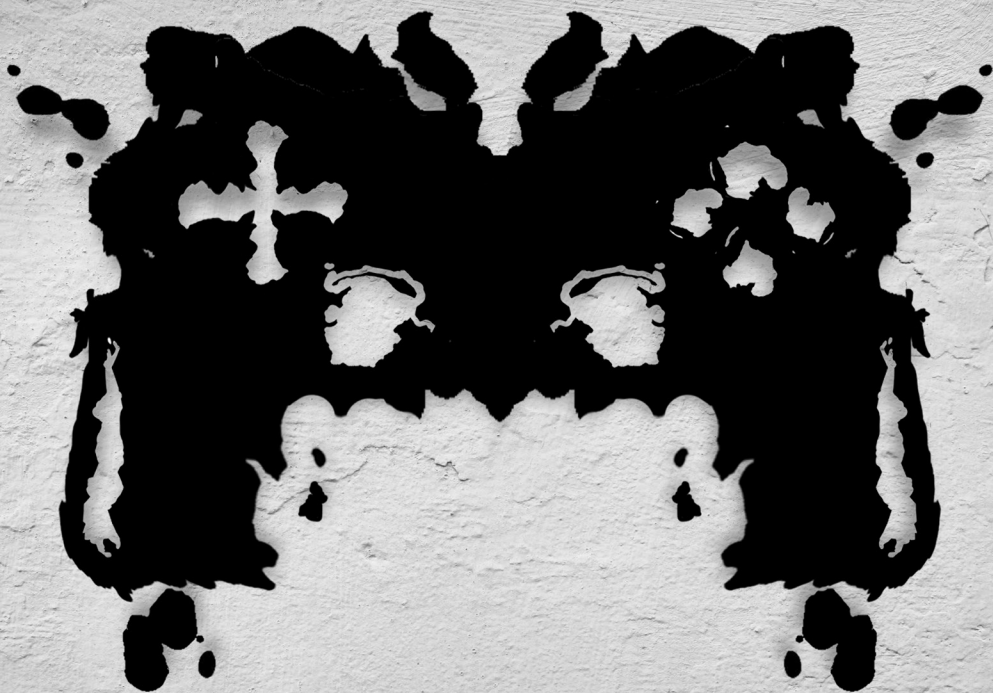


ANALOG

ISSUE 5



Editors Note

Well, here we are on the countdown to the end of 2018, how was it for you? As the world continues to get more angry with itself I'm hoping Analog is an oasis of calm, with the odd rant thrown in to keep things balanced. This issue is the same mixed bag with some great articles on escapism, starting a studio and mental health. Speaking of which, our 6th issue will be totally focussed on mental health and should be out by the end of the year. We've even got the front cover sorted!

Alex B

@thatwouldbealex

Reset — Life and Escapism

by Dann Sullivan

Escapism is a curious thing. At its worst it can be like anything else: overexposure or overindulgence can be dangerous, leaving you tired and worse for wear. But escapism as a small treatment for life, something used to find solace between big decisions or long hours, is something to be celebrated in this busy, fast-paced, interconnected, fourth industrial age many of us live within.

It is, without a doubt, a luxury to have the time to set yourself back on track — many lack that time. It may come through slowing down your pace on the walk back from where you spent your day, gaining enough time to listen to — and take in the changing world around you. It may come through taking the time to notice the differences in the path from the last time you took a moment there. It may come through taking the time to notice all the people around you, all of them heading off with some purpose you don't need to understand.

Of course, as almost all of you reading already know and understand, games give us a special kind of escapism. Like other forms of media, they offer us a glimpse into other worlds, other characters, other situations — lives far from the ones we know and occupy. Video games, perhaps, are the best form of this media-led escapism available in the modern day. Exhibitions or installations of fine art can give us pause for thought or room for pondering. Books can summon our imagination to fill in details deliberately omitted by authors. Film and TV can lead our eyes and views through a story of the director's telling. But games... games arguably give you a degree of control over the path of the character; in those other forms, you are simply an observer.

Video games give you a chance to - mind my pun — reset yourself after life has fatigued you and knocked you off kilter. They can serve as escapism when things get too much; they can even bind themselves to memories of things like scents and sights. Whenever I see the woodlands near the block of flats I grew up

in I remember the time I careened into them on a sled; when I catch the smell of smoked haddock I think of my dad cooking kedgeriee between shifts, while my mum was at work, when I hear clunking charms I think of my childhood holidays in some faraway Devonshire village.

Games can play the same role. I remember my brother and I securing a copy of a dual pack of Sam & Max Hit the Road and Day of the Tentacle sometime after release. Brimful of Asha, from Cornershop (and remixed by Norman Cook), was dominating the UK charts. As a result, Bernard, Hoagie and Laverne's adventure through time will be eternally entangled with the tale of Hindi film background singers.

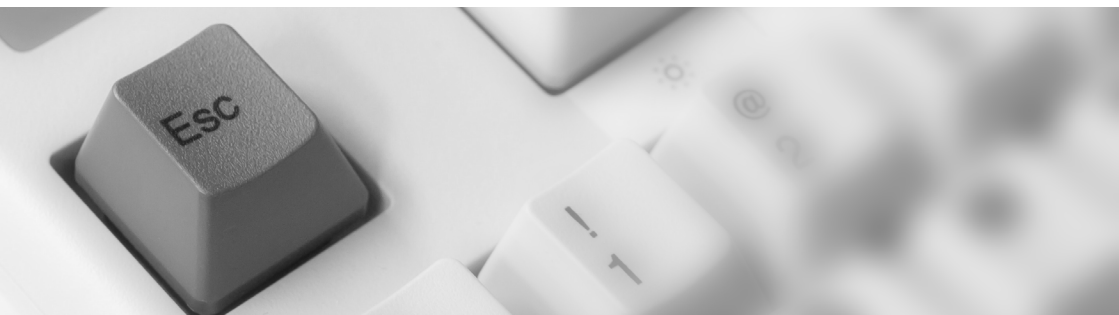
Aside from intertwining themselves with real-world stimuli, though, games can help us cope when it feels like there is no other place to turn in life. In 2009 my half-sister died while journeying down the path of gender transition; I've still not really come to terms with how different those last few weeks made her, nor with how much time and how many years we were both denied together as siblings.

In tough situations, as I'm sure many of you can relate, there is a time where most people simply cannot put their feelings into words. They are overwhelmed and dumbfounded. The world takes on a new shade: every moment is dominated by loss, despair or stress.

While probably not scientifically approved, when you feel as though the world is tinted with something you cannot control, arguably the best way to get away is to dive into a different world — because sometimes the separation gives enough space to pause and discover new context for the real world. There doesn't have to be a theme, or even a link. It was the prosaically pun-laden Duke Nukem parody Eat Lead and the XBLA release of jaunty pachinko-descendent Peggle that gave me enough time away from the world at that time to return with a new viewpoint.

We'll almost always have to confront the things that happen in our lives, especially as the world grows smaller and smaller through technology. As our daily life becomes more and more consumed by the internet and screens and new stresses, it is important that we take time out in other places or other worlds remembering that there is much more to daily life than the next crisis.

@FBFDann



Glitch Games Begins

by Graham Ransom

I'm going to be boring and start off with a hello and my name. So hi, I'm Graham Ransom, co-founder of Glitch Games and we're going to go way back, but not as far as when I was a toddler chewing on old handheld Tiger games. Glitch Games was formed in early 2012 out of a mutual desire to not get a "real job". I'm not sure how many game creators can relate to this ethos, but I would be shocked if at least a handful didn't think we were completely mad.

Simon was fresh out of University, all full of hope and ambition, whereas myself, having graduated a couple years earlier, had lost all desire to work in the games industry properly. Again I think this is definitely a common feeling, being motivated a 100% of the time does not seem to be a cemented trait in the games industry.

We'd known each other since secondary school, well, we didn't really know each other any more than to say hello, as we both ran in different circles - both of us no doubt thinking we were in the cool group I'm sure - but we ended up doing the same computing course at college. I'm not sure how other indie teams come together, but hopefully they met in a more exciting way than this.

After our course ended we went our separate ways, myself up to Wolverhampton University to study Computer Science and Games Development, and Simon off to get a job because he wasn't sure a future in games was for him. As part of my course I did an industrial placement year at a local games company, so I have the privilege of having my name in the credits of apparently the worst game released on the Nintendo Wii - Ninjabread Man (despite having the greatest name and premise ever). I mean Ninjabread Man, come on!

Then 2008 comes around and I take part in the Dare To Be Digital competition, which was part of the DarkMatter Designs team. Students had to create a game in ten weeks and then demo it at an event during the Edinburgh Fringe. Essentially longform game jam. We were one of the three winning teams with our game Boro-Toro, a 2.5d platform-puzzle game that used the then-super-popular Wii remote for controls. The three winning teams were then entered into the running to win a BAFTA Ones To Watch Award, which we surprisingly won. The BAFTA award is now sitting on my "inspiration shelf" next to the Boro-Toro doll that my now-wife made, the old camera that inspired the one in Forever Lost, a LEGO WALL-E because that's where the Glitch-E name for our mascot came from, some big box adventure games, and a plushy that another game developer sent me of the character in their game Choco Run that they made using one of my old game-dev tools. I'm still not sure if I'm one to watch.

Bluntly speaking, I don't care how badly rated it, or any of the other games I worked on whilst there, I had a lot of fun, learnt an incredible amount, and got to work with some fantastic people. It might come across as a cliché to many people, but that's how I genuinely felt. We were setting out to become the biggest baddest developers in the industry, we just wanted to make games and do something we loved. We knew what doing something we hated felt like Simon hated his "real job" and dropped it to go to university as a ripe, mature student to study games.

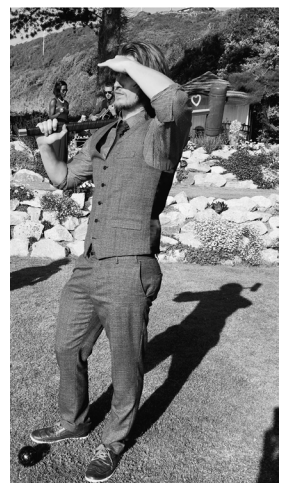
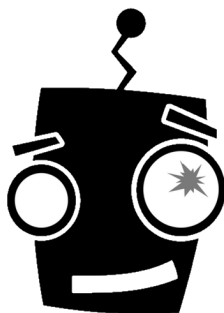
So lets I graduated, then briefly worked at Exient Games in Oxford before I left to attempt to take my dissertation project commercial, which didn't go that well because apparently trying to sell software projects to the NHS just after a global recession isn't wise? Who knew... Thankfully Simon had just completed his course and we combined our powers and created Glitch Games.

Finally we've gotten to the origin story of Glitch, but now we have to start making games. I think that's both the most daunting and exhilarating part of being a developer. You're excited because you're going to make a game but you're terrified for the same reason. Starting something can be the hardest stage.

We had originally planned to work on a top-down pirate game, called Open Waters, nothing to do with that dodgy Shark film, before we realised that it would be way beyond the scope of anything we could hope to achieve. In the end we decided to work on some education apps for kids, including an interactive book app called My Colourful Life about a child who was deaf. I want to take another detour, sorry, to restate the obvious. Games are so diverse and can open means of entertainment to everyone, we learnt a lot with My Colourful Life and we're always amazed by the great work the Special Effect Team do. In February 2012 we took part in a 48 hour game jam and developed what ended up being a very basic adventure game called The Haunting, super spooky title right. It turned out people really liked it so we decided to completely change focus and work on an adventure game trilogy called Forever Lost.

We wrapped that trilogy and 5 other adventure games, now currently we're working on Veritas, a narrative-driven psychological mystery, played from a first-person perspective. We wanted this to be more than just a game, we wanted the lead up to the release and the duration of its lifespan to be immersive, inspired by ARG's and the fun involved with deciphering and weaving viral promotions and community events. We've teamed up with Claire Sharkey from Sharkbit to promote Veritas and to execute this mystery based narrative and plan and the feedback has been great, but it's actually really fun to promote a game like this.

@GlitchGames



Keep calm and listen to IDLES

by Alex Boucher

My hunger for new music has never gone away, despite now being the age where it's expected to have 5 stock albums that should be played in the car, at dinner parties, your own funeral.

The good thing is there are now more places to find it, thanks to music streaming services. Back in the day, if you didn't read NME, listen to the Evening Session or were a regular gig-goer you could be missing the next big thing. Anyway, discovering new bands has always been a passion and I tend to get very precious of them when the rest of the world discovers them. Which is where we seem to be heading with Bristol-based punk outfit IDLES.

Ironically, I can't remember how I came across them. Probably a new music playlist. Regardless, after listening to "Well Done" and then their blistering debut album "Brutalism" I was an official fan. I saw them perform 3 times in 2017, each gig better than the last. They play with such energy, force and passion it's hard not to get caught up and just join the fray. They look after their audience. Frontman Joe Talbot reassures the crowd, reminds us how fragile humans are, asks us to love ourselves.

What struck me with this band were the lyrics. Mental health, living in poverty, escaping the drudgery of small towns, bigotry, what's expected of people. The new album "Joy As An Act of Resistance" goes one further and addresses the tragic loss of Joe Talbot's daughter with the song "June" - "Baby Shoes never worn" is a line that will always stay with me.

Shining a mirror on the state of our country, what we're becoming, even caring more about the High Street than who might be the next James Bond, nothing is spared over these 2 albums.

And then there's the Facebook group. A community of over 7,000 members and so far (touch wood) all is love. Posts about dealing with mental health, personal tragedies, anxiety, and many pics of vinyl, merch and sweaty fans smiling with the band; it really is a gift that keeps on giving.

I've never been part of an online forum where everyone is just nice and looks out for each other.

Long may it continue.

Listen to IDLES on Apple Music, Spotify, all good streaming platforms. Or better still, go down to your local record shop and buy the album. And make sure you catch them live. Search for ALL IS LOVE: AF GANG (IDLES Community) on Facebook.

@thatwouldbealex



Book of Beasties

by Robert Hutchins

Book of Beasties is now on Kickstarter with the mission of sparking conversation around mental health issues among children.

A new tabletop card game with the aim of reversing some of the recent shock statistics regarding mental health and wellness among children has launched to the crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter.

Called Book of Beasties, the card game looks to inspire conversation about mental wellness while offering exercises to help cope with symptoms for anxiety and depression among children, players or friends or relatives.

Having been successfully trialled in schools across the UK and endorsed by numerous and leading psychologists, the ambition of the game and the team behind it is to spark conversation about mental health in a 'comfortable and fun environment.'

It also wants to address recently revealed statistics that ten per cent of the world population of children suffer from a diagnosable mental health issue. Currently, 75 per cent of those children go undiagnosed.

The game is endorsed by mental health advocate and ITV presenter, Anna Williamson, an ambassador for Mind, Childline and The Prince's Trust.

Phil Tottman: "From when we were at school age there appeared to be a significant lack of support systems in place for those who were struggling with their emotions and had signs of possible mental health issues.

"Even now, what with the increased pressure on young people to get good grades and be exceptional in school, which in-turn puts more weight on their shoulders and increases their risk of experiencing something like anxiety.

"From our research we found that there is still no solid help structure for children who are struggling, or much for the teachers and SENCOs (special education needs coordinators) that makes delivering the message about mental health simple and engaging."

While it aims to open up conversation around the topic, Book of Beasties does not claim to be a diagnostic tool.

"The team behind Book of Beasties just wants to normalise the subject of mental health across the board, delivering it through a memorable and enjoyable, yet in depth platform such as a card game."

Book of Beasties is looking to raise £3,000 in funds via Kickstarter to take it to the next level of R&D and production.

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/349030724/book-of-beasties-the-mental-wellness-card-game>

@bookofbeasties

You Just Levelled Up: Breaking the Unwritten Rules of the Games Industry

by Marijam Didžgalvytė

(This article is from 2016, but still rings true today)

I am a games journalist focusing my work on modes of production and politics, in gaming and other technologies. I have been releasing an article every week, often with great response, but something happened last week which made me doubt myself.

For days now I have been debating if I should discuss this publicly, and it is my hope that the following text will somehow inspire and encourage other young (working class, women) writers to stand their ground.

Recently I wrote two articles about the necessity to acknowledge the populations that create the tools we use to game, often under appalling conditions. The first one,

(<https://medium.com/tech-diversity-files/a-problem-with-the-women-in-gaming-discourse-52cb8ac893d0#.lhm7rq4uz>)

asked executive level advocates of diversity in gaming to give attention to the daily struggles of workers in the electronics factories and mines which supply the raw materials of the industry. The second one,

<https://medium.com/tech-diversity-files/women-in-gaming-need-to-talk-about-class-part-ii-931e849bc224#.esb5hji2w>

provided various ideas as to how solidarity could be practically expressed.

Many conversations have since sprung up surrounding this theme, and I am privileged to be part of them. However, not everyone wanted to take the discussion forward. After posting these two articles on the Women in Games (WIGJ) Facebook group*, I discovered a week ago that I was banned from the group. I was given no explanation.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/womeningameswigj/>

After further investigation it became apparent that the founder of WIGJ, David W. Smith (@davidsmithuk), unhappy with comments that he felt were critical of his conference, had made the decision to remove me. Other, female, colleagues of Mr Smith have disagreed, but the man is their boss, so the ban stayed. The self-described diversity advocate read an article that addressed a world wide issue of inequality and responded 'what did you say about my ticket prices?' Or, to put this another way, a working class woman writing about the struggles of other women in games got banned from a Women in Games group by a Bafta-employed white man.

Now some people may see such issue as trivial, but do not underestimate the effect of exclusion, especially on emerging writer, with no financial backing.

Before I felt angry, I cried. To be ejected, with no dialogue, from a safe space for women by a man preaching inclusivity, when I really don't think I have said anything controversial at all. To be a migrant working class woman and be, once again, silenced by a rich, white, British man. To know this happened, yet I have nowhere to go because I simply don't have the power. To know that he will continue to be seen as a righteous supporter of gender equality, when I know he's anything but. To fear that when I press 'Publish' here, I will probably end up cutting all of my ties to the industry. To know that my 92 Twitter followers will probably have little effect on dismantling this classist and silencing behaviour. This is how Gamergate happened, this is how inequality for women in the industry happened. Someone ignoring and stifling an oppressed groups' critique as they are unable to step back and reflect on a bigger issue, instead just viewing it as a personal attack. We cannot find ourselves in a place where all critique is seen as a personal condemnation.

If someone is living in the 'first' world and they have opportunities all around them, chances are that this is built on the back of 'unknown others'. Accepting that and doing what we can to combat it, rather than burying our heads in the sand, is absolutely crucial. Banning someone who reminds them of these inequalities is pathetic.

What gave me the confidence to respond, was when, a few days later, I heard from other female admins and the CEO of Women in Games, Ms Marie-Claire Isaaman. They apologised for this episode and welcomed me back to the group. My understanding is that they possibly acted without Mr Smith's consent as I still haven't heard a word from him.

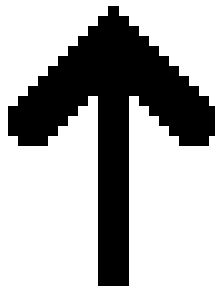
I am very relieved that my fundamental support of 'Women in Games' has been vindicated, as the devoted individuals contributing to this organisation are inspirational and I am proud that I can share my writing with the members of this group. One must ask, however, what individuals like Mr Smith bring to the group. Industry ties? Perhaps. But do we still need to work for those parts of the industry that refuse to let in progressive voices, voices that challenge such elitism.

'Acknowledge the people that suffer creating the tools you use every waking hour, and support their struggles.' Is it really such a radical message? I suspect that, increasingly, it isn't.

I wish Mr. Smith could have had a discussion with me, but he probably knew that I would win every argument—talking about class IS important and it is his failure for not doing so, not mine for bringing it up. Oh well, I suppose we wouldn't want people accidentally learning about struggles beyond their comprehension and it ruining their evening of champagne and cake at the top of Tower 42 now would we. <https://twitter.com/davidsmithuk/status/774243497037721600>

**** 2000+ members, a page for women to share resources related to work and other discourses in regards to women in games.***

@marijamdid



I rarely play games with the sound on

by Jupiter Hadley

I remember the day that I got my first games system. a red GameBoy Advance SP, with Pokemon Ruby and a red matching case. I remember picking out all of the matching red accessories and being a bit sad that there was no purple. I had saved up for this - picked out all of the items at Toys R' Us, and brought them to the counter. I paid for them with my own money, and that was that, I had a games system.

This game system, however, didn't have the one thing my CD player did; a jack for a pair of headphones. This would be a problem.

I took the system home and sat in the living room, holding it in my hand. I quickly flipped the thing open. My sister had a GameBoy Advance SP in the color blue. My dad had found it in a birdhouse, at a property he was repainting. The thing was tattered, clearly hurt by the rain and weather around upstate NY. It had a lot of black marks on the outside, scrapes and cuts from where some birds had clearly tried to understand what it was. There were bits of plastic dug out - specifically those soft bits that are on the bottom of the console. The backlit screen was no longer backlit, and the system didn't have any sound.

I was happy to have a new one, one with light. I inserted my Pokemon game and turned it on, the sound of the system came to life. Matching its volume was my mother's voice - demanding the noise to stop. I quickly looked at the sides and turned down the sound, relishing instead on the new light, and the new game. I started playing Pokemon. I was as happy as can be, playing this new game without any sound.

I didn't think much of turning off the sound. You see, my mom had a weird thing about kids making noise. We weren't meant to play video games with noise on. The Playstation had a similar rule when brought into the living room - we could only have the volume on low, if on at all. I know the 'EA, Challenge Everything' slogan, and by the end of that the volume normally had to go off.

Because of these rules, a lot of my playtime was quiet - games without audio. This was just a part of the experience for me. There wasn't much time to hear the sound. I had heard the start of Pokemon a few times, as that's the game I kept buying; Pearl, Emerald, Ruby, but nothing beyond the startup music.

Years went by, and I didn't think of turning it on. Most of the time, when I play a game on my computer, I turn the sound down and off. I turn it off to hear the TV or the world around me. I mute browser-based games so that I can focus on other things. I watch TV shows with subtitles on, because there is a better chance of me paying attention.

So, as I boot up a steam game, instinctively, I turn the sound off and start playing. It wasn't until I was 18, in another country and without the internet, that I dug out my old GameBoy Advance SP. I turned on Pokemon Ruby, the game always stuck in the back of the console, and brought it to life. Playing in silence, a friend of mine said 'Why don't you have the sound on?' Surprised, I said 'Oh!' and turned it up.

As it turns out, Pokemon Ruby has different, intense music for battles, as well as different music for various regions - something I had never had the pleasure of experiencing. All of this didn't change the game too much for me, and after a while, I found myself turning the sound back down, to instead hear the TV show I had been idly watching in the background.

Did I learn anything from this? Well, no, apart from the fact that apparently this system did have a headphones attachment, but I didn't go to Toys R' Us often and got a lot of my games second-hand from a cheap shop that sold them for quarters.

Growing up without sound means that I don't tend to listen to the sound of games when playing for fun, I tend to turn it off when playing games that I want to play and only seem to have it on for the recording. There is probably a lot that I miss - sounds are added to a game for a number of reasons, however, most of the time I forget sound is meant to exist. When I do hear a game with great audio or little sound effects, I take note of them, and they stick in my brain for a little while.

But, I'll still turn off the audio in exchange for a TV Show, a radio station, or just to hear the silence of my room. Audio is just different for me.

@Jupiter_Hadley

How gamers see things differently, and why that matters to me and the research industry.

by Betty Adamou

When I was about 22 or 23, I started getting really into World of Warcraft (which was a big mistake because I'd only just weaned myself off of FarmVille). I'd go to work in the day at my market research job, helping to design new interactive things to make boring online surveys more engaging (fancier buttons! more dynamic interfaces!) and go home and be stuck to WoW for hours at a time. But you know the story of being engrossed in a game, this is a fanzine after all.

In a style not unlike Carrie of Sex in the City, I couldn't help but wonder: why are the surveys made in the market research industry so boring, with such low engagement from participants, but when I go home I'm engrossed in games, as are millions of people around the world? The are many similarities, after all; both the digital game and online survey are interactive mediums, both available on a screen, and both include logic which means if you do x, you'll be redirected to y, perhaps a relevant follow-up narrative or in the case of the survey, a follow-up question. Both the game and the survey are made to be completed. But one medium was boring as hell while the other was so addictive that I'd ignore hunger pangs just to complete 'one more quest'. What was it about games that made me behave differently and make me see digital media and surveys in a different light?

As well as spurring the front cover for this issue, in which I've dubbed the ink-blot/PlayStation controller image "how gamers see things differently", I started a business 8 years ago where I began to design online research as fully-fledged games, thus replacing surveys entirely. I'm pleased to report that this new methodology of 'ResearchGames' has been successful. The clients who buy my ResearchGames, from Fortune 500 brands to academic institutions, have seen a whole new level of participant engagement that they anecdotally tell me they've never seen before when compared to traditional 'tick box' online surveys. And the participant feedback supports this notion; participants voluntarily leave comments to say how thankful they are that someone has taken the time to make research more interesting and fun, they even ask to take part in more ResearchGames, and recently we had students get so engaged in the process that they felt "adding more questions could have improved it more". For context, it's unheard of, in my 15 years in the research industry, for participants to ask for more questions, particularly when they've not been paid any incentives (such as money or prize draws).

When I started Research Through Gaming (the name really does what it says on the tin, doesn't it?) I had a strong hunch that this could work, and some initial research to support the idea, but like most entrepreneurs I couldn't predict if the concept of using games as a research instrument would fail or thrive. But, with each and every ResearchGame I design and launch to the public, and as each year passes by and I accumulate more research and evidence through study and my own experimentation, it not only indicates that 'game-based research' is crucial to engage participants in research today, but is instrumental to the survival of the market research industry in the future.

You will likely remember the last online survey experience you had as boring, too long, and/or not given enough reward for your time. And as people expect more value, intuition, and experientialness (is that a word?) from their digital experiences, how long are those boring traditional tick-box surveys going to last? More importantly, as researchers continue to prove that low participant engagement is detrimental to the quality of data results, how long can organizations use poor data quality to make, potentially, expensive business decisions off the back of that research?

While lots of researchers are talking about using virtual reality as an innovative way to collect observational data, how long before participants tire of walking around virtual supermarkets and being asked questions?

And that's one thing I love about game-based research, and games in general, is the flexibility of the medium and how, whether a focus group, or a virtual reality-based survey, or an online survey is game-ified, the (what I call) basic 'game ingredients' of Goals, Autonomy opportunities, Rules and Feedback (GARF), continue to tap into our human psychological needs of Relatedness, Autonomy, Mastery and Purpose (RAMP). The satisfaction of these psychological needs creates engagement, and flow, and a continuation and completion desire for the task at hand – these are all behaviours that researchers want, in every type of research.

Not only that, but when we play games, the act of play has been proven to evoke a host of other beneficial behaviours desirable for market researchers such as increased problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, where we reveal our true selves and can imagine future scenarios. Play opens us up to new possibilities. Again, all useful for market researchers because we want to know what people really think and feel, what they want, and increasingly, organizations want to know what people will do. They want to predict the future.

This is why the Serious Games industry is everywhere; Serious Games in education, healthcare, recruitment, training and even product innovation show that some of the biggest organizations are using games for precisely the benefits that intrinsic engagement and play provide, as well as the abilities of games to simulate situations and predict future behaviours in ways that no other medium has or can. The game-based learning market alone is set to be worth \$17 billion by 2023, and the Serious Games market as a whole is predicted to grow at compound annual rate of over 16% until 2020, with the major players being IBM, Cisco Systems Inc. Microsoft Corp.

ResearchGames, like ExcerGames, EduGames, HealthGames and AdverGames, are another form of Serious Game, and like the other Serious Game types, ResearchGames can be used to evoke intrinsic engagement and play to foster empathy and help people act out future scenarios in a way that feels safe, and even fun. Like children that play with dolls or adults that live a game experience through avatars, any story is possible.

By contrast, market research struggles, by and large, to accurately predict the future through research. The recent inaccurate prediction of the Brexit polls and the diabolical #fail of a recent fizzy drink advert featuring a Kardashian are an example of that – but why? Because traditional online surveys do not, in any way, evoke a context in which we can imagine ourselves in future scenarios and where we can react to various situations and stimuli in a simulated environment. But games allow players to do this all the time.

In the near future, I see games and research becoming increasingly merged, not just for me and my business, but in the market research industry as a whole, and increasingly for future planning and for predictive modelling. For example, if you can run 100,000 people in a simulation where they are doing their shopping, or considering a financial product, or seeing their doctor, the data collected from those simulations can provide much more reliable data that can be used to estimate behaviours in the real world than if a traditional survey tasks you to imagine your future emotions, experiences and motivations without any stimulus. And that's because games, even simple text-adventure games, evoke what I call the 'triple e effect' of engagement, experience and emotion. Coupled with play, games then become the perfect construct to allow people not to just tell us what they'll do, or buy, or want, but show us.

The more I research about the science, psychology and art of games, and the more I add to my eight years of research, design and commercial work, the more I am excited for the future of research, not just for the industry but for the participants. Those bored participants of traditional surveys are still people – they're still people who enjoy good experiences and enjoy play. They're still people that want to help shape the world around us for the better. Our lives are an experience, and if researchers want to find out about how we experience products/services/politics/work etc. then research should be experiential too.

And that's how game players see things differently because when players are engaged, they problem-solve, collaborate and go over and above the call of duty much more than research respondents who find it cumbersome just to complete a 15 minute survey. But playspondents (see what I did there?) can contribute to research while engaging in the experience, enjoying it, and the desirable behaviours from play and flow produce better outcomes for research buyers, and frankly, everyone involved in the research process.

As an example, in a ResearchGame I designed aimed at prospective students for a UK university, 97 percent of participants who started answering the questions went on to complete the survey. This high 'completion rate' is unheard of, especially with what is considered to be a 'hard to engage' audience of busy young people. I've had people as young as 6 and as old as 89 play my ResearchGames and self-report to enjoy the experience- even learn from it because when I involve them in role-play, they can experience the research content in a new light that they might not have considered before, like when they're challenged to design a piece of clothing, or be placed in a position where they're making a new product but need to balance price with packaging aesthetic. One participant who played a ResearchGame was, unbeknownst to me at the time, actually a writer for GameSkinny. She wrote "I could not possibly be more thrilled to find similar game-based research opportunities in my email inbox in the future". To have this said by a participant, a gamer, and a game reviewer no less, was a massive compliment.

But what about the research buyers? What do they get out of it?

Simply, when people are engaged in well, anything, they give more of their focus and attention. The data they provide in the ResearchGames are then more reliable. I've had clients who've said they've found the insights from my ResearchGames "highly actionable" and they themselves are so engaged in the process, I've had a client have a cameo role in a ResearchGame and other clients say that when it's time for their team to listen to the data results from the game, people from all departments have turned up, and "not just for the free M&M's". They've gone on to design new apparel and food products, engage their audiences in new ways through evolved marketing techniques, and renew their audience understanding through improved customer segmentation research. One of the most simple but biggest testaments I've had from a client came just a week ago in a weekly catch-up meeting, where she noted: "I've never seen people engaged in research like this, ever". I've also seen people take part in non-mandatory activities in the ResearchGames, try to replay them (despite no further incentive being rewarded) and we get better national representation of the public because all age groups are engaged.

As a bonus, my clients have also seen that by distributing more engaging and arguably more innovative research, it puts their brand in a good light with their participants who are often their customers.

I'm eager to see and be part of the evolution of ResearchGames, and my hope is that as they become a more accepted methodology of research, the more we can bring in the talented game developers and game designers from the entertainment game industry to truly open the eyes and minds of all researchers so they can see games, and the potential of research, differently.

Watch these video trailers to get an idea of what a ResearchGame looks like:

TESSA Undercover Agents: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7qH87VPg1A>

Dubious: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWnojrUQ1ZE>

Betty Adamou is the CEO & Founder of Research Through Gaming, and the author of Games and Gamification in Market Research, available for pre-order on Amazon and Kogan Page now via www.gamesandgamification.com. Out on 3rd November 2018.

Betty will be contributing a column on Serious Games for upcoming issues of ANALOG.

@BettyAdamou

Gaming for Good

by Adam Holmes

The entertainment industry has long been a focus of attention for people who believe it has a moral obligation to promote non-violence and more recently video games have received heightened national attention around charges of addiction.

However, the gaming industry is doing a tremendous amount of good through the games it creates, the community it has created and also through technological advances.

To promote discussion amongst experts and to allow the gaming industry to present its side of the story **War Child UK**, the creators of Armistice and Help: The Game, hosted an inaugural “**Gaming for Good**” event. The occasion aimed to demonstrate just how much is being done by the gaming community to help causes around the world, as well as look at what more can be done.

The event kicked off with indie-gaming legend, **Cliff Harris (Positech Games)**, who was clear in calling out indie devs for how lucrative popular indie games can be and how easy it is to do good. He wants companies to be doing more to give back.

Emma Smith took to the stage to share why having “heart and authenticity” are core to **Creative Assembly’s** approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR). This impassioned session was stacked full of valuable insights; Emma asserted that your CSR has to “anchor to your business aims”, and that by working with charities and making it a part of your internal culture you cement your company’s values. Most importantly, however, Emma was clear that charity efforts should have “heart and authenticity”, otherwise gamers will call you out. She highlighted the partnership between “Total War: Thrones of Britannia” and War Child, which gave the community a totally different perspective on war.

Our third session of the day was a dive into being “Meaningfully Social” by **Kelvin Plomer (Jagex)**. Kelvin showcased how Jagex focused its charity efforts and rallied the Runescape community around the topic of mental health. This dedicated approach included in-game events during Mental Health Awareness week, and featured new characters in Runescape that pushed out key messages about the topic. A staggering 54% of Runescape’s player-base interacted with the campaign—demonstrating just how powerful massive multiplayer online games can be in raising awareness. Kelvin also highlighted Jagex’s approach to staff-engagement, and ended with the big reveal: **over £294,000 raised** in 18 months!

Our next speaker of the day was **Mark Turpin (The Yogscast)** who stunned the audience with his session, “The History of the Yogscast Jingle Jam”. For those who aren’t aware of what the Jingle Jam is —firstly, where have you been living?—the Jingle Jam is an annual charity streaming fundraiser created by The Yogscast group that has raised a staggering **\$11million for charity in just six years**.

The afternoon ended with a panel session featuring **Gina Jackson (The Imaginarium)**, **Miles Jacobson (Sports Interactive)**, **Alex Chapman (Sheridans)** and **Wayne Emanuel (War Child UK)**. The panel reinforced the idea that the gaming industry is “really friendly” and gives a lot back to causes, but that charities should continue to explore opportunities further because the opportunities are endless as the industry continues to develop. War Child has been a major beneficiary of the gaming community’s response to innovative fundraising ideas, with over 2 million raised in 10 years.

When asked about the benefits of engaging with charities, some fascinating insights came back, including that it should be an “investment in mental health” for your employees as it offers a welcome break from working on a single project for a long time. The final call to action for that day was that Gamers are generous; they are passionate; they are interested in doing good: but we must engage them with “authenticity and heart”.

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*A massive thank you to our friends at the **BFI Certification Unit** for making the event a success, and **Sheridans** for ensuring the drinks and conversation were flowing in to the evening.*

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*The next opportunity for the games industry to support War Child is through Armistice in November. **Armistice 2018** marks 100 years since the end of the First World War, and looks to build on the **\$390,000 raised** by Armistice to date in support of children affected by war.*

Please get in touch if you would like to learn more.
Adam Holmes, Gaming Partnerships, War Child UK

Con Flu

by Byron Atkinson-Jones

I'm sitting here in my office working on my latest game, trying to model a complex representation of a live geo-political model of the world in as simplistic way as possible but there's something impeding my thought processes and I don't mean the fact that I need to write this article for Alex, no the thing getting in the way is con flu trying desperately to raise its ugly head and take up residence in my body for its vacation away from home.

What do you mean you don't know what con flu is? I'm going to describe it for you but honestly the best way to find out all about it is to just attend some large gathering of gamers and game developers. Within a day or two after you'll have your introduction and spend the next week or so vowing never to go to another conference again. To put it simply, con flu is conference flu or the illness that some kind soul decided to give to everyone else who visited the same conference. The reality is it's probably a mixture of competing illnesses spread by multiple people attending the conference, but I like to picture an innocent looking 'typhoid Mary' happily going around playing games, shaking hands and giving the occasional friendly hug while spreading a deadly lurgy.

This year my version of con flu came from attending just one day of EGX in Birmingham. I could only go the one day and I only managed to play one game and shake the hands of just a few people, so I thought I was probably safe. This was of course wishful thinking. Within a day the weird clammy feeling started, soon to be replaced by the nagging tickling at the back of the throat and then metamorphosing into a gunky cough that makes you sound like you've been religiously smoking 400 a day for 80 years. The con flu had taken hold.

A few days after EGX I had a couple of online meetings. Normally we would meet up in person but this day everybody had opted to just dial in instead. The reason became clear pretty rapidly, everyone who had attended EGX had come down with their version of con flu and spent the time snuffling and coughing during the call. It wasn't a pretty sound.

This led me to start thinking, or perhaps it was just the con flu messing with my head, trying really hard to delay me working on my game, but I wondered if there had ever been a case where I went to a conference and didn't come down with some variation of con flu after it. Admittedly, my brain wasn't firing on all cylinders at this point due to the raised temperature but for the life of me I couldn't come up with one single instance. In some way I had always contracted con flu.

This then led onto another far more disturbing thought – how does this viral spreading start? Do people go to conferences knowing they have something and are destined to become the starting vector for a couple of weeks of misery for a lot of people? Maybe they think it's something innocent and it doesn't occur to them to stay away.

I'm putting a fairly light tone to all of this but in reality, it's quite serious. Colds really hit me, and I nearly always end up with a nasty chest infection that can knock me out for weeks. It's my curse and my wife is always telling me to go straight to the Doctors as soon as a cold starts but I resist as there's little Doctors can do to 'cure' it. I'm not the only one who suffers badly, and I've heard some of my peers in the games industry come up with strategies to try and minimise the spread by not shaking hands or hugging but instead to just do fist bumps. I do wonder if those same people then go on to play a few games at the shows, handling the controllers which is only just one step removed from having shaken the hand of the person who played the game before you – or indeed the 10 other people before you. In reality, if it's at the conference chances are you're going to catch it. Even more so if you're exhibiting.

Maybe for the next games conference I'll go in a Hazmat suit and tell everyone it's cosplay.

@xiotex

Start With Nothing

an Interview with WHATISZERK

by Charlie Boucher

Recently I had a little sojourn into the world of Old School RuneScape thanks to a YouTuber tour guide called WhatIsZerk.

For those of you who have never read a fantasy novel or are not up on your Norse history... Firstly "Zerk" is an abbreviation for "berserker"; a Norse warrior, legendary for zoning out in battle and becoming a mindless killing machine. Secondly – read a fantasy novel. There are lots of good ones out there – maybe try *Legend* by David Gemmell, or the *Belgariad* series by David Eddings. There are excellent berzerkers in both of them.

For those of you who have never played RuneScape – welcome to the club. First unleashed on the internet by Jagex in 2001, RuneScape is a fantasy Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG). Over the years advances in technology meant that there were improvements in gameplay and updates to the design. But whilst a lot of people really loved the gameplay updates, they weren't crazy about the design. And so in 2007 Old School RuneScape was launched, a version of the game where everything was new and shiny except for the graphics.

Jagex are the kind of team that listen to the fans – at the moment there are three versions of RuneScape that you can play, and each has an incredibly loyal fanbase, all of whom are convinced that the iteration of RS that they play is the best of the bunch. This has led to Jagex having to manage multiple forums and channels for each different version of the game; but, like I said, they seem to be a company that really loves the games they build, and respect the fans that play them.

So whilst chatting to WhatIsZerk was great (we had beer), it was also baffling. There are a LOT of acronyms to take in, and I realised that in order to fully appreciate the depth of knowledge and experience, I probably needed to play the game. So I popped over to www.oldschool.runescape.com and downloaded the 22MB of free game. And then I took my first faltering steps into Gielinor. Within five minutes I had chopped down a tree, caught some shrimp, burned some shrimp, and then successfully cooked my first meal in RuneScape. The tutorial is easy to follow, and the gameplay is surprisingly quick. Don't be fooled by the retro graphics; behind this old school design things are moving with incredible efficiency. There is a lot to learn here; the interface has multiple tabs, buttons, indicators, icons, and frequently you can right-click for further options. I get the impression you'd need to be playing this pretty regularly and for some time to become completely fluid with all of the possibilities of the game and your character.

WhatIsZerk has been playing OSRS for years and has a bundle of subscribers to his YouTube account – WhatIsZerk RS. His almost-8k bunch of fans tune in to watch regular forays into the complex world of Old School RuneScape. WhatIsZerk likes to set himself weapon-based challenges during his Player-Vs-Player sessions. He starts with zero character skills and a weapon with nothing going for it. Consistent game play and strategic decisions improve the stats, until he eventually ends up with a weapon that is incredibly desirable.

Weapons, it seems, are the key to WhatIsZerk's success. Elder Maul is a particular favourite. WhatIsZerk had to find his way through six dungeon levels to defeat Great Olm, and it took a week to figure out how to kill the dude. He's got his eye on the Karazu Rapier next, which is an expensive piece of kit.

Creating original content is the biggest challenge for any YouTuber. The "Starting from scratch" gameplay was the turning point for WhatIsZerk; his first video to try this suddenly started spiking in views, and so he found the YouTubers win-win scenario. A challenging way to play RuneScape that he enjoys, and that his viewers respond to.

As with any MMORPG, the introduction of Real Life can be the thing that upsets a great gameplay experience. Loyal gamers can find themselves rubbing up against scammers; people who are only in the game to make money in the real world. These spoilers tend to be found in the arena. This is where players can bet and win in-game coin that can be transferred into real world funds. Luckily Jagex have found a neat deterrent for these opportunists. By putting a 1% tax on the bets Jagex managed to deter scammers within 4 to 5 days. WhatIsZerk is a big fan of this decision – it's been great for gamers, but terrible for real world traders.

OSRS is coming to an Android phone near you soon. If you love to MMORPG on the go then keep an eye on your app store. Meanwhile I'm going to finish the tutorial. I have places to run to and shrimp to burn.

@charlieboucher



It's Not Just a Free Ticket

by Jennifer E. Killham and Ahmed Hisham Emam

You and I, we are professionals and conference goers. Conference volunteers, we recognize them as a smiling group of people in matching shirts. We see them first thing, attentively stationed at registration desks, handing over our conference badge lanyards and free tote bags. They notice when we are lost in the convention's maze, redirecting us to that one talk we came all this way to see. If we picked one word to describe them, we might offer up "students" (We've even heard them referred to as "kids."). But, this juxtaposition of "us" as established industry professionals versus "them" as newbie students is actually often not the case.

Just like you and me, volunteers are extraordinary. Yes, some are students hoping to break into the industry, but they are also indie developers, heads of indie studios, people working on AAA titles, and speakers at international conferences. They are professional artists, who have designed our volunteer t-shirts and website logos. They are also programming wizards who build happiness algorithms to improve volunteer scheduling systems.

We have adopted the Twitter hashtag #VolunteersAreAwesome. When we say volunteers are awesome, we mean they are more than fantastic at ensuring that every attendee has the best experience possible. Do not get us wrong, we love it when we hear praise about a job well done, but when we say "awesome," we are talking about a group of individuals who are carefully chosen, representing some of the most driven, talented, and community-minded people we know.

We take pride in how many of our volunteer team members are people who are traditionally harder to find at game events (including internationals, women, and parents). Our volunteers come from a diverse range of backgrounds, united by a common goal to make our industry a better place! Their motivation and talent has earned them special recognition by recruiters and industry leaders, something we regard a vital part of the success of any conference.

For our veteran volunteers, The Volunteer Experience™ (TVE™) has been more than just a free ticket to a conference. TVE™ has been a remarkable opportunity for professional development, where dreams morph into achievable goals. TVE™ has transformed networking, where casual salutations shape into long-lasting friendships. TVE™ has been a platform for making a difference, where ideas for positive change become reality. The catalyst for transformation for these dreams, greetings, and ideas is TVE™ mission. Our mission is to foster and advance our culture of inclusion and high performance, because these are a catalyst for engagement and innovation. We strive to cultivate environments that encourage team members to bring their whole selves to their work.

Below, we invite you to meet two active members of our community. While we are highlighting these two volunteer veterans, we note that there are hundreds of other volunteers who are equally awesome and we hope you can get to know them at our next event.

Meet Katherine, a citizen of the world with limitless potential. After earning her bachelor's degree at Universidad del Norte in Colombia, she set sail to experience the world, and we are glad she did. Before joining us at TVE™, Katherine left her footprints in many countries. She started her path into the industry as software developer in Germany, then traversed continents to serve as an executive web designer in India. After India, she headed to Spain to earn her master's in Game Development at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. In conjunction with her studies, Katherine worked as a junior webmaster. Not long after she through her graduation cap in the air, she headed north to be a web producer in Sweden, where she further honed her people skills and refined her ability to tackle problems with poise. In Katherine's current position of three years, she has worked on more than 30 projects as a game producer for a United Kingdom based studio.

Over the last several years, we are proud to have collaborated closely with Katherine, someone who cares deeply about investing in the next generation. As a leader in our community, Katherine transfers her years of industry experience and global mindset towards energizing our team. As a strong advocate for healthy work environments, Katherine reminds us of the power of caring for the whole person.

For example, let's talk about the role of food in caring for the whole person. Even though many conferences offer their crew free food and public catering options exist for attendees, dietary needs are a complex matter in a world where allergies and food consciousness are commonplace. To our good fortune, Katherine goes the extra mile as our team's "Food Guru." For those of us who have what our dear friend Hal calls "a see-food diet" (where you eat anything you see), we may take the ability to eat well at conferences for granted. As Food Guru, Katherine makes certain the dietary needs of hundreds are adequately met. This is no easy feat, requiring hours of preparation ahead of time and individualized attention during the show.

Food is not the only way Katherine helps us stay healthy at events. We caught up with Katherine at 7:00AM on the first day of a conference all laced up for a run with volunteers and attendees. As an important note, Katherine was not another runner joining in, nor was she just another leader of the running club; she was the original trailblazer. Katherine conceived and executed the very idea of starting the conference's run club. One run and a shower later, we saw Katherine throwing on volunteer shirt, then heading over to take new volunteers under her wing at a women in games event.

That is the caliber of our volunteers. #VolunteersAreAwesome

Meet Jens, who is known to many volunteers as the person who co-founded The Volunteer Experience™ and built our community's website, and--together with a team of volunteer veterans--programmed a happiness algorithm designed to maximize volunteer happiness within our volunteer scheduling system. So, when you meet one of our veterans who said they enjoyed the show, Jens is one of the key people who helped them have the most optimal conference experience.

We also want to introduce you to Jens when he is not wearing his volunteer t-shirt. Jens is an ambitious entrepreneur with big dreams for his community. Jens, like many entrepreneurs, has tremendous drive, but most noteworthy are his passions for building strong communities, his commitment to the development of others, and his humbleness.

In his home region of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, Jens is guiding the future of the game industry, and in many ways the future of our community of volunteers. As a long-term resident of Schleswig-Holstein, Jens earned both his bachelor's and master's degree in Computer Science at the University of Kiel. After graduation, Jens remained in Kiel in order to fully devote himself to strengthening game development in the region. As an entrepreneur, Jens co-founded an indie studio called StoryYaller Games, which enhances narrative quality and artistic excellence in games. His second company, "Off The Beaten Track," developed a fun 3D escape room game called The Ransom. Additionally, Jens started "IF(game)SH" to set the course for continued growth in Schleswig-Holstein. If(game)SH is an initiative that helps regional citizens exchange knowledge and receive crucial feedback on their game development projects, the same project that was recently honored by Deputy Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein, Jan Philipp Albrecht, with a digitization prize under the theme "Participation in the Digital Society." Most recently, Jens was selected to serve as one of three regional representatives for the GAME Verband in Schleswig-Holstein.

We also know Jens as a speaker for advocacy tracks, addressing topics such as how sexism, violence and microtransactions have negatively shifted the public image of game development. He also joined a panel comprised of all volunteers to speak about diversity and inclusion in games at Quo Vadis in Berlin. This is experience Jens takes back home with him. Jens's rich history of volunteering for conferences is something he also takes home with him. In 2019, he is also co-organizing the Baltic Dev Days, a conference in his hometown of Kiel.

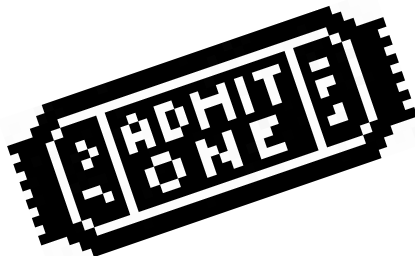
You are probably noticing the same pattern we did: to talk about Jens's accomplishments is to talk about bettering game development.

Again, Katherine and Jens are two of hundreds of incredible volunteers we work alongside, who make the choice to apply for and accept the role of conference volunteer. Katherine, Jens, and our team of volunteers are as intentional about how they give back to the next generation of game developers, as they are their own professional development. Together, we strive to elevate, and sometimes we even do so through song (see tweet: https://twitter.com/jacinda_chew/status/1031193181801467906).

We close with a favorite quote of Jens's by Heraclitus: "Day by day, what you choose, what you think and what you do is who you become."

Special thanks to Irina Hasanow and Laurens Mathot for their insight into earlier drafts.

@gameanglia



Why Do You Work?

by Will Luton

Bart: Working is for chumps.

Homer: Son, I'm proud of you! I was twice your age before I figured that out.

This great subversive joke, that only early The Simpsons could pull off, has bounced around my head for two decades. It was there when I started university and every job and departure since. At times I've felt deeply contented working. Other times I've worked so long and hard that my mental health has snapped, putting me close to the edge.

Why am I working? Am I a chump?

A colleague in the midst of his own work crisis once introduced me to the writings of Mr Money Mustache. The Canadian blogger retired in his early 30s by living frugally and smartly investing the majority of his pay. This, MMM promises, gives us all freedom from work.

Following the blog's advice and building my own "stache" was exhilarating: I began to cut my spending and realised I was no less happy. Plus I now had a clear reason to work: So I could stop. Yet as I began dedicating my next 12 years to early retirement, I would wonder: Am I throwing these years away by working? And what happens when I stop?

In the early summer I started what seemed like the ideal job: A small team I deeply respected, good salary and an amazing pension. Somewhere to settle. Within weeks I realised things weren't what they seemed. We parted ways. It was amicable but still painful. I wondered if I was a chump. And so rather than take another job I decided to start an experiment and live a year retired.

I lasted two days.

The goal was never to move to Bournemouth and take up bowls, but more that I wouldn't worry about income and instead do things that interest me: More writing, give more time to the charities I like, cool consulting and making some damn games. The hundreds of remaining days, I guessed, would be spent working out, visiting museums, taking holidays.

I wanted to know: If I didn't have to work, what would I do? And the answer, surprisingly, is work. I've filled up my days and occasionally evenings with work. While I get to spend more time running or walking my dog, I'm still 9-5. But without a salary.

Why am I do this? I think in part there's the momentum of work and a fear of eating in to my savings, but ultimately I, like most people, enjoy working. Humans as a species have the unique ability to project ourselves in to the future, driving us to apply our minds and achieve some goal or other.

Many in the FIRE movement (Financial Independence, Retire Early) aren't about not working but about doing so without the need to. The logic being that without the fear of losing a paycheck that work becomes more fun. But perhaps that in itself is insightful: It's not that many of us don't want to work, it's that we want to do so on our terms. And the modern working environment makes that hard.

The best jobs I've ever had are where I felt Dan Pink's trifecta of motivation: Autonomy, mastery and purpose. Jobs where I'm trusted to get done what I need to get done, where I can self improve and a place where I believe in what I'm doing. I've come to realise that I'm not trying to escape work, but that I'm trying to find the freedom, the challenge and belief in the work that I do. These reasons are why I work and why I'm not ready to stop.

@will_luton



Steven H - Co-Editor note

I'm quite sure I'm not alone with this, but how the hell is it October already and who stole most of my year! Looking back I really could do with someone returning some of it. Issue 5 already and Analog just keeps on being amazing, as does all the hard work put in by Alex and the contributors.

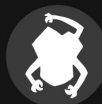
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