



Harvesting Interactive Fiction

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Independent Narrative Designer



"Is it a
game? Is
it a
story?
Both,
really.
And a
delight."

- *The Telegraph*

Monsieur Phileas Fogg returned home *early* from the Reform Club,
and in a new-fangled steam-carriage, besides!

I helped him down, and the iron-lunged, steam-driven horses
clattered away.

"Passepartout," said he. "We are going around the world!"

"Around the world, Monsieur?" ...

"Very good, Monsieur." ...

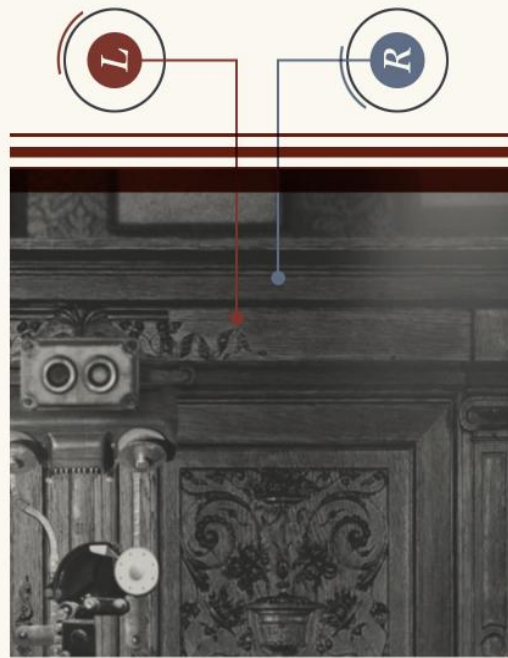


"You'll think you've accidentally picked up your Kindle and started a new book."

- NewGamerNation

DOOR, KIRKE ROOM

locked on the second door to t. No answer. She opened it red a dim and sombre room. windows were covered by green drapes that had been the wall. Her eyes adjusted to ness and she could tell that the s empty save for a gargantuan hat stood against the wall. A lock-like device was attached ors, and she could feel a slight ring from within it. Something about it made Anna feel uneasy, so



she went back out into the corridor.



“The top-ranked iOS game is spare with everything but the story.”

-Medium.com





Choice of Games:

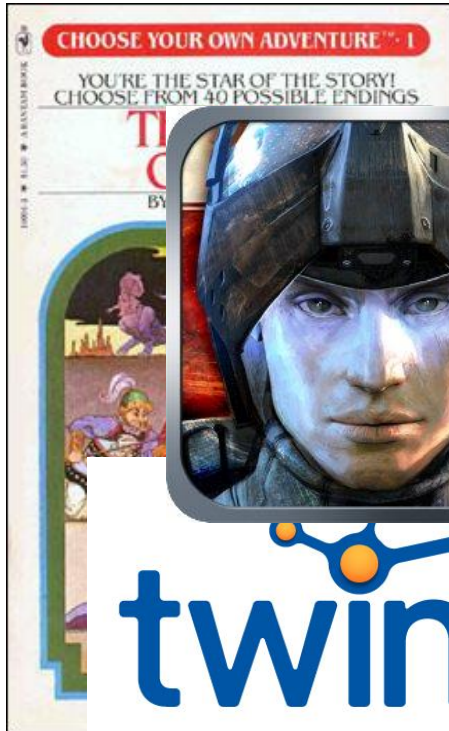
- Choice of Broadsides
- Choice of Zombies
- The Affairs of the Court trilogy
 - Choice of Romance
 - Choice of Intrigues
 - Til Death Do Us Part
- Choice by Gaslight (forthcoming)

Reactive Studios:

- Codename Cygnus



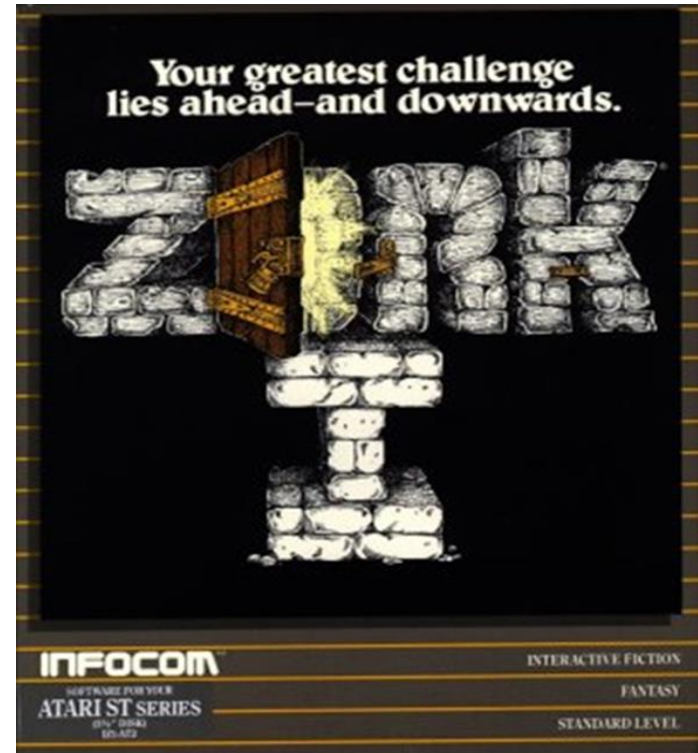
“Interactive Fiction”?





A Short History of Parser IF

- 1979-1989 – Infocom





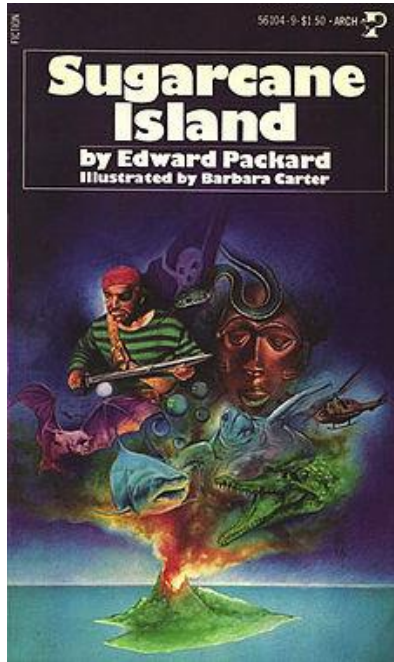
A Short History of Parser IF

- 1979-1989 – Infocom
- 1993 – Inform
- 1995-present – IF Comp

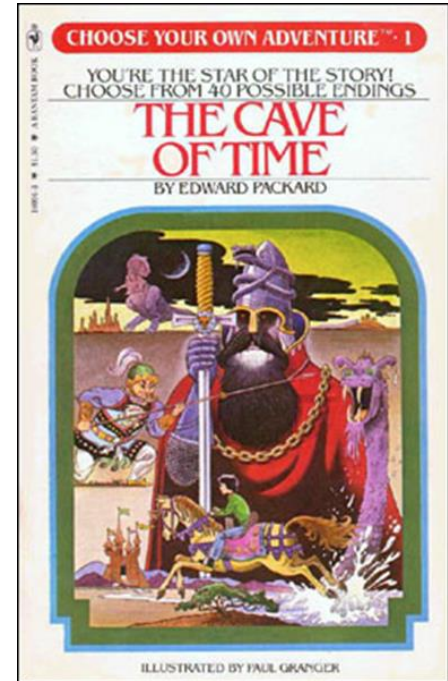


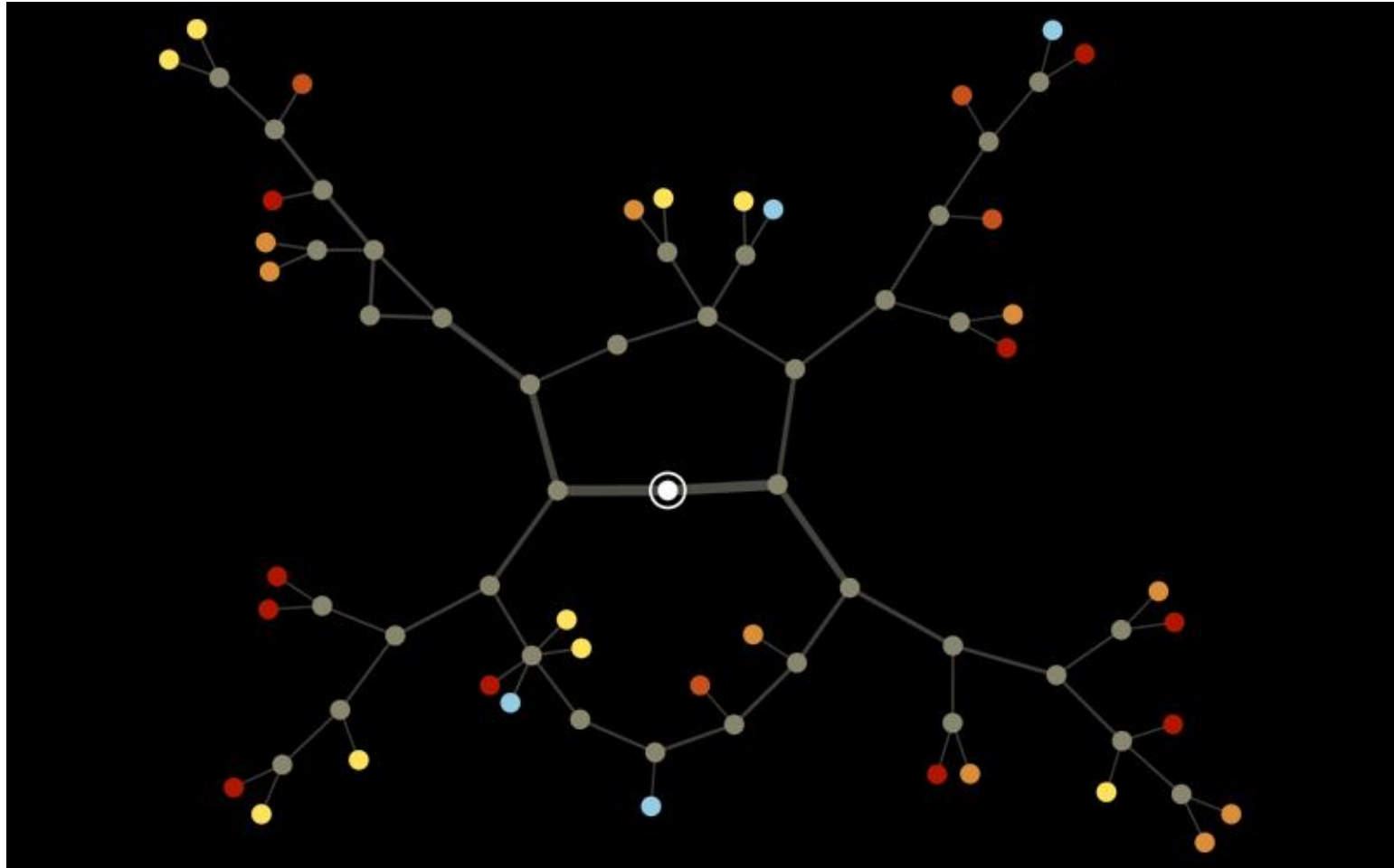


A Short History of Choose-Your-Path



- 1976 – The Adventures of You on Sugar cane Island
- 1979 – The Cave of Time







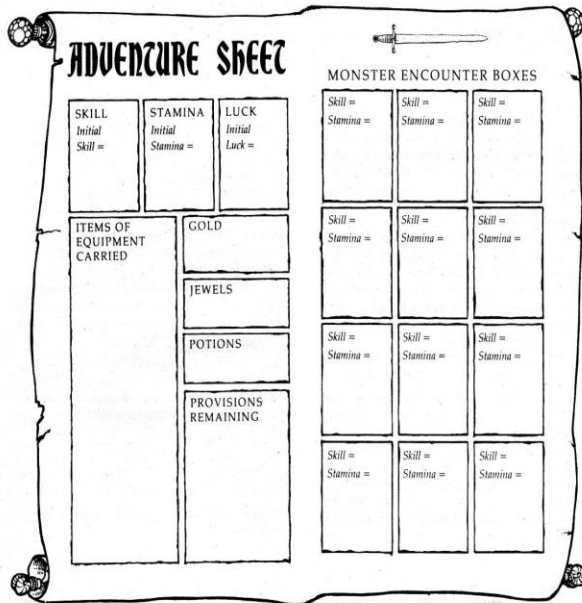
A Short History of Choose-Your-Path

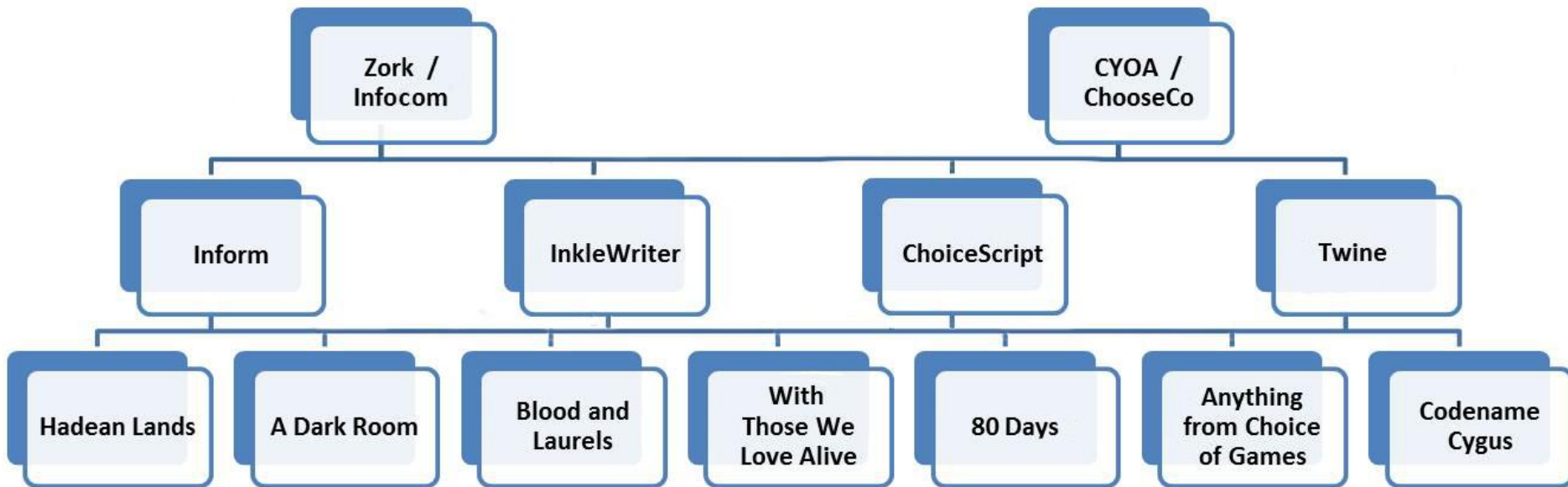


CHOICE
OF GAMES

-1995 -

it
as **twine**







This Year's Top IF

- **A Dark Room** (Top RPG in Apple Store)
- **80 Days** (*Time Magazine's* Game of the Year)
- **Device 6** (Apple Design Award 2014)



What Techniques Can Be Harvested?

- Poetry
- Ambiguity
- Complicity



What Techniques Can Be Harvested?

- **Poetry**
- Ambiguity
- Complicity



The palace courtyard.

A **balcony** looks upon the outside world. The **throne room** lies deeper inside the palace.

Your chambers are on the second floor.

The **garden** sprawls over there. Your **workshop** is in a cabin down a shady path.

The **city** is through a vast archway hanging with vines.



The streets are narrow, winding, **mazelike**.

Ropes span between buildings like enormous spiderwebs blanketing the city.

The **temple** is this way, across the **dry** canal.

The dream distillery is surrounded by **scaffolding**.

Return to the palace



What Techniques Can Be Harvested?

- Poetry
- **Ambiguity**
- Complicity



Will you be male or female?

- ☒ Male.
- ☐ Female.
- ☐ Neither.
- ☐ Unknown/undetermined.
- ☐ Do not pester me with impudent questions!





Here you straightaway behold
A black beast in the forest,
Whose body is of blackest dye, if any
man cuts off his head, **his** blackness
Will disappear.

—Book of Lambspring, 1599



Here you straightaway behold
A black beast in the forest,
Whose body is of blackest dye, if any
woman cuts off his head, **his** blackness
Will disappear.

—Book of Lambspring, 1599



Here you straightaway behold
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What Techniques Can Be Harvested?

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- Ambiguity
- **Complicity**



“Not just ‘it happened to me,’ but
‘I did it.’”

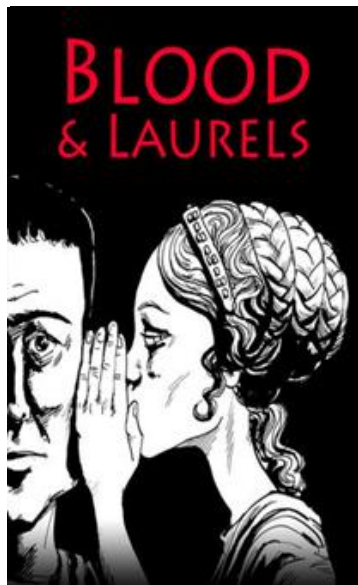
- Andrew Plotkin



Give the player actual choices



Give the player actual choices





Secondary Alchemy Lab

The lab is unsettlingly dim, but familiar enough: rough wooden walls, the broad stone surface of the workbench. The lab door is to the north; it's closed.

To the east is the lab's supply closet. Except... the entire east side of the room is filled with clear crystal. That's not so familiar. That's downright strange.

You notice a heap of alchemical supplies piled on a table. Next to the table, an iron panel is set in the floor.

>



“How” matters



Parser-based IF – make them type it



“How” matters



Codename Cygnus –
make them say it



“How” matters



Motion-sensing input devices – make them do it



Takeaway #1: Changing Market

- You can build a hit game with great writing *alone*.



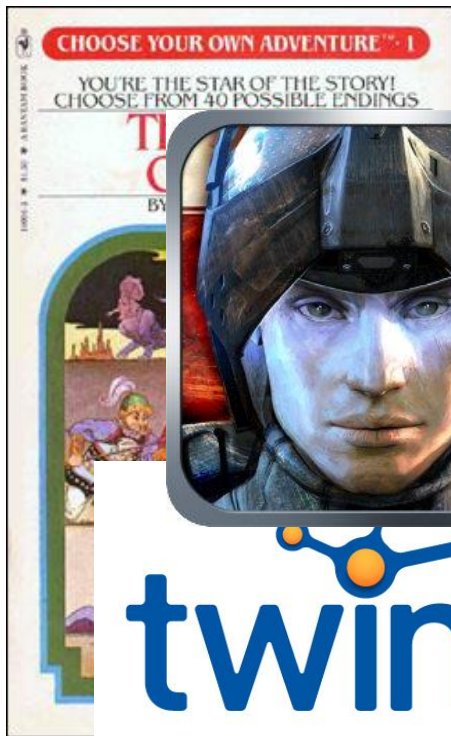
Takeaway #2: Techniques

- Poetry
- Ambiguity
- Complicity (Choice-Based or Otherwise)



Takeaway #3: Tools







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