

[Note: QQQ is my editorial mark to indicate that I should return to this later.]

[Plan: Edit on Monday morning/afternoon after filling in as many of the QQQs as possible.]

The second annual Seattle Indies Game Jam arrived at unexpected results!

The Seattle Indies worked with the Pacific Science Center to host a collaborative "game jam" environment. The event sold out with a total of 100 people that met and built videogames in teams or individually over the course of 48 hours - from 7 PM on Friday to 4 PM on Sunday - based around a central theme. The Game Jam was hosted by the Pacific Science Center in the Jeff and Alicia Carnevali Pavilion's Ackerley Family Exhibit Gallery, just past the IMAX stadium.

With the ubiquity of videogame development, game jams have become an increasingly popular way to develop videogames within a short period of time. Videogames made in these environments are usually short games that could be played in anywhere between 5-minute experiences and multiple-hour multiplayer games. Generic elements might be pre-built before the start of the game jam, but the idea is to build something within the game jam period of time as a challenge and as a learning opportunity. [QQQ Edit 11/4 10 AM - including a more brief summary about what [a game jam is...](#) QQQ]

The reason for this is out of utility and practicality. As Stephen, audio programmer for Goodnight, Rowan said, "it's better to make the mechanics easy rather than overtaxing developers with something too big." TJ, [QQQ - game designer for yet to be named game], echoed this sentiment: "People want to make a Mario Odyssey game but end up spinning their wheels the whole time because they can kinda program it, but can't. Instead, they should say 'I think I can do that' and work toward that."

The idea, which is shared by many of the other developers here, is that within the 48-hour framework, the game will usually be completed to a minimum viable state within the first 24 hours, leaving the remaining time to bug test and, and as Ray with [QQQ - VR game yet to be named] said, "implement stretch goals like extra levels."

The game jam format can change the aspect of game development in multiple ways. The location of the game jam, for example, can affect the productivity, motivations, and creativity of game developers. The Pacific Science Center is a venue that inspires creativity for people of all ages. Friday night, everyone was ready to go and went well into the night. Some teams were up as late as 4 AM on Saturday morning. [QQQ - Saturday] [QQQ - Sunday]

Additionally, the limited window for creating a videogame changes the workflow, the focus isn't on polished perfection, rather, creating a good enough product before the deadline. It's a balance between not being too ambitious with the project to not achieve any results and ending up with an underwhelming project. Some programmers will spend time after the game jam is over to polish their games until they feel it's ready to publish to distribution platforms, while others will move on after completing the project. The decision would be based on the result of the game.

The Pacific Science Center hosted the event and ensured a secure space for the game developers during the day and night. During the day, there were enough people in the main area so game developers could go out to lunch and not have to worry about their personal equipment. During the night, security detail monitored the building and grounds to ensure that there were no incidents on-site. There was a Pacific Science Center employee around - Michael and Julia - throughout Friday and Saturday evening and to make sure the spaces provided for sleeping within the building remained safe and secure. Most everyone that stayed overnight took public transportation or private transportation to and from the Seattle Center, whereas people that drove home in the evening would park in the parking garage or on the street.

Most of the groups and individuals making these games had never met prior to Friday evening. Some had been in the Seattle Indies scene working on other games in proximity to other game developers but had never found the opportunity to work together until this Game Jam. The videogame developers might continue working on their games after Sunday and will

retain the rights in case they want to sell the rights to the game on any sort of PC gaming platform, but most just want to work on games for fun.

In the weeks leading up to the Game Jam, the Seattle Indies made a series of announcements on the [Facebook page](#), first asking for all people to go through a background check, then posting a link to a dedicated Discord channel to organize. There was a general chatroom for everyone and a looking for group chatroom for people to organize in advance.

STAFF

[]Seattle Indies- Tim

[]Seattle Center- Andrew, Michael, and QQQ

[]Judges- Brooke, Fernando, QQQ, QQQ

[]Volunteers- Andrew, Anthony, Chris, Ket, and William

TEAMS

[]QQQ #closequarters [QQQ-Ray's team]

[]QQQ #reverse-fishing-game

[]QQQ #nature-valley-boys

[]QQQ #droffbeet

[]QQQ #sqeak

[]QQQ #bar-fight-game

[]QQQ #vrfunkyroom

[]QQQ Andrew, Robert, Sarah, and Steven - Tree game

[]QQQ Poura, Kasra, and Efran - "Baffled Brawler"

The below is a mostly-complete chronological log of the events of this Game Jam:

FRIDAY

4 PM

Volunteers showed up early to help set up tables and chairs.

6 PM

The official arrival time for participants in the Game Jam. At this time, people could load in their equipment into the main room and check-in with their teams if they had already met beforehand, either via the Discord chatroom or if they've worked together before. People could preliminarily meet to discuss what kinds of disciplines they were focused on so they could pre-assemble into teams in advance of the pitching session at 8 PM.

7 PM

Everyone met in the Seattle Center Auditorium for the kick-off presentation about the game jam. This was an announcement ceremony presented by Tim, with the Seattle Indies, and Abdula, with Amazon. The content of the presentation was primarily to make sure everyone on the same page before starting:

- *Policies*
The game jam was hosted during museum hours. We were encouraged to interact with inquisitive kids and family, because "[we] are an exhibit." We covered logistics about building access, bathrooms, and sleeping areas.
- *"Word from our Sponsors"*
Amazon graciously provided funding for the Game Jam. They are working on a new uploading platform similar to the Android Play Store called Game On and encouraged us to consider uploading to their platform.
- *Theme: Unexpected Results*
There were a handful of themes that were picked by the Seattle Indies over the course of the previous two months.

Patrons on Patreon could vote on particulars. The theme of "Unexpected Results" was presented in a clever countdown fashion.

- *Failure is OK*

Tim reminded us that failure is OK. We might shoot for the moon and probably won't make it.

- *Work hard as a team*

The important part is that we all work hard as teams to deliver the best possible product.

- *Presentations*

On Sunday, the games will be presented [online](#) and streamed on Twitch.

8 PM

We returned back to the foyer area. People that needed teammates met in front of a digital whiteboard to brainstorm and present their ideas. If a group needed, say, a level designer or artist, they could pitch their idea and recruit new people for their teams. The pitches were also posted on Discord for future reference. This was also the opportunity to make sure all participants could form into teams.

Many of the game developers in creative industries - art and music, for example - could work on multiple projects. []qqq

9 PM TO MIDNIGHT

Mentors toured around the existing teams to make sure everyone had the preliminary resources they needed. People stopped by the volunteer area on their first break after working on their project for a few hours to either talk about their project's status or just to take their mind off the work. Everyone explained to some degree that their projects were in experimental phases.

As the evening progressed, their ideas and games solidified:

Skateboard Game

One group - Andrew, Robert, Sarah, and Stephen - settled on a surreal puzzle game with skateboard and job simulation elements in the vein of Journey. They wanted to work on a game that was focused on positivity and fun rather than an overly complex game. Every member of the team has previously worked in multiple game jams and taking the experiences of not quite failures in the past with them has led them to have an accurate context for what they can accomplish over the course of the game jam.

As Stephen said, "we don't want to have any of the gameplay mechanics to [fit in with the theme of being] unexpected. We'd rather that the narrative is unexpected." Without spoiling their story, Stephen said that their narrative has a trippy context to it that will be revealed to the player as they play.

They initially brainstormed many ideas before settling on their idea because it was something they could do easily. This way, as Stephen continued, "if we get all the necessary, easy stuff out of the way, then that gives us more room for playtesting. We'll need as much time for balancing. We want to have a minimum viable product by tomorrow so we can spend the rest of the time testing."

VR Game - Time Machine?

Another group - Amanda, Forrest, Josh, Ray, and others that are working remotely - went with a similarly small-in-scope game about a child in a time machine cardboard box. The child will move across different time periods, conveyed in a bathroom, and will be implemented using VR [virtual reality] technology. "It will be a scavenger hunt, with about 2 to 3 rooms, maybe up to 4 if we can get the first 2 or 3 polished," said 3D modeler Josh. They intended to have the game complete by Saturday, trimmed and ready to go, so they could work all through Sunday on testing for bugs and any stretch goals.

Josh said came up with the idea for their game based on the music they wanted to implement. The idea evolved into a puzzle room with a kid with a simple narrative structure. Ray said that "implementing a UI dialog system would be too complicated for this project," since their aim is a 5-minute or 10-minute game. Depending on the results of the game, Ray estimated that

they could have a narrator with voice acting if they have time. The idea here was to have a "show, not tell" approach to storytelling.

The team chose the VR platform based around the team's mutual interest in VR, starting with a recent AR/VR Game Jam. Currently, VR technology runs on three different platforms: Microsoft's Mixed Reality, Oculus Rift, and HTC VIVE. Each platform runs in a slightly different programming language, so to overcome this challenge, Ray said that programmed their game in a language called VRTK, which can implement the code in all three languages. Ray and Amanda continued that they will be mindful of VR motion sickness.

SATURDAY

MIDNIGHT

Michael announced the policies for sleeping arrangements. There were still two solo programmers and three groups of programmers at around 3 AM.

4 AM

Interactive Narrative

A duo of third-shift programmers - TJ and Craig - worked on a game with narrative branching options in Blueprint [Kismet] and implementing it within the Unreal engine. The player character walks up to floating text and reads the dialog. The unexpected element is that the dialog, which as of this conversation they still didn't have completely ironed out, would be something that would be initially confusing until the primary idea is revealed to the player.

Game designer TJ, for explained that if the game succeeds, check back in on this on Sunday, he and his game jam colleague Craig will continue working on the game. They had been talking about working on a game for a while, but never got around to it. Others may follow suit, using this game jam game as a portfolio item.

8 AM

Many of the teams started to wake up from sleeping overnight in a pre-designated area or filter in at around 8 AM or so. Some of the teams weren't feeling confident about where they were at with their games at the start of the morning. Some game developers had run into assorted, unexpected issues that as mentors filter in this morning should be able to address.

Skateboard/Tree game

Andrew, Robert, and Sarah clarified from last night that there were no skateboarding mechanics within their game. This was a late-night miscommunication, which will be left in for posterity because this is common, and as Andrew said, "good cautionary advice because scoping is a big worry among game developers. Sometimes, it just doesn't work out." Andrew further clarified by saying that they are working on unexpected elements but don't want to reveal the surprise, but it will be implemented using props and hints.

Tentatively called "Space Arena" by Poura, Kasra, and Efran

Poura introduced the game, as a quick break from troubleshooting a controller mapping issue, as an arena with portals where you control a ball that goes between portals. The unexpected element is that they will go to random portals on the level to avoid their opponents.

Poura and Efran have worked on a project before, but have not with Kasra before, but Kasra has won two game jam events in the past, and they began collaborating well. They used the window of the room as a [Scrum board](#). Efran said that they were coming up with ideas for 4 hours last night before starting. They generated 75 ideas and narrowed it down to 34 ideas, then 11, and they're using one primary idea. They'll explore additional ideas after they've completed the game to a stable state.

Once the game jam is over, if "Space Arena" turns into a good product, they may polish the game and publish it on Amazon's Game On platform. Poura explored the idea that Abdula may be able to provide consulting or advising for getting games fast-tracked onto the Game On platform.

10 AM

Guests started to filter into the Pacific Science Center. The Seattle Indies provided breakfast - bagels, and pastries - for game developers. As the game developers stopped over to pick up breakfast, they all felt confident about their games. Issues seem to be minor. They were setting things up throughout the evening and early morning to brainstorm ideas and issues seemed to get ironed out. Everything seemed great!

NOON

We initially suspected that the confidence level from developers was more because they were stopping over after celebrating a minor/major milestone or when they needed to take a break than an actual overall uptick in progress.

A few of the game developers confirmed this to be true.

Although stopping by and breaking the game developer's concentrations mid-thought generated useful information, gathering more in-depth information on status also was an interruption.

Pacific Science Center guests and staff alike were interested in the development of the games. They stuck more to cursory glances and inquisitive questions than any intensive sit-down exhibit conversations, but that might be expected. Everyone at the game jam is focused on what they're working on - whether programming, art, sound design, or bug testing - so they're not quite making eye contact or trying to sell their game at this point to guests.

The team working on the VR game, perhaps tentatively titled Time Machine, were testing their game through most of the morning. Ray had a rough draft demo to show off that []

Many of the game developers seemed confident that they would be on track to finish their projects, as they initially intended them, on time.

4 PM

Interviews with over twelve game developers, judges, and Tim. Bilgem brought a video camera and Anthony conducted the interviews asking, primarily, three questions to the game developers:

1. Why do you like videogames?
2. What's your favorite part of game jams?
3. What do you like about the Seattle Indies?

Judges and Tim received more specific questions about their interests within teaching or producing game development.

7 PM

Dinner: pizza provided by the Seattle Indies.

7:15 PM

Post-dinner chats about progress and decompression about status.

10 PM

Tested [] Time Machine [] - minimum viable product achieved. All design mapping complete. The box is fully interactive as intended. Still needed: visuals.

Taking a break from the audio production on Goodnight, Rowan, Steven said "that some folks are probably experiencing a burn-out at this time of day, almost midnight on Saturday. You can see that some are gone, people are finally sleeping. This is the breaking point, Saturday night. The people that will keep going and get really discouraged tomorrow morning. They'll sleep and get that moment of clarity to get their game out - or - a game. It's all about a simple idea that is enjoyable to play."

SUNDAY

MIDNIGHT

Many game developers worked on polishing their games. More than half were in a stable state, let alone some sort of minimum viable product.

[Tractor game]

You play tractor driver navigating around obstacles on an endless loop. They were in progress.

Goblungee

Jules was working on art assets for Goblungee. She "finalized the environment's color scheme, and also developed the first three thrown objects," as well as showing working designs of Mr. Snootypants, a red dragon monster, and was working on "Goblin 1."

Spawn Salon

Monsters breed inside of a salon. Customers drop off their monsters and ask for mutations or variations. The monsters can be combined or cloned and then sent back to customers or sent off into a chute for later combinations.

[Tentative name- "Objects in Space" or "Space Blast" by Edward and Nick]

You break out of a room and try to find hidden messages in a series of hallways that may or may not be possessed by baddies.

[Tentative name- "that game" by TJ and Craig]

A cerebral experience where you uncover what's going on as you progress through the level. They had two playable instances available: one with dialogue and one with the level nicely textured. They work 3rd shift so they should have more progress done by 8 AM on Sunday.

[Saoi, Binu, and Beverly's game]

A VR game where you teleport around a topsy-turvy world to get the prize like a flower and explore the field. There is a yellow light-type creature that follows you around and trees that are floating in the air. They had a minimum viable product but they were still sorting out some of the details about boundaries and invisible walls.

Baffled Brawl

A three-player competitive tank racing game with doors that would randomly move you around the screen and items that would either help you or help your opponents. They spent most of today polishing the gameplay and mechanics so warping between doors was straight-forward.

[Tentative name- Time Mashine]

A VR game where you play a kid that time travels between three bathrooms - log cabin "old," contemporary, and science fiction "futuristic." They have textures on the walls and also added a sense of urgency to the game with the addition of a lockbox on top of the cardboard box time machine. The lockbox has three numbers that you can spin to reveal a prize.

7 AM

Seven teams were up and at it. Maybe it was Daylight Savings Time?

Binu came up with the idea overnight of a game over / loading screen and was looking to implement it. Forrest, working on []QQQ Time Machine QQQ[], collaborated with Ray to implement the sound into the game. TJ and Craig, 3rd shift developers working on []QQQ "That game" QQQ[], turned in early to rest up and got up early to finish work on combining their dialogue branches and texture branches into a finishable product. Poura, working on Baffled Brawl, agreed because they turned in early to get plenty of sleep to address any last minute issues or feature implementation ideas for their game.

10 AM

Guests and the remaining game developers arrived.

[Tentative name- "Dr. Offbeat"]

□□□ described his game as a subversion of a zombie first-person-shooter game. The original idea was that it would be an off-rhythm rhythm game with crazy sound effects where you would heal your opponent with bullets. Movements would have different sound effects than expected and reloading mechanisms were originally based on rhythm mechanics but might be changed before the final release. There is not a working minimum viable product yet.

[[Cerebral game]

Craig and TJ ran into problems with their cerebral game. The hard drive in Craig's laptop experienced technical difficulties. As a workaround, TJ copied the data from Craig's laptop over to TJ's laptop to merge their builds into a minimum viable product, until we resolved the issue by changing the hard drive connections.

NOON

[Edward and Nick's game - 3D horror game with low-fi graphics and grammar]

They successfully added audio and then began to put everything together. They were concerned over aspects of the level design, but their minimum viable product played through several hallways of an environment that looked like air ducts. The working graphics had a distinct low-fi aesthetic, with fuzzy pixelated blocks to differentiate paneling. The objective of the game is to find multiple text boxes - the current working text boxes include silly grammatical issues. Perhaps they'll leave the "low-fi grammatical aesthetic" into the final build at 5 PM?

[Tractor]

Significant progress. They were mid-

Avant-Garde

A random item builder. The idea is that objects like cars or fire hydrants drop from the ceiling. The object of the game is to combine them into ways that will yield the best possible score after the object is launched out of a window.

[Baffled Brawler]

Poura showed a polished demo of the game. □□□ □ Abdula with Amazon stopped by to check in with the Seattle Indies and talked with the developers.

A Cat Named Otto

A 2D cat platformer where the cat races through a maze □□□□ alun paws QQQ□

Knockout Mouse

Cami threw out the pitch for the idea on Friday evening as a "lab rat reverse gravity disaster party." Their team had one 2D artist, writer, two programmers, and sound designer. They needed a 3D background artist/modeler and level designer. □

[Goblunge]

□□lin. Jules "added to the level design, made the scoreboard, added to snootypants and am now working on the title card." Cameron, right now, is "working on making a good wind sound for when the bungee jumper is falling. Easier said than done!"

[Wizards versus Cowboys]

□

4 PM

Crunch time.

6 PM

□

Dr. oFFbEET

Team oFFbEET

7:10-7:15

□

Unexpectedigun

Robby Zinchak

7:15-7:20

□

Hello World

Silicon Souls

7:20-7:25

□

Hooked

ChPe Studio

7:25-7:30

□

smiling at neighbors

□

7:30-7:35

□

Of Cats and Geckos

Tonight Today

7:35-7:40

□

deleveled

deleveled

7:40-7:45

□

Goblungee

Team Bungee / Olin

7:45-7:50

□

Avant Garde

Nature Valley Boys

7:50-7:55

□

Baffled Brawl

Team Clueless

7:55-8:00



Bug Light Saloon

Po-Chen

8:00-8:05



Time Mashine

Close Encounters

8:05-8:10



CreateTech

Foxtopus

8:10-8:15



Dr. Sticky's Spawn Salon

Sticky Biscuits

8:15-8:20



One Click Pony

Broom Cupboard Studios

8:20-8:25



Knockout Mouse

Lab Rat

8:25-8:30



Elemental Forest

Saoi Games

8:30-8:35



Goodnight Rowan

Team Rowan

8:35-8:40



9 PM



10 PM



