



ANALOG

S E V E N

Editor's Note

Ok, ok, I know what you're thinking: "what took you so long?"

Well, life kinda got in the way. Being freelance you have to say yes to a lot of things (especially with a tax bill due) so apologies for the lack of new issues.

I was hoping this would be a business special but not enough submissions. So you'll have to make do with some great articles on going freelance, getting a job and cliques in the games industry. If you're reading this and planning to attend Develop conference in July, keep Wednesday free. We're hiring a bar and playing 80's tunes and power ballads all night. See you there? And special mention to John Pearson for the awesome cover.

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5 Ways to help you get a job

by Guy DeRosa

It's a funny old industry, games. It's kind of like the story of the weird, underestimated kid growing up with annoyingly successful siblings 'TV' and 'Film', suddenly coming out of nowhere to become the belle of the ball... Or in this case, a multi-billionaire...

This year was another meteoric success for games, with gamesindustry.biz reporting a global revenue of \$134.9bn, expecting to hit \$180bn in 2019 and it won't stop there! Finally, telling your parents that you want a career in games development might actually be respected and not this huge surprise drawing disappointed frowns, as it historically did for so many. With all this wonderful fun and all these wonderful figures (which have surpassed TV and film), why wouldn't you want to be a part of it?

I recently attended a great workshop hosted by Into Games (<https://intogames.org>) in Brighton, which focused around giving youth the best possible chance of making their first steps into the industry. Whilst there I got to speak to an interesting and diverse variety of people from current students, professionals, careers advisors, veterans and lecturers. What did I learn? First and foremost that the difficulty of breaking into the industry is an acknowledged pain point, brimming with talented and knowledgeable people trying to do what they can to support beginners (you're in good hands guys, I promise!). However, I couldn't help but notice people are still being guided in the wrong direction at times and a lot of the 'general advice' out there is getting pretty dated. In this article, drawing from 8 years' experience recruiting in the computer games industry, I will try to give you some useful (and hopefully a little bit fresher) information about how to make those first steps into games, with the perspective of recruitment from the inside.

These days the emphasis is on you and who you are. Embrace it... You've just got to know how to flaunt those feathers!

1. Get out there

Go and have some fun with the sort of people you want to become. The games community is small and intimate, so it takes no time at all to be recognised and known. This is one of the few industries in the world where people want to meet you for the sincere and simple reason that they just hope you're a cool person to hang out with, so make the most of it. Take yourself off to launches, enthusiast groups (such as 'Indie Game Developers', 'Augmenting Reality', 'Unity User Group' on meetup.com), game jams, and events (Develop: Brighton, Rezzed), as this is a sure fire way to springboard your way into the industry. They're not always expensive and a lot of these events have free expo areas and parties around them, where the vast majority hang out anyway! Honestly, your next employer would probably prefer to meet you over a drink and a chat about games than via an expensive recruiter. Surround yourself with people who will make growing the natural thing to do.

2. Build an online presence

There's a chance you will have some sort of online presence already, but how good is it?

LinkedIn is a good place to start if you have no presence but you do have some experience. Build a network of connections and politely request recommendations for any previous (industry relevant) work that you have done. Even if that means connecting with your old uni peers and asking a lecturer to recommend you, it's a good start to padding that profile out. Make sure you add projects to this, and specify what your role/duties were – that part is crucial!

Available now? Looking for new opportunities? Make sure prospective employers can see that in your title or summary. Spoon feed visitors information to visitors of your profile, so that they know what you're about the moment they click on your your name.

Freelancer? Why not add your next date of availability to your LinkedIn title.

Portfolio/Showreels

Building a portfolio site is the next big step you should take – or in some cases putting some love into that site which has been sitting half finished since your second year at uni. For you artists and designers in particular, the appearance of your site is critical. Having an ugly or badly-designed site can call into question your sense of design or usability, and that's not what you want... Even the coders amongst you can be judged on it!

I probably don't need to tell you this, but it's probably best to keep your Flash use to a minimum these days too ;)

Make it as easy as you can for the hiring staff to evaluate your work, including Github if possible. My advice would be to run through your projects history, ring fencing each one clearly. Ensure that you describe what you did, and what software you may have used to do it. Any visuals you can provide, including YouTube clips to gameplay where possible, is a massive bonus.

Other places to build a presence

Online communities and forums are a good place to get others to critique your work, and frequent involvement (especially if it displays how you are improving) can get noticed by the right people. Twitter is another great tool and an excellent way to show everybody what an interesting person you are! At the end of every conversation with a new client I ask them if there is anything more I should know about the kind of people they'd like to recruit, and the answer is always the same: we want people with personality! Now this doesn't mean you need to be 'crazy', but gone are the days that an interview meant you have to be the most boring version of you – bear this in mind when CV writing and Twittering – we want to know that you're suitable for the role and what you think of the new Star Wars movie (as long as 'bad' is the answer, of course) :D

3. Recruiters are great, just make sure you choose wisely

Your first port of call should be to make yourself a shopping list of companies you'd like to work with and reach out to those directly - include a cover letter for each application outlining why you'd be great for a role in that company. Trust me, it'll get you extra brownie points and only 10% of people actually do it!

Use LinkedIn to identify whether those companies have an in-house talent acquisition team and introduce yourself personally over a message. In-house teams are usually dealing with a lot of live candidates at any given time and sometimes you could have as many as 200 other applicants. By introducing yourself you may well make yourself stand out from the crowd.

I'm going to level with you here. Recruiters don't have the best reputation and they know it, but the good news is that there is actually a generous collection of great agents out there who are passionate gamers just like you, that genuinely want the games industry to thrive – just like you – I promise!

An early suggestion is to work with just one recruiter initially, and do your research first. This way you will maintain control of your job hunt and be able to actually collaborate with your agent as an individual on how best to approach the market. Your agent will get to know where you've been, where you'd go, what you would/wouldn't like to do and how much for. A good agent will already have the industry knowledge/contacts to connect you to the right opportunity.

Do your research

There is only a small collection of agencies throughout Europe which are genuinely and truly embedded within the games industry. Look at websites, read testimonials and recommendations on agent's individual LinkedIn pages, get a real feel for who is most likely to get you your dream job. Bear in mind recruiters rarely come from a technical background, so make sure you're working with somebody with experience. On my first day in games recruitment (albeit 8 years ago) I called C# "see-hashtag"... True story.

4. Applying

Here are some tips, broken down into area of expertise which may assist you in getting an interview:

Being a 'Jack-of-all-trades' is a no no! Whether you are inexperienced and looking for a first position, or a total veteran, labelling yourself as a 'Jack-of-all trades' or listing a number of different job functions which you may be able to do just isn't cutting it I'm afraid. You need to know what you are and label yourself. People want specialists. Naturally you will have other skills and that gives you some excellent CV/interview fodder, but for now go in with your forté. How can you really show what you can do to get ahead of your competition? Think about the following and let your recruiter or future employer know about it early.

Programmers:

- Demonstrable games/programs/assets studio's developers can look at
- Code samples
- Blog posts or tutoring vids on programming theory or techniques
- Published papers

Artists:

- An online portfolio, or at very least a zip file or drop box
- Examples of games that use your work, outlining your responsibilities and software used
- For 3D Artists, renders with edges you want to show off about and efficient use of polygons

Game Designers:

- Downloadable samples of your work
- A clearly creative side for colour and flair
- Level maps

5. Interviewing and attitude

It's about value and values. You're working in games and you're clearly in it for the love, because very rarely did anybody ever 'fall into' games. So feel free to show how passionate you are about what you do!

Make it clear what you value, aim specifically for those studios that do the same and tell them why: you'll never tire of games development like this. In fact, you'll look forward to it!

Remember (cliché alert): it doesn't matter how experienced and long in the tooth you are, if you're doing what you love then you will never work a day for the rest of your life. (At least I warned you).

For this reason asking early questions about working hours and salary packages in interviews is a no no. You will get the opportunity to find out about that at a later stage – for now, let's focus on the positives:

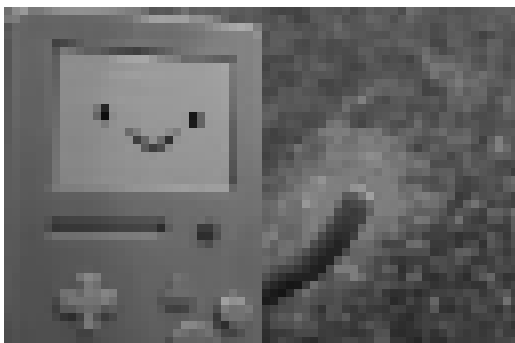
- **What are they trying to achieve**
- **How would you fit into that**
- **What does the person interviewing you enjoy about their position**
- **Do they have a long-term vision**
- **Opportunities for progression**
- **Research, prepare & research some more**

I cannot tell you how many interviewees, no matter how good, lost out to the candidate that stayed up all night playing the client's game the night before as research, or even creating something specifically for them as prep. You get to play games as 'research' for a company you might work for – it's a perk, make the most of it!

Well, that's it... good luck!

Feel free to get in touch with any questions or if you'd like to have a chat :)

@GDC_LoudStrife



Thinking of Freelancing? DON'T DO IT!

by Stephen Hey

I've been living a strange life now for nearly two years. I go into offices full of people, sometimes I just meet them on-line, they are often strangers, but I proffer my services. Then I deliver. Then I go away. This is the life of a marketing freelancer.

Is it good? Yes, for the main part I love it. But that's the part that I am working. The hard part is when I'm not working, or when I'm looking for work, or desperate for it! When I am worrying about the income for the month covering my food and mortgage. I'm sure a lot of devs would tell me to get a grip – "Money? Who needs that when you have a passion?" they'd say. I realise lots of people work in games for pennies but at my age you need a lot of medication and Lego, just to stay alive.

SO WHY AM I FREELANCE NOW?

I started freelancing because I was made redundant, I can't claim a wave of entrepreneurship overwhelmed me and I strode off into the sunset. I am based in Manchester and, while it is THE best city in the UK, it isn't teeming with opportunities for games marketing directors plus I love the industry, so I wasn't going to change to another one I know nothing about. And, I'm too old to move (sometimes literally) and have kids in schools who I have some kind of legal obligation not to move away from (apparently).

BUT, I thought, what if I could offer my 25 years spent marketing games to companies that don't have, and don't actually need, a full-time marketing person. And thus, the dream of HeyStephenHey was born.

TAKING THE GOOD WITH THE BAD

I have been lucky, and, with the help of friends and colleagues who have recommended me, journalists who have shared my story, some canny marketing (because if I can't market myself...) and a little bit of 'right time, right place' luck, I've been fairly steady for most of the last two years. And I've met some brilliantly talented developers and worked on some fantastic games that involve shape shifting wolves, beat bashing pigs, interstellar sportswomen, maniacal robots and all the usual video game stuff.

So why wouldn't I recommend the freelance life to everyone? Getting projects and contracts – sometimes this is tricky and can be discouraging BUT the more you can define your offer the more work you will win.

Working on your own can be lonely. For some this is not an issue, but I am a social animal, desperate for the approval of my peers, so I need people around me, but lots can work on their own, from home all day. And every city has cool cafes or co-working spaces these days.

What about having no colleagues? Who is going to get you a birthday card at work? NO ONE. Who is going to be there to chat about the shocking/hilarious moment in last night's 'Killing Eve'? NO ONE. Who are you going to snog at the Christmas party? YOURSELF! This can be a tough one too but, and for me it's solved by working in a co-working creative hub in Manchester on a desk I was gifted by a friend – I am lucky and consider everyone else there my colleagues. I also consider many of the people I work with in other companies my colleagues and have made lots of friends freelancing. In fact, I get invited to more Christmas parties than ever now. But I still only snog myself.

ITS NOT ALL WORK YOU KNOW

No, some of it's bloody admin. And while I love marketing, I am not a massive fan of accounts, filling in tax returns or filing receipts. However, even this isn't too hard. My accountant is brilliant and cleans up the trail of fiscal fireworks I sometimes create. Also, services like Expensify, Xero and PayPal mean that you can operate a whole accounts system in The Cloud and they make it pretty easy for financial nincompoops like me.

I'M GETTING MIXED MESSAGES STEPHEN!

I know, I started this piece thinking it would be a stern warning about going freelance but actually it is more positive than I thought. This is because I have been lucky, and I have worked (and work) with some great people promoting games, helping start-ups, delivering workshops and scouting for games. But I did want to tell you good folk that you need to be prepared for the down times, when work is hard to find. There's no sick pay if you need to take a day off ill, no holiday pay for when you go on your jollies. For these it's handy if you have a bit of cash saved up to make the gap less stressful and to remember that these stresses are very common, especially in the formative years of a freelance life.

So, I really would advise anyone to think carefully before going freelance. Speak to as many people as you can – freelancers, potential clients, those who have been there and done that. Make sure you know both sides of the arguments and make sure you are prepared to work way over the 9 to 5:30 – for instance, if my children had still been young (and actually still cared I existed) then it would not have been a good point in my life to start losing weekends to work.

But if you do then ace – go for it with abandon, embrace the new and push yourself. And if it all goes wrong, then get a job like all those lucky, lucky, salaried beggars!

HeyStephenHey can not be found on the high street but can be found here:

<https://heystephenhey.com>

@HeyStephenHey

An honest account of grief and running a business

by Samantha Kingston

Update: Over the Christmas period I spent a lot of time trying to recharge and look after myself behind closed doors. I switched off my phones for days at a time, tried to stay offline and even managed to get back into sleeping. (Sounds a bit odd writing that). It was just what I needed, and even now with going back to work today, I am craving the peace and quiet.

So why the update on this article? As it's the new year I wanted to talk about what comes with the new year: pressure. The pressure to be ready for the new year. Having goals in mind, a new haircut or whatever it is that we do to make us feel like we are apart of the 'New Year New Me' trend. But, in reality, it's just another day.

I am, in the new year, still heartbroken by what I went through in 2018. It's only been three months since my mum passed, yet I have already seen the changes in how people talk to me or treat me, or how I have been forgotten. There is an overarching pressure to "Move on" and get back to normal programming.

So after the amazing response I got from posting this article the first time, I wanted to re-share and tell you that, if you have felt that pressure like I have, you are not alone. We are fine doing what we need to do to feel better or just to feel a bit like ourselves.

If you are reading this for the second time I thank you. Please share with others who you think would appreciate it. Or if you are here for the first time, thank you for taking the time out of your day to read.

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I admire anyone who plans and starts up their own business. As business owners it's easy to understand what other founders go through. We share an unofficial bond of understanding the pressure, the worries and the successes of running your own business. I have spent my entire 'Business Owner' career priding myself on my honesty. I am honest with everyone I meet, other business owners and even my clients. In a time where heartache and sadness is hidden behind the Instagram version of life, I will continue to be honest and share and hope that it some way or another I help someone else or allow other people in my position to not feel alone.

A few days after I turned 28, I found out my mum was very sick. Three days later she died in front of me, surrounded by family. For anyone who has lost a parent that pain and fear can be unimaginable.

Through an indescribable pain my business world still continued to run through these moments; through the goodbye, the funeral and the pain that has come after that. All that you see is a normal conversation in a meeting. A normal hello in the morning. A normal email reply I am giving you. So everything must be fine. That is the illusion. You don't know that I haven't slept in two months. I have nightmares that keep me awake. I work on my business at 2:00am so that I am not behind during the week. I cry every morning before I leave the house because all I want to do is go back to bed. I organised a funeral. I get all my mum's post sent to me reminding me daily basis that she is not here. I am now in debt.

But you won't know that because in my head I refuse to let my business and clients down. I don't want to let people down although by keeping going I am suffering on the inside.

Even in the minutes before I got on a plane to say goodbye to my mum I was in business mode, talking to clients and replying to demanding emails while I tried to maintain control of my emotions. I had to keep control. How ridiculous is that, in a moment where I am allowed to feel and let go, my professionalism came first.

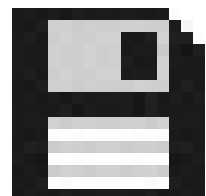
Even while I was in the hospital I had emails, missed calls from the world demanding my attention. I never answered one but it was a prolonged pressure that was building in the back of my head which would hit me hard the moment I got back to work. I have had people tell me to take my time and go back to work when I can. Trust me, I want to. But I can't just shut shop. What would happen if I did? There are people that rely on me, staff to keep in a job and a roof to keep over my head. The days appear ten times longer when you are trying to just get through the day. It can be exhausting to appear okay when surrounded by people. I am exhausted.

But what I need to remind myself is that it's okay. It's okay to not feel in love with my business right now. It's okay to want to feel guilty and it's okay to not have control. I am still trying to work out how I look after myself and still keep my head above the work but I am learning to not be so hard on myself. This pressure of dealing with grief and keeping my business going is one that can't be described. So it might take me 10 times longer to do a simple day to day task but it's all I can do right now.

So I think what I am trying to say in a weird-rounded way is that we don't all live in a shiny version of life and behind closed doors we are all going through stuff. Even the strongest people you know might be going through the toughest of times.

Always be kind and remember that we are human and not always in control of what life throws at us

@K_Samantha1



Being a Game Dev with a Chronic Illness is nearly impossible and that's a fucking problem

by Jen Allaway

Every time I read an article about XYZ game company's terrible work practices, the first thing I think is "If I worked there, I would literally need hospitalization or I might die."

The use of crunch and overwork as currency within companies is fundamentally ableist and discriminatory. If I am physically unable to work overtime, but bob is, and bob gets rewarded for 'going the extra mile' and I'm not, I get screwed out of something that wasn't even an option. What baffles me is how foreign this conversation seems to be in otherwise healthy devs. People with chronic illnesses have to learn before anyone else how to protect their health ; how to set boundaries around work, how to work smarter and not harder. We have to. It's survival.

So when game devs who are healthy advise other game devs of various ability to just "push through" the crunch periods, they aren't realizing that we already "push through" every single day. There's only so much you can "push through" before you break.

And what's laughable about this is if game devs planned their production schedules around able-diverse devs FIRST, it would benefit EVERYONE. Because that means healthy people would be using crunch averse schedules. So they would have more time for a life outside of games.

Game devs who have worked through months of crunch have joked about how it doesn't matter if they break their bodies now, but they don't know what it's like to have a broken body. I hope they never do. I am proof of what happens when you crunch until you can't take it anymore.

And even so, I'm one of the lucky ones. I work at a company where I have super flexible hours for health, doctor appointments, etc. We are crunch averse. The most I have ever crunched was one week, and I did 50 hours instead of 40.

I was told that I went above and beyond that week. It wasn't normal. And as a result, all my coworkers, able-diverse or otherwise, have fulfilling lives outside their company. They come to work excited and recharged every day. Everyone is happy because they have time to be happy.

So what kills me about seeing all these companies abuse their employees is that we as an industry normalise this. Everyone says "these companies are the rule, not the exception." But there are good companies out there that prove we can make games without the bullshit.

I have heard so many dudebros talk about "disrupting" the game industry, and when I asked them what their plans were for addressing crunch and overwork, shrugged their shoulders and said "nothing we can do about it". But you're sO dlsRuPtivE.

WE as a game industry decide what's the norm. WE the workers decide what's okay to do to us. Props to @GameWorkers for working tirelessly every day to dispel the illusion that nothing can be done. Because these companies are NOTHING without our labor and talent.

And more importantly, if workers abuses are so bad that normal, healthy people are feeling the effects, you've already lost THOUSANDS of able-diverse devs. That's thousands of voices that were left behind; who's inability to abuse themselves was more important than their insight.

So yeah. Shit's fucked up. If we design an industry that's inclusive for everyone, including people with health issues, EVERYONE'S health benefits. Those health benefits make better games.

@AllawayJ

Managing a Small Team

by Bryony Bull

If you've finally decided to make your own indie game, there are a couple of things you may not have considered about working in, and managing, a small team.

Your team is going to be absolutely vital in making your vision. While there are loads of great benefits to working in a small team, there are a few common oversights that many people make.

Read on to ensure you can get the best out of your team!

Communication

This is a big one. Communication is key within any business, regardless of size and industry. Every team size, every relationship, personal or work related – for all of them, communication is absolutely vital.

A research project found out that during game development, issues with communication came up in teams 35% of the time.

A good example of this can be found with Asheron's Call, a game developed by Turbine Entertainment and published on Windows PC's. Ragaini, the lead designer on Asheron's Call, noted that there were major issues between Microsoft and Turbine. This was down to several factors (distance and different time zones being part of it) but he specifically mentions communication: "E-mail threads were either ignored or else escalated into tense phone calls, and in some cases the bug tracking database (RAID) was not used effectively. Clearly, everyone would have benefited from more face-to-face time."

It's easy to develop a strong sense of communication and community within your team. Hold daily check-ins, schedule weekly team meetings and simply by making sure everyone is on the same page (for example, updating someone quickly if they've been sick).

Be transparent and communicate objectives clearly and you shouldn't have to worry about too much falling through the cracks.

Conflict

Falling under communication slightly is managing conflicts. You will find, no matter how well people get along, that at some point there will be a clash of personality or ideas. Working in a small team can be a little bit like working with a close-knit family, and whilst for the most part everyone will get along well, someone will inevitably annoy a co-worker at some point.

Resolving these conflicts can be tricky because there are fewer individuals to relieve the stresses felt between people. Over time, this can lead to workplaces feeling uncomfortable, which can affect the quality of your project.

The best way to deal with a conflict is to go for the root of a problem. When choosing/hiring people to work on your project, take into consideration work ethics and personality, and try to involve other members of the team in the selection (if appropriate). The more involved your staff feel, the more they will feel appreciated and valued, and as such are more likely to be devoted to the cause.

You should be aware, however, that no matter how hard you try, conflicts will happen. People are human and mistakes will be made. You should prepare for this by having a plan in mind. As team leader you will have to make sure you listen to all sides of arguments, and then with that information, identify the problem and put forward different solutions.

Overworked/Overlapping roles

In a small team, you'll often find that unlike in a bigger company, everyone will be responsible for more than one task. Whilst this isn't a problem in principle, it's important to ensure that not one individual becomes burdened with too much responsibility. It would be unreasonable to expect a lead programmer to also be in charge of all the art and level design, as these are three large tasks and would likely lead to burn out.

This can be particularly difficult near deadlines. Often, when it's crunch time, it leads to an 'all hands on deck' approach leaving little time for people to take a breath. Whilst individuals on a large team can slow down or even leave a task for a little while, and not cause a huge impact, the same cannot be said for when working with small teams.

You can avoid this through careful planning and task management. Below we list some software which can help with organisation and delegation of tasks.

Use Resources

So you're working with your team when you come across a task that none of you are entirely sure you can handle or have the time for. Don't feel as if this task immediately needs to be completed by you.

There are well trained and highly talented freelancers that you shouldn't be afraid to recruit. You could use them for something like a marketing campaign or designing the cover of your game. While you could always take on tasks like this yourself, using the specialist skills of someone else will help you and your game reach the best potential.

Use a collaborative task management tool

Depending on the complexity and size of your game/project, it could be worth looking into using collaborative task management software. This enables your team a single place where they can communicate, update the state of tasks and share files in real time.

Whilst not essential, it's a very good idea and can really help organisation and successful project management.

Some good free (or very cheap) choices of this kind of software are Trello, Asana, Flow, Casual and Binfire.

Acknowledge good work/be decisive

These two points are easy to overlook but also two of the easiest to implement off of this entire list. Don't forget to acknowledge good staff and work. If you only ever give feedback to criticise your staff will lose morale and confidence. Keep them invested in the project by telling them when they do a good job.

Similarly, a good leader needs to be able to assert their authority and make important decisions for the team. You cannot afford to be indecisive when leading a team, so whilst you should always listen to others input, once you've decided what's best for your business, stick to your guns. Whilst there's no shame in taking advice, the final decision must always be made by you.

What do you think of this list?

Did we cover the basics of good management? Do you think there's anything we've missed? What have you encountered during your game development? Let us know!

Bryony:

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Keeping a cool head while wearing many hats.

by Bee Wakefield

Like many freelancers, I wear many hats. Namely PR, marketing and social media management. People working in the games industry taking on multiple job roles isn't new, but it's something that seems to be on the rise as more indie and one person studios pop up and as more people decide to go freelance.

Wearing multiple hats is often frowned upon, (Jack of all trades) but those who take on multiple job roles both by choice and necessity are showing that it can be done effectively and efficiently. Whether you're working multiple roles that fall in the same area (like I do) or you're handling everything from art/design to marketing, working in more than one role can be exciting and extremely rewarding. It can also come at the cost of your health and, in turn the quality of your work. Luckily (for me) as a freelancer I got to choose to work on multiple roles- it's something that I enjoy, but I've been approached many times by people struggling to handle multiple job roles, and it's often those from small indie studios or one person teams who are having to do it out of necessity.

The pressure of needing to perform at the same level over all your roles, the time available to you and the workload can quickly become overwhelming if you suddenly find yourself needing to move away from your area of expertise. After speaking to a few people who were struggling with this, I found the same points to be the most helpful each time.

-Don't try to do all your job roles at once

If you try to juggle tasks for multiple job roles at the same time, you're going to eventually drop some stuff. If possible, focus on one task at a time, and if you absolutely can't then try to focus on tasks that fall within the same role.

-Get organized

Separating your day into sections can be invaluable, if you can split your main workload for one role into the morning, and another into the afternoon etc it can make things much easier

-Paying attention to your health is important

The games industry is notorious for burn out, and if you're wearing many hats the risk of this increases. It's easy to feel guilty for taking a break, but health comes first. The harder you push yourself when your brain is demanding that you need a break, the harder you'll eventually fall.

-Flexibility

Though you'll ideally want to stick to your schedule, if something comes up- don't panic. Always be prepared for the eventuality that things will change, and try to ensure that you're able to move your schedule around as needed while still keeping its structure.

-Don't be afraid to ask for advice

Whatever situation you're in, it's guaranteed that someone has been there before you. Reaching out to ask for advice is important, and you'll generally find that most people are more than happy to oblige.

@Bee_Wakefield

Cliques

by Francesca Harrall

I get home from school, exhausted, and sling my Puma backpack onto the sofa next to me. Mum isn't back from work yet so I have a couple of hours to myself at home. I stand on the sofa so I can reach the top shelf of the bookcase which is lined with video game cases, platinum and regular separated out so it looks neat and tidy. Clicking the disc into place, I push that big grey button and hear the familiar startup sound of the PlayStation. In those few seconds I feel the horrible school day has washed away. Will I finally figure out the actual combos on Tekken instead of button bashing, uncover a new tomb as Lara Croft, or try my hand at that ridiculously difficult level on Um Jammer Lammy for the fiftieth time?

It's not that I dislike my lessons - I love burying my nose in a book - but it's trying to fit in with the other children I don't like. Being told I'm stupid for not wanting to answer the teacher's questions. Not having anyone to play with at playtime. Dreading that moment where the teacher splits us into groups for art lesson and everyone already know who they're teaming up with but me and maybe a couple of the other social misfits. When it's just me and my video games, I feel happy and content. I get to be whoever I want. Escape from my reality. At middle school age, I don't really know what 'cliques' are yet, but I already know I don't like them. These groups of popular kids that other children so desperately want to be a part of symbolise trying too hard to be someone else, always agreeing with the 'leader' in fear of being ridiculed for not liking the same football team, ice-cream flavour, or boy band. Not my cup of squash, even if it means getting teased for sticking out like a sore thumb. My introverted nature in a school environment where the louder you are, the cooler you are, means I find it difficult to make friends, and as far as I know, there aren't any other kids that play games like I do. Maybe if there are, they have the same struggles with seeking out friendships and so we never find each other. All I know is that from the hours of 8.30am to when that bell rings at three in the afternoon, it's a fight between wanting to be myself, and fitting in so I don't get bullied.

Even if it's not said out loud, it's implied that if you sit inside by yourself playing games or reading books or drawing characters in your own made up world, you're a weirdo, and being a weirdo when you're young is a form of social suicide. Video games feel like the antidote to all that toxic and confusing stuff I am expected to be a part of.

These digital worlds aren't like mine; the characters are stars of their own story, outlandish and bizarre or reserved and shy, loved for their differences and strong because of them, where standing out is what their universe needs. They don't have to apologise or feel foolish for being who they are. And for a couple of hours each day, I get to relish in these universes where I don't have to worry about being anxious or shy.

The internet is fairly new and I'm not old enough to know what MSN messenger is yet, and online multiplayer games don't really exist, so I am kept from this wider world outside of my little hometown where there are many other children like me who flip through tattered copies of PlayStation magazine and play the same demo discs over and over again, who maybe even have their own little friend groups where they can play games together, also casting off the expectations of fitting into a mold of popularity. Video games are my refuge from bullies, the popular kids, and an escape into lands that slake my thirst for adventure. When I grow up, I will discover that they help me realise that it's better not to do it in after all.

That we, who choose not to succumb to the cliques, will hold each other up and get to share in our favourite game worlds together without judgement or exclusion. That you can gravitate towards our own kind whilst appreciating their differences, too.

@mrsmoxx

EVENTS, innit

June

11th -13th : E3
www.e3expo.com

22nd - 30th : BIG Festival (Brazil's Independent Game Festival)
www.bigfestival.com.br

26th - 28th - Gamelab Barcelona
www.gamelab.es

28th - IndigoX, Utrecht
www.dutchgamegarden.nl/indigo/

28th - Women in Games Awards, London
www.womeningamesawards.com

July

9th - Game Dev Heroes, Brighton
www.gamedevheroes.co

10th - The Analog Power Up Party, Brighton

9th - 11th - Develop:Brighton
www.developconf.com

August

18th - 19th - Devcom, Cologne
www.devcom.global

20th - 24th - Gamescom, Cologne
www.gamescom.global

Steven H - Co-Editor note

Much like Alex, life and work has managed to hold up far too many things, if anyone has any life tips on "not taking on too much", or "it's ok so say no" send them my way.

But I'm equally so happy to know we're on the 7th edition of our awesome little fanzine and that it's got more to give, with the content and contributors always being so intelligent and inspiring.

I've realised that I've become somewhat of a lurker over the last year or so and know I need to shout more about how brilliant Analog (and more) is.

Who knows what the next one will bring!

If you have any ideas, thoughts or comments send Alex an email on info@analogzine.co.uk or tweet either of us (@thatwouldbealex @sharkcustard).

www.analogzine.co.uk

Send your submissions to info@analogzine.co.uk

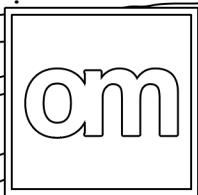
Analog also now has a Patreon, where we would love your support!

<https://www.patreon.com/analogfanzine>

@SharkCustard

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