

LEADING IF DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

Twine 2 (Choice)

Twine is arguably the most accessible application with high potential if the creator is willing to dig deep into it. It has its own easy-to-use language(s) that makes creation of the story fairly simple but allows the use of HTML, CSS, and Javascript that broaden the possibilities and difficulty significantly. Though the application can be used within the online website, all content is saved locally only.

Inform 7 (Parser)

Inform 7 has been around for a long time in software years (circa 1993) and is the head honcho of parser game development. If you are looking to create your own parser game, Inform is a great place to start.

TADS 3 (Parser)

Text Adventure Development System, or TADS, has been around for about as long as Inform and is a popular alternative. Many Parser developers have familiarity with one or the other. TADS has a bit steeper learning curve than Inform.

Honorable Mention Dev Tools

Quest or Squiffy (Parser or Choice)

The website textadventures.co.uk has two tools available for interactive fiction development: Quest and Squiffy. Quest is similar to Inform and TADS for creating parser games. Squiffy is similar to Twine for creating choice-based games, but with a less streamlined interface and a smaller community.

ChoiceScript (Choice)

Choice of Games LLC sells games, but it also offers ChoiceScript for free. See choiceofgames.com/make-your-own-games/choicescript-intro.

ADRIFT (Parser)

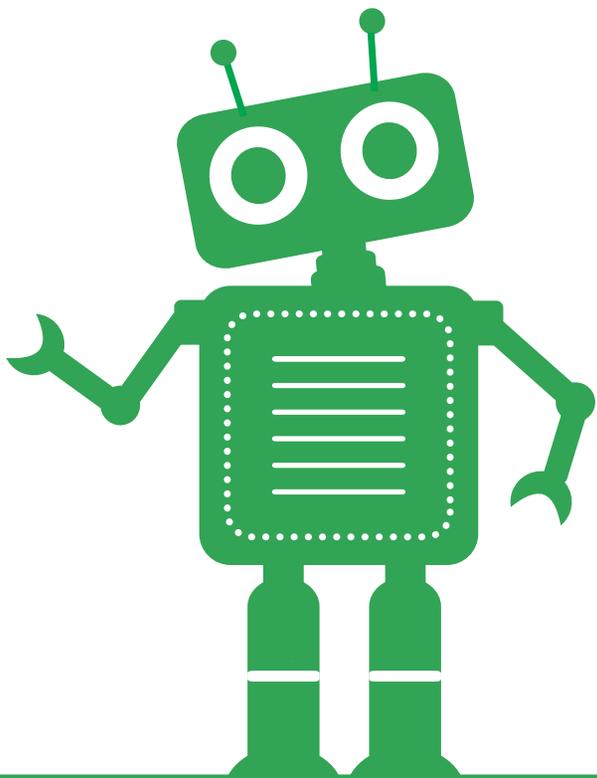
Promotes itself as the lightest “programming required” parser development software available. There have been a few success stories made with this tool.



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BASICS

Interactive Fiction

WHAT IS INTERACTIVE FICTION?

Interactive fiction, or IF for short, is a broad term that may be used to describe a wide array of formats. Any video game that includes significant narrative is a type of interactive fiction. Visual novels, a genre of video games that tend to be dialogue driven with emotional still pictures of the characters, are yet another form. This guide covers two specific types of interactive fiction: parser and choice-based. Both are usually text-based, both have been around for decades, and both are making a big comeback.

IF Technology Foundation (iftechfoundation.org)

An organization that strives to maintain and continue to develop interactive fiction as an art form. You will likely notice IF Tech Foundation's presence on many of the IF websites out there.

Interactive Fiction Competition (ifcomp.org)

The Interactive Fiction Competition has been held annually since 1995. Those wishing to join must declare their entry by June 1st. The results are announced on November 15th.

Interactive Fiction Database (ifdb.tads.org)

Shares free choice and parser based games, competitions, clubs, etc. with the IF community.

Interactive Fiction Archive (ifarchive.org)

A historical archive of the classics as well as newer materials that are added from year to year, including entires to the annual Interactive Fiction Competition since 1995.

Planet Interactive Fiction (planet-if.com)

A popular blogsite for IF games.

PARSER-BASED INTERACTIVE FICTION

Parser is a style of interactive fiction in which the user types commands in natural language to interact with the game. For example, you can enter a room and look around and the game will describe what you see in text. You look more closely at something specific, like an object in the room. The game tells you what it is. You decide to take, push, kick, open, stab, etc., whatever that item is. The game tells you what happens. You react to the event and move from room to room, exploring the world in text.

```
>enter building
```

Inside building

You are inside a building, a well house for a large spring.

There are some keys on the ground here.

There is tasty food here.

There is a shiny brass lamp nearby.

There is an empty bottle here.

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>take keys  
Taken.
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—Adventure (1976)

Notable Parser IF Titles

Adventure by William Crowther and Donald Woods
“The original. What more can be said?” —Carl Muckenhaupt, Interactive Fiction Database (IFDB)

Counterfeit Monkey by Emily Short
“Good luck getting off the island.” —IFDB

Zozzled by Steph Cherrywell
“Get splifficated on a snootful of ectoplasm in this paranormal puzzle comedy.” —IFDB

Alias 'The Magpie' by J. J. Guest
“Sir Rodney Playfair, gentleman thief, has a simple plan...” —IFDB

Anchorhead by Michael Gentry
“Uncover the roots of a horrific conspiracy inspired by the works of H. P. Lovecraft.” —IFDB

CHOICE-BASED INTERACTIVE FICTION

Choice games are very similar to gamebooks, or books that let the reader choose a path through the story as they read it. A notable series of gamebooks is the Choose Your Own Adventure series. A narrative is displayed and the user is given a set of choices to make. Each choice then leads to a different plot path. The biggest difference between a physical gamebook and a digital choice-based story is that a physical book can only be so thick, while a digital story has virtually no limit.

Look alive, kids.

Say hello to your new friend.

The shadows start to take shape, stirring from sleep, untangling themselves from ragged blankets on the floor. They're all around your age.

LOOK AT THE MAN | LOOK AT THE CHILDREN

—Bogeyman (2018)

Notable Choice IF Titles

A Study in Steampunk by Heather Albano (\$3.99)
“Steam-powered mechs meet forbidden sorcery!” —IFDB

Choice of the Dragon by Dan Fabulich and Adam Strong-Morse
“Play as a fire-breathing dragon who sleeps on gold and kidnaps princesses for fun!” —IFDB

Creatures Such As We by Lynnea Glasser
“A dating sim about how humanity connects through art, even out in the vastness of space.” —IFDB

Bogeyman by Elizabeth Smyth
“You can go home when you learn to be good.” —IFDB

Coming Out Simulator 2014, by Nicky Case (18+)
“This is probably the most fun I've had with a choice-based game.” —Hanon Ondricek, IFDB