How to get students to avoid your office hours?
Don’t tell them where your office is.

Engineering 2
549B
Today

Permission Not Required
Game Industry Structure
Formal Abstract Design Tools
How do I enter the game industry?
Permission Not Required
“I can’t get into the industry.”
“I want to break in.”
An Industry Has Evolved Around It
Academic Programs Have Evolved Around It

Top Game Design Programs

Related Articles

- Top game design programs
- Top undergraduate schools for video game design
- Top graduate schools for video game design

Learn More

- Read the press release
- Game design survey methodology

The Princeton Review ranks the top undergraduate and graduate game design programs.

The Princeton Review has selected the best undergraduate and graduate institutions in the United States and Canada where you can study video game design. We ranked the top 15 undergraduate and top 15 graduate programs. We gave another 20 outstanding programs "Honorable Mention" designations, saluting 50 schools in all that we highly recommend for game design study.

We chose these programs based on a 2012 survey of administrators at institutions offering game design coursework and/or degrees. Selection criteria included the quality of the curriculum, faculty credentials, facilities and infrastructure as well as data on scholarships, financial aid and career opportunities.
This door is an illusion. It is not real.
You + Computer = Game
You = Game
YOU DO NOT NEED PERMISSION OR A LETTER FROM HR.
MAKE A GAME NOW.

SAY YOU ARE
“IN THE INDUSTRY”
AND YOU ARE.

Now is the time to experiment.
GAME INDUSTRY STRUCTURE
Publisher Model

- Development Studio
- Publisher
- Players
Publisher Model

- Publisher agrees to publish game in return for percentage of revenue.
- Funding varies
- AAA usually 100% publisher-funded in return for 80% of revenue.
- Mobile usually 100% developer-funded in return for 60/40% share after platform costs.
Publisher Model

Publisher

First Party Approval
First Party Approval

- Microsoft = Technical Certification Requirements
- Sony = Technical Requirements for Certification
- Nintendo = Lotcheck
- Steam approval process
- Apple approval process
- Apple / FB takes 30%
- PSN / XBLA takes 30%
When you see a logo appear on someone’s site, it means that they have conditional approval from first party.

First Party Approval

- First Party
- PlayStation™
- Xbox 360™
- Nintendo
Direct-to-Player Model

Development Studio

Players
Direct-to-Player Model

Development Studio

Players
Apple’s crackdown on app-ranking manipulation: Confused developers caught in the dragnet
Direct-to-Player Model

Passage

Minecraft
Why not direct to player?
“User acquisition”

Players = $
And while you’re fighting your way through direct-to-player, someone will copy your game.
Development Studio Structure

- Studio Head
- Technical Director
- Creative Director
- Art Director
- Project Lead
Each project lead heads a unique project.
Project Lead

- Project lead may be a unique role or it may be filled by one of the leads.
  - Explicitly named or assumed.
- Project lead may also be called:
  - Game Director
  - Game Lead
  - Development Director
Development Studio Structure

- Project Lead
- Lead Designer
- Lead Artist
- Lead Engineer
- Producer
Development Studio Structure

Creative Director

IP Holder

Project Lead

Lead Level Designer

Lead Designer

Level Name

Level Name

Level Name

Level Name

Level Name
Development Studio Structure

Art Director

Project Lead

Lead Artist

IP Holder

Lead Level Designer

Animation Lead

Character Lead

Outsourcing Manager

Artists
Development Studio Structure

- Lead Designer
- Lead Artist
- Lead Programmer
Sole != Lead
Developer != Programmer
Development Studio Structure

DOOM 4
Company of Heroes 100
Bastion 7
Forsaken Planet 5
Costume Quest 25
Free Realms 150
SW:TOR 500
Defiance 150
Super Hexagon 1
PvZ Adventures 40
Medal of Honor 90
Formal Abstract Design Patterns
Doug Church, 1999
“The design is the game; without it you would have a CD full of data, but no experience.”
THAT SHIT DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE
Sometimes with good reason.
• Lack of a common design vocabulary.
  • Fun
  • Not Fun
• We analyze games for graphics using specifics, but fail to do so for play.
• Design is often hidden (per unit cost balance, for instance)
• **Formal:** Precise definition.
• **Abstract:** Underlying ideas, not specifics per game.
• **Design:** For designers.
• **Tools:** Things we can use going forward.
First FADT

INTENTION: Making an implementable plan of one's own creation in response to the current situation in the game world and one's understanding of the game play options.
PERCEIVABLE CONSEQUENCE: A clear reaction from the game world to the action of the player.
Perceivable consequence?
How to find them?

Analyze games.

Let’s try.
Church proposes a framework (FADT) that tries to:

- Create a common vocabulary.
- Create precise definitions so that Thing A can be explained to someone else.
- Focus on underlying ideas, not specific game constructs.
FADTs are created by:

- Identifying and collecting key aspects that make a particular game work by analyzing games.
- Abstracting and formalizing those things.
• Reading: “I have no words, and I must design.” - Greg Costikyan
• Play: Passage by Jason Rohrer