



# Food fight:

## How Team17 dishes out multiplatform madness with Unity

Unity and Team17 join forces to offer a game for every palate



## TEAM17: A UNITY CASE STUDY



### The challenge

Launching hit multiplayer titles across today's most popular platforms

### Platforms

Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, Microsoft Windows

### Project Staff

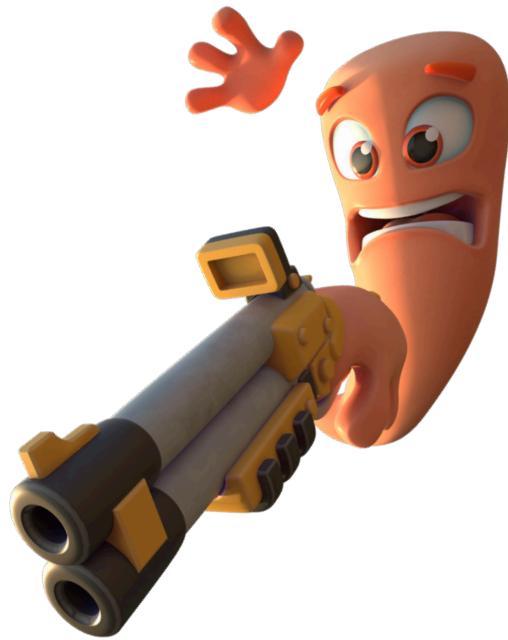
80+

### Location

Wakefield, U.K.  
Manchester, U.K.

Team17 is an indie developer renowned for creating hit multiplayer titles. Their run of hits stretches back to the original *Worms*, an innovator of the couch multiplayer genre that launched on the Amiga and nine other devices in 1995. Since then, the company and its development partners have continued to create great games spanning all genres and gaming platforms.





## Keeping the knives sharp

With the latest iteration of the *Worms* franchise – the real-time action shooter *Worms Rumble* – and *Overcooked! All You Can Eat*, the studio has evolved from the Amiga days. But their goal of delivering great experiences is the same. “In terms of the games that we’re producing, playability, great gameplay, and great experiences for our players are what we’re aiming for,” says Dave Smethurst, head of programming at Team17.

While they were keen to reach players on the new generation of consoles, Team17 knew that simply porting games to PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X|S wasn’t going to cut it. Instead, they decided to compile the hilarious, unique multiplayer Ghost Town Games titles *Overcooked!* and *Overcooked! 2* into a fully remastered bundle packed with extra features, levels, characters, and accessibility options.

Team17 served up the result, *Overcooked! All You Can Eat*, not only on Xbox Series X|S and PlayStation 5, but also PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, Microsoft Windows, and Xbox One. Team17 leveraged the Unity Platform and multiplayer services to deliver this cross-platform confection.



# The results

- Launched one of the first made-with-Unity games on next-gen consoles
- Simplified cross-platform launches across two titles
- Saved years using Unity rather than developing a custom, in-house engine for each project



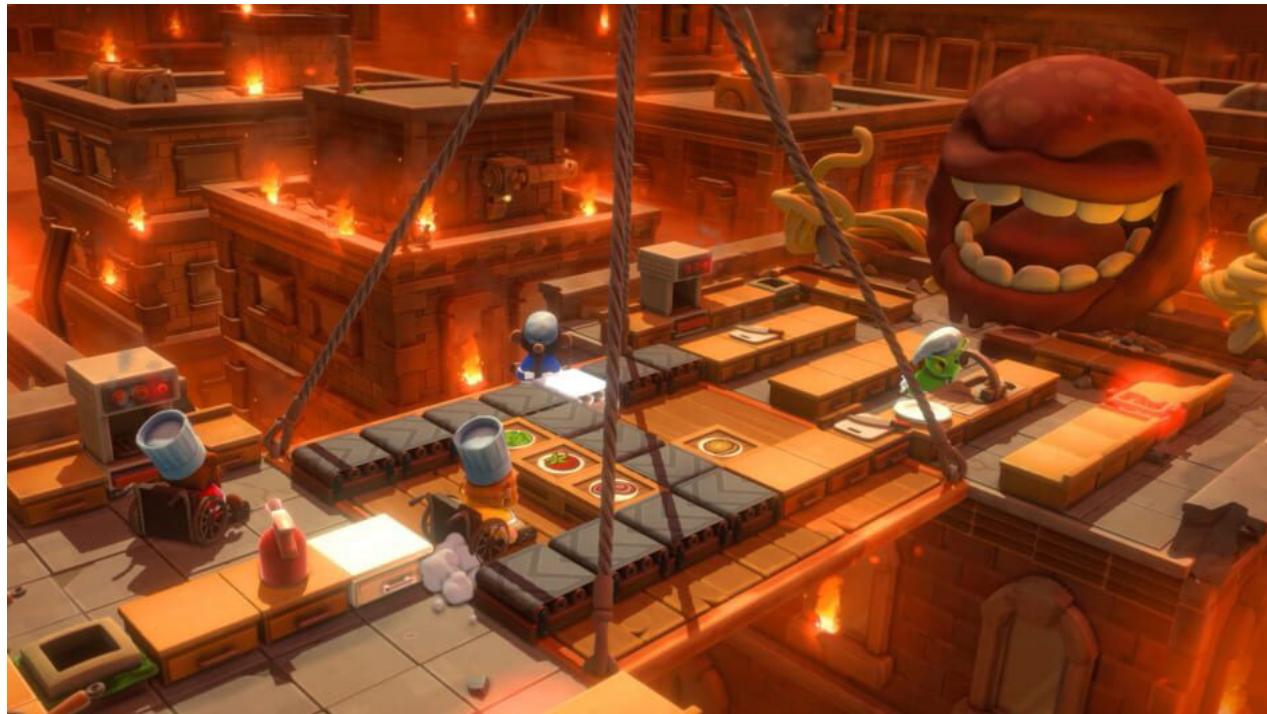


## Cooking up chaos

*Worms Rumble's* wacky, warmongering cartoon grubs have been a popular part of the gaming landscape since their first appearance in 1995. *Rumble* updates older, turn-based battles with intense, real-time, arena-based combat between up to 32 players. There's still the same crazy arsenal with classics like banana bombs, sheep launchers, and holy hand grenades, but with up to 32 participants wielding them, the result is pure chaos.

While *Overcooked! All You Can Eat* may sound like a more peaceful prospect – run a kitchen with your anthropomorphic chefs to chop, stir, and cook your way to success – the result is equally hectic. As any top chef will tell you, it's the ticking clock that adds pressure as players compete to deliver tasty meals before customers become restless or the timer runs out.

Both games have a notoriously difficult-to-nail multiplayer experience at their heart. So how did the studio bring their games to life on today's most popular console platforms?





## Finding the right recipe with Unity

Team17 is an independent label that's helped dozens of small studios around the world bring their games to market, as well as creating their own. After being impressed with an early prototype, they helped Ghost Town Games take the original *Overcooked!* to market.

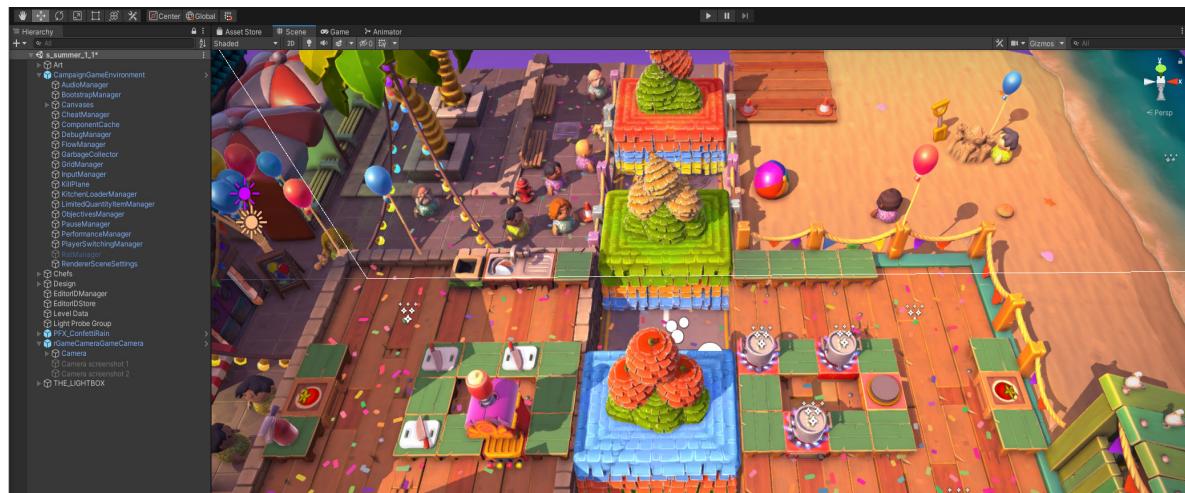
"When we came to do the sequel game, *Overcooked! 2*, the foundations for the game were already all there," explains Dave, "so it was easy enough for us, with our previous experience with Unity on other projects like *The Escapists* and *Beyond Eyes*."

The team's familiarity with the engine unlocked benefits as they created the franchise's latest iteration. From the [Scriptable Rendering Pipeline](#), which allowed them to express their unique visual styles, to the built-in physics system, Team17 was able to pick and choose the tools that benefited their vision for the project.

Traditionally, in-house engines aren't flexible enough to facilitate multiple game projects, and engineering teams often need to go back to the drawing board for each title. For Team17, who work on a varied selection of their own titles while also supporting smaller studios on projects of all kinds, Unity's flexibility gave them a customizable, out-of-the-box solution that shaved years off their development time for each title.

"To build a decently competent game engine, even for small games, you'd probably have at least five to 10 people spending one to two years getting the basic project up," explains Niklas Hansson, Team17's deputy head of programming. "The problem with internal engines is that they aren't flexible enough to do any kind of game, which means if we start doing something new, you end up restarting that process."

With Unity, he continues, "we can focus on developing tools specific to the needs we have for a project, because we already have a general setup that works straight out of the box. For example, we can craft the kind of styles and visuals that we need to have without being bogged down with a custom rendering solution."



*"Developing an engine takes years and years with a relatively large team. Using Unity, we've got an out-of-the-box, well-working Editor. We have platform support, we have rendering tools – you just get so much."*

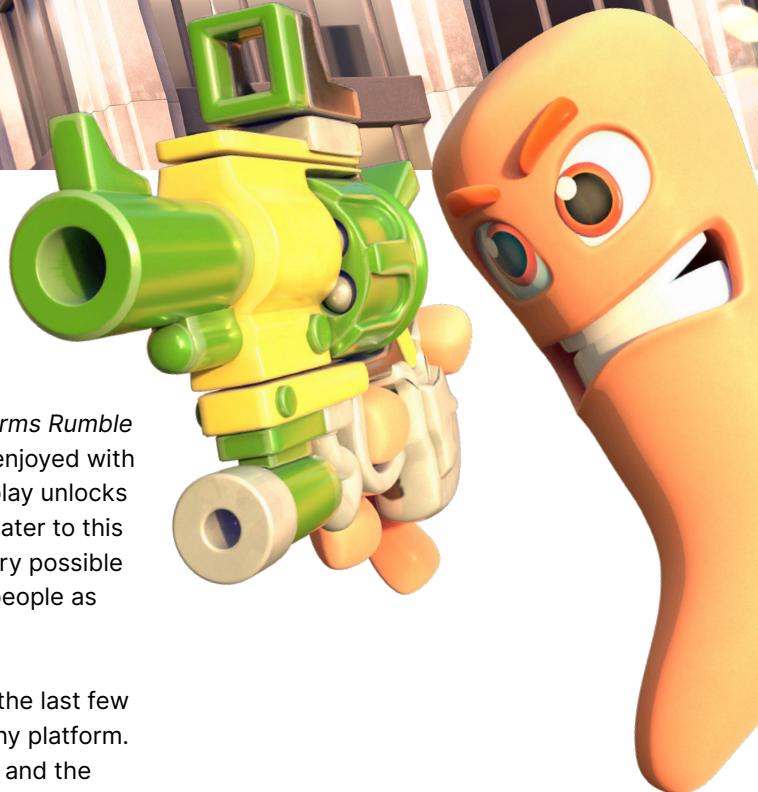
– Niklas Hansson, Deputy Head of Programming, Team17



## Catering to more players on cross-platform consoles

Team17's two top titles are heavily reliant on multiplayer action. *Worms Rumble* is an online-only game, while *Overcooked! All You Can Eat* is best enjoyed with friends, near or far. The potential player base that cross-platform play unlocks is too good to turn down – but the extra resources called upon to cater to this demand are not to be underestimated. Team17 was looking for every possible advantage to ensure they could serve up their games to as many people as possible without sacrificing the quality of the final dish.

The demand for cross-platform games has grown exponentially in the last few years. People now expect to be able to play with their friends on any platform. Add in factors like the audience split between console generations and the increasing power of mobile devices, and many studios are scrambling as they try to cover all bases.



"The two games that we've launched on the new generation of platforms are both cross-platform multiplayer, which has introduced a large level of complexity in terms of managing the releases of those platforms, the compatibility between each version, and making sure that everybody can play online together," says Dave.

"We can't see that slowing down at the moment in terms of expectation from consumers when you're doing multiplayer games now. You really have to take a long, hard look at it to understand, are these games suitable for cross-platform play? If they are, then we have to account for an extra level of technical difficulty within our time frames."

## Inviting more cooks into the kitchen with Multiplay

It was clear that every advantage would be critical in successfully delivering Team17's titles everywhere they wanted to, while enabling players to interact between each. Team17 decided to entrust their server hosting to [Multiplay](#), Unity's engine-agnostic game server hosting and matchmaking platform, part of [Unity Multiplayer Services](#).

Cross-platform-as-default has been the focus of Unity Multiplayer Services for years now, with services from voice-chat to server hosting set up to give developers what they need to build once and deploy everywhere. By choosing this resilient, scalable platform, Team17 is able to deliver the best experience to their players, wherever they are and however they're playing, without having to build and maintain their own gaming infrastructure.

"Multiplay allows us to avoid a lot of pitfalls that might be hard to avoid on our own. We can rely and lean on their experience when it comes to everything from user behavior to expected updates. We can scale between hardware and cloud easily, allowing us to fine-tune the cost of servers," says Niklas.

"It's not just saving time in terms of development, it's also time in terms of the IT department and DevOps. They're not having to get involved. We're not having to take them off other internal projects, so they can focus on what's important to the games."

*"Multiplay was a great choice of partner for us. They provided integrated matchmaking and server hosting that allowed us to focus on our matchmaking function and game development, while relying on their massive experience to make certain the game would hold up for launch. They provided clear data and invaluable advice, helping to make the launch a success."*

– Dave Smethurst, Head of Programming, Team17





## Propelling next-gen releases

Launching on a new generation of consoles can be a daunting task, even for a studio that's launched titles on dozens of different platforms over its 30-year history. Team17's close relationship with Unity helped them prepare *Overcooked! All You Can Eat* for the launch window of PlayStation 5, as well as availability on Xbox Series X|S.

"Because Unity has close ties with the platform holders, they're getting in there very early. Getting code up and running, being able to get that into the hands of key partners, and being able to show that the engine runs very easily on new platforms helped immensely," says Dave.

"The team at Unity dealing with those next-gen platforms are very talented, and they've done a lot of work very quickly to get the engine up to a standard that you can ship a new game at launch of the consoles so well."

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## Jumping into battle with Unity's well-stocked arsenal

Team17's seasoned industry veterans have seen console generations come and go, but they're still an energetic studio that's full of ideas and excitement for the industry. They've been making games long enough to know what's important to them, and they know what good looks like when choosing the tools to help them realize their latest fun-fueled vision.

"A key thing for us as a studio is to be able to iterate quickly and discover what makes our games fun for the players. Unity has allowed us to focus on this by removing most of the technical barriers and providing tools that allow our teams to be effective from almost day one," Dave explains. "Recent additions like the [Scriptable Render Pipeline](#) and the ability to do native plugins give us the flexibility to do what we need."

By relying on Unity for solutions to create and operate their titles, Team17 has found a solution that helps focus on what's important to them – creating fun games. From the engine that powers their biggest hits, to the server hosting that keeps their games online, Unity empowers Team17 to bring their ideas to life and create games across platforms – a goal that might not have been achievable without the right tools.

[Team17 got more than an engine from Unity](#) – they gained access to a galaxy of features and insights on multiplayer development, cross-platform play, and more.

"Working with Unity has allowed us to focus on our primary activity, developing fun experiences for our players, without being bogged down by spending years developing the base technology and backend infrastructure first," Dave continues. "Being able to maintain a dialog with Unity's internal development team has allowed us to feel certain that we're always up to date."





[unity.com](https://unity.com)