Getting Started with Inform 7

PART FIVE: Finishing Touches

Prologues, formatting, bibliographic information, scoring, and releasing the final work.

PROLOGUES (The When Play Begins Rule)

The question of what the player should be doing and why they are doing it in your game is one that is often asked. Context, goals, and perhaps some backstory may need to be provided to the player in order for them to be clear about what the game/story is about and what they need to be doing.

One of the ways to provide this information is through what I will call a prologue: a short piece of text that puts everything into some context before play begins. Here is an example of this:

```
In this short game, you will be rewarded 1 point for every new
room that you enter. Type the word SCORE at anytime to assess
your score.

Once you have visited each and every room, you will be
notified that you have successfully completed the game.


Setting Up Rooms
An Interactive Fiction by John Timmons
Release 1 / Serial number 080318 / Inform 7 build 5J39 (I6/
v6.31 lib 6/11N) SD

Foyer
You see a way to the southeast and stairs leading up.

>
```

Here you can see two paragraphs of text prior to the title of the game and the beginning of play. In this particular example, it explains what will happen, how to track what happens, the goal of play, and how the game will be finished. This gives the player some context of what they need to do and what the goal is.

Here is how we do this:

```
When play begins:
    say "In this short game, you will be rewarded 1 point for
every new room that you enter. Type the word SCORE at anytime
to assess your score.[paragraph break]Once you have visited
each and every room, you will be notified that you have
successfully completed the game.[paragraph break]"

The Foyer is a room. "You see a way to the southeast and
stairs leading up."
```

At the beginning of your code, include the 'when play begins' rule by simply typing 'when play begins' followed by a colon. Then, on the next line, type 'say" followed by the text you wish the player to see enclosed in double quotations. Pretty simple.

FORMATTING

You may have noticed that the text within the double quotations also includes some additional information.

Note two things: the formatting command must be enclosed within square brackets and that this itself is included at the proper place in the text within the double quotations.

Here are a few formatting commands to be aware of:

- `[line break]` - creates a single-spaced line break
- `[paragraph break]` - creates a double-spaced line break
- `[italic type]` - changes the text to italicized text
- `[roman type]` - usually used to end italicized text and return text to normal
- To create quotations marks within the text, use single quotes (')

Look carefully at the following example which utilizes all of the above commands:

```
When play begins:
  say "There are three goals in this game:[paragraph break]
  1. Visit every room [line break]
  2. Find the bluebird [line break]
  3. Get the bluebird to speak to the politician [paragraph
break]
  And remember the words of the blue-eyed man: [paragraph
break]
  [italic type]'No one is alone who has a bird of blue.' [roman
type][paragraph break]"

The Foyer is a room. "North leads to a large hallway."
```

This will produce the following:

```
There are three goals in this game:

 1. Visit every room
 2. Find the bluebird
 3. Get the bluebird to speak to the politician

 And remember the words of the blue-eyed man:

 "No one is alone who has a bird of blue."


Large Spaces
An Interactive Fiction by John Timmons
Release 1 / Serial number 080318 / Inform 7 build 5J39 (I6/
v6.31 lib 6/11N) SD

Foyer
North leads to a large hallway.

>
```

SCORING
By default, Inform assumes you will be using some form of scoring system.

Although not totally necessary, include the following code at the beginning of your code if you are not using any scoring:

```
Use no scoring.
```

Interested in using scoring? Then read on.

First determine what the maximum score a player could achieve in your game. Let us say that the maximum score is 100. Then include this at the beginning of your code:

```
The maximum score is 100.
```

To award the player points do one of these commands:

`Award 10 points.` - increases the player's score by 10 points
`Award -10 points.` - deducts the player's score by 10 points.

Usually we implement the award command with an after rule:

```
After inserting the apple into the fruit bowl:
  award 10 points.
```

This will produce the following during play:

```
>put apple in bowl
You put the apple into the fruit bowl.

[Your score has just gone up by ten points.]
```

The player can check the status of their score at anytime by typing 'score'.

```
>score
You have so far scored 0 out of a possible 100, in 1 turn.
```

Here is how the above example will look in play:

```
>score
You have so far scored 0 out of a possible 100, in 2 turns.

>put apple in bowl
You put the apple into the fruit bowl.

[Your score has just gone up by ten points.]

>score
You have so far scored 10 out of a possible 100, in 3 turns.

>
```

The Every Turn Rule

Now, how do we know when the player has reached 100 points? And then what happens next?

To monitor the status of the score throughout the game we use the 'every turn' rule:

```
Every turn:
  if score is 100 then end the game saying "Congratulations
you have achieved a perfect score!".
```

This rule checks the score on each and every turn. Then, if the score is equal to the maximum score (in this case, 100) the game ends with a custom message.

Here is how it will look in play:

```
>put apple in bowl
You put the apple into the fruit bowl.



    *** Congratulations you have achieved a perfect score! ***


In that game you scored 100 out of a possible 100, in 20
turns.

Would you like to RESTART, RESTORE a saved game or QUIT?
>
```

If you have paying attention, you may have realized that there is a big problem here. The player is able to repeat putting that apple into the fruit bowl and receive 10 points each time. Not the effect we're looking for.

Here is how we prevent the player from doing that:

```
After inserting the apple into the fruit bowl for the first
time:
  award 10 points.
```

The inclusion of the phrase 'for the first time' in the after rule will award points only if this is the first time the player has completed the action.

Here is the complete code for this scoring example:

```
The maximum score is 100.

Every turn:
  if score is 100 then end the game saying "Congratulations
you have achieved a perfect score!".

The Foyer is a room. "North leads to a large hallway."

An apple is in the Foyer. It is edible. The description is
"This is a delicious-looking fresh apple. Your mouth waters at
the sight of it."

A fruit bowl is a container in the Foyer. The description is
"This is an antique dish that Grammy usually has filled with
fresh fruit."

After inserting the apple into the fruit bowl for the first
time:
 award 10 points.
```

For more information about scoring refer to **Chapter 9.2 Scoring** in the Inform 7 documentation.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Inform 7 works can contain more information about a game than just a title and author.

Normally our code will start out as this:

```
"Large Spaces" by John Timmons

The Foyer is a room. "North leads to large hallway."
```

This will produce the following when play begins:

```
Large Spaces
An Interactive Fiction by John Timmons
Release 1 / Serial number 080318 / Inform 7 build 5J39 (I6/
v6.31 lib 6/11N) SD

Foyer
North leads to large hallway.

>
```

- The first line in bold is the story title.
- The second line holds a generic story headline followed by the author's name.
- The third line displays the release number, followed by the serial number (which is simply the date the source was compiled in the format YYMMDD), then information of what version of Inform was used to compile the game.

You can change the story headline and the release number if you wish by doing the following:

```
"Large Spaces" by John Timmons

The story headline is "A Journey Through Immense Rooms".
The release number is 3.

The Foyer is a room. "North leads to large hallway."
```

This will now produce the following when play begins:

```
Large Spaces
A Journey Through Immense Rooms by John Timmons
Release 3 / Serial number 080318 / Inform 7 build 5J39 (I6/
v6.31 lib 6/11N) SD

The Foyer
North leads to large hallway.

>
```

For more information, refer to **Chapter 24.2 Bibliographic data** in the Inform 7 documentation for further information.

RELEASING YOUR GAME (Publishing)
Until now, you have been building, testing, debugging, and playing your game within the Inform 7 authoring environment. In order to allow others to play your work of IF you must release it as a standalone file. Then it can be played by others provided they have one of the free interpreters installed on their system.

Here is how we release a game:

Click the release button: 

Your game will compile and ask you for a filename and location to save it. This will create a file with an extension of '.zblorb' and this is the file you can share with friends so they can be played.

In order to play the game file, a free interpreter will be needed:

For Windows users, download and install WinFrotz
http://freespace.virgin.net/davidk.kinder/frotz.html

For Mac users, download and install Spatterlight
http://ccxvii.net/spatterlight/

or

For Mac users, download and install Zoom for Mac OS
http://www.logicalshift.demon.co.uk/mac/zoom.html

Refer to **Chapter 22.8 The Release button** in the Inform 7 documentation for further information.