

How The Game Industry Works

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Who Is This Guy?

Professional game developer for 20 years.

Shipped PC games, console games, Facebook games, mobile games (including 3 Tomb Raider games, 2 Tony Hawk games and FarmVille2: Country Escape for mobile).

Currently the studio CTO for Zynga Eugene, and lead engineer on an unannounced mobile game.

Agenda

Desperately try to keep you awake.

Talk about how the game industry works. Start with console, and then mobile, and how they're shockingly similar.

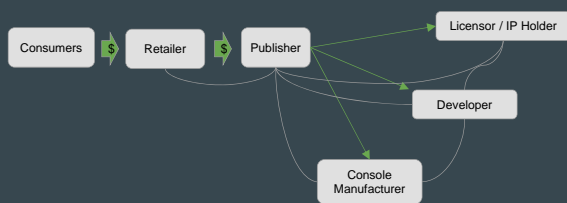
Talk about how to get into the game industry.

Console Game Industry Terminology

- Developer: Makes the games.
- Publisher: Pays for the games. Deals with the others on this list.
- Console Manufacturer: Approves the games.
- Retailer: Sells the games. Why are they even in this list?
- Licensor: Approves the use of IP in the games.
- Overlap!
 - Sony and Microsoft are developers, publishers and manufacturers.
 - EA and Activision are developers and publishers.
- Cyclic industry, with publishers buying developers, closing them, rinse & repeat.

Maybe a diagram would help?

Follow The Money...



What About the Mobile Market?

- It's very similar, except... The console manufacturer and the retailer are the same.
 - Apple makes the device and the AppStore
 - Google does the same thing (really more the OS than the devices themselves)
 - Amazon? Check.
 - Microsoft? Check.
- The mobile game space is extremely competitive, because the 'console' manufacturers don't limit the titles as much as the traditional console manufacturers do.
- "Anybody" can ship a mobile game - including some people in this room?
- Discovery is the big deal now. Ads. Featuring. How do you get people to find/play it?

Awkward Transition...

Given the difficulty in discovery, it's hard for indie mobile games to make much money (for varying definitions of "much").

If you want to make games, but you don't want to be an indie developer, how do you get a job with an established development company?

The Actual Process

- Send resumes (either blind, or for a specific open position).
 - What do we look for in a resume?
 - Entry-level is hard to distinguish yourself!
 - Classes? Languages? Projects, and your role on them? Communication/teamwork?
- Phone screen (or two?).
 - Usually technical in nature, sometimes one with HR. What do we ask?
- On-Site interview.
 - Usually meet with several people on the team.
 - What kinds of things are asked?
 - This varies wildly from employer to employer.