



## The Value of Hiring a Professional Screenwriter for a Video Game

WGC members are nationally and internationally credited professional writers with experience in a broad range of genre formats. This is where you find the experts at crafting stories - and a compelling **story** is the foundation of most compelling entertainment.

One of the key things we've learned over the last years is that, when it comes to affiliated digital content, the **earlier the writer is involved** in the process, the better it is for the final product.

Only the screenwriter starts with a blank page. And through imagination and skill, the screenwriter creates the blueprint that is the foundation of every audio-visual work. **The scripts that screenwriters create are the launch point of productions** that employ thousands of people and pump billions into the Canadian economy.

Professional screenwriters **have the awards to back their work up**. From the Geminis to the Youth Media Awards, the Rockie Awards (Banff New World Media Festival) to the Webbies, from the Bell New Media Fund to the Shaw Rocket Prize, WGC members have been nominated and won hundreds of awards for their writing.

A professional screenwriter has experience creating rounded characters and full narrative arcs. Including a writer at the beginning of the creative process ensures that **the game's script will be fulfilling, and satisfying for the player**.

Professional screenwriters are accustomed to **creating the narrative momentum** that compels the player to stick with the game, to "turn the page," and not "switch off" and "flip channels."

If you're thinking of creating a transmedia property, professional screenwriters also **have the skill to create a multi-layered multi-platform narrative** that stretches the property from the video game platform into flash games, webseries, feature films, TV shows, and more!

Professionals are used to working **within a timeline and to a deadline**.

Professional screenwriters have **experience writing in other people's worlds** - especially in television. They are practiced in the art of writing within an established universe, with pre-created characters, and in fleshing out or adding to existing properties.

Screenwriters are also **accustomed to the collaborative process**, and have experience working with other members of a production team to create a unified vision, and working with other talented creative to bring their separate skills together for a unified project. They are professional team players.

**Screenwriters are adaptable.** They are used to switching between genres, lengths, formats, and platforms. They may work on a police procedural one week, a comedy or a children's drama the next, and then a blockbuster science fiction property after that. No matter the genre, you'll be getting an experienced writer with the chops to handle any kind of storytelling your property may require.

### **What Kind of Video Game Writing Do Screenwriters Do?**

Generally, video game writing jobs fall under **three categories**:

#### **The Lead or Narrative Designer**

*analogous to a television program's "Showrunner"*

- Usually on the game for several years
- Develops the initial story (alone or with the producers/art or game designers)
- Builds the Bible
- Creates the pitch, treatment, world-building, and game objectives (which may have no or disparate titles in gaming studios)
- May write some key scenes, missions, events, or cinematics
- Oversees the episode/mission writers
- May also be the game designer
- Often a salaried position or company employee

#### **Episodic Writers**

- Writes episodes/missions/events under the direction of the Narrative Designer or Producer
- Usually a freelancer
- Is sometimes a coder/artist/intern who wants to try his/her hand at writing

#### **Overwriter**

- A writer hired to write a story (narrative and dialogue) onto a game that is already mostly made, or to create a storyline for a game based on another IP.