

# ANALOG

#4



## *Editors Note*

So I'm slowly getting the hang of this fanzine lark. Analog is now 1 year old, and learning to talk, walk and ask for stuff all the time..

I need to make a special mention to Steven Huckle of Games Hub - without his input and InDesign skills, this fanzine would never have got off the ground!

I confess I printed too many of issue 3, I've still got a box sat behind me. Still need to figure out the whole "distribution model" of this, but I'm still cool to hand it out at events.

It's taken a while to get issue 4 going, mainly because of the plates I'm spinning in my own life and trying to find enough good souls willing to write what's on their mind.

I wanted a theme for each issue but that is proving too restrictive.

So anything goes. Which is why we are covering GDC, Imposter Syndrome, Non-violent video games, Dealing with loss, Zork and Fortnite all in one issue.

Check out the amazing front cover, designed by Cyrus Crashtest - follow him on Twitter, @cyrus-thehermit

We've also partnered up with Game Dev Heroes, a new event that highlights unsung heroes in games - [www.gamedevheroes.co](http://www.gamedevheroes.co)

It's close to the reason I launched Analog, as I wanted to give a voice to those that you don't tend to see at all the events, sitting on panels, speaking on behalf of the rest of us.

Enjoy this one, no idea when issue 5 will be out.

Alex B

**@thatwouldbealex**

## Video Game Words

*by Macks Prewitt*

"It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue."

When I was younger, my dad set up this old Windows laptop and loaded up this game called Zork. He told me that when he was my age; he and his best friends would play this game for hours on end, and that he thought I should play it as well. You know, typical character building dad stuff. I tried to play it.

I have, to this day, never beaten Zork I, II, or III.

It is one of the hardest games I have ever played. It is also one of the most memorable. I spent hours typing out commands and running from grues when I played that game. Years later, I have played many more games, but very few of them have had something as memorable as that warning that you were in immediate danger.

“It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.”

I watched the Exorcist and that movie was scary. I read a Stephen King novel and that was scary. Growing up I was always fascinated by the irrational things that people believed; like the Candyman urban legend. So much so, that I actually tried it.

Surprise!

It didn't work. All of these story-telling mediums are scary in their own way, but, none of those caused me to be afraid of half of entire day. After spending hours typing my way through the ruins of an ancient kingdom and finding a ton of loot; nothing was scarier or inspired actual fear more than going into a dark area and seeing those words pop up.

“It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.”

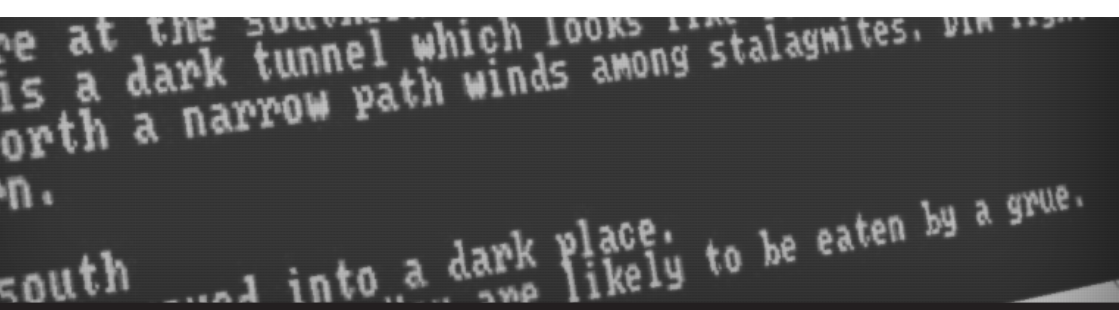
It was scary because it had legitimate consequences. You could die and lose all your loot and progress. I could suspend disbelief in movies, books and urban myths, but in the end I always knew that they were not real. With video games, and in particular Zork, I experienced my first real life lesson. Life isn't fair. It wasn't fair to spend hours collecting loot and exploring the world to have it all taken away because I didn't have a torch equipped. It also scared the crap out of me and I was actually afraid of the dark because of a text adventure game. But that was because I had an imagination. When I got my first job and I got my first paycheck I was ecstatic. I had worked hard and I had earned all this money. It was a great lesson that hard work pays off. The next day I crashed my car and busted a steering rod which took all of my first paycheck to fix. Which taught me another great lesson that carelessness will make you pay. But, in the back of my mind, I knew I had learned this lesson before and a familiar warning popped up.

“It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.”

And that is the beauty of video game words. They stick with you. I still remember, and quote on the regular, the list of responses that the Chrono legionnaire would say from Command and Conquer: Red Alert 2. My friends and I will sometimes quote entire lines from Portal 2 and Borderlands 2 in our day-to-day conversations. Video games have some of the greatest chances to create lasting impressions on people because players are actually living the words that developers write for their games. I know for me personally, some of the best stories I have experienced came from video games because I felt like I was living that story.

But, also, as I go through my own life I will see how it often imitates art and my mind will draw parallels to video game words that I have seen. Like now, as I stand in the doorway of a new passage of life. I stare into the darkness: excited, scared and uncertain of what this new direction will bring me. But as I stand and see that the way is shrouded by darkness. I am prepared by thirteen words that have now become a familiar warning and challenge to me.

"It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue."



# Floss Dance Mania

*by Natalie Sabin*

You're probably sick of hearing Fortnite - it has absolutely exploded over the last few months. It didn't seem like something I would enjoy but one of my friends kept nagging me to download it as it was free, and now I've become less rubbish I'm playing it every day.

Fortnite has a 12 rating rather than 18 so I've noticed there has been a lot of mentions in the news and online about kids playing and parents not being happy about how "addicted" they've become. I work as a fundraiser for a wildlife charity so I spend a lot of time at places where families go for days out and I've lost count of the amount of times that I've seen kids doing the dances from Fortnite. I was working at a farm when I saw kids that can't have been older than 7 doing the dances near me. I said "have you guys been playing Fortnite?" One of the boys immediately said "NO!" the other said "yeah, and I've come second once! How do you know about Fortnite?" I told them that I played and they laughed and wandered off. 7 years old playing a 12 certificate game! Learning how to deal with losing such a high intensity game must be one of the reasons why it has a 12 cert. If I'm in the wrong mood I can get really aggravated and frustrating if I lose so I can't imagine how well young kids take it.

Some parents need to be more switched on when it comes to what their kids are playing - how can you not be more savvy in this day and age?! Consoles now come with parental controls so there really isn't an excuse.

This is the first game that I've played regularly online that is not an 18 certificate. If I'm perfectly honest sometimes I do get embarrassed about enjoying a game that is played by kids but then I try to remind myself that Mario Kart, The Sims and Zoo Tycoon are all loved by kids and those games are awesome. I'm how curious to see how they're going to keep people's interest as it is very repetitive but I've been playing it for a good few months now and still look forward to switching on. There doesn't seem like there's going to be a downturn in players anytime soon!

**@natsabin**

# More to games than guns and gore

*by James Batchelor*

"Games train murderers" - three words my wife will use because a) she knows it winds me up, and b) she genuinely is concerned about the amount of graphic violence in video games today.

Her bleak outlook on our industry is understandable. My wife is a primary school teacher who is regularly bewildered by the fact that the five and six-year-olds in her class choose "playing Call of Duty with my brother" as the highlight of their summer holidays, and what little she has seen of those type of games isn't to her personal taste.

In the past, my knee-jerk reaction would have been to defend our medium, to point out that violence in games is no different to that in movies or on TV. Have you watched Game of Thrones? (How's this for irony? My wife loves that show)

Thing is, if I stop and think about it, I'm becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the levels of violence in some games myself.

Since the developers of Space Invaders first discovered they could program one set of pixels to eliminate another set of pixels from the screen, games makers have found increasingly impressive ways to depict death, ramping up the bodycount as well as the brutality. And, for me, some games take it that little bit too far.

For example, I love the Dishonored games – they're the closest I'm ever going to get to a decent new Thief title given how poorly the last one was received. As such, I play primarily in a stealth-centric style, opting to either avoid or subdue my enemies without killing. Of course, that doesn't always go to plan so occasionally I have to fight my way to safety with that weird little half-sword – but when I do, my character transforms completely.

My version of Corvo has been, until now, subtly and gently rendering guards unconscious and graciously dropping them into a bush. As soon as he gets his sword out, he becomes a stab-happy psychopath that gleefully rips out throats, rams his blade into the side of people's heads and generally does whatever he can to kill in the squelchiest way possible.

Now, I understand why this is. These animations and sound effects have been designed for the 'high chaos' player who chooses to murder their way through Dishonored but as a stealth player, I'd like the option for kills that are a little less overt in their viciousness.

Increasingly determined to be an action game so I allow myself to indulge in a spot of swashbuckling when things go awry. However, I soon noticed that after even the briefest of scuffles, Bayek ends up drenched in blood. The fight I just witnessed saw him deftly dispatch a couple of bandits, but you'd think he's ripped their skin off and rubbed their sliced out organs over his garb for good measure.

Both instances just feel a little over the top given the context of what has actually happened. I've no doubt such effects are satisfying to some players, but with every passing game I realise I'm not one of them. And that's fine – I still enjoy these games, and the content of the industry is never going to be tailored to one man. But I can't be the only one who wouldn't mind a slider or menu option of some sort that lets you tone down the blood.

I'll take this moment to clarify that I'm not saying let's ban all violent games. I'm not saying let them be purged of distasteful combat, promote peace and understanding and oh won't someone please think of the children! Of course I'm not saying that – because even if that's how I felt, who would listen? Violent games are among the best-selling games in the industry, just as the highest-grossing films often have some level of violence in them, whether it's superhero fisticuffs or the typical bullet-spraying Hollywood gunfights. Would Grand Theft Auto V be approaching 100 million sales if your only option to take on enemies was to give them a darn good talking to?

Instead, I'm saying we as an industry need to highlight the non-violent games that are out there. Because there are plenty of them. I run a blog dedicated to them - more on that later - and the list of potential games to include currently stands at 2,486. If I were disciplined enough to post one per day (unlikely), that's enough to last until Friday, March 14th, 2025 – and I find more to add every day, so there's no way that's an exhaustive list.

The action titles, shooters, hack 'n' slashers and other violent titles are likely to always outsell the non-violent – again, same as with film and TV. But we can't let these titles alone define our industry.

Perhaps because we're on the inside, it often feels like the wider world, the mainstream media and much of the public have a warped view of video games. It's all guns and killing, they might think. It's all about the gore. Games train murderers, etc.

But we know there is more to video games than this, and we need to show it. For every Quentin Tarantino gorefest, people are aware of a dozen heart-warming and Oscar-winning dramas. For every Walking Dead, there are countless love stories, comedies, soap operas and more that keep people tuning into their TV for the next episode. Both our fellow screen industries have range, a breadth of content that reaches the widest possible audience. If you were to look at it from the outside, it's hard to say the same about video games.

Even President Trump (and countless other ill-educated scapegoaters) claim the violence in video games is having a detrimental and irreversible affect on our children, casting our titles as the cause of gun violence, mass shootings and other ills of the world. No matter how many times we say "There is no discernible link between video games and violent actions", there is always someone ready to point the Finger of Blame squarely in our direction.

In fact, it was a mass shooting that inspired Non-Violent Game Of The Day, the blog I mentioned five paragraphs back.

On December 14th, 2012, a young man gunned down twenty children and six adults at a primary school in Newton, Connecticut. It wasn't the first shooting of its type, and unforgiveably it has not been (nor will it be) the last. Some media outlets inevitably pointed to the killer's love of violent video games as the cause of his actions, if not a significant factor.

In response, the worldwide community of gamers held a ceasefire: for one day, they would metaphorically lay down their arms and not play graphic shooters, instead opting for non-violent games. It was an admirable gesture, but one that almost certainly fell on deaf ears. I wanted to take this one step further.

The goal of Non-Violent Game Of The Day is to highlight titles that are not built around killing. Heck, I haven't even included Mario (or similar titles) to avoid the grey area of cartoon violence, given his penchant for murdering goombas by the dozen. It's been a chance to explore just how broad this wonderful medium can be, and I'd like to share a few personal favourites:

- Florence, a short but incredibly sweet love story told entirely through wordless gameplay vignettes. Clocking in at less than an hour, you have no excuse not to play this.
- 80 Days, a globe-trotting text adventure that not only adds a steampunk twist to H.G. Wells historic tale, but is also simultaneously at least five of the best novels I've ever read (sixth trip starting soon).
- What Remains of Edith Finch, a collection of short stories told through a variety of different gameplay types. Yes, its subject is the mysterious deaths of the Finch family, but this beautiful title explores this without violence.
- Forza Horizon 3 (and probably the others – I haven't tried them yet). Beautiful open world racing with some of the most iconic cars in the world, and the freedom to progress however you choose.
- Gorogoa, an ingenious puzzle game that is so intricate that I can't possibly explain it to you. But it's a must-play.
- Overcooked, a fast, frantic and frustrating cooking game that will test the very limits of your relationship with whoever you play with – or shatter them entirely.
- Viva Pinata, a cartoony animal-based gardening sim that has more depth than you could possibly imagine.
- Journey, a silent quest to a shining peak that has to be experienced to be understood but never fails to delight or amaze.

I could go on – Thomas Was Alone, The Unfinished Swan, I Am Bread, Hue, Monument Valley, Her Story, World of Goo, Animal Crossing, Peggle, Ruzzle, Monkey Island, Euro Truck Simulator, Train Simulator and all those other weirdly specific simulators – but I've already taken up enough pages in this fanzine.

The point is there are already more examples than we could ever need to prove games go beyond guns, gore and gratuitous violence. So what's the next step?

Well, I'm always happy for people to submit their own suggestions – even your own games, developers! – to [nvgotd.tumblr.com](http://nvgotd.tumblr.com). Just click on 'Submit Your Own', add a pic and a short paragraph about why people need to try it. (Okay, shameless plug over – I promise!)

More than that, you can celebrate your favourite non-violent games on Twitter, Facebook or whichever social media your struggle to tear yourself away from. Thank the creators, give them a retweet and point people in their direction.

When your fellow gaming friends are asking for recommendations, think outside the box and offer up a non-violent option. For friends not into gaming at all, think about what titles they might like to try (I'm still trying to get the wife to play Florence – she'll love it).

Most importantly, if you've not tried many of these games – do it. Play something different, cleanse your palate. I might have mentioned where you can find plenty of examples, and there are thousands more out there.

Just keep talking about non-violent games. Not in the wake of school shootings, not at conferences about serious/artistic games. Every day. Let's show what video games are really all about.

**@James\_Batchelor**

# I'm Not Lazy, I'm Just Thinking

*by Will Luton*

When I write code, I can sit zen-like for hours. I'm contented as days drift away unnoticed. If I'm building graphics, I sink into the pixels before I realise it's 6pm and I've not eaten. Yet when I'm game designing I fidget between shit posting Twitter, and rolling tiny snails from Blu Tac. But I'm not shirking. I'm thinking.

I know why designing games fucks with attention: Design thinking is 90% non-linear. There are very few frameworks and obvious paths in designing games. I can't Stack-overflow building controls for a mobile knitting rhythm action game; A knitting rhythm action game has never existed\*.

Designers bounce from the high level thinking of "how should players feel knitting to this beat?" to the low level of "can you game the purl stitch scoring bonus in multiplayer?" within seconds. They can't do this sat staring at the blinking cursor on a blank page.

In design there will be minutes of frantic documentation and hours of meandering and despairing thinking. When the right synapses align you can return to documenting your genius, before discovering the obvious ignorance of your own stupid broken idea. This repeats until you become so tired you are willing to settle with the least obviously shit set of bewildering compromises.

This isn't to say that engineers or artists or producers don't have difficult and oblique problems. Of course they do. But the application of their ideas, the linear thinking, is the majority of their day. Non-linear thinking is the stumbling blocks, the annoying niggle and everything else is the muscle memory of drawn lines, math methods and task ticketing.

Yet designers and product managers have the anxiety-strewn job of architecting complex human emotions from boxes of transistors with an invented design language that describes abstracted ludonarrative systems. We think and we consider, but we never make.

This is not to diminish other disciplines in our industry, I simply want to assuage my own guilt. Also to hint that my extended, frequent toilet visits aren't the result of a irritable bowel. I'm actually working.

\*I came close once. @ me.

**@will\_luton**



# GDC

*by Jennifer Scheurle*

GDC this year was quite difficult with cases of harassment and abuse that we had to deal with as a community. Those can be very difficult to handle if the accused happens to be your friend or an outspoken advocate for good - I'd like to talk about that part.

In the past few weeks I've been on all kinds of ends of situations where I had to deal with this topic, with people taking sides with openly called out harassers as well as being on the side of being the friend of one myself. This is very tricky to navigate. Some markers:

First step: ALWAYS CONSIDER THE POWER BALANCE! This is hugely important for ANY situation like this. Was the harasser in a position of power, even if they might not be aware? White men tend to hold more power over many other groups in our industry for example.

This is true even if they don't necessarily feel like it. Does the person hold a high position in an organisation or our industry? CEOs, manager roles, known industry figures - they hold power by default over others, that's part of their jobs. It's harder to speak up against them.

It could cost the victim their job to do so, even if there are good reasons for it. This is true for all kinds of people who otherwise seem to be very strong individuals - in fact, people who are seen as outspoken and strong can be more at risk sometimes.

Before you side with anybody: consider the power imbalance between the individuals on a personal level too. Did the victim trust the abuser? Was there a reason that trust could've been used to hurt them? Does the abuser continue to use that trust to inflict hurt?

There are lots of tactics known to marginalised folks that abusers indulge in just before things come to light too, look out for those:

- preemptively controlling the narrative
- making themselves look like victims
- extensive gaslighting of the victim
- ... and more.

When we enter conflicts like this one, the key is compassion and kindness. Recognise that it's impossible to know the ins and outs in all detail, conflict is impossible to avoid and all we can do is help people heal. For that, focus on where the hurt lies, consider the context and power imbalance and most importantly: Be kind.

Institutions, companies and event organisers have an increased responsibility to handle these situations and to protect victims. Extensive care and consideration has to go into the handling of it and they are the main factors in helping to improve and counteract power imbalances.

Overall, the goal should be healing and betterment - for all parties involved. Conflict is a chance to improve as a community and as people, but we all need to be more well-versed in handling those conflicts, consider context and recognise and dismantle power structures.

**@Gaohmee**

# Managing Your Community's Mental Health:

## Interview with Jennifer Hazel from CheckPoint

*by Regina Walton*

Jennifer Hazel is founder and Executive Director of CheckPoint (<https://checkpoint.org.au/>). CheckPoint is an Australian-based non-profit whose mission is to raise awareness of mental health issues, help those in need, and to reduce stigma. They do so by connecting mental health resources with video games and technology. I had the privilege of attending the 2018 Game Developers Conference and listening to Jennifer's talk titled "Managing Your Community's Mental Health: Where's the Line?".

Read on to learn from Jennifer herself about why this is important and where that line lies:

- **Can you explain the how, who, what, when, where, and why?**

As a doctor who has spent many years navigating and understanding appropriate professional boundaries, I regularly see the correlations with community management. Particularly running a mental health non profit company, my social media and community manager (who is wonderful) is now starting to explore that herself, and I feel it's something that isn't generally taught as standard.

- **What inspired this talk?**

[So] when GDC opened up the Community Management track, I saw it as a great opportunity to spread the word - on boundaries, on common mental health issues you might face and how to know where your obligations toward that person start and end.

- **What does "Where's the Line" mean in this context and why is this important?**

The line is an analogy for having interpersonal boundaries, similar to the phrase "drawing a line in the sand". Developing and maintaining these boundaries is important no matter what career you're [in], but especially so in positions that involve frequent interactions with consumers. Regardless of whether you want it to, a relationship develops between the professional and the consumer, and being aware of that relationship and having the skills to control it are vital to everybody's wellbeing. As you can't expect the consumer to have any experience or even insight into that, the onus falls on you, and so I think it's important to educate community managers in how to manage this.

- **Please explain codependency and how that can be harmful in community management.**

Codependency is a type of relationship wherein two people's emotional needs are getting met by each other but in a maladaptive and harmful way. In community management it's quite relevant because of the obligations of the role. The audience knows that the community manager has to talk to them, because that's their job. They are required to be nice, too. So it might be easy for an audience member to fall into the trap of thinking that the community manager is in fact their friend, and begin to treat them this way, perhaps by disclosing personal information or behaving in an inappropriate and over-familiar way. The same might come about if the consumer had an issue with the game, and complained about it, and in the process of that complaint it came out that they were struggling with something in their real life and taking out that frustration on the game company. That in itself is not necessarily a \*problem\* as opposed to just a normal interaction that needs to be navigated. The problems come when one party involved either doesn't respond to, or doesn't set, strict boundaries. So for example, if the audience member was suffering from depression and they were venting their experiences at the community manager. The CM feels they are helping, which makes them feel good, and so they want to keep doing this. However in being that consumer's therapist-by-proxy they're actually preventing the consumer from seeking out real professional help, so they don't recover, and that maintains the inappropriate relationship. That is codependency.

- **How to know where to draw the line? What's appropriate? What's not appropriate?**

The bulk of my talk was about where the line is from the community manager's point of view, and that honestly does change from day to day. At one's best, I would say that appropriate behaviour in terms of managing someone's distress, is using active listening skills, and signposting to appropriate resources that are outside of your relationship with the consumer. Inappropriate behaviour includes giving medical or psychiatric advice, or allowing the consumer to manipulate the relationship into something that is no longer professional. Like having conversations out of hours, disclosing sensitive personal information, seeking you out on personal social media accounts, etc.

- **What can a CM do when it comes to someone in your community with a "vulnerable personality"? Actually, define "vulnerable personality" first.**

Personality vulnerabilities (a key component of diagnosable personality disorders) are ingrained patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviour in a person that prevent them from coping with the normal stressors of life. This is different to a mental illness like depression, anxiety, or bipolar disorder, in which there is a clear biological process. We don't fully understand it yet, but we do know that vulnerable personalities can be linked to early trauma, chronic invalidation, and neglect from a parental figure. So as they grow, the person with a vulnerable personality might have difficulties with controlling their emotions and their behavioural responses to their emotions, with navigating relationships with other people, and they often have an unstable sense of self.

This is important to understand when setting interpersonal boundaries, because people with personality vulnerabilities can, whether they mean to or not, behave in a way that is traumatic for others. Their behaviour can be manipulative or abusive, because they are desperately trying to get their needs met, but they also believe that they will imminently be abandoned at any moment, so there is this push and pull with support figures. They might lash out, then apologise; they might use tactics to make you feel too guilty to end the conversation, like threatening self-harm; they might ask personal questions that you don't feel comfortable answering to try to blur the boundaries of your relationship. These are all common red flags of someone whose agenda is to use you for emotional support because they can't cope by themselves.

- **What can a CM do with someone who discloses that they have a mental issue?**

The best way to approach this is with active listening skills and signposting to professional, external resources, then strictly marking the end of that conversation. It isn't healthy for someone to come to a community manager with repeated crises or updates about their mental health issue. You aren't a therapist and absolutely shouldn't be one, that isn't good for anybody involved!

- **How do you determine what your line is in the context of work?**

It can feel good to help someone else to feel better. It's an incredibly rewarding line of work and why most health professionals pursue that career in the first place! But there is absolutely an amount you can tolerate before it starts becoming harmful to you, and it doesn't make you a bad person to want to stop doing it.

Big things to watch out for are if you have a vulnerability that means your personal mental health can be affected by someone else describing their distress (we call this vicarious trauma). You might not be able to manage distress even at low levels, and that's okay - you just need to set your boundaries a bit narrower. Let people know that you aren't able to discuss personal issues and refer them onto a local service they can use (we have a big list on CheckPoint (<https://check-point.org.au/global/>) for all over the world). On the other end of the spectrum, you might be able to take a lot on board, but eventually you are probably going to get compassion fatigue. It's important to know yourself, how much you can take on board, and where to set that line to keep yourself healthy.

**@ReginaWalton**

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## Staying 25

*by Alex Boucher*

Having a best mate die is a hard thing to deal with. I'm sure I speak for a lot of people, but when they go as unexpected as Sam did it knocks you for six. I think we are prepared for grandparents or family friends with ailments to depart in a gradual and sad but expected manner – but when someone the same age is suddenly taken away from you, it's a classic mixture of denial, anger, sadness and grief. I lost Sam in the Paddington train crash, 18 years ago.

We'd only just got back in touch after my relocation to London and his new job after graduating. I always knew Sam would land on his feet. Savvy, charming, an interest in tech and good music, he was destined to be another Richard Branson. He had a flat he was renting in Bloomsbury and I remember stopping by, quickly chatting about Van Morrison then sinking a few pints at The Hope pub near Goodge Street tube. Ironically, we had both spent 2 weeks doing work experience round the corner at Palace Pictures in 1990; and here we were, now living and working in London.

Sam was a secondary school friend, he joined in the 2nd year so was entering a class of 26 boys who had all made decisions on who to stick with the year before. It was clear he would have no trouble making friends, and soon enough our interest in The Blues Brothers, Eric Clapton and Prince made us firm friends. Being of Italian origin, an evening spent round his home was vibrant, noisy and full of good food and conversation. Between him and his 3 siblings and parents, I felt immediately at home and part of the family, something all Italian families I'm sure would wish to achieve with their guests.

We stayed pals after school, went on holidays and I frequently stayed over for boozy nights out while he was a student at Guildford Uni. As I'm sure every 20-something male will testify, once a girlfriend joins the scene, there can be periods where you don't see your mates as much, but we managed to spin the plates and stay in touch.

I'd called him about meeting for a drink and we had a great time reminiscing at The Hope and talking about our futures. Sam had a new role set up with a telecoms company in Slough, I was learning the ropes in live television – it seemed we were all set up for the next stage in our lives: career, London life and good times.

And then I got the phone call whilst at work from my Dad, telling me that Sam was on the train involved in the the Paddington rail crash. The immediate instinct was to head home back to Essex and then visit his family. All the way home I played Astral Weeks by Van Morrison, whilst going through those series of emotions that would prey on me for the next year or so. It was hard dealing with the fact I wouldn't see Sam ever again, even harder spending some time with his family as we shared the raw feeling of loss and anger. Why him? Why? It just wasn't fair. I had the heartbreaking choice of suggesting relevant songs for his funeral, songs I still can't to listen to to this day. Seeing his coffin being lowered into the ground as his family wept is something that will never leave me.

I like to think that whatever I do now, and the choices I make are something he would appreciate or smile at. I know his death is responsible for my apprehension in making new friends. I only go so far with new friends now, to the point that if it gets any closer I will take a step back at the risk of losing them too. I miss him and always will, but he motivates me, reminds me of family, a time of opportunity, appreciating classic rock music. And above all, what friendship is really about.

**Being there.**

**@thatwouldbealex**



# Imposter Syndrome

*by Shawn Wall*

I laid in an unfamiliar bed, staring at the dim light of 3am casting a diffused landscape of shadows on the ceiling of our AirBnB, three hours drive from home. I had a job interview in the morning for a position in an industry I'd always dreamed of working in, for a company that seemed excellent in every way, and for a role I had six years of experience with. Yet, I could barely breathe for the self-doubt.

This wasn't the first time in my life I had been kept awake by a crushing weight on my chest, despite there only being the soft embrace of our duvet on top of me.

Everytime I apply for a new job, start a project or enter a social interaction; the same fears, worries and doubts surface: I'm not good enough, I'm not ready. I'm never going to live up to the expectations. I'm a failure. I don't deserve any of this.

Four days into my first ever job in web development, I spent my lunch break sobbing silently into my knees in a bathroom stall, overwhelmed with the sheer fear of failing, and every other thought was drowned out by a barrage of self-doubt, screaming inside my skull.

I rolled over in bed, and tried to distract myself with Twitter. In between the photos of hedgehogs with hats, my feed is filled with people far more talented than I am, showing off creations which I can barely comprehend. Fantastic games made over a weekend, "quick sketches" which look more impressive than anything I could conjure up after a year of learning, beautiful projects framed with casual language like "just did this" or "quickly threw this together". All fantastic examples of why I should just give up, forget this interview and return to my comfort zone of not trying.

Imposter syndrome has haunted me for most of my adult life. I can barely remember a time when any sort of mild challenge or departure from my comfort zone in both my work or hobbies didn't trigger week-long episodes of screaming self-doubt and a crippling sense of inferiority in every aspect of my existence.

The feeling that you have no talent or skill. The ever-prevalent doubt as to whether you are actually good at something regardless of any supporting evidence. These are common and growing mental states in many creative and skill-based industries, particularly in development and art.

Whilst bearing in mind the anecdote "correlation doesn't imply causation", I cannot help but attribute the rise of imposter syndrome in part - but not the fault of - the increased exposure and connectivity the internet has provided us.

It is an extremely common mental process to judge our own success and progression based on examples set by others. How else can you tell if what you do is decent, if you have no definitive example of "good" or "bad" to compare to? This is natural and is a driving force of learning, specialization and finding your place in a society based on your strengths.

However, this act of relative comparison to judge your strengths has been - for millenia - isolated to your friends, village, town or community. For example, if you had an affinity with blacksmithing, there would be an experienced town blacksmith you could look up to and judge your relative skill against as you learned and progressed. For any specialisation, the pool of peers you could judge yourself against was generally small and specific, making your skills and specialisation valuable in their relative scarcity.

Open up that scope from village / town / local community to the whole planet and suddenly your relative pool of industry peers goes from the tens to millions. With this, your scale for comparison now ranges to both extreme ends of the spectrum. Suddenly, you are comparing your own talent directly to thousands of people whose skills who are far beyond your own, and you are exposed to the crushing reality that comes with it.

This of course is no fault of the talented individuals you weigh yourself against. Their own journey to their current position may also be filled with many of the same pitfalls and mental blocks you face, but your comparisons don't consider anything other than raw skill and output. The scope you're exposed to is massive, but reigning in who you compare yourself to is the key to mitigating imposter syndrome.

That amazing game developer who can churn out a beautiful, engaging game in a week has spent more years honing their craft than you've been alive. They might have had access to better education, vastly different life circumstances and maybe a handful of luck thrown in. Your paths and levels of progression will undoubtedly be completely different, so instead of comparing yourself to them, use them as inspiration for what you can be later in your own journey, and not a litmus test for what you should be now.

This shift in perspective has helped me massively in my own personal struggle with imposter syndrome. Sure, I still have days when I'm overwhelmed and spend an evening contemplating where I am and why I'm bothering with my path. But instead of it happening every day, it has scaled back to every couple of weeks or even months. By simply seeing those with superior skill as inspiration instead of comparisons, you can have a much healthier outlook, and a far more productive and enjoyable insight into your own development.

**@Nomaki**



# Believe it or not, you can save the world!

*by Michal Napora*

I don't know if you feel the same, but I always wanted to change the world for the better. When I was in my early to mid-20's, I talked about how "corporations are all profit machines", how we destroy our planet, and how people could be better to one another. But most importantly, I used to say how annoyed I am that nobody is doing anything about it. And you know what? I wasn't doing anything about it either – sweet f%#k all. Except that I talked about it and rode a pretty high-horse of smug.

Anyway, lets fast-forward a few years later. Although the enthusiasm for helping out hasn't stopped, I realised that there is only so much a person can do in one day. I also realised one important thing - the immense power that money holds. Now, money in itself isn't a good or a bad thing – it's just an energy, a driving force. It goes and feeds whatever/wherever you send it to. It's like water that streams in the desert – wherever it reaches, life will bloom. And here is the kicker. You can use money to do good! You can use it to change the world! Money can buy food for the hungry, medicine for the sick, anti-poaching equipment, help with research, plant trees, buy rainforest land, and a crap-ton more. When you think about it, Liza Minnelli was right – money does make the world go round.

Ok, so where am I going with this? I guess it's a long-winded way of encouraging you, and other people that read this, to give some of your earnings away. It doesn't matter to which cause or how much you give – it's up to you to choose how you want to help the world (but do a bit of research first to find out where that money will go).

We may not physically save turtles from plastic, feed the hungry in far-away places, or help the ill in dangerous war zones - heck, we're people that make video games. Yet, we can do something that's truly great. We can give the means for someone else to do all that for us. And you know what? That's pretty damn good as well. So open-up your wallet and give some of that cash away. You'll also feel better too, knowing that you did make the world a better place after all.

**@MichalNapora**





# Game Dev Eats

Let's face it, we all travel quite a bit. So here's a quick list from a Twitter survey of places to eat and drink if you work in games:

The Corkonian - Where to find Brits during Gamescom

*Thirsty Bear* - amazing craft beer and a nice short walk from GDC

Saddle Ranch - Where to find Brits during E3

*Miku Vancouver* - best sushi ever!

Lucca In Manningtree - UK for awesome pasta, pizza & drinks.

The Roxy In NYC for happy hour oyster & drinks.

Wu Kong In NYC for their CRAZY candy floss & ice cream.

The Sugar Factory, NYC for their donuts

Piccola Ischia for amazing pizza and tiramisu in Milan.

Smokestack - Serious meat fest. Lots of happy carnivores! Despite the huge lumps of smoked pig everywhere, this place has some of the best veggie food.

Kayal in Leamington / Nottingham / Leicester for southern Indian food. If you're unfamiliar it's approx. 50% between Thai and Northern Indian (most of the Indian restaurants in the UK serve more Northern Indian dishes). Their "business lunch" is insanely good value.

Venue for the last 2 years' gelato diner's conference, <http://biritecreamery.com>

Fat Birds Cafe in Leamington. Does good posh sandwiches, pies, burgers. All day breakfast. Great veggie burger.

There's a tiny little Thai place called Yindee in Glasgow that's open for about 2 hours a day at lunch. Husband and wife duo run it on their off hours and it's become a regular lunch spot for our whole office.

Moroccan cafe van next to San Marino on Station Rd in Brixton, £4 chicken sandwich, has salad and chips and sauce in the tasty bread also great bes-sara (lentil soup) £3 including bread cumin and olive oil.

**#gamedeveats**

# Crunch: Kung Pao Chicken

*by Fernando Rizo*

One commonality linking all of my game dev friends is time poverty. Big studio employees put in long hours at the office, of course, and indie devs are even worse. Some solo developers I know have a work/life balance that would alarm a Predator drone.



In an age where a lukewarm Five Guys cheeseburger can be Deliv-eroo'd to your door with a couple of jaded smartphone taps, diet is often one of the first sacrifices of the time-poor. Now don't get it twisted -- I'm not one of those judgmental waifs doing recipe gifs on Instagram insisting that you adopt foraged ants as your primary source of protein. I'm a game developer, too, and in the queue to hawk a healthy eating cookbook I'm somewhere behind James Corden and the Tatooine Sarlacc.

This issue, we're going to make a classic of Chinese-American cuisine: kung pao chicken. Now maybe it feels like I'm pulling a fast one giving you a recipe for something you could order from your local Chinese takeaway. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with takeaway food, it's just that your local restaurant leans harder into the salt and sugar content of a recipe than you would at home; by making it yourself, your result will taste better and be better for you -- and it can be made very quickly.

Some people turn their noses up at Chinese-American food for not being "authentically Chinese". Anyone who holds this opinion should be forced to subsist entirely on pre-Columbian exchange Italian food (hope you like anchovies) and banned from eating any citrus fruits cultivated after the pomelo (i.e. all of them). Cultures melding and cross-pollinating to create new cuisines is a feature of human history, not a bug.

Once you have a couple of gos at this recipe (which is inspired by the food of J. Kenji Lopez-Alt and Ken Hom) you'll find that it is entirely achievable in less than 30 minutes. If you're a beginning cook, the single most important time-saver is doing all the prep first. This is also a good recipe for doubling up so you can eat the leftovers for lunch tomorrow; just double all of the ingredients except the garlic.

## Kung Pao Chicken

Serves 2

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

## **Ingredients:**

### **For the chicken marinade:**

400g boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size pieces (if you can deal with the disappointed look I'm sending you, you can use chicken breast instead; cut the cooking time for the chicken in half, or else you're going to overcook it)

1 tsp soy sauce

½ tsp sesame oil (or sunflower or other vegetable oil)

¼ tsp sugar

½ tsp cornstarch

A big pinch of freshly-cracked black pepper

A pinch of salt

1 red pepper, diced

1 green pepper, diced

2 spring onions, sliced into ¼ inch segments

¼ cup of roasted peanuts

1 small red chili, minced

1 garlic clove, minced and 1 tsp of minced fresh ginger (or substitute 1 heaped teaspoon of garlic-ginger paste from the Indian section of your supermarket)

### **For the sauce:**

1 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine (easy to find in an Asian grocer, or else substitute for an equal amount of vodka -- it won't have the same nutty flavour of Shaoxing wine but it will enhance the aromatics)

½ tbsp of rice vinegar or white wine vinegar

1 tbsp chicken stock (break the corner off an OXO chicken stock cube into a tbsp of water from the kettle if you don't have fresh stock handy)

½ tbsp sugar

1 tsp cornstarch

1 tbsp sunflower or other vegetable oil

Combine the diced chicken in a bowl with all of the marinade ingredients and leave on the counter to marinate while you prep the other vegetables. If you are serving chicken with white rice (which you should), set one cup of rice, a good pinch of salt, and two cups of water to boil, then reduce heat to minimum and cover. Rice will be done cooking by the time you've finished the rest of the dish.

1. Combine the sauce ingredients in a bowl and whisk together (use a fork if you don't have a proper whisk) for a few seconds until you've got a homogenous sauce.
2. After vegetables are prepped, set a wok or high-sided large pan over high heat and add a good glug of vegetable oil. When oil is shimmering, add the marinated chicken. Cook, stirring and tossing, for 2-3 minutes until chicken is cooked through -- you should be able to easily break a piece apart with a wooden spoon and see no pink in the center. Remove chicken to a clean bowl.
3. Add another glug of oil into the wok. When oil is shimmering, add bell peppers and spring onions and cook for about 1 minute, until starting to brown in spots.
4. Push peppers and spring onions up the sides of the pan to clear a space in the middle. Add a touch of oil if necessary and then peanuts, garlic, ginger, and chili and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant, then combine with peppers and spring onions. Return chicken to the wok along with the sauce. Cook for about a minute until sauce thickens. Serve immediately over white rice.

**Notes:**

The cooking portion of this recipe should take a matter of minutes. The reason there's cornstarch in the chicken marinade is to protect the chicken from the intense heat of the wok. The vegetables don't get up-armored in the same way, so make sure not to overcook them -- the peppers should still have a good crunch.

**@choomsky**

# The 50 over 50 initiative

*by Kate Edwards*

Ageism is a rampant problem in the game industry and within the broader technology sector, and it's becoming even more so as first generations of game creators reach their traditional "retirement years." While sexism in the industry has garnered tremendous attention, and rightfully so in the wake of massive harassment episodes, trolling, and other incidents, the response to ageism has typically been tepid by comparison.

Several games media sites have recently highlighted the ageism issue as an ongoing problem, including Gamasutra, Kotaku, GamesIndustry.biz, and others. Yet various media outlets continue to exacerbate the problem by enthusiastically publishing their annual "30 Under 30" lists to double down on the value of youth and vision while seeming to ignore the benefits of experience and wisdom. The assertion is that highlighting veteran talent is just as positive and valuable to any industry as elevating emerging talent.

By contrast, in much of the popular media consumed by the wider public – and especially admired by many in the tech and gaming sectors – older, wiser characters are regularly featured as key advisors, teachers, mentors, and leaders whose experience and knowledge are greatly prized. Gandalf, Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi, the Oracle (from The Matrix), Dumbledore, Mr. Miyagi, Anti-ope, and on the list goes. Even the word "mentor" is derived from a character in Homer's The Odyssey; the elderly Mentor provided guidance to the younger Telemachus (and ironically was actually the goddess Athena in disguise).

The "50 Over 50" List was conceived to help counter the trend of glossing over ageism and playing off the much trumpeted "30 Under 30" lists. Soliciting nominations from a wide array of game industry colleagues around the world, the primary intent is to demonstrate that ageism, like sexism, must be openly confronted, discussed, and addressed. The secondary purpose is to actually highlight the amazing talent who are over 50 years old and still fervently involved in game creation in some capacity.

The following individuals represent the top 50 veteran game creator nominations for 2018. These names are listed alphabetically by first name, and are not otherwise ranked in any way. You can learn more about each person via the website, <http://gameadvocacy.org/50-over-50-list>

AMY HENNIG	ANDY BRAMMALL	ANDY PAYNE
BOB BATES	BRENDA LAUREL	BRENDA ROMERO
BRIAN FARGO		
CELIA PEARCE	CHARLES CECIL	CHRIS SHRIGLEY
DAVID ABZUG	DAVID WESSMAN	DON DAGLOW
ED FRIES		
FERNANDO RADA	FRANK LANTZ	
GORDON WALTON	GREG JOHNSON	
HARVEY SMITH		
JEFF MINTER	JEFF SPOCK	JENNIFER LADE
JOHANESS REUBEN	JOHN CUTTER	JOHN ROMERO
KATE EDWARDS		
LARALYN MCWILLIAMS	LARRY KUPERMANN	LAWRENCE SCHICK
LORRI HOPPING		
MARK OVERMARS	MATT SUGHRUE	MEG GAISER
MIKE SELLERS	MITCH GITELMAN	
NOLAN BUSHNELL	NORMA ROSSLER-GLAISER	NOAH FALSTEIN
RUSSELL LEES		
SHAHID AHMAD	SHERI GRANER RAY	SIMON BRATTEL
SONIA MICHAELS	STEVE INCE	STEVE MERETZKY
SUSAN GOLD		
TOM HALL	TRACY FULLERTON	
WARREN SPECTOR	WYNNE MCLAUGHLIN	

**@geogrify**

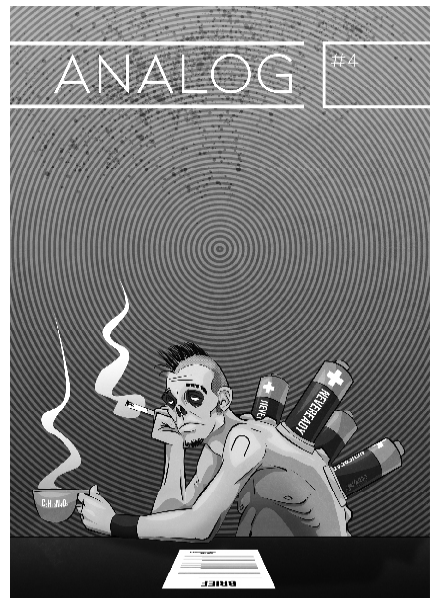
Co-editors ending notes:

I can't believe it's been a year since we put together the first Analog and seems like only yesterday I was lugging around the hand printed copies that Alex and I spent ages folding to hand out at Develop. And it's gone brilliantly since, we've had such amazing range of interesting, helpful and diverse writings. It's all down to those who have contributed so far! Here's to many more in the future.

Steven

**@SharkCustard**

Issue #4



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