



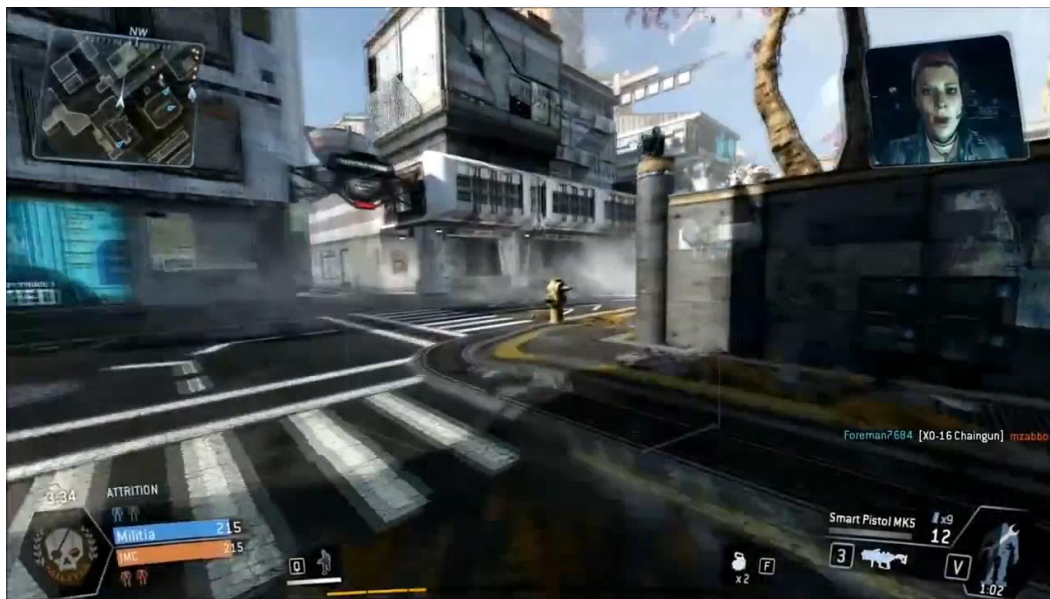
# Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: The Evolution of Rodeo in Titanfall

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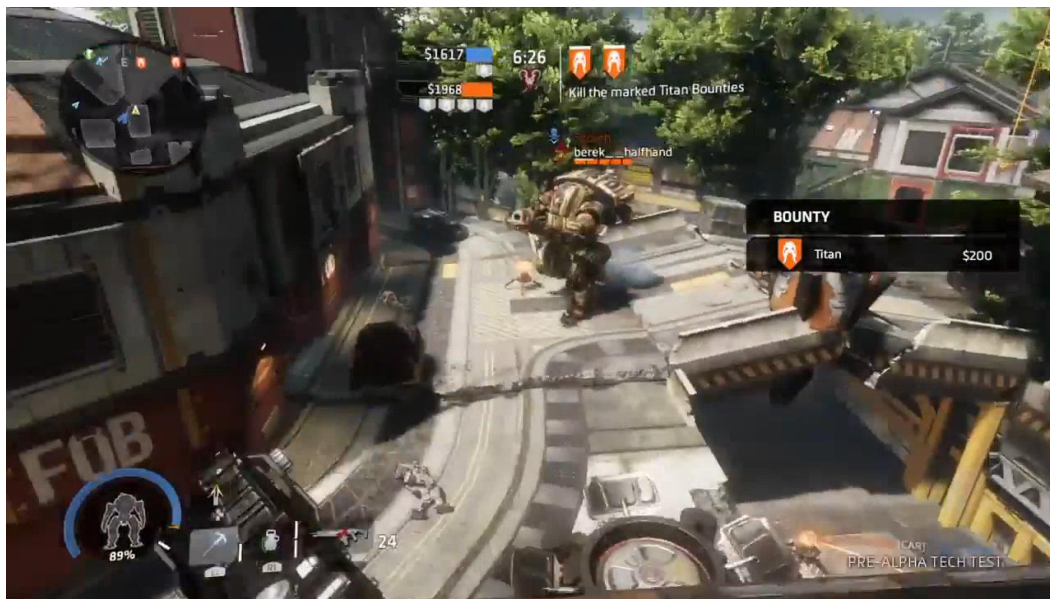


# What is Rodeo? (Titanfall 1)





# What is Rodeo? (Titanfall 2 )





# This Talk will:

- Give a highlighted tour of the history of Rodeo
- Provide insight about the unique design challenges for Rodeo
- Analyze what went well/what went poorly with Rodeo





# In the beginning...





# Design Goals: Part 1

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them





# Iteration 1 (Pilot)





# Iteration 1: Issues Revealed

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?







# Iteration 1 (Titan)





# Iteration 1: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Automated sequence for Pilots. Can choose to cancel.
  - Titans can disembark and shoot Pilot off, or use Electric Smoke





# Electric Smoke





# Iteration 1: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Automated sequence for Pilots. Can choose to cancel.
  - Titans can disembark and shoot Pilot off, or use Electric Smoke
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?
  - Around 6s in total





# Iteration 1: Design Goals Hit?

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them?

Yes, but:

1. Outcome too binary
2. Not enough choice affecting outcome.





# Design Goals: Part 2

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill.



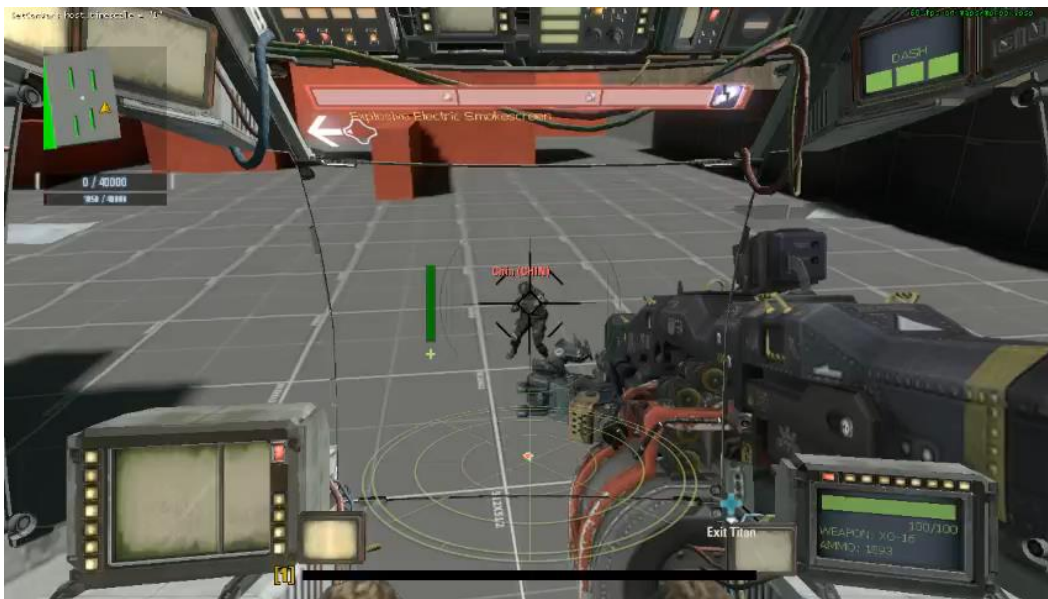


# Iteration 2 (Pilot)





# Iteration 2 (Titan)







# Iteration 2: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Pilots choose when to fire their gun
  - No real change for Titans
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?
  - Variable, but from full health -> 0 takes around 10s in total





# Iteration 2: Design Goals Hit?

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill.

Yes but:

- Presentation was too rough to show for upcoming EA marketing event.





# Design Goals: Part 3

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill. ✓
3. Make Rodeo be visually compelling







# Iteration 3 (Titan)





# Iteration 3: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through Sound
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Pilots choose to plant as many cabers as they want before detonation
  - Titans: No real change
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?
  - Around 15s in total





# Iteration 3: Design Goals Hit?

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill ✓
3. Make Rodeo be visually compelling

Yes but:

1. Too minigame-like
2. Not as accessible as previous attempts





# Design Goals: Part 4

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill. ✓
3. Make Rodeo be visually compelling ✓
4. Make Rodeo be accessible







# Iteration 4 ( Pilot )





# Iteration 4 ( Titan)





# Iteration 4: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
  - Hatch Panel makes it more grounded for Pilot
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Pilots had to remove Panel before shooting their gun
  - Titans had their existing choices enhanced
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?





# Iteration 4: Issues Addressed?





# Iteration 4: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
  - Hatch Panel makes it more grounded for Pilot
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Pilots choose to fire their gun, can jump off at any time
  - Titans: Enhanced existing counters
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?
  - Full health -> Doomed takes around 15 - 20s in total





# Iteration 4: Design Goals Hit?

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill. ✓
3. Make Rodeo be visually compelling ✓
4. Make Rodeo be accessible ✓





# TF1 Rodeo: What went well?

- Generally popular with players
- Fairly well-balanced
- Advanced Tactics possible





# TF1 Rodeo: Advanced Tactics(1)







# TF1 Rodeo: Advanced Tactics(2)





# TF1 Rodeo: What went well?

- Generally popular with players
- Fairly well-balanced
- Advanced Tactics possible
- High Fantasy Fulfilment aspect





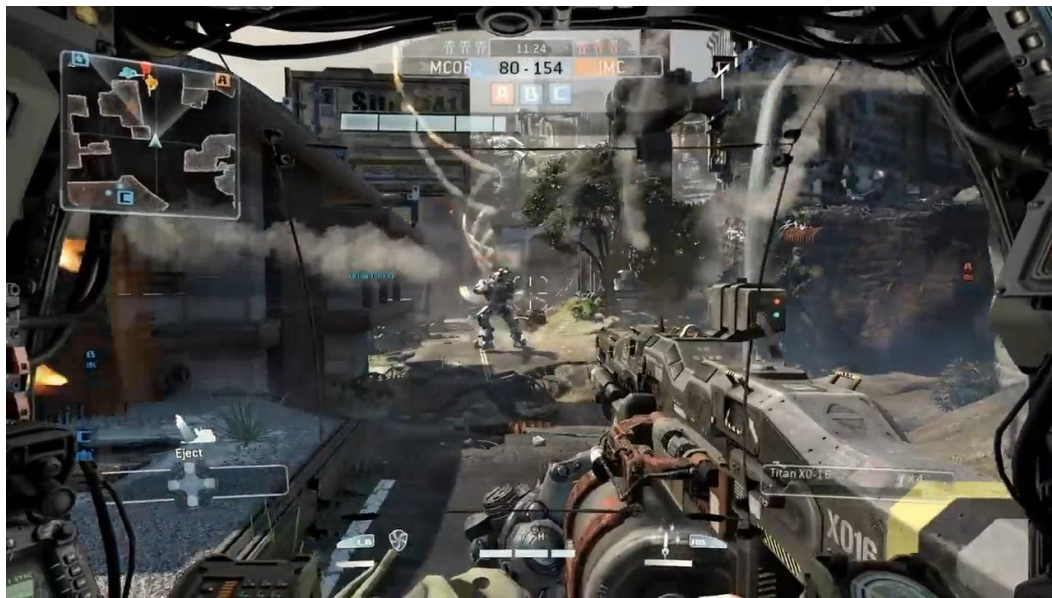
# TF1 Rodeo: What went well?

- Organic interactions with Titan eject
  - Eject onto Rodeo





# Eject into Rodeo





# TF1 Rodeo: What went well?

- Organic interactions with Titan eject
  - Eject onto Rodeo
  - Eject for mid-air battle with Rodeo pilot





# Mid-Air Rodeo Battle





# TF1 Rodeo: What went well?

- Organic interactions with Titan eject
  - Eject onto Rodeo
  - Eject for mid-air battle with Rodeo pilot
- Friendly Rodeo (aka Brodeo)





# Brodeo Flag Cap







# TF1 Rodeo: What went poorly?

- Back and Forth between Titan and Pilot could be improved





# Disembark-Embark Loop





# TF1 Rodeo: What went poorly?

- Back and Forth between Titan and Pilot could be improved
- Actually aiming during Brodeo
- Being able to tell at a glance whether you can Rodeo a Titan





# Rodeo In Titanfall 2





# Rodeo in Titanfall 2

Went  
from  
this:





# Rodeo in Titanfall 2 (Pilot)

To this:





# Rodeo in Titanfall 2 (Titan)





# Titan Experiments - Health Chiclets

- Titans have Chiclets of health that regenerate over time
- Once a Chiclet is gone, that portion of health is lost permanently
- On Chiclet loss, Titans get a short period of invincibility







# Titan Experiments - Health Chiclets





# Health Chiclets vs TF1 Rodeo

- Rodeo did not mesh well with Health Chiclets
- Regen behavior meant that you could rodeo and do no lasting damage
- Invulnerability period made Rodeo very start-and-stop in nature





# Reinventing Rodeo for Titanfall 2

- Needed to make Rodeo work with Health Chiclets
- To preserve pacing, Rodeo damage limited to 1 Chiclet
- Parallel discussions about a potential battery system seemed like a great fit to ground Rodeo and Chiclets into something more physical.





# Reinventing Rodeo for Titanfall 2

- Removing a battery naturally led to the reverse idea of inserting a battery
- This had massive teamwork implications





# Battery Medic





# Reinventing Rodeo for Titanfall 2

- Pilot automatically thrown off after stealing a Battery
- Rodeo shifts from being a long process to a short event
- Gameplay shifts from “How long can the Pilot stay on” to “How do I get away with the battery/chase down the Pilot”





# Reinventing Rodeo for Titanfall 2

Polish features added:

1. Apply Battery to own Titan by embarking
2. Overhead Battery Indicator for Titan
3. "I got a battery for you" callout for Pilot
4. Grenade Rodeo for Pilots that have a battery





# Grenade Rodeo







# Iteration 5: Issues Addressed?

- Communication: How do Players know what is happening?
  - Primarily through HUD elements and Sound
  - Relies a bit on Single Player campaign to teach the mechanics
- Choice: What do Players do when Rodeo happens?
  - Pilots can choose to jump off to cancel early. Grapple etc to get away
  - Titans: Electric Smoke. Weapons/Dash etc to chase down
- Length: How long does Rodeo take?
  - Stealing battery takes about 5s
  - Variable length as to whether battery is recovered or not





# Iteration 5: Design Goals Hit?

1. Give a way for Pilots to meaningfully interact with Titans, potentially doing heavy damage to them ✓
2. Make Rodeo have a dynamic range of outcomes, affected by Player choices/skill. ✓
3. Make Rodeo be visually compelling ✓
4. Make Rodeo be accessible ?





# TF2 Rodeo: Did we keep what went well?

- Popular?
- Well-balanced?
- Weaker Fantasy Fulfilment aspect





# TF2 Rodeo: Did we keep what went well?

- Organic interactions with the Titan eject system preserved
  - More mechanics interact well with the chase part
- Brodeo enhanced





# TF2 Rodeo: Did we improve what went poorly?

- Back and Forth between Titan and Pilot is improved
- Aiming during Brodeo generally better





# Brodeo Aim Improvement





# TF2 Rodeo: Did we improve what went poorly?

- Back and Forth between Titan and Pilot is improved
- Aiming during Brodeo generally better
- Still hard to tell at a glance whether you can Rodeo a Titan, but less of a problem than before





# Enemy Highlighting







# Single Player vs Multi-Player

- Picking up battery: Pilots only in MP, Titan and Pilots in SP
- Encourages Teamwork in MP
- Better counterplay, risk/reward
- General desire for Titans to last a little shorter





# Rodeo Trigger Conditions

- From the start, Pilots automatically magnetized onto titans
- No button input needed





# Jetpack Assist Ability





# Rodeo Trigger Conditions

- From the start, Pilots automatically magnetized onto titans
- No button input needed
- Jetpack Assist Ability
- In Titanfall 2, Frontal Rodeo is slightly harder



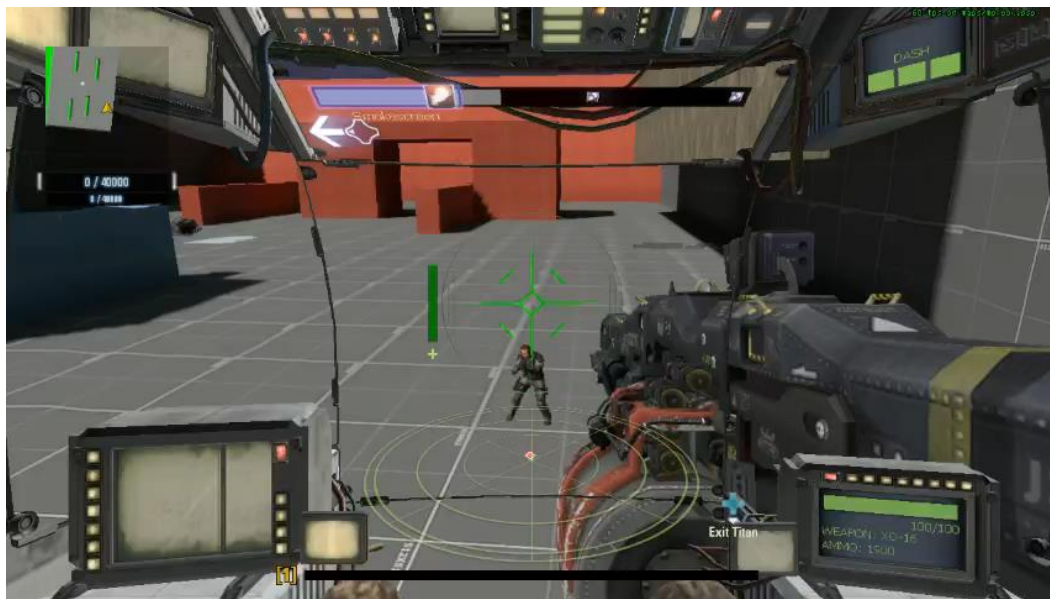


# Counterplay: Wall Smashing





# Counterplay: Wall Smashing





# Counterplay: Wall Smashing





# Counterplay: Wired Hood







# Counterplay: Active Reload





# Multi-Spot Rodeo

- Let multiple people climb onto multiple spots on a Titan



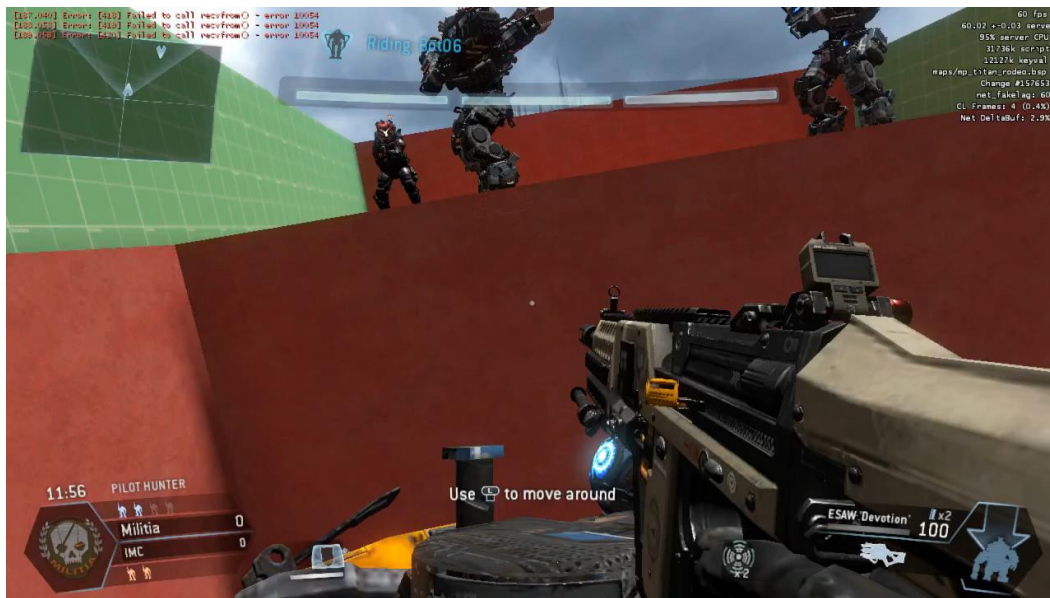


# Multi-Spot Rodeo





# Multi-Spot Rodeo: Gunfights





# Final Lessons

- Start fast, start simple!
- Add as little as you can to make the idea work
- Advocate for both sides
- Don't be afraid to make big changes





# Special Thanks

- Rodeo was a team effort!
- In particular, shout outs to:
- Designers: Mackey McCandlish, Brent McLeod, Carlos Pineda
- Programmers: Steven Wong, Joel Gompert
- Animators: Paul Messerly, Mark Grigsby, Bruce Ferriz, Laure Retif





# Special Thanks

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- All the players out there!





# Questions?

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