

Get Jamming!

Aspiring developers create a video game in a weekend

From March 25th to March 27th, Train2Game, in association with the University of Bedfordshire, held its first ever Game Jam with all the proceeds going to the Prince's Trust. Train2Game Game Development student Phillip Stevens was one of over 100 participants in the event and the Train2Game blog caught up with him on the Saturday afternoon – halfway through the event – to see how he was getting on. You can read the transcript below, or listen to it at www.audioboo.fm/train2game

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

T2G: We're about halfway through the Game Jam at the time of recording, how do you feel it has gone so far?

STEVENS: I've found it's gone well considering I picked up a team three weeks beforehand. We've gotten along well and we've produced approximately half the game now. We're just going through the final stages of the final level and then we're going to polish it.

T2G: What skills learned on your Train2Game course so far have you been using throughout this event?

STEVENS: Mainly meeting new people, I feel that's always helped. I only knew these people through the Train2Game forum and now we're working together we know how everybody works, so it seems a lot easier to work with these people when you're with them in person as opposed to through something like Skype.

T2G: The theme of the event is *Sherlock Holmes*; did that surprise you at all? And what idea have you chosen for your game?

STEVENS: It surprised me, although the first thing that came to my mind was a game like Maniac Mansion or Monkey Island where it's a text based and side scrolling thing with the mouse. So we've gone for a simple point and click system where you interact with one object, and that object will interact with another creating the answer to a puzzle that you'll then solve to move onto the next clue.

T2G: In this short intense period that's a lot different to most of the time in the games industry, what have you learned and how do you think it has benefitted you?

STEVENS: I think I've learned a lot. I've learnt that I can stay up for 24 hours with lack of caffeine, lack of sleep and still produce a lot of work and I feel it'll serve me well in the future.

T2G: Have you picked up any extra skills here today?

STEVENS: Yeah, definitely. I didn't know how to do certain things with Audacity and other music producing software, and I've learned how to do some extra stuff in Gamemaker which is always a bonus.



T2G: And how do you see the next half of the Game Jam going?

STEVENS: I can see it getting very messy now, everybody is tired. I think everybody has stayed up – minus a few people – for...well, up until now really and I think it's going to get to a few of them. There's just going to be us and a few other teams who will probably not struggle with it as much.

T2G: How do you think the whole experience is benefiting you as a Train2Game student in terms of finding a career in future?

STEVENS: I think this will definitely be something we can put on our CVs as it shows we've had the dedication not only to travel to Luton but also to stay up for 48 hours just to create a game in such a short period of time only knowing what that topic is on the day we arrived.

T2G: Final question, if you had the opportunity to do one would you do another Game Jam?

STEVENS: Most definitely yeah.

T2G: Thanks Philip

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!"

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.

