroic" enough. With less three weeks to go before our soft opening and a lot of work still ahead of us, we knew we didn't have the resources to make big changes.



*Meanwhile, on Main Campus, the build comes together. We anticipate having a full build ready by April 15.*

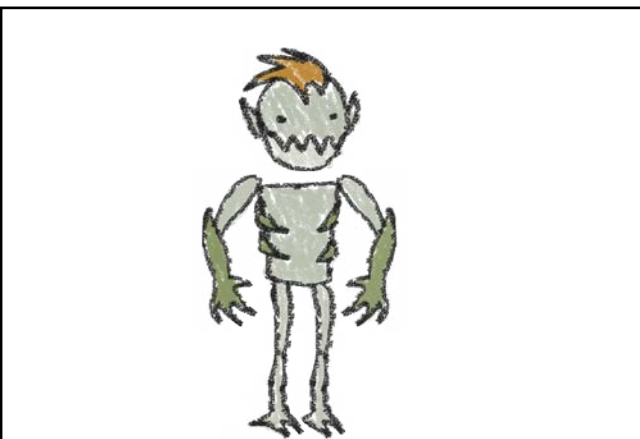
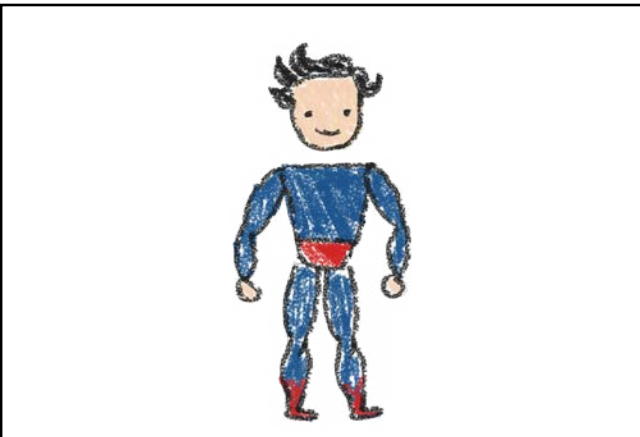
Fortunately, we were able to brainstorm with our client and find a fix that was doable. Rather than have the story be about going on a quest for something the Hero "really, really wanted", we decided to make the story be about going on a quest for a "treasure" which had gone missing from the Hero's town. We also added a few lines of moral lesson at the end of the story. These were Goldilocks changes—big enough to make a difference, but small enough to be doable in our timeframe and with our resources.

All of this, puts us in a great position to playtest this weekend.



## Week 11: Fixing the Story

April 1 - April 5, 2013



*Heroes & Villains: Kids will be able to choose what they will look like in the story, mixing and matching parts from various heroes (e.g. a pirate and super hero) as well as choosing the villains they'll face (for example, a time traveling alien).*

### We Suggest

- Launchpad Toys Toonstastic is just the sort of thing we wish we had found at the beginning of the semester. Designed to inspire kids to become storytellers, this app works sort of like a digital puppet show. Kids create a story with a library of characters and settings and then animate them in a story structured around a traditional story arc. (<http://launchpadtoys.com/toonstastic/>)
- Similarly, MonkeyGram lets users create animated postcards in place of texting. Check it out (<http://launchpadtoys.com/monkeygram/>)

### The Week Ahead

- We can't wait to finally get our experience in front of kids this weekend. Over the next week, we expect to be:
- Making improvements based on kids' feedback.
  - Refining the user interface.
  - Recording audio with two actors.
  - Finalizing a physical build of the kiosk with Ben Carter on main campus and designing a vinyl wrapping, which will give it color.

