A Scientific Assessment of the Validity and Value of Metacritic

Start Time: 2013-03-27 12:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-27 12:55:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Adams Greenwood-Ericksen(Full Sail University)
Room: Overlook 2, 2nd Fl, West Hall
Format: Poster
Track(s): Business, Marketing & Management
Eligible Passes: Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Student Expo Pass, Main Conference Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Expo Pass, Audio Pass, All Access Pass
Description:
Over the last decade Metacritic has become an important but controversial fixture in the industry. In this poster session, a statistical assessment of the validity and financial impact of the influential metareview site will be presented. Metacritic's formula will be explained and a method for modeling and predicting the weights Metacritic staff assign to various publications will be presented and discussed.
Takeaway:
Attendees will be presented with an analysis of the statistical relationship between sales and metascores. They will learn how Metacritic scores are constructed and how to model these metascores for specific games using publicly available information.
Intended Audience:
Anyone seeking a deeper understanding of how Metacritic works could benefit from this session including marketing and public relations specialists, indie developers, studio and publisher executives, and game user researchers. No special knowledge is necessary to understand the material which will be presented.

#1ReasonToBe

Start Time: 2013-03-27 15:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-27 16:30:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Brenda Romero(UC Santa Cruz), Robin Hunicke(Funomena), Elizabeth Sampat(Storm8), Mattie Brice(San Francisco State University), Leigh Alexander(Gamasutra), Kim McAuliffe(Microsoft Studios)
Room: 135, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Advocacy
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Inspired by the #1ReasonWhy and #1ReasonToBe hashtag discussion, join us for a rapid, fun microtalk-style celebration and exploration of what it means to be a woman in games. Each panelist will share her experience, its highs and lows, and explore a vision for a future industry that is inclusive for all. Panelists include Brenda Romero (Game Designer in Residence, University of California at Santa Cruz), Robin Hunicke (Co-Founder, Funomena!), Leigh Alexander (Editor at Large, Gamasutra), Elizabeth Sampat (Game Designer, Storm 8), Kim McAuliffe (Microsoft Studios) and Mattie Brice (MA Student, Creative Writing, San Francisco State University).
Takeaway:
Attendees will walk away from this celebration of women game developers with a strong sense of what it means to be a woman in games, and what actions we can take to foster more inclusivity in the industry we all love.
Intended Audience:
Women in games, people invested in inclusivity in the gaming industry, and people curious about the experiences of game developers from backgrounds different than their own are all welcome to attend - the only prerequisite is an open mind.

Ahead of the Curve: The SpaceChem Postmortem

Start Time: 2013-03-26 15:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 15:25:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Zach Barth(Zachtronics Industries)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, All Access Pass
Description:

SpaceChem is a design-based puzzle game about fake science and cosmic horror. In this talk, designer Zach Barth explores the differences between SpaceChem and other puzzle games, provides information on how to make your own design-based puzzles, and shows how to build community features around them. The talk includes cautionary tales from the development of SpaceChem regarding appeal, difficulty, and tutorial design. The talk also covers rapid-fire, post-launch insights and sales data.

Takeaway:

Attendees will learn about design-based puzzles and the community features that support them.

An Indie Expedition Through the Jungle of Free-to-play, In-App Purchase, Ad-Supported, and Analytics

Start Time: 2013-03-26 15:35:00

End Time: 2013-03-26 16:00:00

Duration: 25-Minute

Speaker(s): Aaron Isaksen(AppAbove Games LLC)

Room: 2005, West Hall

Format: Lecture

Track(s): Independent Games Summit

Eligible Passes: Independent Games Summit Pass, All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass

Description:

In-App Purchases are well accepted in the mainstream development community, but remain a controversial topic for indies. We can keep our specialness while benefiting from this new business model. The speaker will cover several case studies of how indies have used IAP to reach success and failure, and will analyze what worked and what didn't work. Focusing on practical takeaways, the coverage will include single and dual currencies, free versus pay apps, pricing, and ethics. The talk will discuss best practices for analytics, including how indies can use A/B testing and real-time tracking to improve their performance without damaging their games.

Takeaway:

Attendees will gain a better understanding of how indies can successfully and ethically use In-App Purchases in their games. In addition, attendees will learn how small teams can use analytics to improve their sales performance without offending their customers and peers.

Breaking in to the Game Biz!

Start Time: 2013-03-29 16:00:00

End Time: 2013-03-29 17:00:00

Duration: 60-Minute

Speaker(s): Kate Flack(Ultima Forever), Siobhan Reddy(Media Molecule), Jake Rodkin(The Walking Dead/Telltale Games)

Room: 2005, West Hall

Format: Panel

Track(s): Game Career Seminar

Eligible Passes: Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Student Expo Pass, Main Conference Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Expo Pass, Audio Pass, All Access Pass

Description:

For those interested in entering a larger game company, the prospect can be daunting. Here, we'll focus not on impressing HR reps, but rather the game developers that will actually be hiring you. Our assembled panel of experts, from companies like Telltale Games (The Walking Dead), EA Mythic (Ultima Forever), and Media Molecule (LittleBigPlanet) will share their knowledge, as well as their own unique paths to the industry. This will be largely Q&A, so come with your questions at the ready!

Classic Game Postmortem: X-COM: UFO Defense

Start Time: 2013-03-28 10:00:00

End Time: 2013-03-28 11:00:00

Duration: 60-Minute

Speaker(s): Julian Gollop(Gollop Games)

Room: 2014, West Hall

Format: Lecture

Track(s): Design

Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass

Description:
Firaxis' and 2K Games' recent X-COM: Enemy Unknown is actually a remake of a series that began twenty years ago. It all started in 1994 with MicroProse's UFO: Enemy Unknown, entitled X-COM: UFO Defense in North America, a real-time base management simulation with turn-based tactical combat and an engaging story of alien invasion. The marriage of its distinct Geoscape and Battlescape views represented the game's strategy and battle modes, respectively; and they provided what felt like two different and compelling games in one. In this postmortem, Julian Gollop will lay out the tactics he deployed in directing, co-designing, co-programming, and even co-drawing the first, and often highest regarded, UFO/X-COM entry.

Creating Immersive Narrative Games Without Big Budgets or Resources

Start Time: 2013-03-26 11:50:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 12:15:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Georg Backer(Hotsauce Interactive Ltd.)
Room: 2018, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Game Narrative Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
Creating immersive, interactive story and character driven games always seems to be seen as an expensive and daunting venture, reserved for developers with deep pockets and large resources. But this doesn't need to be the case. This talk will discuss and dissect a selection of games, from small to big, and will show how they make immersive narrative experiences work with limited resources and using a variety of methods: from audio and writing, to clever game design and use of mechanics.
Takeaway:
The attendees will gain useful tips, tricks, and insights on how interactive, immersive narrative games can be created without needing an army of resources and dollars, and that great narrative design can be found in small and big games.

Creatrilogy: Three Talks Exploring Indie Game Creativity

Start Time: 2013-03-25 15:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-25 16:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Andy Hull(Story Fort, LLC), James Lantz(Independent), Davey Wreden(Galactic Cafe)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
What Indies Can Learn from Wooden Toys (Andy Hull, Story Fort, LLC) Most indie games must find creative solutions to deal with the limitations imposed by having a small team, a limited budget, and short development times. In this talk, Spelunky XBLA programmer Andy Hull draws on 5 years of experience working as a wooden toy designer to examine how wooden toys seek to create immersive, engaging, and complete experiences using limited resources. Explore what design solutions game developers can borrow specifically from toy design, and see examples of games that already do. Genre and Creativity in Indie Development (James Lantz, Independent) James Lantz will discuss how to change the way you think about genre in order to make truly experimental games. His talk will incorporate interviews with creative indie developers, psychological science, and his own perspective. James will talk about how genre can hold us back from, or push us toward, being truly experimental, and how we can change this. Lessons in Creativity Learned from The Stanley Parable (Davey Wreden, Galactic Cafe) Creativity is elusive, hard to define, and harder to capture. Davey Wreden, creator of The Stanley Parable, offers a simple and concise set of rules that allow us to define creativity more precisely. Through historical examples and personal anecdotes from development of The Stanley Parable, he investigates how these rules serve as building blocks to more deeply elicit the creative spirit in any artistically-minded professional.
Takeaway:
Spelunky XBLA programmer Andy Hull draws on 5 years of experience working as a wooden toy designer to examine what lessons indie game developers can learn by looking through this unique design lens. Drawing on his experience making The Stanley Parable, Davey Wreden will attempt to isolate a set of mental tools for creative game design. These principles are intended to inform and instruct others on how to evoke the creative spirit. James Lantz will explore how genre effects the indie design process, both consciously and subconsciously, and specifically about how creative games are constrained or set free by genre.

DARK DAYS: A Journey Through CAPY's Secret Gameography

Start Time: 2013-03-29 09:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-29 09:50:00
Speaker(s): Kris Piotrowski(Capybara Games)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: 60-Minute Lecture
Track(s): Game Career Seminar
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Audio Pass, Expo Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Main Conference Pass, Student Expo Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
Most people know CAPY from such games as Critter Crunch, Clash of Heroes, Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery EP and most recently, Super Time Force. However, things weren't always so dang exciting at the fine little independent studio... CAPY started out in the pre-iOS mobile space (aka game-making hell), and spent its first six years making a veritable bucket-load of mobile games just to keep the lights on. This keynote will dissect CAPY's forgotten gameography, and outline how and why the studio transitioned, slowly, to independence.

Designing DayZ: Lessons from Cherno

Start Time: 2013-03-27 14:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-27 15:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Dean Hall(Bohemia Interactive)
Room: 134, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Creator of the popular DayZ Mod, Dean 'Rocket' Hall, discusses the experience of making DayZ from start to finish, and will share some of the lessons he learned while designing a multiplayer game. Touching on the development of the mod, through its release and rise in popularity to its growth into a full-blown commercial title, Dean will provide a frank and honest overview of what it took to make DayZ.
Takeaway:
A frank, honest, and humorous example of an idea that went viral and how that idea was able to survive the experience largely intact. The lessons learned from the project will be outlined for those interested in designing multiplayer games.
Intended Audience:
Anyone interested in the DayZ project, viral gaming, and especially those interested in designing multiplayer experiences.

Designing Humor in Borderlands 2

Start Time: 2013-03-28 17:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 17:55:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Anthony Burch(Gearbox Software)
Room: 134, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
The lead writer of Borderlands 2 explains how the team attempted to convey humor, not just through dialog and art, but through game mechanics. The lecture will discuss how a quest with no gameplay can actually be funnier than a quest with it, how every mechanic holds the potential for humor, and how even jokes need debugging. There will also be more use of the word fart than you are probably comfortable with.
Takeaway:
Attendees will learn how humor in video games can be conveyed through systems design and interactivity, rather than just through dialog. Attendees will also learn why they might wish to do such a thing in the first place.
Intended Audience:
This session targets writers and developers of humorous games, or anyone who is interested in learning about the pros and cons of putting a bunch of fart jokes into your triple-A shooter. No prerequisite knowledge is necessary for this talk.

Designing Journey

Start Time: 2013-03-28 16:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 17:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Jenova Chen(thatgamecompany)
Room: 2014, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design, Production
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
It took thatgamecompany three years to develop a two-hour long video game. Many high-level experimental ideas were tested and failed, and many lessons were learned during the design and production of the game. 12 months have passed since the game was launched, and we would like to share what we learned with you. This talk will give you the insight into the process thatgamecompany took to come up the original concept for Journey, how we polished and executed the design to realize an emotional arc, and most importantly, the difficult lessons we learned throughout the process.
Intended Audience:
This talk is primarily intended for game designers, producers, professionals and students. The secondary audience includes business and gameplay engineers.

Designing Without a Pitch - FTL Postmortem

Start Time: 2013-03-26 13:45:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 14:45:00
Speaker(s): Justin Ma(Subset Games), Matthew Davis(Subset Games)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: 60-Minute Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass
Description:
The creation of FTL: Faster Than Light began with the desire to experience what it would feel like to be the captain of a starship. Many games have focused on space battles, but few games have focused on what happens in the ship itself. The player experience was the primary goal; gameplay structures, mechanics, and genre were all secondary. By focusing on a high-level goal of experiencing a singular feeling, and developing it with minimal preconceptions about FTL's gameplay, Subset Games was allowed to frequently alter or abandon aspects of its design, which eventually led to the game we know today. Matthew Davis and Justin Ma will share their creative process as they take you step by step, from concept to crowdfunding to release.
Takeaway:
Attendees will see how we took a very abstract idea, crystallized it into gameplay, and refined it over and over until it became fun. They will see FTL's early prototypes, and learn why we cut certain features and focused on others. They will learn the hows and whys of separating one's expectations from preconceived notions about games, genres, settings, and other previous experiences when designing.

Free Indie Games: Curating the DIY Revolution

Start Time: 2013-03-25 14:20:00
End Time: 2013-03-25 14:45:00
Speaker(s): Terry Cavanagh(Independent), (Independent)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: 25-Minute Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass
Description:
By hunting down and curating games that defy convention on both cultural and technical axes, Freeindiegames is one of today's most important game-related sites. In this presentation, Porpentine will describe how outsider voices are challenging and redefining the nature of games, talk about figames as a response to the huge growth in indie DIY, and present some of the best, most overlooked indie games of 2012.
Takeaway:
Attendees will take away an appreciation of the surprising quantity of overlooked games that are designed by outsiders (of both the industry and society), and our approach to curating these games.

GDC Microtalks: One Hour, Ten Talks, A Bazillion Design Ideas

Start Time: 2013-03-28 14:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 15:30:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Richard Lemarchand(Interactive Media Division, University of Southern California), Anna Anthropy(Auntie Pixelante), Ben Cerveny(Bloom), Carla Fisher(No Crusts Interactive), George Fan(Independent), Kim Swift(Airtight Games), Leigh Alexander(Gamasutra), Manveer Heir(BioWare Montreal), Mare Sheppard(Metanet Software Inc.), Tom Bissell(Freelance)
Room: 2014, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass, All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
The GDC Microtalks session returns with more short talks packed with gigantic concepts, presented by a bevy of distinctive voices from the world of games and play. The Microtalk concept is game-like and simple: each of the session's ten speakers gets 20 slides, each of which will be displayed for exactly 16 seconds before automatically advancing. That gives each speaker five minutes and 20 seconds to talk about things that they might not otherwise get to discuss on stage at GDC. Join anna anthropy, Ben Cerveny, Carla Fisher, George Fan, Kim Swift, Leigh Alexander, Manveer Heir, Mare Sheppard and Tom Bissell, along with curator and host Richard Lemarchand, for an hour of scintillating ideas about the past, present and future of play. What will you be talking about after this year's session?
Takeaway:
In previous years the Microtalks has had a very loose theme. This year, our gallant Microtalks speakers can discuss whatever they want! As usual, we can count on them to pique our curiosity with new ideas, to challenge us to look at our work in new ways, and to inspire us to make new kinds of games.
Intended Audience:
Everyone interested in video games as a rich, vibrant cultural form with vast horizons of possibility.

How We Created Mark of the Ninja Without (Totally) Losing Our Minds

Start Time: 2013-03-25 13:45:00
End Time: 2013-03-25 14:10:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Jeff Agala(Klei Entertainment)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, All Access Pass
Description:
Mark of the Ninja was, without question, Klei Entertainment's most ambitious game. Art, technology, design, and audio domains were challenged in ways they had never been challenged before. We managed to build the game in 16 months, without significant overtime, to a level of quality we're immensely proud of. Creative director Jeff Agala will discuss how the team grew and arose to meet these challenges, delivered a great game, and did it without destroying themselves.
Takeaway:
Attendees will come away with better understanding of how Klei takes on an ambitious project as a team, how we deconstruct and innovate within a genre, and how we do it without killing ourselves.

Humanity's Last Game: The Game Design Challenge Final Championship

Start Time: 2013-03-28 11:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 13:00:00
Duration: 90-Minute
Speaker(s): Eric Zimmerman(Independent), Steve Meretzky(Playdom), Richard Lemarchand(School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California), Jenova Chen(thatgamecompany), Erin Robinson(Ivy Games), Jason Rohrer(Independent), Harvey Smith(Arkane Studios), Will Wright(Stupid Fun Club)
Room: 2014, West Hall
Format: Panel
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
The 10th and final Game Design Challenge brings together winners from the past for an ultimate, final showdown. Over the

years, we have seen challenges that range from creating a game that expresses the poetry of Emily Dickenson to a game that uses needle and thread as an interface to a game that tells the story of the designer's first sexual experience. This year, for the final Game Design Challenge, panelists must design the last game that humanity will ever play. Is it a game that goes on forever? Or perhaps a game that leads to the extinction of humanity? Or a game that brings humanity immortality? Winners from the last 10 years of the Game Design Challenge will each present a unique solution to this game design problem. As always, you will play a crucial role. After the panelists present, the audience will vote to see who will become the winner of the Game Design Challenge Final Championship.

Takeaway:
More than just a design exercise, the Game Design Challenge asks expert game designers to think on their feet as they address important game design dilemmas, offering a sneak peek into their game design process. Strap yourself in and get ready for a session that promises to be full of innovative and provocative game design thinking.

Intended Audience:
The Game Design Challenge is for anyone who wants a peek at how top game designers think. And you might just get a glimpse into the future of gaming.

Indie Game Micro-Postmortems

Start Time: 2013-03-29 14:50:00
End Time: 2013-03-29 15:50:00
Speaker(s): Robert Boyd(Zeboyd Games), Tim Rogers(ActionButton.net), Anna Anthropy(Auntie Pixelante)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: 60-Minute Lecture
Track(s): Game Career Seminar
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Audio Pass, Expo Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Main Conference Pass, Student Expo Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
Making games is hard! We all know that by now, right? But it's also pretty great. These three postmortems will show the ups and downs of three different independent game projects. We've got Robert Boyd discussing the Penny Arcade tie-in Rain Slick Precipice of Darkness 3, Tim Rogers of Action Button Entertainment discussing his widely and critically acclaimed, but not widely and commercially successful, iOS game Ziggurat, and Anna Anthropy discussing her IGF-nominated narrative/gameplay experiment dys4ia. Each of these folks will discuss what went well and what went poorly during their development processes, which should have some valuable takeaways for new game makers hoping to try something different.

Indie Soapbox

Start Time: 2013-03-26 16:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 17:30:00
Speaker(s): Matthew Wegner(Flashbang), Bennett Foddy(foddy.net), Rami Ismail(Vlambeer), Chris Hecker(definition six, inc.), Renaud Bedard(Polytron Corporation), Tim Rogers(ActionButton.net), Rich Vreeland(Disasterpeace), David Rosen(Wolfire Games), Emily Short(Mind Spring), Noel Llopis(Snappy Touch)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: 60-Minute Panel
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass
Description:
Ten different speakers will take the stage for 5 minutes each to present, inspire, discuss, theorize, and rant about issues in and around independent game development. Attend this crowd favorite for a healthy dose of fresh perspectives and ideas.
Takeaway:
Expand your perspective! Individual topics will range as widely as the individuals themselves. What do these notable indies think about? What do they care about? Will someone inadvertently reveal the secret formula for success in 2013? Come and find out!

Interactive Fiction: Traditions vs. Potential

Start Time: 2013-03-27 13:05:00
End Time: 2013-03-27 13:30:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Mordechai Buckman(Independent)
Room: Overlook 1, 2nd Fl, West Hall

Format: Poster
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Expo Pass, Main Conference Pass, Audio Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass, Student Expo Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
The history of the adventure game is filled with many ambitious stories, but these ambitions are often hindered by the hodgepodge of gameplay styles that the medium is known for. The original text adventures used its diverse gameplay to showcase the flexibility of the text parser interface. Many current adventure games do not use the text parser, and are still providing the same arbitrary activities while trying to tell more complex plots. There is a place for pixel hunts and inventory puzzles in stories, but in most narrative situations they are not appropriate. This is where the dynamic interface becomes useful, a tool for turning story scenarios into intuitive gameplay. This method is demonstrated in the context of several potential narrative scenarios, and contrasted with the conventional approach to adventure game design.
Takeaway:
The traditions that adventure games have accumulated over the years are not conducive to the long-term viability of the medium. Designing an adventure around characterization, by using an ever-shifting interface to reflect emotions and thoughts, leads to more sophisticated and flexible storytelling.
Intended Audience:
Game designers and writers will pick up clear and usable ideas, but anyone with an interest in interactive storytelling will find food for thought here.

It's Not in the Writer's Manual: A Q&A Session for New Writers

Start Time: 2013-03-26 12:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 13:30:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Toiya Kristen Finley(Schnoodle Media, LLC), Antony Johnston(Independent), Christy Marx(Zynga), Chris Avellone(Obsidian Entertainment), Tobias Heussner(Bigpoint GmbH), Jonathon Myers(Freelance)
Room: 2018, West Hall
Format: Panel
Track(s): Game Narrative Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
How do newer writers fit into game design and narrative design teams? Are in-house jobs better than freelance gigs? Do film writers have advantages over novelists in getting game writing gigs? Made especially for individuals with little experience and for those looking to break in, this session encourages participants to ask veteran writers and narrative designers questions without definitive answers, or answers that could be found in manuals or on the Web. Anyone who works with writers is also encouraged to attend. Whether it's finding the right job, leading writers and improving team dynamics, or establishing rates, no question about the business of game writing is off limits.
Takeaway:
Attendees will be able to ask questions regarding their experiences in the industry. They may wish to become professional game writers or want insight into working with writers. Not all attendees ask questions, but the variety of responses and the ensuing conversations will benefit newer writers and narrative designers.

Kickstarter Lessons for Indie Game Developers

Start Time: 2013-03-27 11:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-27 12:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Jeff Pobst(Hidden Path Entertainment), Douglas Wilson(Die Gute Fabrik), Greg Rice(Double Fine Productions), Charles Cecil(Revolution Software), Colin Walsh(Celsius Game Studios)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Panel
Track(s): Business, Marketing & Management
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Kickstarter is becoming a legitimate but challenging option for indie developers to try to raise funding for game development. It isn't an easy endeavor, requiring skills that can be different than typical game development. And though the category is large, success is not a given: only 23% of video game Kickstarters launched have been successful and less than 3% of all game campaigns raised more than $100,000. Give yourself a head start and hear from those who have run successful Kickstarters to find out what they learned along the way. The panel features Greg Rice from the Double Fine

Adventure campaign ($3.3 million raised), Charles Cecil from the Broken Sword: The Serpent's Curse campaign ($772,000 raised), Douglas Wilson from the Sportsfriends campaign ($152,000 raised), and Colin Walsh of the Drifter campaign ($81,000 raised). The session will be moderated by Jeff Pobst of the Defense Grid 2 campaign ($271,000 raised).

Takeaway:
Attendees will hear insights from those who worked hard to make their Kickstarter campaigns successful, and learn about the unexpected challenges, approaches, and areas of focus that helped increase the chances of the campaign being successful.

Intended Audience:
Independent game developers who are even considering Kickstarter will want to hear what the panelists reveal about their games, their Kickstarter experiences, their community interaction, and the things that worked well and that failed miserably during their Kickstarter campaigns.

Life After Permadeath: Game Design Within Self-Imposed Constraints

Start Time: 2013-03-28 10:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 10:25:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Keith Kawahata(Kabam Inc.)
Room: 307, South Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Kabam's Realm of the Mad God, a wildly popular, action-packed MMORPG has achieved a cult-like status among its players. Keith Kawahata, vice president of Kabam Studios, will delve into the challenges of designing for large MMORPG communities like Realm of the Mad God, with self-imposed constraints such as permadeath in mind. Keith will examine why these constraints are important to have in place, and when they should be broken. This discussion will provide tips for indie, social, and mobile developers on how to grow and sustain a player community in the face of challenges (and successes), all while keeping true to the 'soul' of a game.

Mad as Hell: Hothead Developers Rant Back

Start Time: 2013-03-29 11:30:00
End Time: 2013-03-29 12:30:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Eric Zimmerman(Independent), Jason Della Rocca(Execution Labs), Kellee Santiago(Independent Developer), Margaret Robertson(Hide&Seek), Anna Marsh(Lady Shotgun), Naomi Clark(Brooklyn Game Ensemble), Anna Anthropy(Auntie Pixelante), Mitu Khandaker(The Tiniest Shark), Karen Sideman(GameLike)
Room: 2014, West Hall
Format: Panel
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Each year the rant session brings together a panel of game developers to b*#%h about whatever the hell they want. In the past, we've heard from angry game publishers and pissed-off game journalists. This year we will blow the doors off the hinges with a panel of the angriest game developer hotheads we could find. So get ready to be schooled in what is truly f@$ked up about our industry. Cutting through the clutter of polite industry chit-chat, the rant session takes on the issues that matter to developers in a no-holds-barred format. Fasten your seat belts, and prepare for strong opinions from some of the game industry's most distinguished and dissatisfied game developers. The invited panelists will be given free reign. You have been warned. Co-hosted by Jason Della Roca and Eric Zimmerman, the rant session is about identifying solutions as well as problems. The audience will have a chance to respond to the rants and join in the discussion. Topics will address issues of concrete importance to the game industry. And we may catch a glimpse of a better future for us all.

Takeaway:
Why a rant session? The most vital conversations at GDC usually happen in corridors, between scheduled events, and at late-night beer sessions. The rant session goes beyond polished, promotional demos in order to air the burning issues that are most important to rank and file game developers. Expect impassioned diatribes, cutting critiques, and burning-hot manifestos.

Intended Audience:
This session is for anyone who wants the raw version of what is really going on in the game industry. Come prepared to have your assumptions challenged and your sensibilities rankled.

Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Ferelden

Start Time: 2013-03-28 13:35:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 14:00:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Heidi McDonald(Schell Games)
Room: Overlook 1, 2nd Fl, West Hall
Format: Poster
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Student Expo Pass, Main Conference Pass, All Access Pass, Audio Pass, Expo Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass
Description:
Schell Games narrative designer Heidi McDonald, creator of the ICING model for writing more satisfying NPC romances, is taking her work a step further. Breaking up her prior survey data by gender, she will discuss the differences and similarities she found in the way that males and females approach NPC romance. Using gender data from over 500 surveyed gamers, McDonald will share the steps narrative designers can take to address the romance motivations of several types of players at once.
Takeaway:
The survey has shown that men and women romance in games for different reasons. Therefore, there are specific steps narrative designers can take to make NPC romance more appealing to everyone. The most far-reaching of these steps would be to increase the complexity of female NPC and player characters.
Intended Audience:
Those who can benefit from this presentation include narrative designers at all levels, and gamers who enjoy NPC romance and might be interested in learning about gamer behavior which relates to that. There are no prerequisites for attending this presentation, as the ICING model will be briefly re-explained.

Molyjam: How Twitter Jokes Can Save Video Games

Start Time: 2013-03-25 10:35:00
End Time: 2013-03-25 11:00:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Anna Kipnis(Double Fine Productions)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Independent Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass, Independent Games Summit Pass
Description:
Fake Twitter account, @PeterMolydeux, has been lovingly parodying Peter Molyneux's fantastically ambitious game ideas. In two weeks, our modest plan for a local game jam based on these tweets exploded into an international event, with over a thousand people participating in more than thirty cities worldwide. This story is about how Molyjam was invented, organized, and became viral in such a short time. It's about why jams like Molyjam are important to stave off creative stagnation in our industry, and (best of all) the kind of bizarre, preposterous games that resulted from this exercise.
Takeaway:
Attendees will learn about how Molyjam garnered a wide audience in an extremely short amount of time with participants of all experience levels, how this crazy thing came about, and how it was pulled off. Advice will be given on how to organize a game jam, how to approach the jam's theme in an original way, and how to make people care about it.

The Emerging Landscape of African Game Development

Start Time: 2013-03-26 11:15:00
End Time: 2013-03-26 11:40:00
Duration: 25-Minute
Speaker(s): Wesley Kirinya(Leti Games), Eyram Tawia(Leti Games)
Room: 131, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Localization Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:
There are hundreds of tribes in Africa, each with its own rich culture and games. For African audiences, video games are only a new medium to play what has already existed for centuries before. A video game developer in Africa must be able to

design across the cultural boundaries, and educate the player in using new interactive technologies. There has been tremendous growth in mobile technology and the number of mobile users, so mobile phones have become the most popular gaming platform. However, political issues have affected many communities on the continent, which has led to any media, such as newspapers, television, and radio, being sensitive about the content they release to the public. Video games are no exception to this rule, and thus game creators must be careful about the themes and ideas behind their games. Sharing over 7 years of experience as game developers in Africa, the speakers will present an overview of the African market and the emerging landscape for game development.

Takeaway:

The internet penetration in Africa is 15%, which is almost half of the world's average. This presents unique challenges to anyone building software, let alone video games. This talk will provide attendees with a much-needed glimpse into game development in the emerging market region of Africa.

There's More to Life Than Press Releases and Promo Codes

Start Time: 2013-03-25 11:15:00
End Time: 2013-03-25 12:15:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Eli Hodapp(TouchArcade)
Room: 134, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Smartphone & Tablet Games Summit
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Summits, Tutorials & Bootcamps Pass
Description:

Stuck in a rut of unanswered e-mails, unclaimed promo codes, and game releases that go nowhere? TouchArcade's editor in chief, Eli Hodapp, provides a fresh take on iOS game marketing which revolves around a grassroots approach: fist engage and build a strong community of loyal fans, then let media coverage and success come naturally.

Takeaway:

Attendees will be shown specific examples of how community building can result in a snowball effect. This effect drives game downloads and attention in the media, often without sending a single press release.

Three Folk Games To Inspire Radical New Video Games

Start Time: 2013-03-29 10:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-29 11:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Douglas Wilson(Die Gute Fabrik)
Room: 134, North Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:

Developers of motion control games face a variety of tricky problems, in terms of both technology and design. These problems call for new ways of thinking about games, and new sources of inspiration. In this talk, researcher and experimental game designer Douglas Wilson will demonstrate three simple folk games that might inspire video game developers - especially developers working on party games and physical games. Doug will explain how folk games and playground games offer many valuable design lessons and precedents by reflecting on these examples, his own award-winning indie projects like B.U.T.T.O.N. and Johann Sebastian Joust, and his PhD research on the subject.

Takeaway:

Attendees will learn how to play three simple folk games. Takeaways will include a series of concrete design lessons that can be drawn from the three example games, as well as some more general design principles regarding motion control games and party games.

Intended Audience:

This talk is primarily aimed at developers of motion control games, physical games, and party games, as well as anyone interested in forward-thinking, experimental game design. No prerequisite knowledge is required.

What We Learned Porting Team Fortress 2 to Virtual Reality

Start Time: 2013-03-28 18:05:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 18:30:00
Duration: 25-Minute

Speaker(s): Joe Ludwig(Valve)
Room: 2014, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Design, Programming
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Several people at Valve spent the past year exploring various forms of wearable computing. The wearable effort included porting Team Fortress 2 to run in virtual reality goggles. This session will describe lessons learned from Valve's porting experience. Topics covered include an overview of what stereo support entails, rendering 2D user interface in a 90 degree field of view display, dealing with view models and other rendering shortcuts, and how mouselook can interact with head tracking in a first person shooter. In addition to the lessons that apply to Team Fortress 2, there are also several lessons that would apply to any new virtual reality game. A game designed for VR could avoid many of the issues that came up with Team Fortress 2. These topics will also be covered.
Takeaway:
Attendees will learn what Valve learned from their effort to port Team Fortress 2 to virtual reality. A few tips will be included on adding stereo support to your engine, how to deal with user interface, and how to integrate head tracking with your input system. The talk will focus on concrete examples encountered during development of the virtual reality version of TF2.
Intended Audience:
Any game developer who is interested in building virtual reality games or adapting existing games to virtual reality. The talk will be more about concepts than code, so no particular technical skill is required. Artists and game designers are encouraged to attend.

World of Dishonored: Raising Dunwall
Start Time: 2013-03-27 17:00:00
End Time: 2013-03-28 18:00:00
Duration: 60-Minute
Speaker(s): Viktor Antonov(Zenimax Media), Sebastien Mitton(Arkane Studios)
Room: 2005, West Hall
Format: Lecture
Track(s): Visual Arts
Eligible Passes: All Access Pass, Main Conference Pass
Description:
Viktor Antonov and Sebastien Mitton discuss the inspirations and challenges behind building Dishonored's new game world, and creating fiction through back-story and visual design. The pre-production process included high concept design work, visiting locations, studying urban experiences and European architecture design, and researching similar time periods. All elements are detailed in their process of adding Dunwall to the map of fantastic game worlds.