

Game Design

8/26/08: Orientation

(Some) Class Rules

- You may very well **not** be entitled to your opinion
- Raise your hand
- Don't show off
- I switch gears a lot
- Complete the readings, the book is excellent!
- I don't have a parking pass!
- Don't cheat



***Game Design
and Development***

FUNDAMENTALS OF
GAME DESIGN

PEARSON
Prentice
Hall

Ernest Adams • Andrew Rollings

Syllabus

Motivation

Skills

Writing

Storytelling

Speaking

Psychology

Sociology

Performing Arts

Marketing

Economics

Operations Research

Physics

Math

Trigonometry

Statistics

Probability

Linear Algebra

Scripting

Architecture

....?

LISTENING

“The opposite of talking
isn’t listening. The opposite
of talking is waiting.”

-Fran Lebowitz

Biz

Stereotypes

The Enthusiast



The Bum



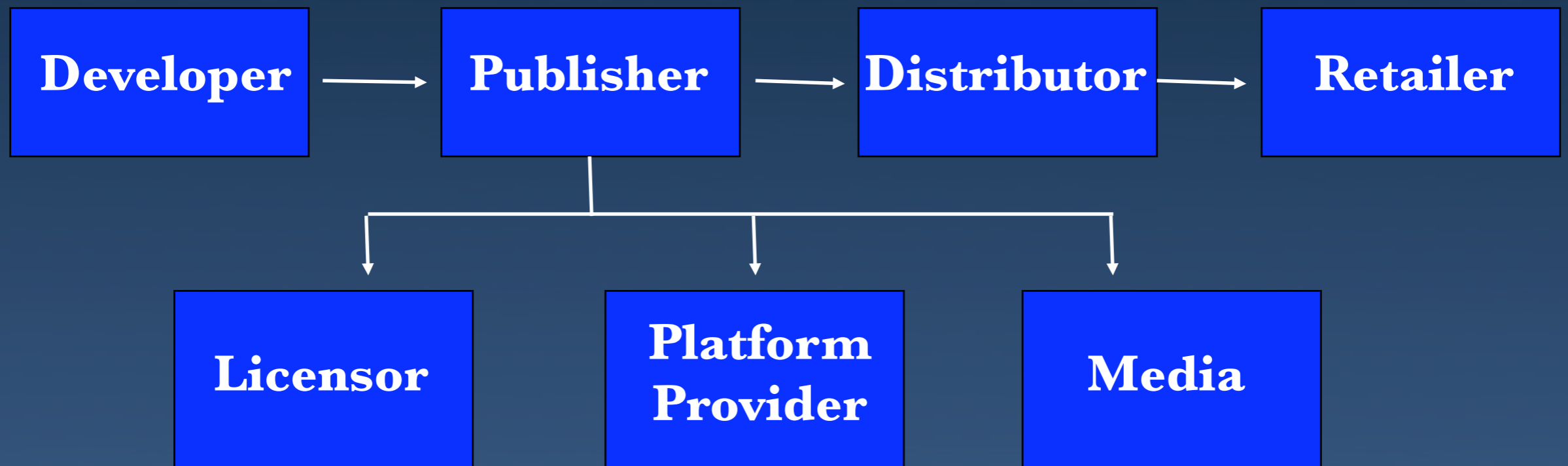
The Pro



Myths of Game Development

- Game developers operate in a bubble with infinite time and infinite resources to make the Perfect Game
- We'll get to create the games that they want to play...and everyone's going to love it!
- I've got the killer game idea that's The Next Big Thing and a publisher's going to give me several million dollars to develop it
- We'll get millions when those royalty checks come in!!!
- We're going to get royalty checks.
- The game's done when it's done

Industry Structure



Assembling your Dev Team

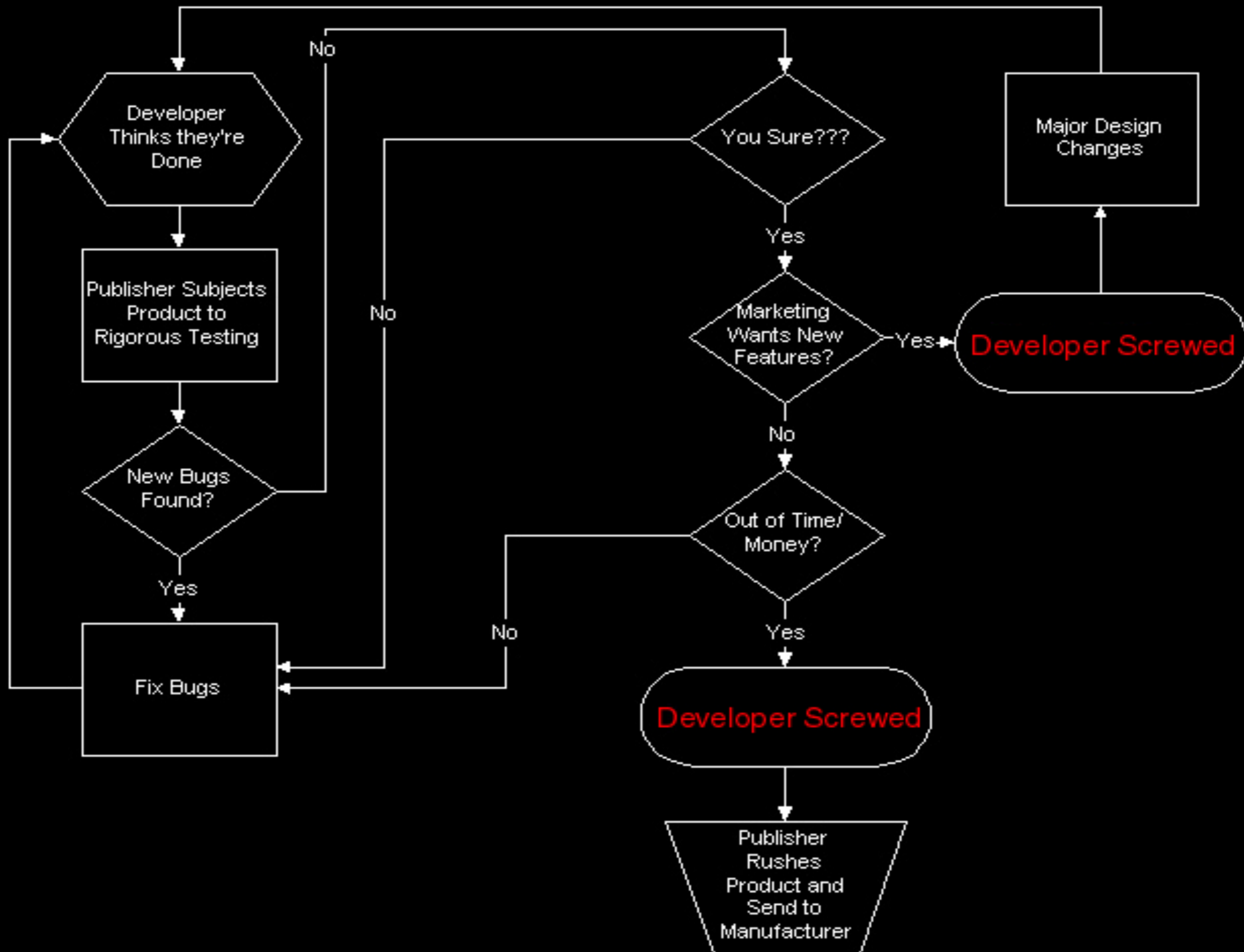
- Project Manager
- Game Designer
- Lead Programmer, Additional Programmers
- Lead Artist, Additional Artists
- Lead Level Designer, Additional Level Designers
- Audio Director, Additional audio engineers/musicians as needed
- Production Assistant and various other support staff for the project

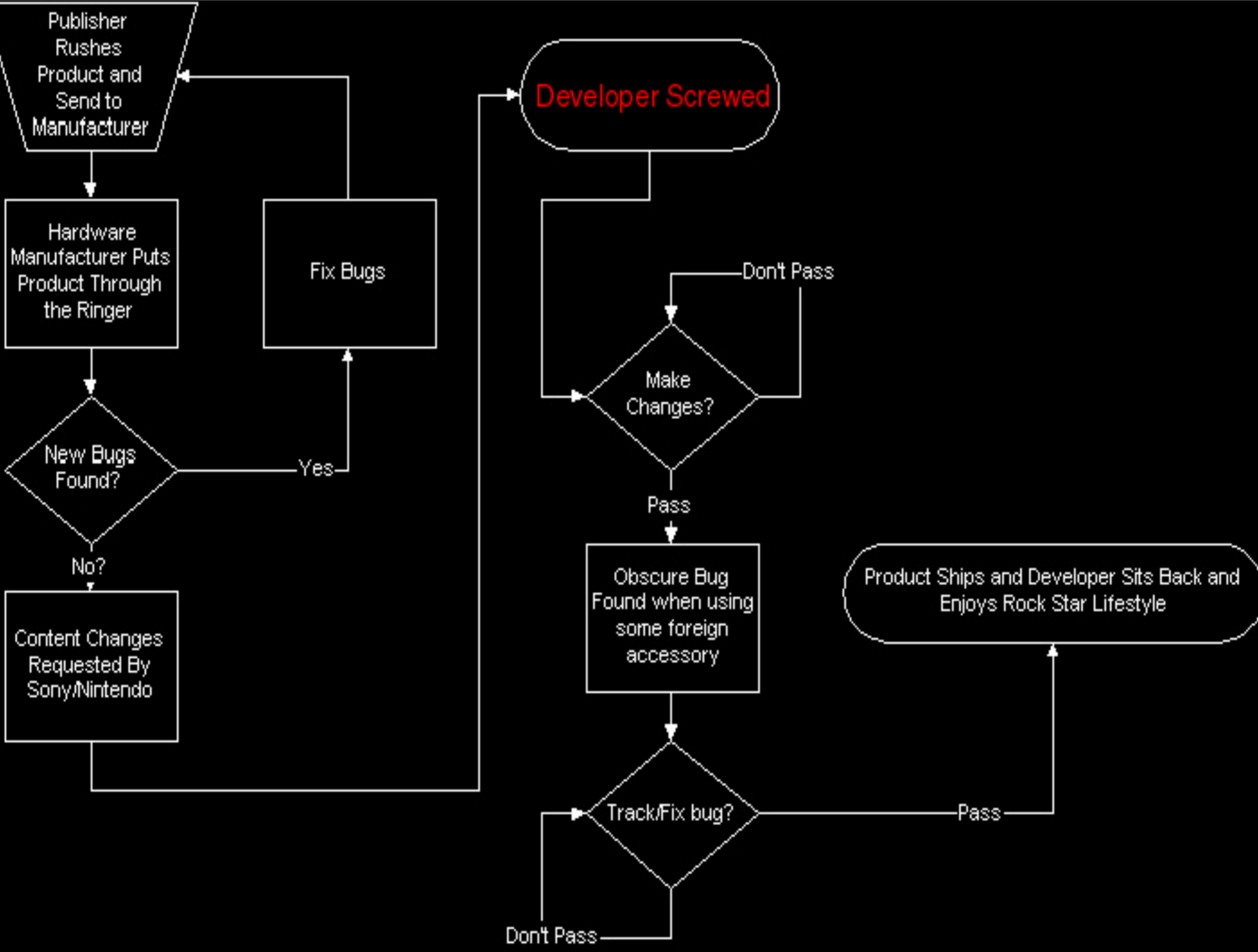
NDA

- Non-Disclosure Agreement
 - Read it
 - Understand it
 - Sign it
 - OBEY IT

The Game Development Cycle

- Project Treatment/Proposal/Bid
- Contract with Milestone Deliverables
- Game Design and Technical Design Documents (GDD/TDD)
- Concept Approval
- Prototype
- First Playable
- Various Interim Milestones
- Alpha
- Beta
- Lot Check
- Master (off to manufacturing and then shipped to stores)
- Kicking back and waiting for the royalty checks to come in!!!





Master

- Congratulations! The game is complete and has been sent to manufacturing.
- In a few short weeks, the game will be on the shelves
- Now what..?
- Kick back, relax and wait for the cash to flow!
- Now this is where you become rich and famous...right?

The Ugly Truth

- 90% of games that come out yearly don't make money
- The 10% that do make money, compensate for all the duds that a publisher may release in a year
- There are games that sell 100,000 copies. But because it cost \$3M to make and \$2M to manufacture and market, it doesn't even break even.

Cost of Development

- Let's take a good PS2 title that sells 250,000 copies:
 - Cost of Development: \$3M
 - Developer Royalty: 10% of wholesale price minus COGs
 - Wholesale price = \$36 (retail price is \$50)
 - COGs = \$9 (includes royalty paid to Sony)
 - Developer gets 10% of \$27 = \$2.70/unit
 - Game needs to sell 1.1 MILLION copies before developer sees a royalty check. Royalty has to pay off any advance. EGAD!

Cost of Development

- Let's take a good DS title that sells 150,000 copies (most games don't break 100k units):
 - Cost of Development: \$200k
 - Developer Royalty: 10% of wholesale price minus COGs
 - Wholesale price = \$20 (retail price is \$35)
 - COGs = \$11 (includes royalty paid to Nintendo)
 - Developer gets 10% of \$9 = \$0.90/unit
 - Developer SCREWED. Again.

A 2D Game Circa 1994



FIG 1

A 3D Game Circa 1996

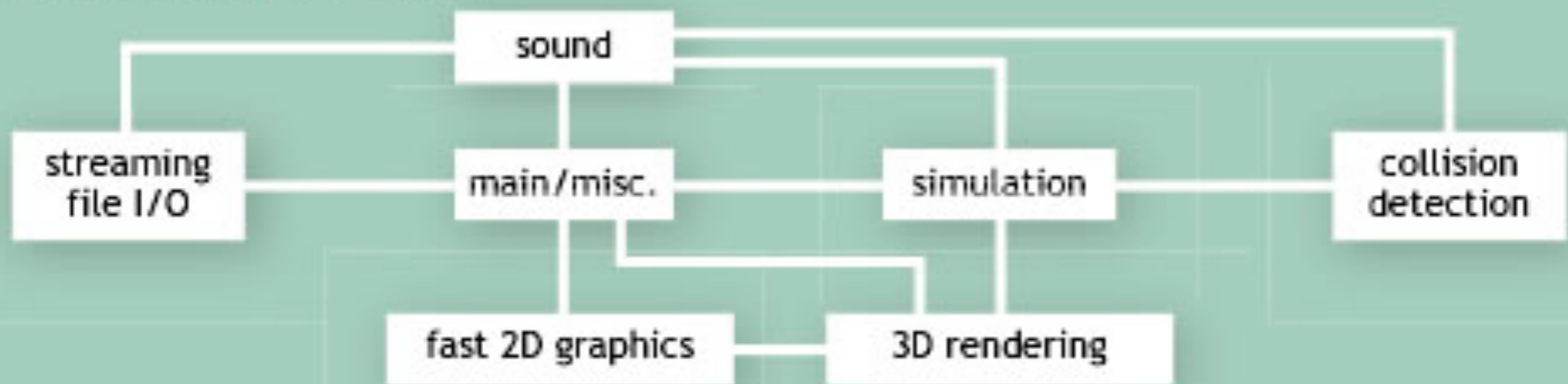
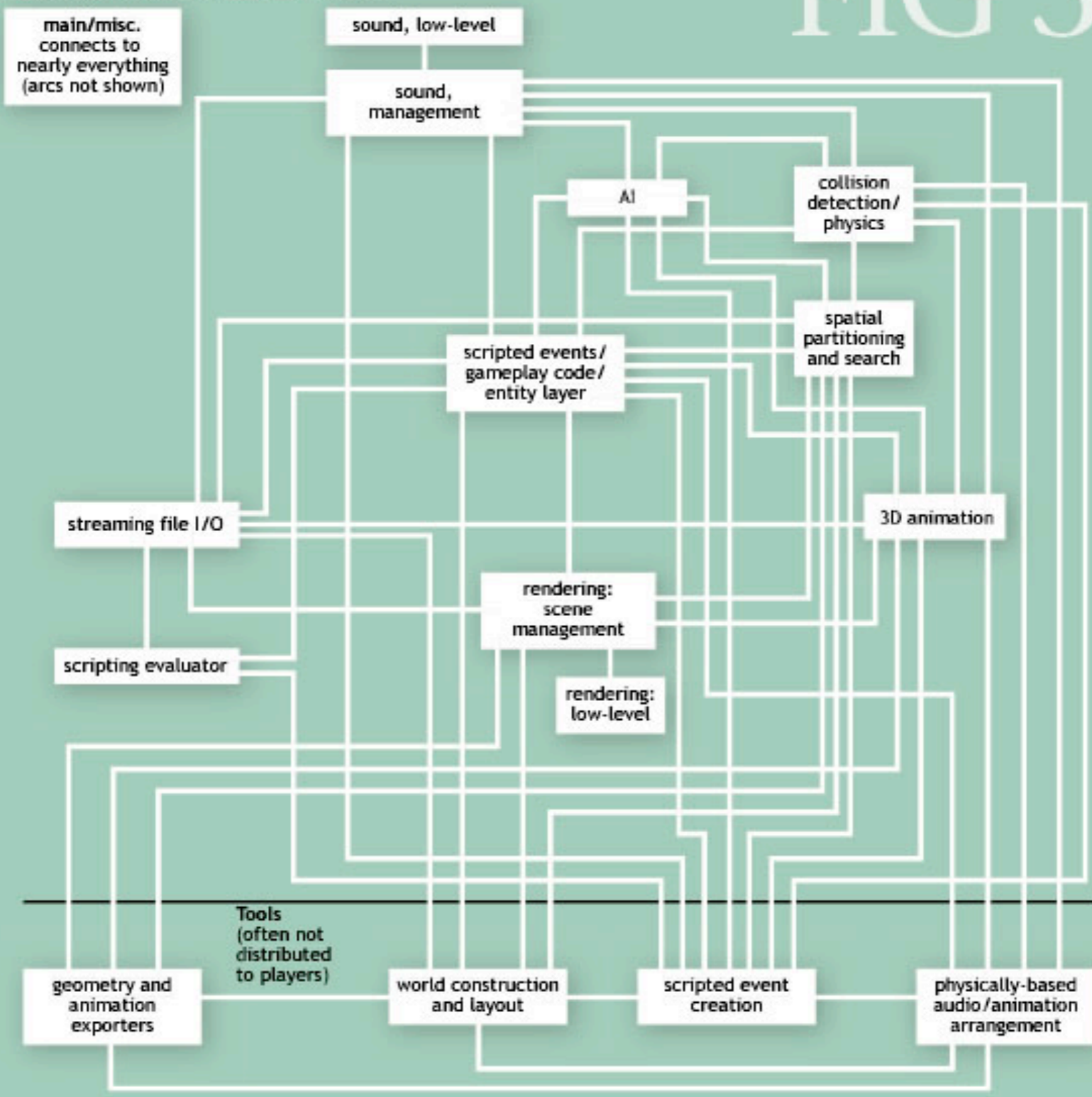


FIG 2

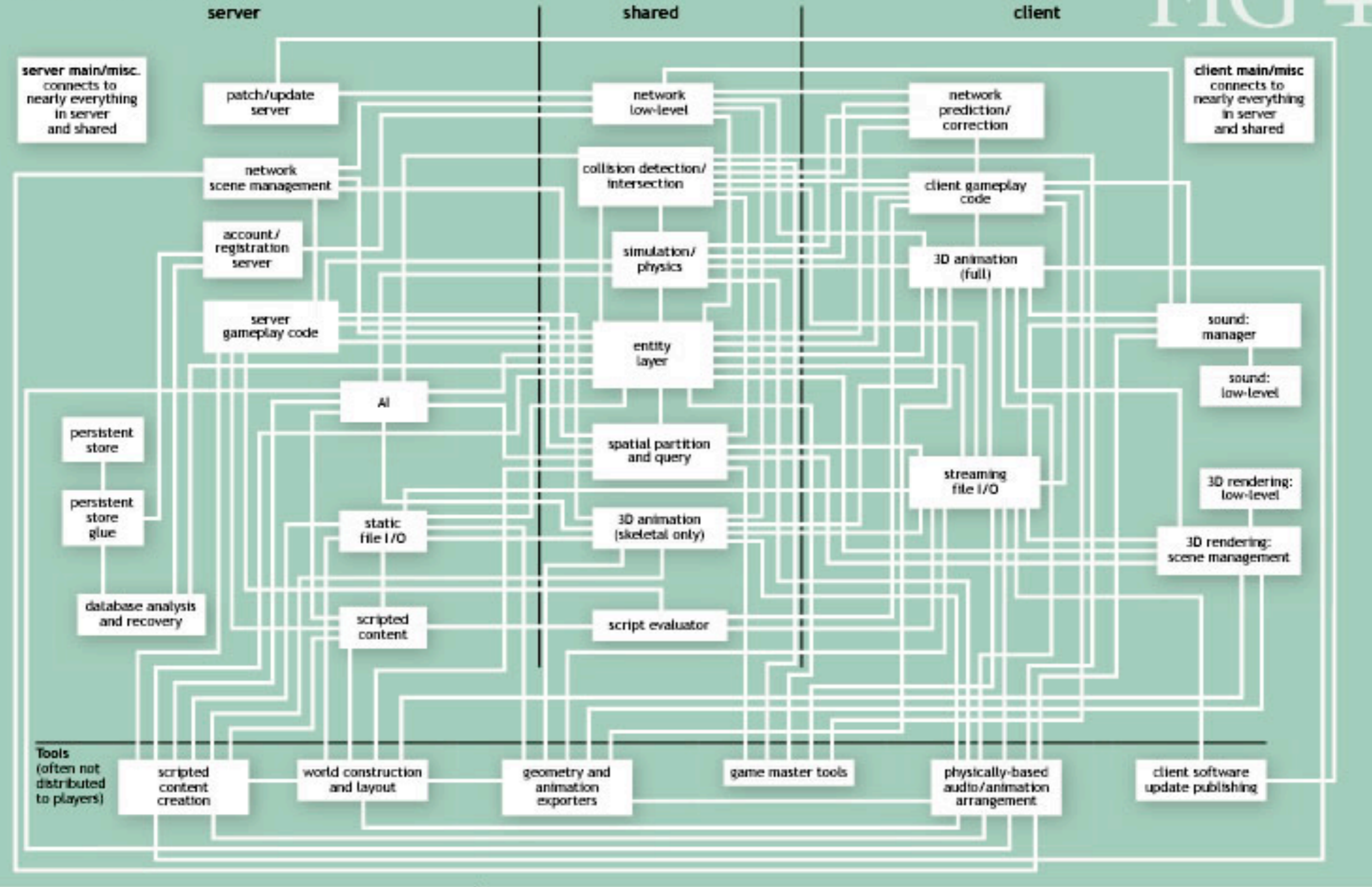
FIG 3

A 3D Single-Player Game Circa 2004



A 3D MMG Circa 2004

FIG 4



It's a Long Road

- WHY!?
- BECAUSE SILLY!
- and... Maybe you'll be a rock star? :D

Homework #1

- Due Tuesday, September 2nd
- List 50 “meaningful moments” you’ve had playing a game
- 2–4 descriptive sentences for each
 - Bullets are fine
- On PAPER
 - STAPLED paper!
- Or via e-mail...
 - Just make sure you in-class Tuesday