

Brendan James Jackson

Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa

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Profile

Creative and technically skilled Game Designer, Developer, and Educator with a strong foundation in gameplay programming, systems design, and player-focused development. Experienced in Unity, C#, and a range of design and production tools, with additional exposure to Unreal and analogue game design. Passionate about creating meaningful player experiences through well-balanced mechanics, engaging narratives, and accessible design. Proven leadership in academic and industry settings, with strong research skills rooted in fan studies, identity, and player-character connections—used to inform design choices and deepen engagement. Experienced in teaching, mentoring, community building, and client-based development.

Education

Master of Arts in Digital Arts (Pending completion)

University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

2022 – Present

Currently awaiting final results

Bachelor of Arts Honours in Digital Arts (Cum Laude)

University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

2021

Bachelor of Engineering Sciences in Digital Arts

University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

2018 – 2020

Experience

Game Design Lecturer

SAE Institute South Africa – Johannesburg, South Africa

July 2024 – Present

- Teach game design with a focus on gameplay programming using Unity and C# for PC and mobile platforms
- Deliver modules on advanced development topics: VR, AR, multiplayer systems, VFX, shaders
- Instruct web development: HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Bootstrap
- Teach business of games: finance, monetization, and distribution strategies

- Guide student projects through all stages of design and implementation

Game Design Tutor

University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg, South Africa

January 2022 – December 2023

- Supported teaching of digital and analogue game design using Unity and C#
- Provided feedback and technical guidance for student game projects
- Mentored students through ideation, iteration, and development phases

Lead Game Designer & Lead Programmer – Mighty Mzansi

Picnic Pals (in collaboration with Penrose Gaming for MTN)

July 2022 – December 2022

- Designed and developed a mobile game for MTN's Mzansi Gaming platform using Unity and C#
- Integrated MTN APIs to reward players with real-world benefits like airtime and data
- Coordinated development and design with a student team under Picnic Pals
- Worked alongside Penrose Gaming as intermediary to MTN
- Focused on culturally relevant design for South African mobile audiences

Volunteer – Campus Game Jam

South Africa

2021 – 2023

- Assisted with organizing and running South Africa's largest university-level game jam
- Managed event logistics, registration, and MC duties for live/online events
- Collaborated with organizers and sponsors to support emerging dev communities

Volunteer – Jozi Games Festival

Johannesburg, South Africa

2024

- Assisted in planning and running a major local game industry event
- Helped manage décor, speaker sessions, arcade setup, registration, and operations
- Interacted with attendees and professionals from across the South African games industry

Skills & Tools

Game Development

Unity (2D & 3D), Unreal Engine (basic), Unreal Blueprints, C#, C, C++, Delphi, Python (basic), Assembly, Gameplay Programming, Mobile Game Development, VR & AR Development, Multiplayer Systems, Visual Effects (VFX) & Shaders, API Integration, Game Prototyping & Rapid Iteration, Debugging & Technical Problem Solving

Game Design

Systems Design, Level Design, Mechanics & Combat Design, Narrative Design & Worldbuilding, Player Experience Design (UX), UI Design Principles, Board/Card Game Design, Playtesting & Feedback Loops, Game Documentation & Pitch Writing, Accessibility Awareness in Game Design

Web Development

HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Bootstrap, Responsive Front-End Design

Tools & Platforms

Git / GitHub, Milanote, Trello, Krita, Inkscape, Blender, Google Workspace / Microsoft Office

Production & Community

Leadership & Team Management, Teaching & Mentorship, Communication & Public Speaking, Community Engagement & Event Hosting, Marketing, Social Media & Community Management, Time Management & Task Prioritization, Creative Problem Solving & Critical Thinking, Collaboration & Teamwork