Bill Trost.

Game Designer | Level Design | Systems | Scripting

San Diego, CA | Open to Relocation | btrost@gmail.com | linkedin.com/in/btrost | billtrost.com

SUMMARY

Game designer for 30 years. Co-created *EverQuest* and the world of Norrath; designed its faction system and built many of its cities and dungeons. Conceived and led *Defiance*, a game and Syfy TV series in one world. Sole designer on *Koi Pond*, the #1 paid app on the App Store in 2008. In 2026, built and shipped *Direwood* solo in UEFN, from concept to launch in five months.

RECENT WORK

grimbrim • *Solo Developer* 2023 – Present

- Currently building *Lifeline*, a 4x4x4x4 territory-control CTF in UEFN, and *Throng*, an online multiplayer game in three.js.
- Designed, built, and shipped *Direwood* (UEFN, July 2026), a proximity-chat folk horror social experience for 3–13 players. Island code 7008-1718-4516. Press kit: billtrost.com/grimbrim/DIREWOOD
- Wrote all gameplay systems in Verse: a four-act structure, a symbol cypher, randomized offerings, and an asymmetric PvP finale.
- Handled the level design, lighting, and atmosphere; retextured and integrated third-party assets; mixed all audio; cut the trailers.
- Built and shipped *Pupper*, a PICO-8 roguelike in Lua (Nov 2023).

Unannounced Project • *Contract Designer* Aug 2026 – Present

- Implementing gameplay and narrative content on a three-person team.
- Building AI tools for narrative and mechanics design.

EXPERIENCE

Intrepid Studios • *Director of Design* 2023 – Feb 2026

- Worked hands-on in UE5 on terrain, landscape, foliage, and set dressing to support narrative flow.
- Led design across systems, narrative, UX, and combat on *Ashes of Creation*.
- Redesigned the first-time user experience and authored onboarding quests to teach complex systems.

Amazon Games San Diego • *Creative Director / Founding Member* 2016 – 2023

- Wrote the design doc for, pitched, and designed the player faction system for *New World*.
- Designed and implemented *New World*'s narrative systems and tools, and built the narrative team.
- Led two character-driven combat prototypes in Lumberyard and UE4, and R&D into AI-generated voiceover.

The Blimp Pilots • *Co-Founder / Sole Designer* 2008 – 2015

- Designed *Koi Pond*, the #1 paid app on the App Store in 2008.
- Designed *Distant Shore*: anonymous social game built around messages in bottles. *Elephant Odyssey*: built with the San Diego Zoo.
- The studio was named one of Entrepreneur's Top 100 Companies to Watch (Mobile) in 2009.

Trion Worlds San Diego • *Creative Lead / Founding Member (Defiance)* 2007 – 2013

- Created the *Defiance* IP and conceived it as a game and Syfy TV series sharing one world.
- Pitched it to Syfy/NBCUniversal, then led creative in partnership with the show's writers/producers to develop the game and series.
- Hands-on designer for the game's narrative, systems, and 3Cs through a simultaneous PC, Xbox 360, and PS3 launch.

Sony Online Entertainment / Verant Interactive • *Co-Creator / Lead Designer (EverQuest)* 1996 – 2007

- Started pre-greenlight building 3D environments and UI art; hired as an artist, then created the world of Norrath: the pantheon, cosmology, factions, and the atlas that became part of the design doc.
- Designed the faction system, so every group in the world had its own agenda and alliances and reacted to what players did.
- Formed and trained the world-building team. Built Qeynos as their model, then cities and dungeons including Cabilis, Najena, Kedge Keep, and Splitpaw: layout, geometry, NPCs, quests, and encounters. Built the offline tutorial zone.
- Led design on the *Kunark* and *Velious* expansions and foundational design for *EverQuest II*.
- Co-created *Untold Legends* (PSP launch title, Greatest Hits) and its sequel; each shipped by a small team in under a year.

TOOLS & RECOGNITION

UEFN/Verse • UE4/UE5 • Blueprints • Lumberyard • Proprietary Engines/Scripting • Claude Code/Codex • three.js • Lua • JSON • Excel

EverQuest: Game Developers Choice Online Awards Hall of Fame 2011, GameSpot GOTY 1999, AIAS Online GOTY 2000 and 2001 (*Kunark*)
Defiance: MMORPG.com Most Innovative MMO 2013 • Personal: Next Generation Hot 100 Developers 2006