





# Introductions

- Michael Daly
  - Organized 2008 Triangle Game Jam
- Michael Lee
  - Organized 2009 Triangle Global Game Jam



# What We'd Like to Cover

- What are game jams?
- The benefits of game jams for developers
- How to be successful in a game jam
- How to organize and run your own game jam



# WHAT ARE GAME JAMS?



# The Definition

- An event where:
  - You make a game
  - Within a certain amount of time
- That's it!



# A One Slide History

- The first
  - Indie Game Jam
- Others followed quickly
  - Lithuanian Game Jam
  - Ad Lib Game Development Society (Dallas)
  - Nordic Game Jam
  - Toronto Game Jam
  - Global Game Jam
  - Etc.



# Firefighter

- Doug Church, Justin Hall, Chris Hecker





# Outside Influences

- Game jams inspired by similar events in other fields
  - Poetry slams
  - Musical jams
  - Demo scene parties
- Other similar events
  - Experimental Gameplay Project
  - Ludum Dare
  - FJORG!
  - Even just rapid prototyping (hi Vince!)



# All About the Differences

- Differences in motivation
  - Indie Game Jam
  - Toronto Game Jam
  - Global Game Jam
- Differences in approach
  - Indie Game Jam
  - Ad Lib Game Development Society

# They Are What We Thought They Were

- An event to make games in a time-constrained environment
- Every game jam is unique
  - Differences driven by objectives and motivations
- Game jams are what you make of them!



# THE BENEFITS OF GAME JAMS



# You Have Fun

- It's fun
- A chance to be creative
- Get inspired



# You Make A Game

- Duh!
- Increases chances of success
- You can share it
- Make games with freedom
- And much more!



# Musical Dragon Twirler

- Brad Acree , Jonathan Fischhoff, Bruce Shankle





# You Gain Experience Points

- New problems
- New roles and responsibilities
- Go through entire production cycle
- Learn new technology
- Make mistakes (cheaply)



# You Learn New Skills

- Decision-making
- Time management
- Speed
- Adaptation
- Balance
- Discipline



# Pixelated Martini Roller

- Michael Noland, Vincent Scheib, Nolan Walker





# Communication, Communication

- Meet new people
- Learn teamwork
- Get team experience
- Build a community



# PARTICIPATING IN GAME JAMS



# First and Most Importantly

- Control scope!
  - By far the most important thing
  - Be realistic with time given
  - Focus on bare essentials



# Getting Prepared

- Have tools and tech ready to go
  - Also, don't reinvent the wheel
- Know what you're doing (sorta)
  - Unless you don't
- Take advantage of early access



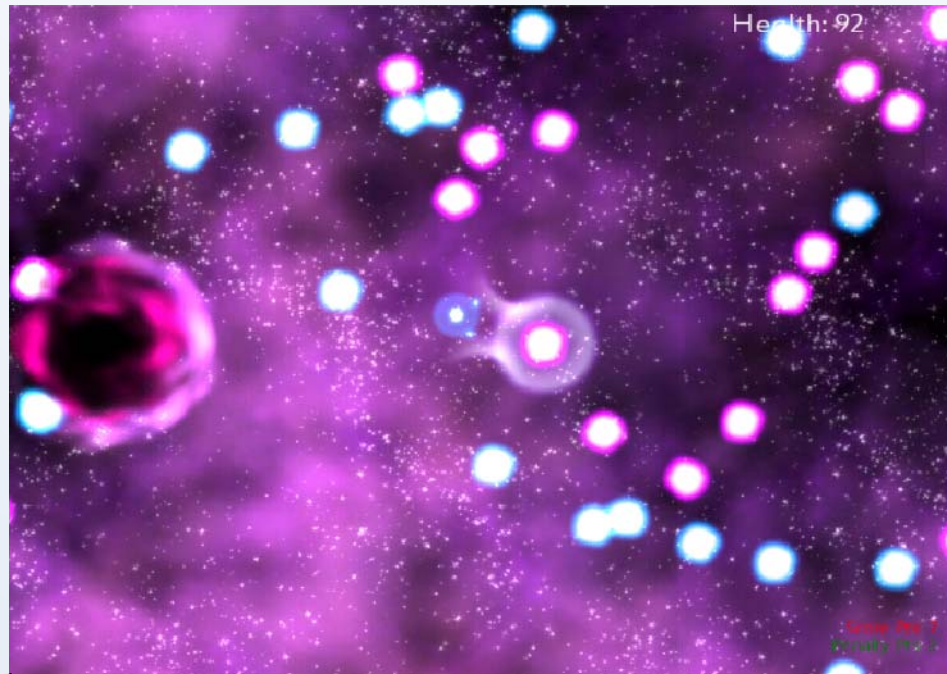
# Planning and Project Management

- Have a plan!
  - Or have a plan to have a plan
  - Write things down
- Design should fit the team
- Tiers of development
- Schedule, schedule, schedule
  - Fast start, early finish
  - Avoid the creep!
- Have a producer



# SpaceFish

- Nick Darnell, Michael Noland





# Other Random Tips

- Save early, save often
- Be flexible
- Communicate with others
- Don't burn yourself out
- Be willing to fail
- Have fun!



# ORGANIZING YOUR OWN GAME JAM



# Things to Cover

- Venue
- Participants
- Themes and Rules
- Costs
- Setup
- Organization
- Flow
- Follow-up



# Venue

- Don't underestimate it!
  - Affects cost, access, attendance, security, equipment, and schedule
- Possible venue locations:
  - Game studios
  - Academic institutions
  - Meeting rooms (hotel/convention centers)
  - House/garage/basement
- Go wide
  - Make a list of questions (cost, attendance, etc.)
  - Talk to studio heads, department heads, marketing, people with nice garages
  - Use your connections



# Participants

- How many?
  - Determine interest
  - Tied closely to venue choice
  - More people = harder to organize
- Who?
  - Talk to local game studios
  - Contact university departments
  - Check out online communities
  - Get your friends
- Examples
  - Using a pre-existing group
  - Invitation-only
  - First come, first serve



# Themes and Rules

- Theme is optional
- Creative constraint
- Consider potential vs. difficulty
- Different themes
  - 100,000 guys
  - Cheese
  - Mad-libs
  - Global Game Jam
- Licensing
  - Open-source? Public distribution?



# Costs

- Potential costs
  - Venue
  - Food
  - Equipment
  - IT
  - Lodging/transportation
- How to cover?
  - Registration fee
  - Sponsors (game studios, tech companies, universities, government)
- Game jam for free
  - Venue and support from sponsors, help from volunteers
- Compensating sponsors
  - IGDA meetings
  - Positive media attention



# Getting Setup

- Electrical concerns
  - Load vs. capacity
  - Access to circuit breaker
- Equipment
  - Tables, chairs, whiteboards, extension cords, network cable, surge protectors, routers, etc.
- Facility/IT
  - Network access
  - Source control
  - Tools and tech
- Setup/Breakdown
  - Have things ready
  - Schedule time on both ends
  - Get help from others



# Getting Organized

- Make a website
  - Reference information before the jam
  - Post results afterwards
- Inform participants
  - Venue access, contact info, what to bring, security policies, licensing, etc.
  - Event flow and schedule
  - Theme (if necessary)
- Self-documentation
  - Readme: contributors, description, instructions
  - Take screenshots
  - Final game build



# A Flow for the Game Jam

- Have a MC
- Discuss theme as a group
- Thinking time
- Propose ideas
- Cull proposals
- Create teams from best ideas
- Review team balance
- Planning
- Milestone reminders
- Deadline
- Presentations



# Following Up

- Post games and results
  - To your website
  - Use local IGDA chapter
- Keep in touch with participants

# References (History)

- Indie Game Jam history
  - Chris Hecker
  - <http://www.indiegamejam.com/igj0/#0th>
- Firefighter
  - <http://www.indiegamejam.com/igj0/games.html#firefighter>
- Lithuanian Game Jam history
  - Renaldas Zioma
  - <http://ltgamejam.org/>
- Toronto Game Jam motivations
  - Rob Segal

# References (Benefits)

- Musical Dragon Twirler
  - <http://trianglegamejam.com/games.php#MusicalDragonTwirler>
- Pixelated Martini Roller
  - <http://trianglegamejam.com/games.php#PixelatedMartiniRoller>

# References (Participation)

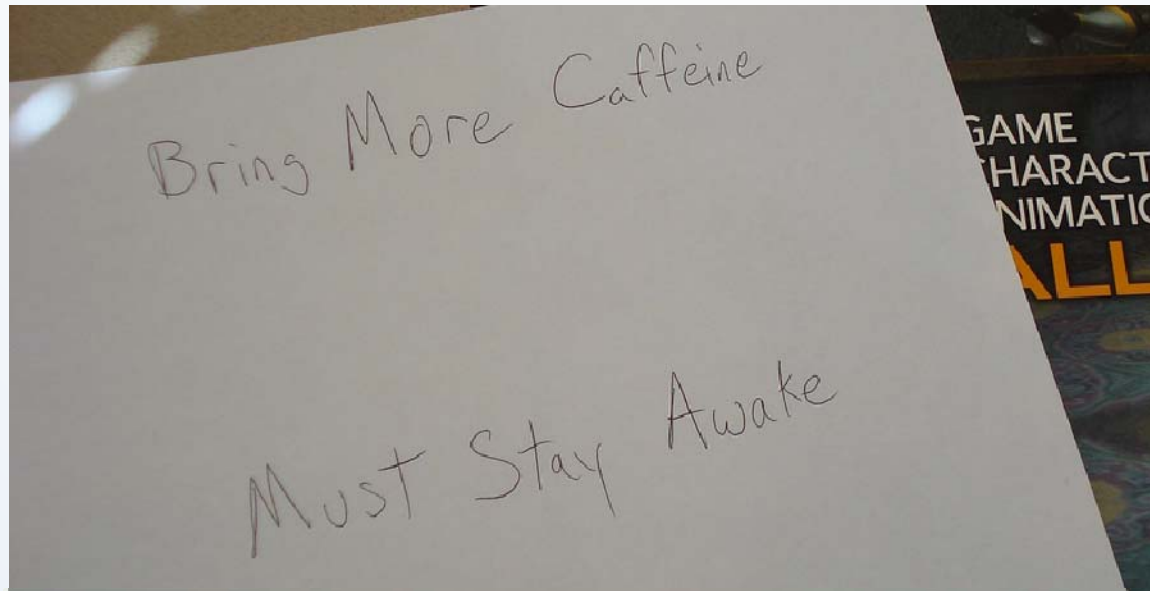
- SpaceFish
  - <http://globalgamejam.org/games/spacefish>
- Tiers of Development
  - Squirrel Eiserloh
  - <http://www.algds.org/#Advice>

# Useful Links

- Triangle Game Jam
  - <http://trianglegamejam.com/>
- Global Game Jam
  - <http://globalgamejam.org/>
- Ad Lib Game Development Society
  - <http://www.algds.org/>
- Indie Game Jam
  - <http://www.indiegamejam.com/>
- Nordic Game Jam
  - <http://www.nordicgamejam.org/>
- Toronto Game Jam
  - <http://www.tojam.ca/>

# In No Particular Order

- Thanks to
  - Michael Lubker (Austin)
  - Mike Reddy (Newport, South Wales, UK)
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  - Ian Schreiber (Global Game Jam)
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  - Rich Elswick (Detroit)
  - Veronica Zammitto (Vancouver, BC, Canada)
  - Foaad (Santa Cruz)
  - Jose Zagal (Chicago)
  - Philip Tan (Singapore)
  - Chris Hecker (Indie Game Jam)
  - Renaldas Zioma (Lithuanian Game Jam)
  - Rob Segal (Toronto Game Jam)
- Apologies to anyone we forgot



Questions?

Slides and notes will be available online

Michael Daly – [duelingmonkeys.com](http://duelingmonkeys.com)

Michael Lee – [gamedrinkcode.com](http://gamedrinkcode.com)

**THANKS FOR LISTENING!**