

Noah Holmes

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Creative direction and principal design for AAA games, shaping franchise vision, core gameplay systems, and narrative across live-service titles, with partnerships across Wizards of the Coast on Dungeons & Dragons, EverQuest, and Defiance with Syfy/NBCUniversal at the \$140M+ scale

Principal Game Designer (*Design Direction and Systems Architecture*)

Apr 2024 — Feb 2026

Intrepid Studios - Ashes of Creation

- Architected the World State Manager, a real-time systemic layer monitoring player behavior, economy, resource flow, and world conditions, greenlit across the studio's director group as a foundational live-service system on a \$140M+ AAA MMORPG
- Built the Content Visualization Tool, an engine-integrated designer tool that syncs World State Manager snapshots and lets designers monitor and branch world states with built-in economy and content safeguards
- Unified disparate content tools into a single modular ImGUI toolchain in Unreal Engine 5, partnering with tools engineering to triple content implementation speed and reduce bugs by 75% across a 25-person design team
- Designed Cursed Curios, a risk-reward open world PvP loop built around artifact acquisition and player flagging that turns individual players into high-value world objectives
- Set design standards and quality bars for foundational live-service systems across the project, mentoring designers and aligning execution across engineering, narrative, and content teams

Senior Game Designer (*Lead Narrative Designer*)

Aug 2018 — Apr 2024

Cryptic Studios - Neverwinter (Dungeons & Dragons)

- Served as sole creative authority on narrative output for a \$1B+ Dungeons & Dragons live-service ARPG, partnering with Wizards of the Coast across 12 major live updates including Undermountain, Sharandar, and Avernus
- Owned the Battle Pass system and Heroic Encounter framework, a studio-wide systemic encounter framework adopted across the live game
- Authored GDDs and narrative frameworks that guided a content team of ten in delivering quest, encounter, and environmental content across every live release
- Set tone, voice, and canon consistency standards adopted across every content release, maintaining IP fidelity in collaboration with Wizards of the Coast

Game Director (*Independent Project*)

Jul 2018 — Jul 2019

Stealth Start-up - Unannounced Sports Simulation Game (Mobile)

- Owned full game direction from concept through documentation, defining core gameplay systems, multiplayer structure, UI/UX, and live-service monetization model for a mobile sports simulation
- Established product vision and Games-as-a-Service framework, aligning gameplay loops, progression, and economy design into a cohesive long-term player experience
- Secured initial financial backing from Zeality, validating creative direction and market viability

Senior Game Designer III (*Lead Systems & Live Designer*)

May 2016 — Jul 2018

Trion Worlds, Inc. - Trove

- Shipped Geode and Luminopolis, two major live-service expansions delivering new biomes, crafting economies, world events, and progression systems with integrated monetization hooks
- Architected the studio-wide subclassing system, a cross-class progression layer that deepened replayability across the entire class roster, shipped alongside the Dino Tamer ranged combat class
- Built and shipped multi-phase boss encounters including the Shadow Hydrakken and Darknik Dreadnought Mk II across three difficulty modes, anchoring endgame systems content
- Owned the Trove FTUE and partnered with engineers on mission tools enabling dynamic randomized content, contributing to a 15-20% retention lift across live operations

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Lead Game Designer (*Monetization and Itemization*)

Feb 2016 — May 2016

Trion Worlds, Inc. - *Defiance*

- Held sole lead design ownership of all systems, itemization, and live economy on an \$80M AAA transmedia live-service title during a critical studio transition
- Optimized Cyber Rig Merchants and Chip acquisition systems, improving ARPPU 10% and lifting lockbox revenue 20% through targeted economy and itemization design
- Shipped the Daisy Cutter, a guided rocket launcher delivered as a limited-time promotional pack item, then partnered with Business Intelligence to validate sales performance post-launch

Senior Game Designer II (*Player Economy, Crafting, and Content*)

Jun 2010 — Feb 2016

Trion Worlds, Inc. - *RIFT*

- Designed and monetized the Dimensions housing system end-to-end, owning item creation, rare chase material design, lockbox integration, and Zen store pricing across the full housing economy, growing housing-related revenue 10x
- Evolved the crafting system across Storm Legion and Nightmare Tide expansions, deepening its role from basic gear production into a central endgame progression layer through planar material integration, Grandmaster tiers, and Runecrafting overhauls
- Designed the RIFT FTUE, teaching dynamic world systems through live spectacle rather than static explanation and contributing to RIFT's strong critical reception at launch
- Authored the Exuvia of Khargroth, a systemic world escalation boss emerging from player-driven Death planar invasion chains, shipped alongside 100+ pieces of scripted player content
- Mentored designers throughout the project and served as a senior voice across content, systems, and live-service direction

Early Career Experience (*Multi-IP Content, Systems, and Cinematics*)

1998 — 2010

Cryptic Studios / Sony Online Entertainment / The 3DO Company

- Directed the Star Trek Online launch cinematic in-engine with original voice performance by the late Leonard Nimoy
- Designed and shipped the Nemesis System for Champions Online, a personalized antagonist framework that became a flagship feature at launch, alongside the Champions Online FTUE
- Owned mission and content design across five EverQuest II expansions including Desert of Flames, Kingdom of Sky, and Echoes of Faydwer, alongside the Assassin epic quest line
- Delivered 20+ scripted quest lines and 7 raids for Star Trek Online including ground and space mission content
- Shipped on console action-adventure and shoot 'em up titles (GoDai: Elemental Force, Army Men: Green Rogue) at The 3DO Company

Skills

Design Leadership and Direction

- Creative Vision & Franchise Direction
- Design Strategy & Quality Bars
- Team Leadership & Mentorship
- Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration
- Stakeholder Communication

Gameplay, Systems and Narrative

- Core Gameplay Loops & Systems
- Progression & Live-Service Systems
- Narrative Structure & Frameworks
- Mission, Encounter, & Pacing
- Narrative & Gameplay Integration

Studio Operations and Processes

- Content Pipeline & Tooling
- Workflow & Team Velocity
- Rapid Prototyping & Iteration
- Design Standards & Documentation
- Hiring & Talent Development

Tools

Engines and Scripting

- Unreal Engine 5
- Blueprints
- C#
- Lua

Production and Workflow

- Perforce
- Jira
- Confluence

Design and Visualization

- Miro
- Visio
- Draw.io
- Sora

Personal interests include high-performance driving, motorsports, snorkeling, and sport fishing