

daniel p wright

daniel.wright@zoemode.com

Little Big Adventure

A year and a half in the games industry

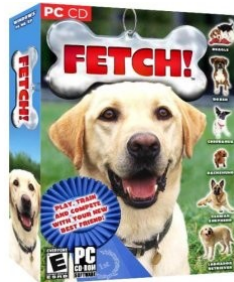
- You
 - Discipline? Year? Girls??
- Me
- Virtual Playground
- Zoë Mode (Kuju Brighton)
 - What we do and why it's good
 - Studio atmosphere
- Small Studios vs. Larger Studios
- Top Tips

- Oxford Brookes University 2002-2004
 - Computer Systems / Multimedia Systems
- University of Teesside 2004-2007
 - Computer Games Programming BSc
- Virtual Playground
 - Industrial Placement 2005-2006
 - Returned after graduating 2007
- Zoë Mode 2007-Present



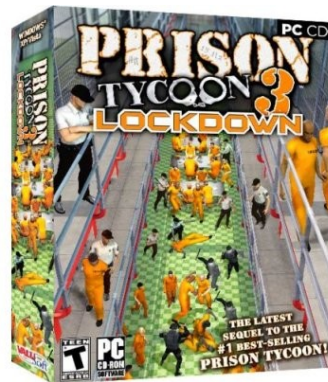
- Independent games developer based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Specialises in “Tycoon” style games aimed at a low price-point
- Currently makes PC games exclusively
- Small team of ~10 developers

- Three titles during placement
 - Saw the team grow from 2 coders to 4



- Learned a huge amount
 - No real option when you're half the programming team
- Large impact on the final product

- Returned after graduating to work on two more titles



Zoë Mode

- World's leading independent developer of music, party and social games
- Formerly Kuju Brighton
 - Still part of Kuju, but rebranded to reflect focus on music and lifestyle games
- Develop on all major console platforms
 - PSP, PS2, Wii, PS3, X-Box 360
- Currently ~120 developers
 - Multiple projects means smaller teams

- Focus is on “games for everyone”
 - Accessible; inclusive
 - Social
- Diverse market – diverse workforce
 - Other disciplines, such as music
 - Roughly 3× as many women as average
- Explore new ideas
 - The Lab

- Important
 - Broaden gaming market
 - Part of games “growing up”
 - Morally and socially beneficial
 - In your face, Jack Thompson!
- Rewarding
 - Games have mass, mainstream appeal
 - Be part of the evolution of gaming
 - Broaden bragging audience

- Projects typically more interesting
 - Bigger licenses, more ambitious tech...
- More resources allow for more “polish”
- Better support structure
 - When things go wrong, they can be managed.
- Recognisable studio and game titles
 - Not just for bragging; looks good on CV.
- Opportunities for promotions, etc.

- You learn FAST!
- Much broader experience
 - You touch many areas of the codebase
 - Less prone to specialisation
- Quickly become very important
 - But with great power comes responsibility
- Greater ownership over “your” code
- Less bureaucracy

- Small-team projects
 - Each individual's role is important
 - Code ownership, field “experts”
 - Pride in your work
- Large, established studio
 - Known with publishers, license holders
 - Get decent games signed
 - Resources available to turn your smaller team into a bigger one and help manage crunch.

- If you're good, you don't need to worry
 - Just make it clear you're good
- If you're not good, become good
 - Practise. Work.
 - Pursue stuff you enjoy
 - Presumably this is why you're here

Once you're good...

- Every other applicant will have a degree
 - So, nice to have something more
 - But careful! Don't forsake the degree
- Hobby projects & competitions
 - 72 Hour Game Development Competition
- Cool factor
 - “WiiAction”: Timing
- Industrial Placement

- Selective Portfolio
 - Choose your best work
- Website
 - Make it look good!
 - Consider CMS such as Wordpress
- Blog
 - Very powerful tool to sell yourself
 - Gives the reader the impression that they are getting to know the “real you”
 - Don't fill it with banal rubbish

jobs@zoemode.com

Thank you