

Design Document #1

Part of Shock's unique appeal is the fact that it brought the vibe of the Underworld dungeon crawl into a science fiction setting. Primarily, Shock was at heart a real role-playing game, not an action shooter. However, certain members of the press and the gaming public mistook it for a Doom clone, somewhat limiting the product's commercial success. With Junction Point, we are clearly setting out to make a role-playing game, not only embracing the sense of role-playing that Shock provided, but expanding on it. Hence, the major design precepts of Junction Point are:

Pacing: *Slow it down, baby.*

Junction Point is paced like an RPG, not a Quake deathmatch. The player will be rewarded for carefully exploring their surroundings, examining items and approaching combat with a plan of action.

Persistence of World: *Like Underworld and Shock, the world of Junction Point is open ended and freely traversable.*

Junction Point takes place on the cramped decks of the USN heavy cruiser "San Francisco" as it plies its way towards Earth. Citadel Station felt like a real place, with its own sights, sounds and smells. With the technological advances afforded by DromEd, Act/React and LG's exceptional audio we intend to raise the ante on immersion. As Junction Point is not a mission-based game, the player will never be pulled out of the environment. They can travel anywhere on the San Francisco that their wits and trigger finger allow them. Objects they leave behind will remain there for the course of the game (unless, of course, somebody else takes them!). Destroyed things remain destroyed and dead things stay dead. This adds powerfully to the notion of immersion, as the player has free run of the environment. Of course, as the player is inserted clandestinely into the San Francisco with no way to get off, they are conveniently confined to our small corner of the universe.

Character Growth: *The player character grows, not just their gun collection.*

The player character will, of course, obtain a wide array of new weapons, armor, and other goodies through the course of the game. However, she will also grow inside. As she is a burgeoning psionic (see psionics-, below) she will learn new mental techniques in the course of her explorations. She will need to, ummm, experience a certain amount of gameplay to advance her skills. The player will be allowed to focus (apply experience points to) their psionic efforts into various areas, such as suggestion, illusion, telekinesis, etc. The more they focus their efforts in a specific area, the more they improve their skills there.

Persistence of Storyline: *Junction Point is not mission-based. It has an overarching storyline broken down into organic "chapters" that often overlap each other.*

The game will have an overarching storyline, but sub-missions will organically appear throughout the game. Some threads will block other avenues of gameplay (for instance, a key to a door that must be passed to proceed further in the game) and some threads are presented simultaneously ("repair a shuttle" and "reboot the security network") with each thread leading to its own portion of gameplay. This allows us to allow a player who is stuck in one aspect of exploration to proceed in others (an analog version of multiple mission choices).

Techno-Horror Tone: *Junction Point tells a dark tale set in a very dark place.*

Shock provided players with a unique tension and suspense much more akin to Alone in the Dark and Resident Evil than Doom. Junction Point also is set in a suspenseful futuristic horror setting and introduces a number of themes and game mechanics that support this vibe. The storyline is a moody cross between System Shock and Apocalypse Now.

Desperate Gunplay: *Like Shock, the combat in Junction Point will be quick and decisive.*

Most PC shooters are essentially games of attrition. Players can take dozens of rounds of

shotgun shells, grenades, and BFG fire before they even start feeling woozy. The gunplay in Shock was a much more decisive affair; it was crucial to get the drop on your foe and fire on him before he knew you were there. Junction Point will adhere to this style of gunplay. The player will be fairly vulnerable to gunfire and ammo will be difficult to come by. They will have to take their foes by surprise, make ample use of cover and make every shot count. To reinforce this, the player will be rewarded for careful shooting by the fact that shots to critical body parts (head, heart, etc.) will do more damage than other hits. With non-human and robotic enemies, the player will have to find out the best places to hit!

Isolation: *The protagonist of Shock was a vulnerable isolated character. This leveraged the horror/suspense of the story and provided a number of useful design tools. JP will continue the theme that the player is alone in a hostile world and that their only contact with friendly forces is non-interactive in-game cut-scenes (see ghosts below) which play a similar role to the logs and emails of Shock.*