4.1 PROFESSIONAL SPOTLIGHT

By Austin Bunker

Gaming can make a Better World

By Jane McGonigal
TED Talks 2010
Game Development

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I It was very smart for Miss McGonigal to begin by threatening a majorities views on video games by saying that the she will convince the audience to "... spend more time playing bigger and better games.", then continuing to, "three billion hours a week is not nearly enough gameplay to solve the world most urgent problems." She gets a crackle from the audience when she mentions that her research shows that we need over 21 billion hours of gameplay per week to start solving those problems. By her offering a solution in the beginning before continuing into the rest of her information, she entices the audience to listen to what her solution is for something that so many people see as a widespread issue all in diverse ways. When she elaborates on why she believes video games are imperative to the survival of the human race, she relates getting an "Epic Win" in a video game to solving real world problems, then shows the faces of gamers in games compared to the faces of those who do not play games; it then makes much more sense when she says that, "...when we're in game worlds, I believe many of us become our best selves...". This statement motivated me because it makes me think of all of the possibilities of the people I motivate through my work and what they can do; the speaker, with her experience in the gaming industry, hits notes that tug at my heart and give me hope for the future, and it brightens my eyes when the hope is gaming. McGonigal is very enlightening when forcing the audience to think about how games are designed, she explains that people feel so powerful and confident because tasks are matched to your level and it is never impossible; you can always accomplish the end-goal. Just after talking about how useful World of Warcraft can help gaming and our species as a whole, she mentions issues with it such as being addicted to that "Epic Win", and it hypes me to figure out how to make games that can evolve a person and change them for the better; ensure my game is worth the time people spend on it. When going on, she also tells that kids spend on average 10,000 hours on gaming, while spending 10,050 hours on school, and that really shows the dedication of the group I am working for, the audience that I am craving to give a new and fresh experience. The speech gave me so much hope that people are waking up and the industry is changing to be social, and a learning experience. I can get online and talk to a person in Brazil and become friends with them at a distance. Just as McGonigal said, "Gamer's always believe that an Epic Win is possible, and that it is always worth time. Gamers won't sit around." And continues about how games create very strong social groups as compared to other areas, and that gamers crave working hard, and working together. Her eyes shine when she talks about how prominently determined and happy gamers are from what her research shows, this also shows me how imperative so many others believe games are, and it pushes me to ensure that our future children

have involved tools to use for learning, working, and socializing. Making the real world like a game can truly increase the drive and quality of people and their works, enhance how people see things, and change the world with a single intellectual property.

When determining that video games come from something as simple as a dice game, it shows how much humans like the play aspect of their lives; people before would literally survive famine by passing time playing games. Games save lives. Games save cultures. When I heard about Herodotus' story not being fake and proof being out there that gaming could have led to the savior of the civilization of the Etruscans and led to the Roman Empire. What if the next game I make is the next game that helps a portion of lower-income families make it through the rough spot, then inspire their children to inspire the next group of unfortunates. How Miss McGonigal showed her results and information from the three games, especially Oil Shortage, opened my eyes to so many new ways of challenging others to open their eyes. An idea becomes a revolution when people share that idea like an airborne cure for an illness.

From everything I learned in this video, and to answer the question she asked, "What will happen next?", I would respond: Next is the step to urge other to play games and educate, and to use my gift of game development to change the world. This is a revolution.

Are Games Better than Life

By David Perry
TED Talks 2006
Game Development

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II Hearing about the history of the speaker, David Perry's life, was awe-inspiring; he began with the Basic programming language and made games the same size as the eBay logo. This reminded me of how I started with HTML and web programming languages and made very simplistic games and websites. He also brought the gaming industry and Hollywood together for games. Similarly, I have evolved in my skill. Hearing how gamers have made their own markets and how they are socializing in such a strange way while remaining so friendly to each other also opened my eyes to how organized and systematic the gaming population can be without instruction, they all follow rules set by each other every day. Also, in Mr. Perry's evolution of games video, he showed many games from the 2D pixel and sprite days then directly after he showed the new 3D takes on the same games. The evolution of first person shooters was very personal and inspiring to me because I started playing video games with those of the likes of DOOM and DOOM II original, and I have many memories of playing them with my sister and uncle; thinking back, DOOM got me started on the track I am on now. The talents within the industry are so talented, and the programmers are incredible at the vast requirements for their professions. I know I can be just as good and better if I set my mind to it.

Hearing the "gaming addicts" story also struck a core with me, as growing up people would tell me that I too was a video game addict, my parents always looked at games as a waste of time, others would say, "Why do you want to do that as a career, there is no money in it?" and I just responded, "Have you even heard of Mark Zuckerberg or Cliff Bleszinski?" I always knew that I, too was a video game addict, but not in a bad way only in a committed and dedicated way. Being that this video was released 12 years ago, hearing the addict saying that one day soon video games will look and feel just like movies and real life gave me butterflies because that is where we are now, and we are going beyond just graphics. The new mind-blowing tech is all about AI and the underneath of the games we play. Also, hearing him speak of the true fear and happiness a video game can elicit shook me because it truly is a better learning mechanism than text books; you can see the world changing and moving around you, interact with the historical figures you read about, and truly grasp the reasoning behind choices of others. The line between games and reality is blurring with every day; driving in a game can teach you to drive in real life, learning to shoot in a game can improve your hunting season accuracy, and even running in a platformer can teach you to avoid real world obstacles. Of course, we must always understand the line between real world and gaming, but we also must continue to use the digital playground to improve and fix the real world; this will lead to the most innovative future we could imagine and push the next Bill Gates or Steve Jobs out of their shell to reveal themselves to the world.

Animating a Photoreal Digital Face

By Paul Debevec
TED Talks 2009
Computer Animation

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III The technology that goes into creating photorealistic asset, whether human or furniture, is a daunting task. Seeing how detailed the process was back in 2009 is incredible, and the process of multiple images at a time reminds me of multi-threaded applications in programming because of the try fail result. Animation has always blown my mind, to be frank, because I have no skill for it what-so-ever. Animation, while working hand in hand with Developers, have a much more artistic and creative technique that is absent in the developer job, because the developer makes the engine used for the animation. For example, the programmer makes the shader and renderer in the engine, which is then used to bring the asset to life with animation and design. I love animation because it allows your creativity to flow and you control how and when a character move. When an artist is allowed the proper creativity, it will motivate everyone else within an industry to be on par with the new standards, just like when a new addition to the C++ library comes out.

When I develop a game, I require the talent of people like Mr. Debevec, and that is because the programmer must know the needs of the animation team to ensure that the proper toolset is being developed. Even when programming the firing of a weapon or running of a character, you must ensure the system is dynamic and fluid enough that the animation team and programmers can add particle systems, extra blended animations, and more. It is very inspiring that companies such as these have been working so diligently throughout time beginning before even the early 2000s; the strides of these industries have brought to light the ability to control robotic arms, understand people and how they work, and gives so much emotion to a game or movie and gets tears flowing from the audience. I have learned that animation is more than moving bones, it is granting life to an otherwise lifeless body and giving it a personality. Animators give the character a walk, and way of talking, a way of moving, and a way of interacting; animators are one of the central parts to the project. Many people don't realize just how in-depth animation can be, they think it stops at the storyboarding and drawing phases, but it takes a whole team coming together to get that lifeless asset to appear how they do on screen. It is especially hard when you have to really dig for the character and make them look how everyone would imagine them looking like in certain situations; this can take years of research. For example, just to get the lead actress in the animated Disney film Brave's hair to be so lifelike, they spent more than two years just making the physics for the hair. If the hair were any different, the movie would have been received and reviewed very differently.

Future of Location Based Mobile Games

By Ville Vesterinen
Assembly Seminar 2011
Mobile Development

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https://www.sttinfo.fi/data/images/legacy/img/6c3509df-bb91-11dd-81d0-5978eab081e2.jpg

IV This video is from 2011 and Mr. Vesterinen speaks about how there were no notable location-based games, and he continues to talk about the broad uses of the category in the future. If you take a modern eye to the subject, Pokémon Go, The Walking Dead, and Jurassic World Alive have taken the world by storm and is one of the highest grossing genres of modern mobile games. It is baffling to see the immense progress in the real time location games, and it has become so large now-a-days that people have walked off bridges while playing they were so immersed. The most inspiring part of all the speech is that the genre has taken off, and if it weren't for companies like Grey Area, Ville Vesterinen's company, we would not have Pokémon Go or any of those same genre games. The fact that he mentioned many modern game genres come from platforms like Facebook brightened my eyes because Facebook gaming, now that I think back to it, is what got my parents, and many of my friend's parents, into other types of games like console. Similarly, the Wii was a transition period for many who wanted to get into gaming and opened so many possibilities for future technology like Microsoft Kinect. The motto of, "People don't just connect to each other. They connect through a shared object." (-Jyri Engestrom) is incredible, because there has never been a time better than today to prove that; with the early emergence of multiplayer and online worlds, people are connecting through everything from sharing weapons in Fortnite Save the World, to a barrier built in Call of Duty, community is imperative to the gaming community.

This speech was not just about games and how they are affected by adding location, this was about the fact that location-based games create a shared world that bonds and introduces people to each other through a means by which they can happily do so. Achieving a friendship in a location service is an agreed upon medium to socialize, especially for those who have issues or disorders that prevent them from socializing how they need to; without proper socialization, humans cannot survive. Plus, meeting people with similar interests that are nearby leads to brilliant minds collaborating and potential taking the world even farther into the future with their joint innovations. Humans are social by nature, and it is so relieving and easing to know that people are becoming so social. This makes the idea in a video game spark into a revolution so much faster and shows that people crave each other's interactions.

After hearing Mr. Vesterinen and his ideals, it gets me hyped for tomorrow because what was being loved and worked on so diligently by his company is now one of the largest trends to hit the world, just under Battle Royale on that list.

"State of Unreal" GDC 2018 - Human-driven digital characters – 3Lateral

By Vladimir Mikhailovich
Game Developers Conference 2018
Game Animation and Design

View Video

https://vfxserbia.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/3lateral-gdc1.jpg?w=672

V Let me begin by saying how close I am to this video; I have been using Unreal Engine for years and following this project from the beginning. Seeing the likes of Andy Serkis interacting with a big-name video game company reassures all of us game developers that the future is yet to happen, and the best is yet to come. Being able to see even the eyelid flickers that he does in real life happen in the 3D digital world is immaculate and redefining, it just shows how much progress both the film and gaming industry have been making in recent times. It is wonderful having the employees from Epic interacting so much with the company is perfect and what the industry has needed and seeing how they interact with the model real time is insane. Being able to manipulate and control so many variations of the actor give so much more immersion and benefits to the story that it is crazy not to use it. Being able to translate a human performance and remap it onto another skeleton is beyond any capabilities we thought we would have 20 years ago, and seeing the massive support and public outcry for more of this tech shows, again, the commitment of the people to the art.

Video games and movies have moved people for as long as anyone alive can remember, even silent films. The reason silent films gave us such fine control over the audience is because you could elicit the emotion you want by visuals; how a character on scene walks, moves, and talks, in real life and video games, can hint you in on how that character is feeling, what emotions they are experiencing, and the potential outcomes because of the actions. For example, it is not a silent film but Gears of War 3 by Epic Games (Spoiler Alert), Dom's wife turns to ashes in front of him, and you have been playing Dom for years now, so you begin to cry because it is as though your wife was perishing. Being a hardcore fan that I am, I even had a picture of Dom and Maria with writing on the back from Dom to Maria. The fact of the matter is that games can elicit more emotion than ever before because actors, writers, developers, and designers from all over the world and all professional categories are coming together and creating communal masterpieces that have ideas from everywhere in them. Because of this, video games and movies are becoming more universal than language, pictures, or even sound. Entertainment and Media is the new form of cave wall drawings, but with so much more finesse and detail.