Melting Point
The Design and Evolution of a Game

Purpose: sausage and laws -- but you want to see games being made. Let’s talk about where a game started, how it got to where it is today, and why it’s not somewhere else.
Purpose: sausage and laws -- but you want to see games being made. Let’s talk about where a game started, how it got to where it is today, and why it’s not somewhere else.
My background

Entrepreneur
25 years SW
10 in game dev

CogniToy, SolidWorks, UI design
Reasons

Push: entrepreneur, had to get out
Pull: Wanted to get back into true game dev, finances OK for the summer
Heroics: wanted to change the world
Concept

Planetary sim
Play with the climate

Science game
A good simulation is the possibly the best lab for learning
Flow
Goals

A game about global warming
A broad audience
Show problem scope and some solutions
Make it fun
Plan

Meet

Learn

Design

Prototype

MIT climate conference, Inconvenient Truth
No name for the game
no web site yet
Design: June

- Art concepts
- Learn tools
- Build #10
- 1.8 KLOC

Point out key ideas on art and interface
wxpython and Python vs other options, svn, raid server
Summertime

stayed home, worked with Morgan
Had to keep him fed with things to do
Mid-July

Map data, country data
Database conversion -- throwaway code
Many false starts about data formats
Late July

Lots of map work
Build #169
7.7 KLOC

Lots of time spent cleaning up country data, flags, statistics
Research into world almanac data, energy use
Late August

Start querying the data and displaying it
Lots of work on UI widgets and appearance
Gradients, cities

World browser
Build #249
15.6 KLOC
September

Game design
Marketing plan
Get out and look for money

It’s time for a blog
Wired Next Fest, Ernest Adams
Discovery Network
October

Engine work
Game design
Build #267
17.7 KLOC

Turned into a pumpkin
Bose contract -- started light, but they begged for more
Balance of Power
Winter

A ray of hope
Web game
Modeling System
New markets: museums, foundations, MTV, NPR
New media: besides downloadable, web-based and playing cards
Not the end

sunrise or sunset?