



ONE LAST APOCALYPSE

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[internal](#)

Developed by Daniel Flood and Others...

Not a zombie apocalypse; that is officially cliché. This will be a community engagement and development process. It will run 18-36 hours. It will have educational outcomes built into the experience. It will run in December 2017. It will be the version of the major project we couldn't deliver. It will be a response to space and assault/challenge the perception of The Edge space. It needs to take in all that we've learned about running events of this nature and activate all the gear we have. It needs to start early next year and get budgeted fully before things start to be built.

BACKGROUND

The Edge has delivered three LARP/ARG events which were named the Zombie Climate Apocalypse. First delivered as a part of the Future Cities Festival program in 2011. This was written and produced by Daniel Flood with help from Mick Byrne and Matt Fallon. Subsequently two further events were delivered, written and developed by community members in collaboration with Deb Polson and Daniel Flood with a bucket load of help from Mick Byrne. These events were focused on game design for purpose, with hard and soft skill learning outcomes built into them. The community members that developed the game also worked with The Edge programming team to manage the delivery of the events. They were a bit rubbish in the cleanup. Community members were invited to apply to be players or volunteer to be zombies. The events ran @ 36 hours, with players camping on the roof in tents. Over the time they were presented with a variety of puzzle challenges, narrative events and Nerf Gun battles with the hordes and other adversaries. The events were received well by the community members involved in the development and those involved in the playing. They were run on the cheap, which each event costing @ \$5000 in materials, equipment and contractors. Staffing cost was high, as working with the community was intensive in the lead up and execution. The Edge stopped delivering these events as companies across Australia started to deliver these kinds of events commercially. One company went so far as the rip off the custom logo that The Edge design team put together to market the event.

WHY NOW?

While we did a lot of work to develop an interesting event, when the third was delivered it felt like - to Mick and Daniel - that there was still something to be done in that space. We stepped away as the market crowded in and we had a less than amicable split with one of our contractors in this space. Now these kinds of events are turning up everywhere (perfect example is the explosion in Escape Room projects) and other matters that have arisen with SLQ, it seems a fitting time to revisit this kind of a project one last time, as a nostalgic return to an old platform we have something to contribute to now that the time has passed, we've gotten older and little wiser (a little bit like [T2 Trainspotting](#)).

WHOSE JOB IS IT?

Primarily Daniel and Mick's with a big assist from the Program Support Officer. It will end up dragging the entire team in and if I can find the funding/partner a contractor to assist in the delivery. The overall project will have a focus on activating the community to write, develop and deliver the program. We will have a more than usual active involvement in the process. We will be partnering with anyone that would like to collaborate with us on it. Essentially, people will be as involved as they need to be to make it a viable project and baulking will not be an option.

BUT DANIEL, WHY NOT ZOMBIES? THEY'RE STILL COOL... RIGHT?

Yes, zombies are still cool but kids, they ain't what they used to be. When we did our first Zombie Apocalypse The Walking Dead was yet to screen in Australia (it was starting to gather momentum in the USA. Both Matt Fallon and I had gotten a hold of it through various methods; I'd imported my copy from the USA on BluRay) and I (with the crew from Fade In Productions) had just won the People's Choice Award at the MTV Project180 event for 15:52 - a pitch for a zombie apocalypse tv series set fifteen years after the apocalypse in the Australian desert. If you haven't already, you can see the [trailer here](#). It still doesn't suck much to my surprise and I need to do something with that idea at some point...

Since then there has been a deluge of zombie related media, games and events on this nature (if you haven't already, the only ones I recommend are [iZombie](#) and [Archie Afterlife](#), both of which are really quite awesome). A certain cultural venue in Queensland is looking to deliver an zombie event in the next twelve months. See [this article](#) where George R Romero blames the destruction of the zombie genre on Brad Pitt's cinema adaptation of World War Z. I thought it was the deluge of crap film and television, but maybe I'm wrong. I liked the movie of World War Z but it has nothing on the [book](#).

There are other kinds of apocalypses and apocalyptic narratives; Mad Max, The Seventh Seal, War of the Worlds, Day of the Triffids, When The Wind Blow, Fahrenheit 451, The Exorcist, 1984, Brave New World, The Road (plus everything else Cormac McCarthy has ever written; All the Pretty Horses and No Country for Old Men are amongst the great apocalyptic texts for my money). We can avoid being cliché and as Monty Python would say; *now for something completely different*.

Long and short of it; zombies are still cool but we can do better.

DOES THIS CONNECT WITH THE SIGNATURE PROGRAM?

It could and that is a conversation for The Edge programming team to have in the immediate future. While I do not want to overtly impose of the community engaging with this project, it is probably a good idea. A lot of apocalyptic science fiction deals with identity at it's core; lack of, loss of, erosion of etc. So long as it isn't zombies.

BOOK LINKS

There are a bunch of books linked off of this page. They're Daniel's personal copies and only intended for use by internal team. Once/if this site goes live to the world (as we hope it does) these links will need to be changed to 'where-to-buy' links.

THE PROCESS

As this is primarily a process driven project with the community, some kind of structure will need to be established. Last time the programs were developed in an organic fashion that proved ultimately unwieldy to properly deliver, control or evaluate. This is not to say that the events were badly managed or unsafe in any way; far from it. Now we look at them and realise they could be much better handled.

The below structure is a modular approach to development. It sets a more leisurely pace (the previous events were developed - woe to go - in a matter of weeks, not months) of ten months, with time taken to explore the concepts and ideas fully, ensuring we have a solid and manageable idea to play with.

Each of these processes allows for entry and exit from the project. Community are welcome to engage with the project over the entire run or not. If in the end it is The Edge programming team running the actual event; so be it. We'll not have done our jobs properly as it is an awesome idea but that is the way these things work sometimes.

Each of the below modules will be broken down into discreet sessions with plans and materials (where possible) provided or points towards where they need to be purchased. We will try and avoid this wherever possible but sometimes the best options cost twenty dollars. From an external's perspective playing, they can simply ignore a given session and where feasible we will provide alternative options/session plans.

BUT DANIEL, ISN'T THIS A LOT OF WORK?

Yes, but this *is the work*. The intention is not to cut corners, to be far enough ahead of the process that we can avoid desperation and falling behind with the work.

APOCALYPSE BOOKCLUB

A bi-weekly bookclub looking at and discussing apocalyptic texts in relation to the project. Why? 'Cause we're a library and it's cool. Like bow ties.

APOCALYPSE MACHINE

This title is ripped from a really awesome table top gaming book called [Chuthulu Apocalypse](#). The core conceit is a central set of game rules that allow you to design and develop a unique post (or mid) apocalyptic world for the players to engage in. I like the idea as it suggests a machine you feed ideas

into and out they come; pre-packaged apocalypses :). If anyone is interested, I can loan you a copy to look at but figure that might be a touch too nerdy for most people reading this,

We're going to develop a series of workshops and gaming opportunities for the community to engage with. The purpose is to develop an understanding of apocalyptic gaming - what is fun about that space. This would include sessions of games like [The Quiet Year](#), [Apocalypse World](#), [Fiasco](#), a session out at Escape Hunt and other opportunities as they arise.

The focus of these sessions on critical thought and taking the processes apart. It will have a focus on building community, there will be food and we'll take the opportunity to broaden out the communities we generally engage with. I see this running for a couple of months, one night a week or fortnight; whatever we feel is achievable. We will look to engage with groups like League of Extraordinary Gamers, Go Play etc. We will engage with universities and high schools. We will engage with some of the designers of interesting games. These workshops won't have anything to do with game design; that's another process we'll call Apocalypse Thinking.

SESSION ONE: APOCALYPSE MACHINE

Conversation about Apocalypses. Some facilitated conversation, a really short game of some description. A setting of the ground rules around what this process is looking to develop. It really is an introduction and launch of the project, so some deeper thought would need to be had around what it might look like.

SESSION TWO: THE QUIET YEAR

The Quiet Year is a strange board game crossed with a story game where the players design a post-apocalyptic settlement over a series of turns. Each players turn is informed by the turn of a playing card that introduces some complication to the narrative. The game is broken into four phases; Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. When the King of Spades is turned in the Winter Deck, the Frost Shepherds arrive and the game is over.

The game takes 3-4 hours to play (depending on how quickly the King of Spades card is turned) including instructions on how to play. The play instructions are included in the text of the rules book and are handled by one of the players (probably the one who know's the rules best). Ideally we would have several tables of this game running at the same time to maximise involvement. This will require several staff to be involved and having played the game at some point.

Reason for this game, it is an example of a shared story game that doesn't get bogged down with characters. Players work towards a common goal and the menace it not clearly defined. It is also interesting mechanically, which can't be said for all games. Above all else, it's a fun game to play!

At the end of the session there will be a facilitated conversation about the game and what to take away from the playing.

APOCALYPSE THINKING

The initial design process will take at least three months. It will focus on prototyping and testing ideas that may or may not be useful in the grand scheme of the project but might be cool. The central idea with this part of the process is to get people thinking about what is possible without getting caught up in it having to work immediately. It gives room for mistakes to be made, ideas discarded and progressing through the crap to find the interesting work underneath.

Wherever there is an opportunity to test, we will test in public and take feedback wherever we can. Testing and reiteration and applying design thinking principles wherever possible to the development of these new ideas. Adam - the new manager of APDL starting in January - is a huge design thinking person and will be a great resource in this situation. The aim of this process is not to come up with the final design process. That comes out of the Apocalypse Design process discussed below.

The aim with this is to develop a better understanding of how this process might work, how it will work and lay the ground work to undertake the design process. There will be elements and bits that come out of this process that will translate into design. This process can be undertaken in multiple places with a number of different groups of people as it is not a design process so to speak.

There will be the opportunity for some of the content developed as a part of this process to be publicly exhibited/presented at the end of the financial year. We wouldn't look at this costing us any money.

APOCALYPSE DESIGN

Everything the community learning in the Apocalypse Thinking process plugs into the Apocalypse Design process. This will see the development of a full-fledged game design document (akin to a LARP script) that will form the basis of the event. This will take the form of a wiki and will be developed with the community. This process will take four months and will involve a lot of testing and retesting. Nothing lands in the final product unless it is right and as we have a long runway with limited commercial imperatives we can avoid the usual pitfalls.

Like the other apocalypse events, I don't see it costing more than \$5-8000 dollars to deliver. I also might be very wrong and we have to go out and find money :) I also see this document being finished a full two months prior to the event actually happening so we can deliver it clear of any real developmental processes (I think that makes sense). This is acknowledging that there will be things that need changing right up until delivery but that the foundations are solid.

APOCALYPSE DOCS

Goes without saying, we will be documenting everything from a back and front of house perspective. We will be providing the how to plan to the communities we engage with in real time, which is to say we deliver the howto document the week after we deliver a process so the people following at home can play along also. This will take some commitment.

APOCALYPSE MANAGEMENT

We will be running an event management training process that will see community deliver this event to the public playing. The learnings will be planned and staged as required, rather than organic and seemingly random (like the zombies was). We will outdo the better attempts around town to achieve this. Because we're awesome.

APOCALYPSE REGIONS

This project is not intended to be delivered only at The Edge. We will look to engage with regional partners to deliver satellite events. After all, Apocalypses are not the sole domain of urban communities. We will explore how these regional events plug into the main event and each other to create a broader story. We would look to bring leaders from these communities into The Edge to provide training and support to deliver their event. If there was a regional centre that was looking to run a large event we might send someone up there to help them. Maybe a community member...

APOCALYPSE LEARNING

A key outcome for this project is to embed learning outcomes/modules into the project. These outcomes are skinned with the game framework. These learning outcomes (number to be determined) will be designed by the community engaging in the design process.

APOCALYPSE WEEKEND

It will happen and it will be awesome. It will be the best thing we've ever done. It will be December 2016 and it will put other people's work to shame. Below are notes about 'possible' events within the event. Nothing is set in stone, it's all just the things that come to be surface as the thinking happens and might make a good fit. Some of the events that take place in the program will have external producers and sit to the side of the main game from a design perspective. These will be produced by some of our favourite people.

APOCALYPSE BALL

It all come to a major event held in the auditorium. Idea has come from Mandi McIntyre, so credit and probably producing will go to here. As a part of the weekend there would be a formal event that works into the themes of the show. This will include guests from outside of the game event and will be a large scale event for The Edge's community and supporters. More about this will either be found elsewhere or here at a later date.

APOCALYPSE RESOURCES

[project_plans](#)

Nordic LARP

[Larps From The Factory](#) is a collection of LARP scripts from a Norwegian research project. It is accompanied by the [LARP Factory website](#). This is Daniel's personal copy and not intended for distribution.

[NordicLARP.org](#) is a site outlining what Nordic LARP actually is.

Critical Success Factors

[Which of the critical success factors does this project target? For more details see](#)

SLQ-Strategic-Plan-2016-20

Enable Access

- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10] Provide life skills and early childhood literacy programs
- Increase free access to digital content
- Strengthen Queensland library infrastructure and discovery platforms

Engage Community

- Grow the State's historical collection of Queensland culture and heritage
- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10] Engage with communities of interest through dedicated centres of engagement
- Facilitate the community's use of and interaction with content

Build Capability

- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10] Build capacity within our communities of interest
- Generate new revenue sources
- Position our workforce for the future

Delivering of The Edge Promises

Aside from the SLQ Strategic Plan, there is The Edge's commitments to the community and the lens we look at it through. Here are a few more check boxes for you to answer

This empowers creative experimentation across...

- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Art?
- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Science?
- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Technology?
- Enterprise?

It will inspire...

- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Whimsy?
- Nostalgia?
- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Curiosity?
- [✓ daniel, 2016-11-10]Awe?

baker_-_apocalypse_world_-_printer.pdf