

## ***CSU33012 Software Engineering***

### ***Biography Assignment: John Romero***

Alfonso John Romero is a video games developer and programmer, well known for being the designer behind games such as Wolfenstein 3D, Doom, and Quake, games which led to the mass popularisation of the first-person shooter genre. He is the co-founder of the company id Software and Ion Storm, and created many of the tools used by id Software to create their games while he was working with the company. Along with a few other game developers, Romero's games are what got me really interested in gaming, and later coding and development. I chose to write about Romero specifically as his early works were very influential in the video game industry.

#### **Early life and career**

Romero was born on October 28, 1967, in Colorado. During his upbringing, Romero was inspired and influenced by many of the games available at the time. He was introduced to video games through the arcade game Space Invaders. According to Romero, the biggest influence on him came from Pac-Man, which was the first game that got him thinking about game design. He was also inspired by programmer Nasir Gebelli, who worked at Sirius Software and later at Squaresoft. Nasir's 3D shooters influenced Romero's later works. Romero started programming on the Apple II in 1980. His first published game was Scout Search which appeared in the June 1984 issue of inCider, although he had developed games before this. The first game he developed was a clone of Crazy Climber. The earliest game he had made that was eventually published was Jumpster, which he created in 1983 and later had published in 1987. Romero's first job in the video game industry was at Origin Systems, which he started working for in 1987. Romero later left the company to co-found Inside Out Software. During this time, he worked on porting games between the Apple II and the Commodore 64, such as the game Might & Magic II.

### **Softdisk and id Software**

In 1989, Romero moved to Louisiana and started working as a programmer at Softdisk in its Special Projects division. He later started a PC games division in 1990 called Gamer's Edge, where he worked with John D. Carmack, Adrian Carmack, and Tom Hall. In 1991, Romero and his colleagues left Softdisk to co-found id Software. Romero was involved in several of id Software's most famous games, including titles such as Wolfenstein 3D and Doom, where he designed half the levels of Wolfenstein 3D, and most of the first episode of Doom. He also wrote many of the tools used at id Software to create their games, examples including the level editors DoomEd and QuakeEd, and DWANGO client for connecting to DWANGO's servers. He also created the installers for all the games up to the game Quake. Romero worked at id Software up until 1996, and during his time there he created and worked on 28 games.

### **Ion Storm, Monkeystone Games, and Midway Games**

After leaving id Software, Romero co-founded Ion Storm with Tom Hall. Romero designed and produced the game Daikatana at this company. Announced in 1997, Daikatana became infamous due to its controversial advertising and having its release date pushed out repeatedly, and later receiving negative reviews upon release. Romero and Hall left Ion Storm in 2001 to found Monkeystone Games. The company was made to develop and publish games for mobile devices. Monkeystone Games had a short lifespan of about three and a half years, during which it released around 15 games for multiple devices including the Pocket PC and Nokia N-Gage. In 2003 Romero left to work at Midway Games, although Romero continued working with Monkeystone. He worked as project lead and later creative director on Midway's game Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows, while Monkeystone worked on Midway's title Area 51. However, Monkeystone Games closed in 2005, and Romero left Midway before the completion of Gauntlet: Seven Sorrows.

### **Cyberathlete Professional League**

For ten years, Romero was the Chairman of the Board for the Cyberathlete Professional League, a professional sports tournament organisation that specialised in video game competitions. He announced a new FPS project for them called Severity in 2006. The project was for both consoles and PC, and would be a multiplayer first person shooter built on technology licensed from id Software. The game was being developed by Escalation Studios, and it was claimed to blend different styles of gameplay through multiple game modes, as well as having cross-platform multiplayer. However, it was announced in 2009 that production of Severity was cancelled as Escalation Studios could not find a publisher.

### **Blackroom**

In 2016, Romero announced that he had partnered with Adrian Carmack to create Blackroom, a new first-person shooter that would be inspired by the classic titles such as Doom and Wolfenstein, with a mixture of exploration, speed, and combat. They created the studio Night Work Games for it and made a Kickstarter campaign to raise \$700,000 for development. Although they expected a launch date in 2018, the Kickstarter campaign was cancelled to develop a demo of the game, which Romero planned to release before reopening the campaign in the future. This was never released, although in an interview in 2019, Romero claimed that he was still working on Blackroom.

### **Romero Games Ltd.**

In 2015, Romero established a new development studio with his wife Brenda Romero. The studio is called Romero Games and is located in Galway, Ireland. The first game developed by the studio was a HD mobile remake of Dangerous Dave in the Deserted Pirate's Hideout, a game that Romero had originally designed and released in 1988 for the Apple II. The studio went onto release two other games. Gunman Taco Truck was released in 2017 and was sold through steam to mostly positive reviews. Empire of Sin is the most recently released game Romero has worked on and was released on both PC and consoles to mixed reviews.