Making Games

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About Me

- Born at a young age, I’ve always loved videogames.
- Entered the game industry in the mid-‘90’s, when I joined LucasArts as an entry-level QA tester.
- Worked at Namco, then Factor 5, Sony (PlayStation), Intel, and now back at PlayStation.
- My opinions are my own and do not reflect the views, opinions, positions, or philosophies of any of my employers, past or present. Please, don’t get me fired.
You Shouldn’t Make Games
Why You Shouldn’t Make Games

- Crunch. You’ll do it, despite all the best intentions. And the romance fades quickly.
- Haters.
- Incredibly low ROI. The average Indie game will make more money off a Steam sale (and it won’t be much) than what it’ll make when it initially releases.
- You will work on some of the most soul-sucking creatively bereft games ever.
- Virtually zero job security.
  - Most developers have been making games for 3-6 years. Burn out is very high.
  - No unions.
  - Most (over 55%) games are self-funded.
“But, Chuck, I’m different!”

- “This is all I’ve ever wanted to do with my life.”
  - Everyone working in the game industry is doing it for the passion.

- “My idea is amaze-balls!”
  - That genre-busting idea you have? I’ve heard the pitch.
  - What’s more, what guarantee do you have that anyone would actually pay for your game?

- “Once people play my game, it’ll sell itself.”
  - Discoverability is a huge problem. YUUUGE. On all storefronts.

- “I went to university for this.”
  - What you learn here is only the beginning.
  - “You know nothing, Jon Snow.”
Obligatory Chart

The Dunning-Kruger Effect

With apologies to Kruger and Dunning's 1999 study "Unskilled and Unaware of It: How Difficulties in Recognizing One's Own Incompetence Lead to Inflated Self-Assessments"
You Should Make Games!
Why Make Games?

- To get rich because you have an amazing game idea guaranteed to print money?
- Because making games is a dream job? “They play games all day!”
- You love to work in a collaborative environment? You’re a team player!
- Because videogames have literally changed your life?
- You want to give someone else the same “feels” you had the first time you played your favorite game.
- Because you truly, honestly, cannot imagine doing anything else?
Make Games Because...

... despite all the reasons not to do it, you know that making games is a noble endeavor made all the more crucial in light of current events. You are motivated by genuine smiles. You see value in “games” as a critical art form capable of eliciting true empathy, and you’re excited about having even a small part in the medium’s evolution.
Getting Started Advice

▪ Start with a Core Competency.
  – UCSC will teach you so many things. Most established studios need to fill specialized positions (Level Designer, Netcode Engineer, Character Animator).
  – Know a little about everything, but make sure to know a lot about something critical.

▪ Start somewhere big, doing something small.

▪ Network. Go to the industry parties and mixers, but don’t be That Guy. Be genuine and respectful.

▪ Remember everything Mr. Dreskin ever taught you.
Other Random Advice

▪ Never stop improving.
  – This class will teach completely different things next year because the game industry is *constantly changing*. You need to keep up, especially after you graduate.

▪ Prototype on paper. Make a card game or board game. Love LEGOs.

▪ Watch what you say.

▪ Always remember why you got into this crazy business in the first place.
  – The second that reason no longer motivates you, find new motivation or GTF out.

▪ Avoid “Feature Creep.” She’s an insidious succubus and she’ll be your undoing.

▪ Remember that the creative process is incredibly difficult to schedule, regardless of your chosen discipline. But you should still try.
End

Questions?