# Rekame

## MAG

### ISSUE 1 JUNE 2010

#### A MAGAZINE ABOUT GAME MAKER, FOR GAME MAKERS, BY GAME MAKERS

# *WELCOME TO REKAME MAG*

## Trailing in

Magazines are a touchy subject in the world of Game Maker. Many have been started, most have fallen. There has been bad examples, good examples, and the odd stellar attempt.

Think about the likes of GMTech, Markup Magazine, and Russell's Quarterly - some amazing examples of just how good GMrelated magazines can be. But all have, unfortunately, stopped producing. GMTech disappeared midway through production of its 17th issue, with its website switching to a "Site offline" error. Markup took a hiatus which pretty much spelled its end. And Tom Russell, the sole producer of Russell's Quarterly, decided to quit after a few brilliant issues.

Nowadays, there's Overbyte, which recently fell apart after three issues. Game Maker's Digest is a seeming evolution of the previous GMIndie Magazine, which is oddly registration-only, but is a very solid magazine still in production today with weekly issues. Other minor magazines, such as Grabeorama's "GMag", Nikc-Nack's Magazine, GM-Press Weekly and the biannual This Is Indie magazine all provide still-running, welcome additions to the list.

So what is Rekame Mag? Am I just trying to cash in (kinda) on the fad? Maybe. But I'm not going to be limiting myself to any kind of schedule. I want the magazine to be fun to make. So, although there's a chance I may well make an Issue 2, I won't guarantee it, nor will I say when. This is just my entry into the Game Maker magazine world, and is hopefully an enjoyable one.

## IAQ (Infrequently Asked Questions)

### *If there is an Issue 2, will you be accepting more staff members? If so, what would change?*
I don't know yet. Although I like the idea of a personally-made magazine akin to the previously mentioned "Russell's Quarterly", it would probably be beneficial to the magazine for more people. I'm unlikely to ever turn it into a monthly, bimonthly or whatever magazine, though. From what I've seen in the past it only hurts magazines in the long run - a few days past the deadline turns to a month, then a few months, then everyone just loses motivation and the whole thing collapses.

### *Where're the staff credits and stuff? Aren't they usually on the front of the magazine?*
Since it's just me doing it at the moment, I put the staff credits on the back page, along with photo credits, legal information etc. They just seem to fit better there.

### *Why the shortness?*
Content-wise it's not that bad. I've gone for a three-column layout and condensed (but perfectly readable) fonts so I could keep the filesize as low as possible while still getting in all the necessary content. I know a lot of magazines boost their page counts with unnecessary splash images and the like - I didn't want to do that.

### *Why do I recognise your absurd writing style?*
If you've read GMTech from Issue 9 onwards, Overbyte or http://GameMakerBlog.com I have been frequent contributors to all three. In GMTech I wrote reviews and previews. I also did, and still do, this for Game Maker Blog. Throughout Overbyte's three-issue production I wrote three or four articles, and clumsily compiled Issue 2's comic.

### *Do you accept review proposals?*
Rekame Mag so far has been about looking back at some of the GM games I've enjoyed or remembered in some way. That's why this issue contains a review of Jesse Venbrux's "Blopper". As such, I would be unlikely to review games recommended to me by their creators or fans. However, it's worth a go - if I do make an Issue 2 and your game significantly interests me (or if there are other people writing for it) then sure.

### *Why "Rekame"?*
Read "Rekame Mag" backwards.

Anyway, I hope this magazine proves an enjoyable read to you. If you have any feedback, you're welcome to email me at nal@nalgames.com or to reply to the inevitable Game Maker Community topic. Thanks for downloading and giving it a go, I'll see you all if all goes well and there's an Issue 2!

All the best,
-Allison James

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# PERPETUAL RUN 2

## makerManCan102 runs towards addiction in this bizarre arcade platformer

Arcade platformers are popular in the Game Maker universe thanks to their addictiveness, relative ease of creation (in the aspects of time and skill required). They leave doors open for game devices such as procedural generation, artsy graphics, implementation of one or a number of gimmicks and suchlike.

Perpetual Run 2, a game created by makerManCan102, sees you traversing a predefined level in one of two switchable control methods. When playing, you get a choice of either running down walls (which become floors from this perspective) and jumping, or scraping down walls and flinging yourself across to other, parallel ones. It's difficult to describe, yeah.

The catch is that switching between these mechanisms isn't a matter of choice. It's a necessity. Lack of parallel walls or obstacles too wide to switch across to require quick thoughts and reflexes as you change the control technique to move on. You don't have any control over the guy's running/sliding so your only choice is to think fast...

...very, very fast. Because of the requirement to constantly be thinking about two separate mechanisms, and the quickly-oncoming obstacles, the game is difficult. Once you've played, and quickly died, a few times, your best bet will be to memorise what you have to do and when. It's then the game's true addictive colours come into play - you will nearly always better yourself with every go, so there's that one-more-try feeling as you continue to make progress.

One of the aspects that the game is strong in is originality. It presents a level of double-thinking that's very rarely seen in games, and I've not seen anything implemented in this way to this style before.

The graphics of the game are minimalist, and by extension a wee bit bland. It's not an experience killer, far from it, but the man in particular is a crudely-drawn man. There is also an odd selection of in-game typefaces (the menu is written in a jungle font!) and a screen shake which incorporates a pet hate of mine - angled screen shaking. Again, it doesn't hurt the game in any discernable way. Well, except for sufferers of epilepsy or possibly also motion sickness.

Aurally, the game is pretty good. A techno soundtrack fits the game's style rather nicely and adds to the tension of its atmosphere.

Sounds are barely existent - the only one that I could properly make out was a bizarre one played upon your death(s).

As for glitches, as far as I could see, and I played the game a fair bit, there were none. There's a slight feeling of the game being ready to break as you play, but it never does.

To summarise, Perpetual Run 2 is a good, solid game. It improves on its predecessor (which's gameplay was different, basically being just this version's platforming segment), adding extra tension, and with its dual-control gimmick, it stimulates new parts of the brain.

It's small, and fairly throwaway, but give it a shot... then give it a few more shots. You'll be bound to.

http://tinyurl.com/37kk4dy

## The Final Say

### NECESSITIES

GAMEPLAY: 18/30
GRAPHICS: 3/10
REPLAYABILITY: 8/10
ORIGINALITY: 8/10

### OPTIONALS x4

AURAL: 4/10
CHALLENGE: 8/10
DOWNLOAD SIZE: X/10
EXECUTION: 8/10
LONGEVITY: X/10
POTENTIAL REACHED: X/10
RETRO: X/10
SEQUEL IMPROVEMENT: 6/10

### Overall
# 63%

A small but addictive and above-average arcade platformer well worth the download

# BLOPPER
## A look at one of Jesse Venbrux's oldest games

It would be fair to say that, as far as Game Maker developers go, Jesse Venbrux (known to many by his alias "2Dcube") is amongst the most well-known. Having spawned the popular, highly-well-known Karoshi series of Game Maker and now also Flash games, as well as having been the only person so far to have come first place in two YoYo Games competitions, his inventiveness and skill are far from unnoticed.

But screw that. 95% or more of the Game Maker universe know Frozzd, Karoshi 2.0 and They Need To Be Fed. He's been a game developer for years - let's go and have a look at one of his older, less noticed games.

Despite quite clearly showing its age, Blopper is actually a good, solid game. Featuring 20 single-screen levels, you play as a little yellow dude with helicopter blades on his head, who can momentarily float and bounce at will. Levels, as opposed to previous releases of his (and similar to a later release, Wubly Squared), consist of blocks which's colour and/or pattern display what they do. Obstacles include switch blocks, bomb blocks, blocks you can't jump off, and fake blocks (distinguished by their reversed gradient).

Levels generally get more challenging as you progress, however halfway through the game, the smooth difficulty curve turns into a spike which comes in the form of an infuriating level requiring all the reflexes you can claw out of your frustrated fingers. It's nowhere near as hard as Wubly Squared can get, but it's close.

Disappointingly, the hard work you may or may not put into completing the game rewards you with something everyone hates about numerous Game Maker games - a "Well done" message". And nothing else. Still, there's a feeling of gratification to be had from sticking it out.

As mentioned earlier, graphically the game consists mainly of varying-coloured blocks. Those that aren't are Blopper, a simplelooking blob, and a small selection of other items such as lazers and obligatory-collection gems. The game makes use of Comic Sans MS for menus and the in-game HUD (which is just a level number and name). Overall, it's hardly beautiful - the word best suited to describing the graphics would be "functional".

Blopper's music is confusingly chosen. It doesn't really fit the game very well, but speakers are mutable so it's okay. Sound effects, as with the graphics, are functional but not spectacular.

As a warning, the game is compiled in a Game Maker version pre-7 (probably 5). As such, it may not work on Windows Vista or 7 systems unless you use the compatibility fixer (link).

As a second warning, the game forces a resolution change, something that was close to standard with earlier Game Maker games but thankfully has been phased out over time.

But overall, it's a fun game. For any platformer fan, that's willing to tolerate its age and its flaws, it's still fun to play. It was the first taste of Venbrux's gaming talent I ever had, back when it was released - it's only good for the game that even now, four or five years later, I can still enjoy it.

http://tinyurl.com/38unzpp

## The Final Say

### NECESSITIES

GAMEPLAY: 22/30
GRAPHICS: 4/10
REPLAYABILITY: 6/10
ORIGINALITY: 8/10

### OPTIONALS x4

AURAL: X/10
CHALLENGE: 9/10
DOWNLOAD SIZE: X/10
EXECUTION: 6/10
LONGEVITY: 7/10
POTENTIAL REACHED: 8/10
RETRO: X/10
SEQUEL IMPROVEMENT: X/10

### Overall
# 70%

Obviously not in the same league as Jesse's newer games, but all the same a fine game

# SKULLPOGO

## Chevy Ray bounces to arcade addictiveness

Most people will now know Skullpogo as an addictive iPhone arcade game with retrostyled graphics. We know better. It, of course, is originally a freeware PC title created in Game Maker by ChevyRay. And it's damn fine.

The game sees you, on a pogo stick, bouncing onto pigs, bats and whatever else you can land on in an attempt to rack up points, combos, level advancements, the works. The game is set in a graveyard, with you as a monocle-clad skull-head with a surprisingly cute look.

Part of the game's fun comes from the combos you rack up by bouncing on more than one enemy before you hit the floor. Despite the random generation of enemy positions occasionally resulting in a combo drop that wasn't your fault (it is rare), there's a lot of self-bettering to be had from going for a personal best. It also helps with achieving highscores, naturally.

To add variety to the mix, Skullpogo will give you powerups which hold a variety of effects.

One of the handiest, odd considering it's also one of the most basic, is a power up which temporarily boosts your speed, allowing for extra manoeuvrability and further combination shots, while also adding a frantic atmospheric element.

Aesthetically, the game is superb.

Wonderfully drawn, simplistic, retro-ish graphics that fit together beautifully. They're capped off with a good-looking menu, fitting fonts, and some very pleasant graphical effects too.

Another aspect in which Skullpogo shines is in its sounds and music. The music is catchy, fitting and really does the feel of the game justice. Sound effects also fit really well and do their job fine.

In all, Skullpogo is a smashing game. It reeks of polish and is incredibly addictive to play.

If you're thinking about purchasing the game on iPhone this is a great little introduction to the game, and you'll probably end up giving both more than an hour of play as you frantically scrabble your way to the top of the leaderboard.

http://tinyurl.com/2v4wxuy

## The Final Say

### NECESSITIES

GAMEPLAY: 26/30
GRAPHICS: 9/10
REPLAYABILITY: 4/10
ORIGINALITY: 7/10

### OPTIONALS x4

AURAL: X/10
CHALLENGE: X/10
DOWNLOAD SIZE: X/10
EXECUTION: 9/10
LONGEVITY: 8/10
POTENTIAL REACHED: 9/10
RETRO: 9/10
SEQUEL IMPROVEMENT: X/10

## Overall
# 81%

Highly-addictive arcade action with the looks, the style, and the obligatory iPhone port

# *THIS IS INFINITY*

## Alternative title for Cactus' pseudo-first-person game: "This is Bloody Confusing"

Probably one of the pioneers of the abstract boom in independent development, Cactus (real name Jonatan Soderstrom, give or take a couple of umlauts) has been known to frequently play with the senses of whoever has dared try his games. This is Infinity probably takes that a step too far.

You're given no instructions. No guidance. No clear route. You're thrown into a world that flashes psychedelically with the apparent quest of getting to the moon. For some, this will be intriguing - a joy to explore the bizarre world figuring out how to go about your goal, or perhaps just wondering if it's a wild goose chase. But for others, the lights, the lack of a clear path, and the feeling that any minute now you'll be shaking uncontrollably, will result in a fairly swift hit of the Escape button.

A short while after the release of This is Infinity, Cactus actually brought out a "guide" on how to go about completing the game, addressing the near-universal player confusion. If you're wanting to play this, you may actually want to attempt it without the guide first to see if you can decrypt it. I couldn't.

Not much more can be said about the game's aesthetics. As per usual with Cactus, the game is pretty, but so damn weird it'll put some people off.

The aural aspect of the game is good. A simple, soft ambient noise which gives the game world a very strong atmosphere. If you play the game with headphones and with lights off, the previous trippiness will result in a surreal, but good, feeling. That's its primary positive point.

It's a definite audience splitter. I couldn't personally get into it properly, but I know some that could, did, and loved it for it. If it sounds like your kind of game, then by all means play it and disagree with me. I'll stick to knowing what I'm doing though!

http://tinyurl.com/32oodnb

## The Final Say

### NECESSITIES

GAMEPLAY: 7/30
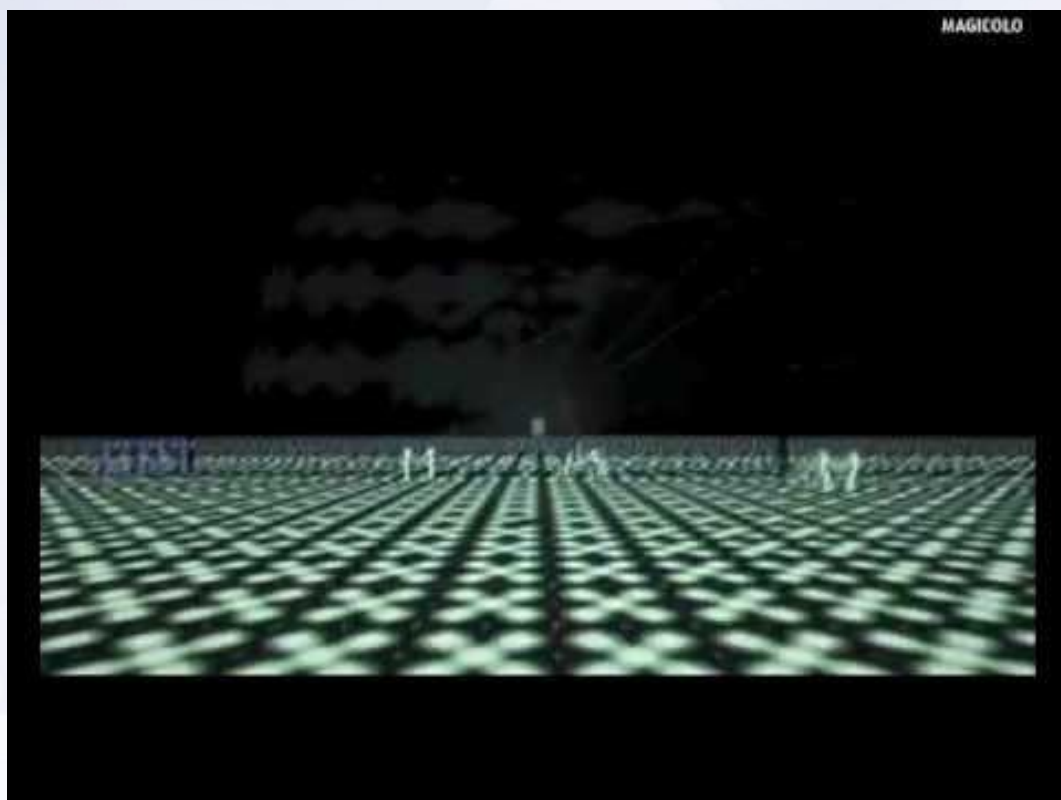GRAPHICS: 5/10
REPLAYABILITY: 2/10
ORIGINALITY: 9/10

### OPTIONALS x4

AURAL: 8/10
CHALLENGE: X/10
DOWNLOAD SIZE: X/10
EXECUTION: 5/10
LONGEVITY: 4/10
POTENTIAL REACHED: 6/10
RETRO: X/10
SEQUEL IMPROVEMENT: X/10

## Overall
# 46%

It's worth a single playthrough just so you know if you've regretted it or not

# GREYSON WRIGHT

## An interview with the guy behind The Black Hole That Wants to Eat Me and Overbyte Magazine

**Hello Greyson, thanks for the accepting the interview. Please introduce yourself.**

I'm Greyson Wright. I'm 18 years old and I like to make websites and games, and websites about games as well.

**When and how did you discover Game Maker, and why were you looking for it?**

I found Game Maker back in 2003, I believe I searched for something along the lines of "free game maker" or "free game making program" in Yahoo! Search. I had (still do, actually) an old PlayStation Underground Jam Pack demo disc thing that had a video of the making of Spyro on it, and if I can recall, the first thing the video said was 'When making games, all you need is a big piece of paper and a few good ideas." which made game design seem easy and fun. I would always get big pieces of paper and draw out level designs on them, but never actually had anyway to turn them into reality, which is why I was looking for a way to make games.

**Have you ever attempted to make games like these with Game Maker, or now you have the program, are you more into making other games?**

The game ideas I used to have were usually rips of other games I had played and liked, but after I found the program I never actually attempted to make them. I'd try to come up with "original" ideas and make them work, though most of my ideas stayed ideas and I never made them because of my limited knowledge of how to use GM.

Still, I want to make some adventure games and such, but I usually make my ideas too complicated for me to handle, so I generally try to stick to simpler ideas now.

**So is this simple idea regime how "The Black Hole That Wants To Eat Me" came to be?**

Pretty much. I wanted to make something simple and original, but fun and possibly addictive at the same time. I'm not sure if the idea is original, though I've never seen games where you have to run away from a black hole that is apparently trying to eat you.

**Haha, quite. So do you have any other games currently in production?**

I have one that I started work on recently. I have only one unfinished sprite done for the game at the moment, nothing else. I've got many other games that I've started and never finished, but I'd like to finish some of those at some point.

**Fair enough. So, moving on, back in October-November 2009 you began work on a magazine by the name of Overbyte. Can you tell us a little about how you decided to start it?**

The idea of OverByte came to life after I had contacted the owner of GMTech Magazine to see if I could possibly join their team as a reviewer. Needless to say they didn't need anyone else since the magazine was on its death bed, so the idea came up to start a new magazine. I didn't want this magazine to be another profession/serious magazine like GMTech and MarkUp were, it had to be something different, which is where the casual and humorous writing style came into play. Broxter was to be the designer of the magazine and I was the editor, we had already gotten some content done and in the issue before the planned January 1st release date, but early on Christmas morning, Broxter decided to quit OverByte which left me alone in the production of the magazine. I stopped doing anything for the magazine until I eventually downloaded OpenOffice, which is how I put together the first issue.

**Why did you choose to make it informally written as opposed to the formal format seen in the majority of magazines?**

I wanted it to be different than the other magazines, it had to be the white speck in a black sea (or something like that), it had to stand in the middle of everyone else and scream at the top of its lungs. It never did this of course, at least not while I was around. To be quite honest, I wanted OverByte to be considered a joke at first, but once the first issue was released, I wanted it to be a bit more on the serious side but still informal and nice.

**What do you think led to its demise?**

Laziness and lack of time to meet the deadlines. I really, really hate it when something doesn't get released on time, you see. What led to its demise was most likely me quitting, which I did because I really didn't have time for the magazine anymore since I had to go to work with my uncle and stuff. It has always been a sort of a worry for me about the reception of each issue and whether it will get released on time or not, and I didn't need that worry anymore. Also the lack of motivation, probably. Another factor would be that Broxter apparently blocked me on MSN so I wouldn't bug him about getting stuff put in the issue, and once I learned of that, I decided that I was done with the magazine for sure.

**Sounds like a real shame. But I understand you have a project now in production that plans to mix the Overbyte format with a website layout?**

That is correct. It's still an idea at the moment and I haven't started working on it yet. The idea is to provide the indie gaming community with news, interesting articles and tutorials, as well as provide reviews of select games and possibly previews of games. I'm definitely not limiting it to this, as a website could bring new opportunities that a pdf magazine couldn't. The best part is that there will be no issues and no deadline for content, it can be added whenever and read at the moment it's finished and put on the site, rather than waiting a month for an issue to be released. I'd just like to say that it will be done sometime before the end of the world in 2012.

**Okay, I reckon if you keep working on it, it'll turn out well. Thanks again for accepting this interview, and good luck with your future endeavours.**

Thanks for wanting to interview me!

# ORIGINALITY IN DESIGN

## Making your next game a little different to the millions of others it will join when complete

Originality - one of the main, and likely the strongest, traits that independently developed games have over their commercial counterparts. Though I'm not going to take up half this article discussing why, I'll just mention it quickly - because original games don't sell well.

Original games carry a big quality risk - why risk £40 or so on a game that might be awful when you can get the sixth, seventh, eighth incarnation of a game you know you like?

It's a shame, really, as when the originality pays off, it pays off big. If you don't know why, just get your arse onto Steam and go and buy Psychonauts. It costs about a tenth of a new game.

But, in the world of free, the monetary risk with an original game is eliminated. All that remains is the big popularity boom if it succeeds. So, if you're an independent developer, how are you going to go about making a game original? Well, there are several ways of doing it.

The gimmick. Arguably the easiest. A "gimmick" game tends to be one which does absolutely everything conventionally... but with one exception. This exception should be making for unseen level design that would not have been possible without it.

By far the commonest genre such games fall into is platformer. Think of games which are standard... but with gravity switching.

Think of games like Shift, which are seemingly normal until you have to reverse the entire level and end up with the background becoming the floors and the floors becoming the background.

The biggest problem in making a gimmick game is that you should probably make sure the gimmick you've chosen has either never been done before, or you can make an existing gimmick game's gimmick different enough to hold its own. So try to avoid gravity switching and grappling hooks.

If you're stuck for inspiration, try making a few levels in a standard platforming engine. Then add some impossible-to-pass obstacles, run the game, and think about clever ways to overcome them.

There's a world of possibility out there in the way of gimmicks, and although a lot has already been done, a lot more hasn't.

And don't forget, it doesn't necessarily have to be a platformer. A good example would be the Ceramic Shooter series, a shoot-em-up in which you MUSTN'T shoot-em-up despite a continuously-firing gun attached to your ship.

The hybrid. You could try making some kind of hybrid game in your quest for entertaining originality - think, for instance, things like Mario, but with the Breakout bat taped to his head and where you can't let the ball touch the ground. Look for reasoning if necessary - maybe the level is entirely metal and the ball is of electric, so if it touches the ground you get zapped.

One of the advantages to this is that if either of the games you're "fusing" is a well known one, people will already have some idea as to how to play it (infact, with the example just mentioned it barely needs any explanation, 99% of players will be familiar with both concepts and will be able to jump straight into the game).

As a quick note, you should probably consider crediting the creators of the two (or more) games you chose to fuse together, especially if they were independent games just like yours.

The gimmick collection. Basically, where each level, or set of levels, has its own gimmick. In later levels gimmicks may then be joined.

A (fairly) recent example of such a game would be Jumpman, in which gravity rotation, "looping" (leaving the room from one side results in your appearance at the opposite side), physics and more were pulled together into a vast array of fun levels.

With a collection of gimmicks there is less stress to be original with each one, but more stress in level design as things cannot get too complex, stupid, or too easy to complete in ways not originally intended (why flip the room three times, change colour repeatedly to get through a load of blocks then double jump across a crevasse if you could just grow wings and fly to the end of the level?).

The art. This is probably the hardest to successfully pull off, because one false step and you're going to seem like a pretentious jerk with a non-fun, boring game.

Art games delicately have to balance gameplay with some kind of message/moral.

This may result in sacrificing certain parts of gameplay - you might remove the challenge or the variety to get across a message related to tedium, for instance.
Furthermore, artsy games are certainly not for everybody, so it's an immediate alienation of a percentage of your audience.

The perception bender. Though this could go under "Gimmick", it deserves a category of its own. Perception benders are games which take conventional things and twist them on their head.

Think about, in a platformer, spikes you can jump on safely and health packs that kill you. Think enemy bullets in shmups that give you health or bosses that can be killed in one shot.

Also think of games like Echochrome, where the entire idea of perspective is taken away, allowing you to walk from a high-up ledge to a low-down one with no apparent switch in height purely because you rotated the camera to make it look like the two ledges were joined.

Depending on how you go about bending people's perception, these games can be difficult or easy to create, but often result in very interesting, satisfying experiences.

# KEEPING IT KOSHER

## Is making your game non-child-friendly the right move

It's something you see a lot in games. Not just those made in Game Maker or the wider independent development scene, but in commercial games too, and even broader than that. They, of course, bear stricter policies, which lead to the ubiquitous age ratings.

Whether it's BBFC , PEGI, ESRB or any other group of initials, their letters and numbers of age guidance are everywhere.

It's something that doesn't affect independent games. As long as you don't drift into illegal digital content territory, you can get away with pretty much anything. But don't forget - it's an audience splitter. If you stick shedloads of graphic violence, suggestive or even completely UNsuggestive content, and rude language in your game, you have to be aware of the consequences. Many websites will demand you add a content caution to the game description, turning away people not wanting to expose themselves to it. Other websites may refuse to carry your game completely, a big audience killer. Sometimes, though, the effect you desire will be weakened or destroyed if you keep it cheesy and PG. So where's the line drawn?

Swearing. It's something seemingly innocuous in nature - words don't physically harm. It's only human perception that gives swearing its impact, its child-unfriendliness. Because of the strength contained in swear words compared to others, they may be required to show certain emotions - anger, depression, and the like.

But you have to watch out. The regions of using cursing for impact and of cursing just for the sake of doing so are very, very nearby, and it's easy to miss. If the situation in which you're planning on including swearing could be, with no detrimental effect to the experience, resolved, then it's a far better way of doing it. Avoid using asterisks or similar words ("fudging hell"), as they sound/ look cheesy, and will kill the impact. If you've used swearing once or twice and feel that otherwise you can avoid it in the future, that's far better than just using it more because it'd been used once already.

More dangerous is swearing's casual use in common, modern dialect. Go to any group of teenagers, or even young adults, and it's more likely than not that there will be a fair share of curse words exchanged, not for any particular effect, just because they can. In games, this should be ignored. Unlike in emotive scenes, swear words used in this context are easily substitutable for better, acceptable words.

As a minor extra point, if you have a character that regularly speaks foreign with English translations, don't be tempted to slip rude words into the native text. Many members of the Game Maker universe will be able to read it, and could take offence to what is completely avoidable.

Suggestive content is something that may be needed to illustrate a point. However, unless you're just going flat-out and making a pornographical game, it's something that can easily be touched upon in a light-hearted manner.

It's something you commonly see in films and games too. Picture Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. A game full of controversial material, but the sex? (Yes, I'm ignoring Hot Coffee here.) There are two instances in the game. If you pick up a woman for car fun, the camera pulls up to an angle where nothing can be seen, the car starts rocking and the lady can be heard. In similar fashion, seducing a girlfriend to such a point will lead to an exterior shot of her house.

Yeah, this still isn't particularly family friendly. But it prevents your game from being unnecessarily dirty, leaving the impact and the result of the scene intact.

Violence is the most common taboo in gaming , and naturally so. This isn't just the presence of blood. This is the act of killing, or even of pain. Many games have this act as their focal point. Some will precede it with a storyline explaining why, others will just hand you a lovely big gun and tell you that the guys in blue are worth 100 points. Sometimes, it might be for a good reason. Maybe they're attacking your home planet and won't respond peacefully. Other times, you're a mass murderer that hadn't had enough yet.

Violence has become so commonplace, that in its most basic form it's friendly to anybody. Even games geared at children usually see you whacking bad guys, a gory death replaced by some kind of naff animation or them simply disintegrating into nothing.

So that's ignorable. But, if you're making a game where the purpose is clearly killing others, how far do you need to go with gore?

It depends on your aim. If you're simulating a war while simultaneously trying to send a message across about how they result in nothing but the deaths of brave men, maybe you should include some blood. Don't go overboard, just illustrate how a simple, resolvable conflict has turned into this. If you're going Manhunt, then it's generally okay to include a lot of blood. Conversely to swearing, blood for the sake of blood occasionally has artistic and experience properties. Horror games can certainly benefit from its presence - many will feel queasy from the sight of blood or "feel the enemy's pain", a good atmospheric device. Again though, if what you're trying to achieve will work perfectly fine without excessive violence, then why include it? Why alienate a percentage of your potential audience needlessly?

In conclusion, and in a "too long, didn't read" fashion - don't include adult-only content into a game if you don't have to. It's sometimes required, but usually avoidable, and if you can find another way, your game will benefit from it.

# THE MODERATOR'S MANUAL

## The dos and don'ts to being a respectable authority figure on any Game Maker website

So, you got the message? A PM, an email, or something related from the administrator of a Game Maker website, asking you if you'd like to step into the boots of a moderator and take care of things.

Regardless of whether or not you decide to accept, it's a feeling of honour (variable depending on the size and the reputation of the site in question) knowing that people consider you trustworthy enough to handle functions normal members cannot.

Assuming you decide to accept, how do you behave? This guide will attempt to give you some pointers to ensure your tenure as a moderator is smooth and successful.

DO NOT treat members as if they're beneath you. Don't insult them, don't go over the top when they've done wrong, and keep the empty threats to a bare minimum (or even eliminate them entirely).

DO be firm, but at the same time fair, with people disobeying the site rules (intentionally or otherwise). If the website you're moderating allows you to comment on other people's profiles, put warnings there. This, as well as clearly showing them where they went wrong, will invoke a form of mild embarrassment, leaving the offender more likely to comply in future, as with any of their friends who look at their profile pages.

DO NOT ignore repeat offences or give out the same punishment each time. Repeated breaking of rules makes it clear the offender is doing it rebelliously - they have no, or little, intention of complying with the rules or using the website in the correct manner. Having said this, use your sense of judgment. Don't ban somebody on their second offence unless it's a very bad one.

DO utilise temporary bans. Before permanently banning somebody from the site, give them a week or so where their access is prohibited (ensure they know why they've been banned - don't leave a PM if they can't access it during the time). If they do genuinely enjoy using the site, this will give them a taste of what it's like to be without it.

It's also psychologically effective, as it's clearly one step away from a permanent ban. When the temporary ban is up, be clear what will happen if they overstep the line again.

DO NOT take any action without chatting to other fellow moderators first, unless it's *blatantly* obvious what needs to be done. Actions such as warnings, duplicate account bannings, and spambot bannings can be decided independently with a little common sense. But punishments of wrongdoers who are unaware they're breaking rules, or need a minor punishment to point them in the right direction, should probably be discussed amongst the workforce.

As well as punishments, if moderators have other powers on the site (eg YoYo Games' "Featured" sticker) this is also something that discussion would be beneficial to, again, unless it's clear that a particular action is the way to go.

DO use proper English spelling, grammar and punctuation at all times. This is excusable if English is not your primary language but never make mistakes on purpose. To remain professional in presentation, ensure you can differentiate between synonyms such as "there/they're/their", "your/you're", "to/too/two" etc.

If you can't, they're seriously not difficult to learn. Guides on the internet, in English books and suchlike can provide easy ways of learning correct usage. Many browsers nowadays also carry spellcheckers, which may get the odd thing wrong (elevated in quantity by Game Maker games frequently carrying odd names - guilty as charged), but are generally correct.

DO NOT abuse your power, ever. As well as the obvious – banning people you don't like despite their doing nothing wrong, forum topic locks because you disagree with their subject matter etc - seemingly harmless actions which your sense of judgment should be flagging up as wrong should also be avoided, always. You may, at some point, have to deal with friends or things you were involved with - try to be as unbiased as humanly possible when you take action.

DO be yourself... in general. Becoming a moderator, despite many people's perception as such, does not mean you have to turn into a grumpy, intolerant sod with no interest in activities on the website. Just make sure that you're as mature as possible and can handle moderatorly duties as required and you can otherwise be exactly the same person.

DO NOT worry if somebody that was on the receiving end of one of your punishment decides to "hate" you, along with turning all their friends on you. This is what makes you different to them - you can handle yourself maturely, whereas they cannot. Since the site almost certainly carries rules against flaming, you can deal with them as necessary. And if you can't, you can get other moderators to help your case. This removes the element of bias, and the more moderators that agree with you, the quicker they'll realise they were wrong and you were right.

DO help others out if they have genuine quibbles. This includes reports of misbehaviour (though point them to the site's report system for future use if it has one), site bugs (pass them onto admins), and if you have time and ability, problems in GM itself. Anything that could easily be searched online, requests to play games etc can be ignored.

DO NOT ask to be a moderator if you're not one, ever! Moderation is not a right, a stepping stone on your meteoric rise to power, or a tool with which to give yourself and your friends massive game ratings and plays. It's a privilege - a sign of trust. And it's not fun. It's not horribly difficult either, but as the saying goes - with great power comes great responsibility.

# CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

## A crossword with cryptic clues to a number of well-known Game Maker developers

Goddamn crosswords. Who cares about them any more? Well, on the offchance you do, here's a fairly difficult one full of developers of Game Maker games, both old and new. Be on the look out for dropped game names in clues, which may or may not be obvious, along with first names and the like. Compiling this crossword didn't go well - I spelt Jwaap's name wrong (as stated in one of the clues) and one of the people is there twice, though I disguised this with two separate clues. You're welcome to use Google, YoYo Games or anything else to help complete this.

I'll provide answers either in the GMC topic if there isn't an Issue 2, or in Issue 2 if there is one. No prizes for completing it, I'm afraid. Note: In clues, after the word/letter count (there are also instances of numbers in aliases), a letter is shown. N = real name, A = alias, T = team name.

### ACROSS

1. This little developer stops time (4,6 N)
4. It's armageddon day for this guy (6 A)
5. He's not overt to a bit of spelunking (5,2 N)
6. Sentenced to jail for murdering retro (10 A)
7. Prickly creator of bizarre quick games (6 A)
10. To his defence he's not really immortal (4,4 N)
11. He's only simulating total quiet (8 A)
13. Chaos - star patterns and sewers! (4,5 N)
14. Murdered the aquamarine president (5 A)
18. A flat block used to a focus on deaths (6 A)
23. Mouldy spud pays a visit (6,5 A)
25. Punishment stains the Knight Rider driver? (7 A)
26. No elite castle can stop this hero (10 A)
29. Waxy backward gophers? (7 A)
30. Breakable firing game creator (5,5 A)
32. Theseus runs for it (3 A)
33. A very Variable developer (7,3 N)
35. Fish-face that springs his fist into action (4,5 N)
37. Made a game about tepid cogs (4,4 N)
38. Wears a jumper so he can run, man! (4,7 N)
39. Undrinkable, with a keyboard for a weapon (9 A)
40. He also takes the plunge into flash games (4,5 N)
41. Developer that always feels purple (9,8 N)

### DOWN

2. When everything starts to fall, he has power (9, A)
3. Has a crush for bombs going off (3,7 N)
6. Super, mega, awesome and godly (9 N)
7. Starts and ends in C, and is full of pixels (8 A)
8. No tapeworm would attack this Johnny fan (5 A)
9. Old well-known developer locks on (3,8 A)
12. Counted nyne Aztec gods (5 A)
15. Rising star murders cowboys with Greg (6,6 N)
16. A sexy hiker with an obscene tank (6 A)
17. Game developer that upsets the cleaner (9 A)
19. Daniel makes a game with 2-3 dots (10 A)
20. JW's name with an ending S, not N (3,6,6 N)
21. This developer proves there is no mouse (7 A)
22. Ancient ants and lost snowmen (9 T)
24. This developer runs a mad house (4,6 N)
27. Sector 9er unconfident about his looks (3,5 A)
28. Putting his physical faith in dominoes (5 A)
31. Blue oil company director bombs acid (2,9 A)
34. 22 boxes plus one (6,1 A)
36. Brian takes the shift at 11pm (4 A)
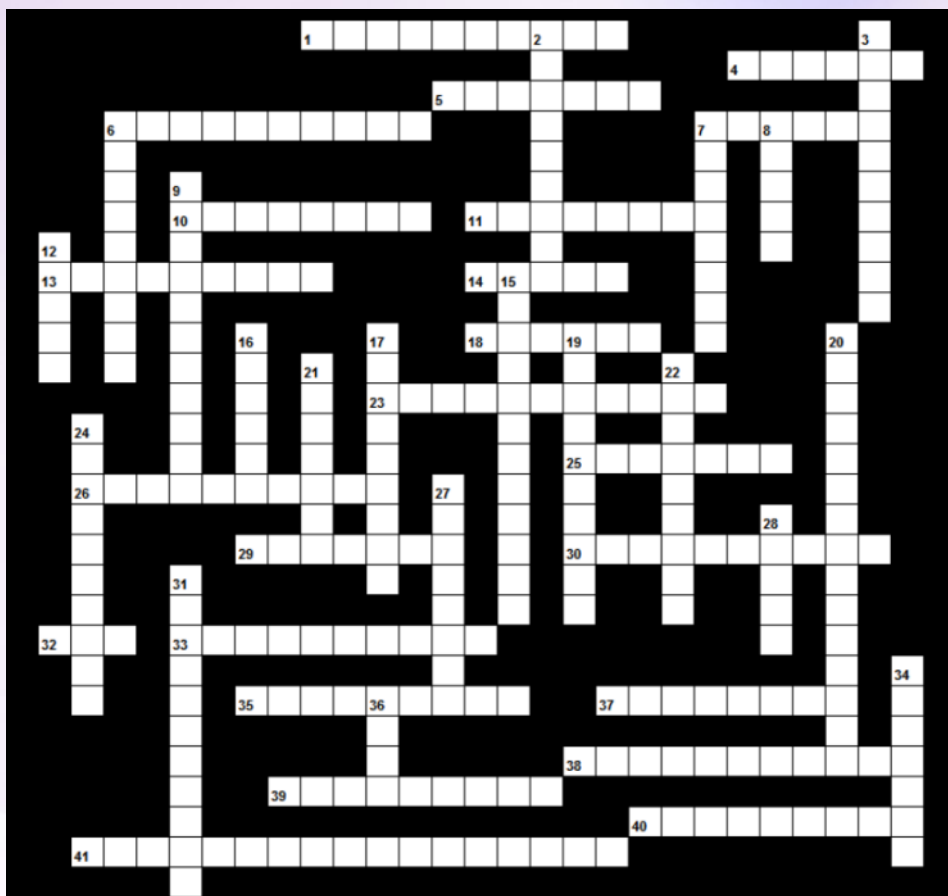
There are two good ways of filling this crossword in - you can print the page out and do it with a pen/pencil, or paste the page in Microsoft Paint or similar and do it like that

# THE LAST WORD
## Ozzy Osbourne's "Hellraiser" gets desecrated

| | |
|---|---|
| I'm living on an endless road | I'm living with my old PC |
| Around the world for rock and roll | Around the net's the place to be |
| Sometimes it feels so tough | Sometimes its load time's tough |
| But I still ain't had enough | But I will ne'er have enough |
| I keep saying that it's getting too much | ISP says "Downloading too much" |
| But I know I'm a liar | But I know I'm on fire |
| Feeling all right in the noise and the light | Getting this file from the YoYo Games site |
| But that's what lights my fire | To help my games grow higher |
| | |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| In the thunder and heat | Newbies use D&D |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| Rock you back in your seat | That's not worthy for me |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| And I'll make it come true | I will use GML |
| Hellraiser... | Game Maker... |
| ...I'll put a spell on you! | ... Errors can go to hell! |
| | |
| Walking out on another stage | Making sprites with the built-in 'ware |
| Another town, another place | And tearing out frustrated hair |
| Sometimes I don't feel right | Sometimes use GIMP instead |
| Nerves wound up too damn tight | Nerves unwind, soothe my head |
| People keep telling me it's bad for my health | SFX...R for nice sound effects |
| But kicking back don't mke it | And Fruity Loops for music |
| Out of control, I play the ultimate role | Out of control, as problems damage my soul |
| But that's what lights my fire | But that just aims me higher |
| | |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| In the thunder and heat | Newbies use D&D |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| Rock you back in your seat | That's not worthy for me |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| And I'll make it come true | I will use GML |
| Hellraiser... | Game Maker... |
| ...I'll put a spell on you! | ... Errors can go to hell! |
| | |
| I'm living on an endless road | Learning this code's an endless road |
| Across the world for rock and roll | But my PR will soon explode |
| Sometimes it feels so tough | Sometimes, it may feel tough |
| But I still ain't had enough | But I will not have enough |
| Feeling all right in the noise and the light | Putting my game, up onto YoYo Games |
| But that's what lights my fire | I watch my game go higher |
| | |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| In the thunder and heat | Fifty plays in a day |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| Rock you back in your seat | My non-featured dismay |
| Hellraiser | Game Maker |
| And I'll make it come true | Isn't going down well |
| Hellraiser... | Game Maker... |
| ...I'll put a spell on you! | ... DOWNRATERS GO TO HELL. |