

# Get Jamming!

Aspiring developers create a video game in a weekend

The Train2Game 48 hour Game Jam took place from March 25th through to March 27th During the event the Train2Game blog caught up with both students and crew. The following is an interview with freelance Game Developer and Game Jam advisor Graham Bryan which took place half way through the event. The interview will also be available to listen to at [www.audioboo.fm/train2game](http://www.audioboo.fm/train2game)

All proceeds from the Train2Game Game Jam will go to The Prince's Trust.

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**T2G:** Hi Graham, what first of all can you tell us what experience you have in the industry?

**BRYAN:** Well I've been working in the industry now for about seven years. Five years of that I actually ran my own digital media studio where we were specialising in casual game development, and a further two years of that I've been working as a freelance Game Developer; again predominantly in the casual gaming arena.

**T2G:** We're about halfway through the Game Jam now, how do you think it's going overall?

**BRYAN:** I've got to be honest; I've done three game jams in the last six months and in terms of prior preparation and proper planning at the beginning of the jam, this is by far the most superior that I've seen. We're were at the Global Game Jam in January where there's a lot of actual professional developers that go together, and even then there was a lot less attention put to the actual planning process at the beginning, and by the time we get to the end of it, it did show.

**T2G:** So the Train2Game students have been coping well so far?

**BRYAN:** Yeah, they've been well; they are open to advice, they know when to ask for advice and the right questions to ask as well. So I've actually been extremely impressed with the level of competence above everything else.

**T2G:** What game has impressed you the most so far?

**BRYAN:** We're kind of at the point now where we're starting to actually see trickles of actual games being put together, so it's a little bit too early to say in terms of the actual game mechanics. There is definitely a couple of interesting angles that people have done to try and put a different twist on it which I'm looking forward to seeing the final games. There's definitely a few interesting ideas, but I think we're looking at probably another 4 to 6 I can actually get hands on and actually start playing with anything.



**T2G:** So, what are some of the most interesting ideas you've seen?

**BRYAN:** Due to the nature of the theme that's been put out – it is the *Sherlock Holmes* theme – there's instantly a subsection of casual games that you think are the obvious choice to go for with that kind of thing; and we probably have about 40% of the teams who are actually going for that. But then we have some people who have focussed on what may be more of a subcomponent of the Sherlock Holmes story and expanding that out and exploring that in a little bit more detail. We've got a couple of people where they've not gone for the traditional approach of Sherlock Holmes, and we've definitely got some interesting graphical styles coming out as well.

**T2G:** Tell me about the interesting styles and graphics...

**BRYAN:** There are a couple of styles which seem to have gone for an extremely cartoony style – or a Japanese chibi kind of style – which because of the nature of the games and the technologies people are using for developing . Not only is that unique in that it stands out from the others, I actually think it'll work best once all the assets have been put together, because they've not gone for the ultra-realistic kind of a approach, so it gives them a little bit of creative license and it can make some of the stuff they're doing quite interesting. We've got quite a few that have gone for a more a realism then abstraction – so when people are using stock photos as a base and then abstracting that into their own graphical styles. And like I said we've got this other end where people are going completely away from realism and they're trying to adapt the Sherlock into it themselves. So there's an interesting division.

**T2G:** And finally, how can attending a Game Jam like this benefit the students?

**BRYAN:** The key thing is it's a mini-development pipeline. Especially as Train2Game is through distant learning, I definitely think they benefit from this kind of exercise – if nothing else from the teamwork development skills – from seeing from what goes into the development of the game and actually working closely with other developers as well. So, that is the key thing – actually understanding the process – it's a good environment to make mistakes now that they would end up doing if they went into industry anyway. So it really is kind of like a mini, compressed, real world experiment.

**T2G:** Thanks Graham

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*Dave Sharp, Head of Placements and Incubators at Train2Game, added "Train2Game's Game Jam is for all those with a passion for gaming, a test of skill, creativity and imagination. A small group acting as a team exemplifies where games development is heading and the Game Jam model brings that together beautifully. I'm expecting to see some new and crazy ideas flow out of this event and prove that the participants are up to the challenge!"*



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## About Train2Game

Created in 2008, Train2Game is the only online blended learning college that offers people the chance to qualify as a Games Designer, Games Developer, Games Artist & Animator or Games QA Tester with a TIGA Diploma and was created to meet the specific industry skills shortages as recognised by TIGA.

