

Privateer II : The Darkening

New Tester Information

Welcome to Privateer II : The Darkening. In order for you to test Privateer II : The Darkening effectively and efficiently, all new testers need to know the information contained within this document.

New testers need :

- To have read the New Tester Information document
- The binder containing all relevant testing information (under construction)

QA Team Organization

QA Project Leader	J. Allen Brack (Number One)
QA Assistant Project Leader	Rhea Shelley (Stardust)
Hardware Lab Technician	Brett Bonner (Grail)
Translations Liaison	Unknown
Testers	Scott Shelton Jeff Shelton Ben Potter Sean Mustakas Marcus Merrell John Guentzel Billy Cain
Person with a significant unknown role	Dave Downing
Team Writer	Jennifer Spohrer
Database Writer Extraordinaire	Bruce Gilmore
Product Support Supervisor	Kay Gilmore (The Big Boss)

Management Philosophy

TQM

Open management is critical to the projects' success. We will, as a team, attempt to follow the TQM or Total Quality Management model. These ideals are comprised of just a few items.

- If you are doing what is expected of you, I'm going to let you know.
- If you are not doing what is expected of you, I'm going to let you know.

This style is a two way street. If you have the materials you need to effectively do your job, I want to know. If you do not have the materials you need to effectively do your job, I want to know. If I'm not getting you the things you need, please tell me. No one has the ability to anticipate all aspects of testing. No one has all the answers. Please do not hesitate to ask for whatever you need.

Weekly Lunch

Having a weekly team lunch is important. It's a positive morale choice. Sometimes, the lunch might be on Origin. Most times, you'll be responsible for your own food. This will promote the teamwork and overall happiness.

Tester of the Week

Promoting recognition for accomplishments is important. Individuals often are neglected due to the large corporate structure Origin now embodies. There will be a tester of the week to indicate who did the best job during the previous week. This could include finding a critical bug, finding several critical bugs, or just being awesome in general.

Timelogs

All testers are required to submit weekly timelogs. A timelog merely details the amount of time you have spent playing the game. The template for this will be sent along with instructions on how to fill one out.

Bug Writing

This section details the various parts of the Bug database and how to actually write up a bug.

Status

The status of a bug is placed here. The various status' of bugs and what they mean are listed below :

New	When a tester enters a bug, the status is automatically marked as new.
Assigned	After the Project Leader reviews the bug, they will "assign" it to a particular person in Product Development.
Awaiting Verification	When Product Development believes a bug has been fixed, they will then mark in AV. QA is responsible for checking all AV's, and VERIFYING whether the bug is actually fixed or not.
Fix Failed	After a bug is marked AV, if the bug is not fixed, the Bug is marked Fix Failed and returned to PD.
Fix Verified	After a bug is marked AV, if the bug is fixed, the Bug is marked Fix Verified.
Killed	If Product Development does not agree with a particular bug, it will be marked as Killed.
Dupe	If a bug is a duplicate of another bug, it is marked Dupe.
Closed	After bugs are killed, QA will review the bugs to determine that the correct decision is being made. If QA can agree, the bug is marked Closed.

Found By

Self-explanatory

Assigned To

Generally the Project Leader will inform personnel who to assign bugs to. Assigned to details who is responsible for fixing a particular bug.

Bug Type

This section details the types of bugs that you will encounter while testing the game. All bugs submitted must have a bug type corresponding to the following descriptions :

Art	Art bugs consist of anything dealing with the game's graphics. This includes cockpit art, gameflow art, palette problems, etc.
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Code not working	This is a bug detailing a flaw in the game's function. This can be anything from missiles doing no damage to options not functioning when the appropriate menu item is selected.
Crash to DOS	Crashes are code dumps to DOS. After any crash, it is a requirement that you reboot your machine.
Data Error	A data error is defined as a problem with the game's data, but the function of the game is not impaired. For example, you are targeting a Longbow, yet the ship you can visually see you have targeted is a Hellcat. This also applies to an incorrect movie playing, improper missile loadouts, etc.
Fatal to DOS	A fatal is similar to a crash, but a fatal is a program generated error message. For example, "malloc () failed."
Glitch	A glitch is any bug that is NOT REPEATABLE.
Lockup	A lockup occurs when the game halts and you must reset your computer to regain control.
Sound Problem	Any problems with mixing, looping, repeating sound effects or audio in the movies can be considered a sound problem.
Video Problem	Any problems with the movies can be considered a video problem.
Suggestion	Any suggested improvement for the game's design should be written up as a suggestion. It is also important to note HOW a suggestion should change the game along with why the suggestion should change the game.

Repeatability

It is important to know if the bug is repeatable. Try to repeat the bug with the exact circumstances that led to the bug in the first place. Always means the bug will happen every time you perform an action. Often means the bug will happen 2/3 times. Sometimes means 1/2 times. Rarely means a bug is repeatable only 1/3 times.

Description

This is where any error messages are detailed, and details leading up to the reproduction of the bug are listed. Additionally, the data critical to the bug should be here. (What ship, what you were doing, etc.)

Gameflow Problem

With Gameflow problems, it is key to remember a few things. Location is important. Be sure to record the Planet or Star Base you are on, then your

location on the actual place. Also, use your brain to determine the room you're in.

Mission Problem

Problems in missions should include the mission name or number, the nav point, your Wingmen for that mission, the ship you are flying, and any enemies in the action area, etc.

Location

This area will describe where you are when the bug occurs. For example, "Gameflow : Cirrus : Surgeon's Blunder Bar : Talking to Dr. Brack" or "Spaceflight : Random Mission # 000C : Nav Point #125" are both examples of location.

Comments

This area is generally reserved for Project Leader/Product Development comments. Additionally, when PD requires additional information to reproduce a bug, the information will be placed here.

Cheating

After entering a booth, the cheats can be activated by putting the mouse pointer in the upper-left corner and pressing the right mouse button. The cheat menu gives you the option to give yourself additional money, set your location, start a sub-plot, etc. Generally, cheating can cause problems by not setting certain flags correctly, so avoid cheating as regular practice. When entering bugs, it is important to note whether the bug was found by cheating.

QA Philosophy

Key Philosophies

1. The basic testing motto: I dare you to break this game.
2. The second motto: Repeat it.
3. Play the game differently every time.
4. You represent over 50,000 customers playing the game.

Directions

Your job is to find places in the game that don't work, are broken, missing, sound bad, don't look good, and anything else you can dream up. Be creative.

Just because you get past something once, doesn't mean that you will get past it again. Try and do things a few times in a few different ways just to make sure that it will be O.K. in EVERY situation. Remember, there will be thousands of customers playing this game a thousand different ways. It is your job to play the game all of those ways before it gets in their hands. That way, if there is a problem with one of those ways, we will find it and the customer will never see it.

There are a few different ways to approach testing a game. First, pretend that you are a brand new user and that this is the first time that you have ever played this game in your life. The second approach, is to think that you know something, but you really don't. This should lead to you into doing some right stuff and some wrong stuff. The next method is to pretend that you do actually know what you're doing. Hopefully, this one will work best. The last approach should be a curious one. Just try as many different things as you can think of, right and wrong. With these different approaches in mind, you should come across a variety of problems that you would otherwise not have found.

Customers out there will do ANYTHING. Stray from the course. Privateer II : The Darkening is a very open ended game. This means that you must keep very good track of every thing you did to get a certain thing to happen. This will help you narrow down exactly what the bug is, and how someone else can repeat it on their computer.

Key Terms

Gameflow	Represents the still-shot backgrounds of the planet or depot. This is where the player interacts with the characters throughout the game.
Gump	A gump is a postage stamp attached to a mouse hotspot. Clicking a gump will perform an action.
Hotspot	An area of the screen that is normally clickable using the mouse/joystick to perform an action.
Mission	An objective which must be achieved for success, usually spaceflight based.
Object Mesh	A vast grid-like mesh composed of coordinates defined in 3D space to represent ships, missiles, objects, etc. Object meshes can be manipulated to represent movement in a 3D environment. Textures are normally applied to the faces of the mesh to give the object a more realistic appearance.
Palette	An array of colors used to in displaying a scene.
Postage Stamp	Game art in gameflow that cannot be selected with the mouse/joystick.
Texture	A bitmap that is applied to the face of a polygonal object.
CG	Computer Generated.

Sprite	A series of animating frames usually designed to represent movement. Examples of sprites : Explosions and animating characters in gameflow.
Burn	Tech term for a CD-ROM which is ready to use. A CD we have made has been "burned."
QA	Quality Assurance. Literally, we Assure the Quality of the game we are working on, in this case Privateer II : The Darkening.
AI	Artificial Intelligence. The AI causes enemy ships to react and fly defensively.
Flag	"Flags" are variables which have a value usually determined by mission. After a mission is won, a "mission success flag" is set. A common type of bug is not having certain flags set.
Bug	A bug is a section of a computer application which is not performing the desired task.
Bitmap	A two dimensional piece of art.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this project will be a great experience for you. If you have any questions, please ask. Communication is the key to success.

- J. Allen Brack
QA PL Privateer II : The Darkening

-Rhea Shelley
QA APL Privateer II : The Darkening

-EOF

NOTE : Revised 8/1/96 -JAB/RHS
Original Document co-authored by
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