

Adrian Hon

Six to Start

Why Stories in Games Suck



Global Play
Play Global



Six to Start

Adrian Hon

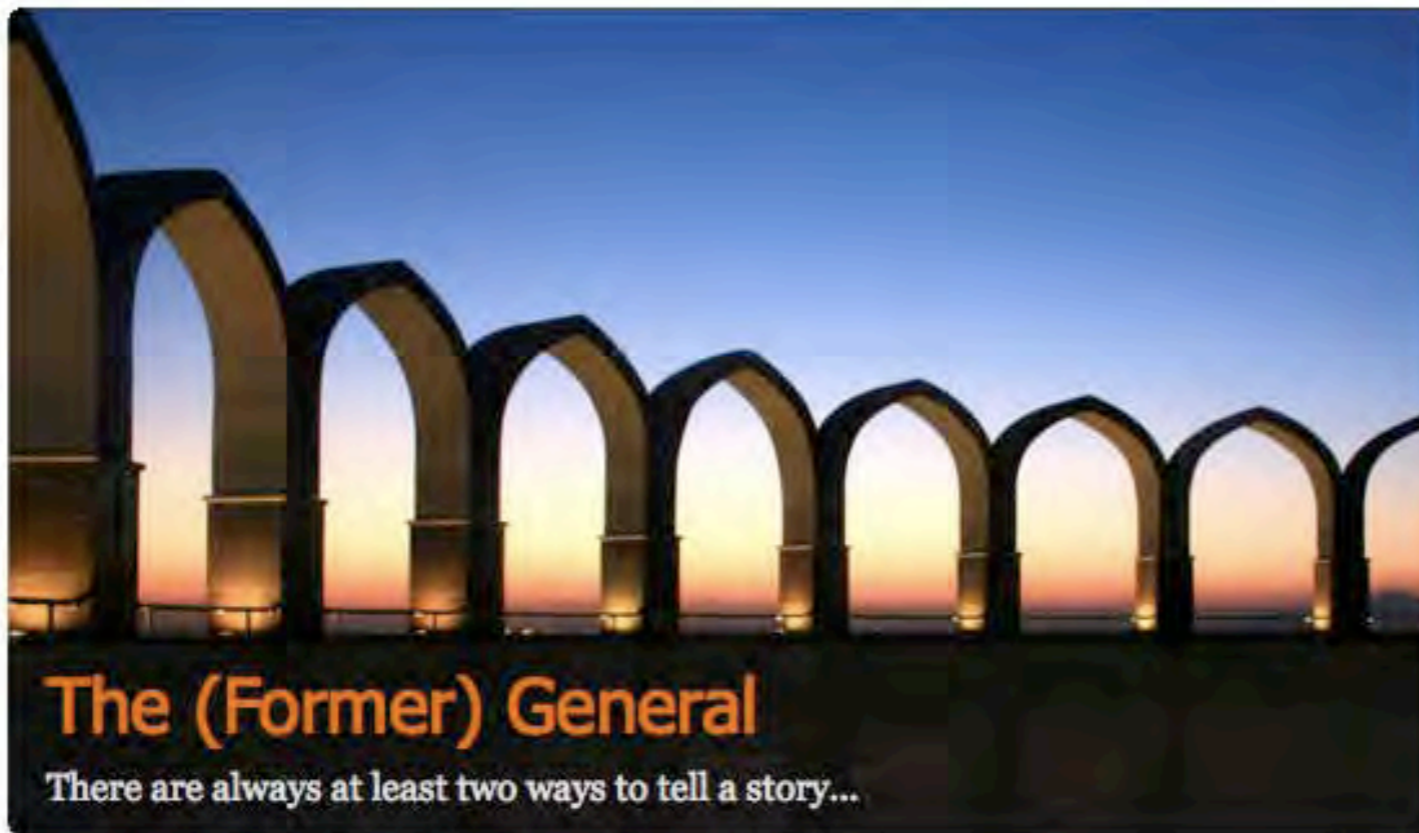
Co-Founder, Chief Creative



We Tell Stories ⁶

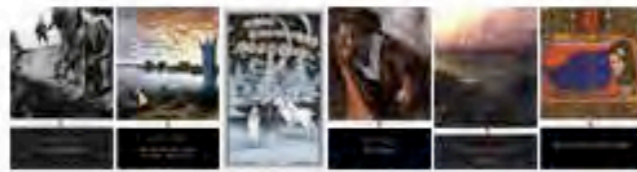
SIX AUTHORS. SIX STORIES. SIX WEEKS.

Digital fiction from Penguin



THE 21 STEPS	SLICE
FAIRY TALES	YOUR PLACE AND MINE
HARD TIMES	THE (FORMER) GENERAL
» SEE ALL SIX STORIES	

SIX CLASSICS ⁶



» READ ABOUT ALL SIX CLASSICS

SIX AUTHORS ⁶



» READ ABOUT ALL SIX AUTHORS

#027

Bar None

PERPLEXCITY

SOLVE THE PUZZLE
SCRAMBLE IN THE
MIND, LET ANSWERS

PERPLEX
POINTS

SOLVE THIS CLUE
EASY WITH

PERPLEX
POINTS



Violet and I often have a quiet drink after work in our favourite bar on the Möbius Strip. It's not unusual for some bloke to try to chat her up and she usually brushes them off with a cutting one-liner. One night, a particularly persistent guy just wouldn't give up asking for her phone number, insisting that he recognised her from somewhere.

Eventually, she asked the system what was

"My phone number has 11 digits and they sum to 44. Vowels in stress, consonants in a rhythmic, doody line, read in German, lose in French, strings on a violin, depresses of exasperation, atomic number of lithium, harmonies of the apocalypse, colours of the rainbow, dots in a quincunx."

He asked her to repeat the problem but, smiling, she refused.

WHAT IS VIOLET'S PHONE NUMBER?

Why Stories in Games Suck

Warning:

**This is Highly
Opinionated**



Do stories in every
game suck?

No



The Longest Journey

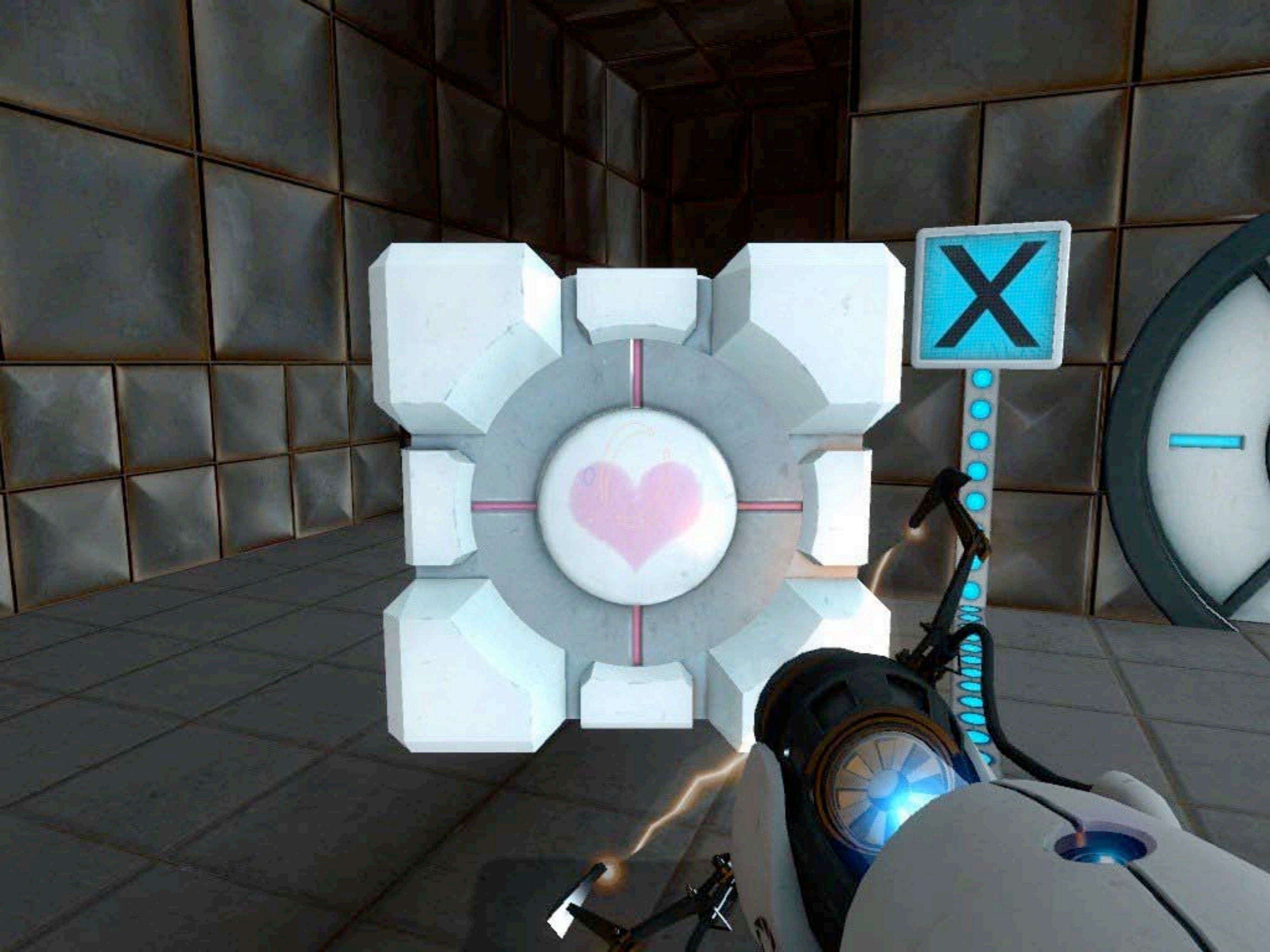
Have you ever had a dream so real...
you are not sure if you are awake or dreaming?

FUN
COM

"It's easily one of the best adventure
games ever made ..."

NEW YORK TIMES

MATURE
M
ESRB



Do stories in almost
every game suck?

Yes

Whose fault is it?!

Mine



FABLE 2



FULL WEAPON
SET 0
KPS 0

WEAPON DISPLAY
Weapon: Dark 2F
Gun: Full Gunf

A diagram of a ship silhouette with several green and yellow indicators, likely representing weapon status or damage points.

LOCK EJECT LOCK

The central control panel features a large circular gauge on the left, two small digital displays in the center, and a central button labeled 'EJECT' flanked by 'LOCK' buttons. Below these are several smaller buttons and a row of four larger buttons.

AUTO TARGETTING
Target: Ralari
Range : 2632 m

A diagram showing a target ship (Ralari) with a range of 2632 m. The display includes various colored lines and indicators representing target tracking and weapon alignment.

Two digital displays, one showing a green bar and the other a red bar, with a grid of buttons below them.

AUTO TRPL

A control panel with a red indicator light, a 'TRPL' button, and a digital display.



TV


...Or does it?

“It's not a stretch to say that, were this a film, some of the ‘performances’ would be Oscar-worthy”

- Gamespy

“a Scorsese-quality narrative”

- Eurogamer




(Partly) it's the
media's fault

No, really, whose
fault is it?



Yours



Pos	Console	Name	Publisher	Week	Yearly	Total
1		 Wii Sports	Nintendo	131	6,216,531	44,987,265
2		 Wii Fit	Nintendo	78	5,944,768	19,498,183
3		 Wii Play	Nintendo	130	2,978,948	23,274,098
4		 Mario Kart Wii	Nintendo	59	2,848,595	15,865,031
5		 Pokemon Platinum Version	Nintendo	37	2,170,333	4,404,555
6		 Resident Evil 5	Capcom	12	2,130,558	2,130,558
7		 Resident Evil 5	Capcom	12	2,003,587	2,003,587
8		 Killzone 2	Sony Computer Entertainment	13	1,630,005	1,630,005
9		 Mario Kart DS	Nintendo	184	1,518,346	14,959,029
10		 New Super Mario Bros.	Nintendo	158	1,502,658	18,643,430
11		 Call of Duty: World at War	Activision Blizzard	28	1,375,184	5,495,875
12		 Halo Wars	Microsoft	13	1,235,755	1,235,755
13		 Street Fighter IV	Capcom	15	1,220,091	1,220,091
14		 Professor Layton and the Curious Village	Level 5	119	1,164,374	3,015,903



“But I long ago lost count of the number of videogames I've played whose in-game economies, storylines and character motivations made absolutely no sense.”

- IGN on Resident Evil 5



9/10

“All [the characters] could have been drawn from any shooter of the last five years... The script certainly doesn't help much, since most of it seems to consist of people barking "F*** dis shit!" and "Go! Go!" over and over.”

- Eurogamer on Killzone 2



9/10



“Other than featuring the voice of Jack Bauer, the story is mostly forgettable...”

- Game Informer on Call of Duty 5

8.8/10



Conclusion 1:

Games with bad
stories still sell fine

**Twelve terrorists. One cop.
The odds are against John McClane...
That's just the way he likes it.**



BRUCE WILLIS
DIE HARD

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX Presents A GORDON COMPANY/SILVER PICTURES Production A JOHN McTIERNAN Film BRUCE WILLIS DIE HARD
ALAN RICKMAN ALEXANDER GODUNOV BONNIE BEDELIA Music by MICHAEL KAMEN Visual Effects Produced by RICHARD EDLUND Film Editors FRANK J. URIOSTE, A.C.E.
and JOHN F. LINK Production Designer JACKSON DeGOVIA Director of Photography JAN De BONT Executive Producer CHARLES GORDON Screenplay by JEB STUART and STEVEN E. de SOUZA
Based on the novel by RODERICK THORP Produced by LAWRENCE GORDON and JOEL SILVER Directed by JOHN McTIERNAN Read The Forecast Paperback
Color by Deluxe

COMING THIS JULY



What about other
media?



Books?



Television?



2 Golden Globes

Best Writing (WGA)

Best Cast (SAG)

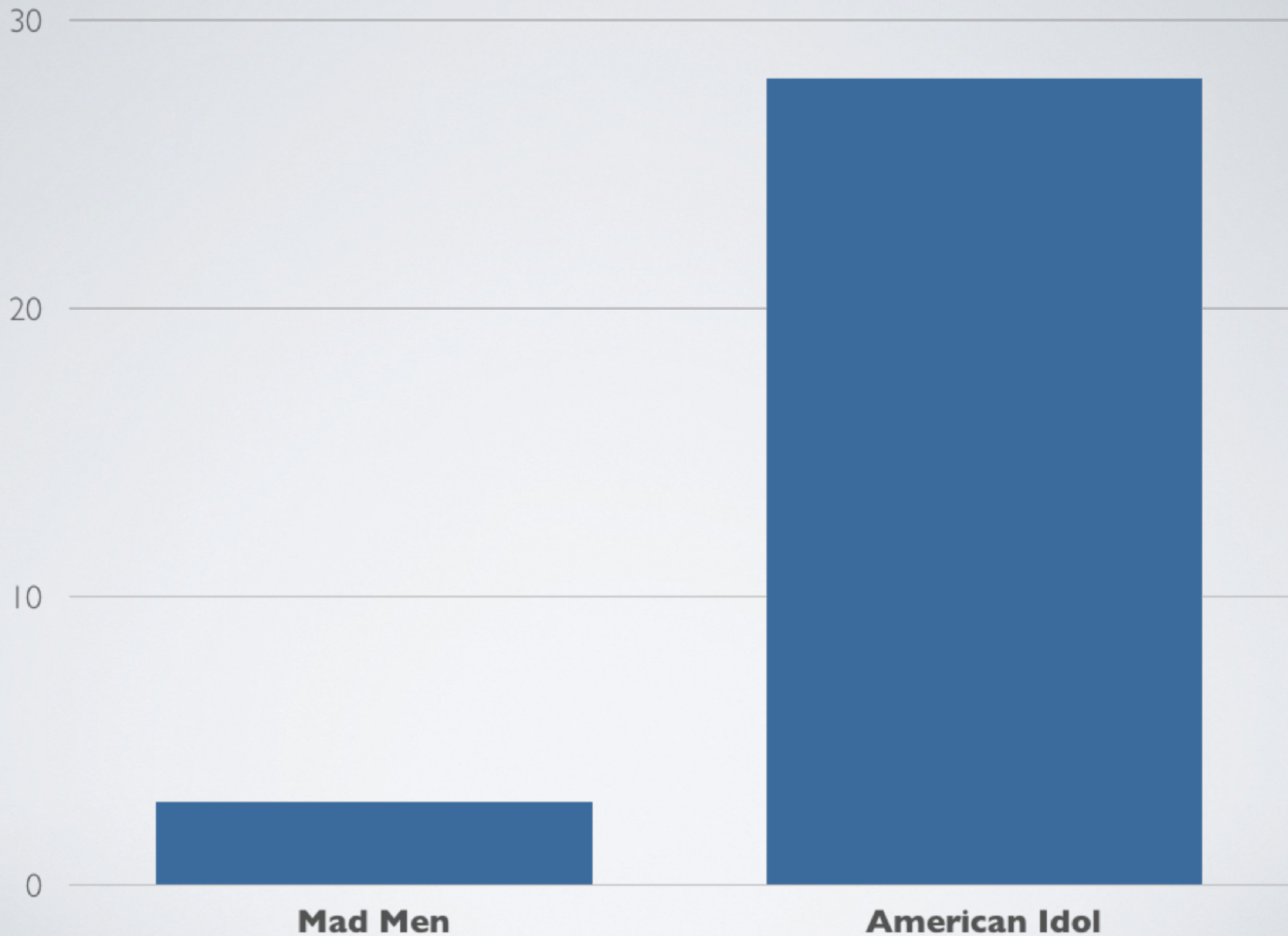
16 Emmy nominations

2.9 million viewers



American
Idol

FOX 56
W O L F





High Art

Low Art



Conclusion 2:

Most of everything is
Low Art



Inventing a new
camera every movie



STAR WARS
THE
OLD REPUBLIC



Conclusion 3:

Mixing Stories and
Interaction is hard



I hate Will Wright
and Sid Meier

Acquaintance

sfg thinks xb is being very alluring.



Gameplay interface including:

- Character portrait:
- Star icon
- Time: Sun. 9:45 AM
- Money: \$2,492
- Inventory slots with icons for a sandwich and a phone.
- Navigation and social icons.
- Character selection panel with two portraits.
- IGN.COM logo



MENU

COMMLINK

Unexplored
(0, 0)

Mission Year: 2344
Econ: 50% (+135/turn)
Psych: 0%
Labs: 50% (3 turns)



Mission Year 2344
Energy: 5828



Deirdre gazed at the occupants of the room in silent contempt. She quickly chided herself for this thinking. Everything will be made good in the end, she reassured herself. Although it was hard to believe, what with the scene unfolding at the moment. 'Anyone with the monumental gall to name all of their cities after himself deserves such misfortune,' shouted the Spartan delegate.



Conclusion 4:

Your story isn't always
the best story

What's Next?

Let the interface get
out of the way



We Tell Stories

SIX AUTHORS. SIX STORIES. SIX WEEKS.

CHARLES CUMMING: THE 21 STEPS

Chapter 7 >>>

Chapter 8 >>>

Chapter 9 >>>

Chapter 10 >>>

Chapter 11 >>>

Chapter 12 >>>

Chapter 13 >>>

Chapter 14 >>>

Chapter 15 >>>

Chapter 16 >>>

Chapter 17 >>>



I woke up inside a small room that was steel-lined and cold. It must have been soundproofed, too, because I couldn't hear anything outside. I could have been in the hotel, in a field in the middle of Perthshire, in an aeroplane at 35,000 feet.

It was impossible to tell.

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EUROGAMER

- Stop using 'professional game writers'
- Educate game designers
- Game writers shouldn't be scenario designers
- Writers need to work closer with designers
- Publishers should stop being stupid
- Games aren't movies - now get over it
- Players should demand better
- Involve writers right from the start
- Use more than just one writer
- Plot doesn't need to be conveyed through dialogue
- More isn't better



Conclusion 5:

Good stories are
hard to do...

...But good writers
(and game designers)
keep on trying



Find out more

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