Jacob Patrick

DigiPen Application Prompt: Why have you applied to our Bachelor of Arts in Game Design degree, what inspired you to pursue a future in this field, what have you done to prepare yourself for this field, and why is DigiPen the right school for you to realize your goals?

Since I was a toddler I have been interested in game design. From the time I could talk I played video games on a windows XP Atari emulator. By the time I was six I played enough emulated games, on enough platforms, that I could start comparing them. I would question and critique the control ports, how smooth they played, and how well they ran and worked. As I grew up the passion for looking at games, breaking them down, and trying to build them into something better, never left me. Conscious or not I was critiquing the games and trying to design better solutions to problems I identified while playing a variety of early 2000’s games.

The biggest reason I was started playing games so early was because I must spend several hours a day doing medical treatment. During this time, I am connected to heavy noisy equipment, and makes it impossible to move. Video games let me escape the ‘reality’ of my life, this was a huge draw, even if it just meant that I got to put headphones on to get away from the noise.

When I was six I tried to re-design cribbage; it didn’t go that well. I don’t remember exactly what I did, but I do remember that it made the game significantly worse. Despite the failure I loved trying to balance how ‘powerful’ the crib is. I found it incredibly enjoyable challenge to make the crib powerful, yet not game breaking.

By the time I got into high school, I knew I wanted to work in game development. Initially I thought I wanted to work on the programing of the games. However, as I explored game design in and out of classes, I realized I enjoyed working on designing the whole of the game, engineering the player's experience, and balancing the game, far more than I enjoyed the programming. I’m not sure why I have always loved doing this, my only guess is that is the perfect mix of my mother’s creativity and my father’s engineering.

I discovered my love for game design while taking game development courses in high school that taught the basics of 2D game design. I would spend hours working on the games I made. In and out of class, at home and during my medical treatment. I loved trying to add new features and struggling with logic puzzles, I even ended up choosing to work on games over studying for other classes like math or English. Once I was done with both game design classes I continued making games. With the assistance of YouTube, I taught myself how to use Unity and Blender, I also attended the school game development club. For hours friends and I would discuss ideas for games that we had. One week in the club a friend and I made a game to turn in as a History class assignment. Throughout High School I made an effort to improve my ability to program the games I want to design I took several advanced computer science classes, including a level 200 three credit Data Structures and Algorithms course accredited by Marquette University, during my Junior year.

When I first discovered DigiPen I knew it was the school for me. When I read about life on campus I could tell DigiPen was an environment that would let me thrive. Everything I saw depicted a school whose students strived for, and routinely achieved excellence. From the group work and class projects, to the Alumni and their work, I knew DigiPen could teach me what I wanted to know. Furthermore, the student clubs, groups, and the campus events, are all things I was interested in I felt that these where my people.

When I had the pleasure this summer to visit the Redmond campus, I knew this was the place I belonged. I sat in on a Game Design 2 class, and while working on my own project the other students treated me as if I belonged, going so far as to reminding me to sign for attendance. In addition, I could start a conversation about any one of my hobbies with any of the students around me and was greatly engaged by every teacher I met. Not only is the student body and faculty fitting to my learning style, the pace of learning, and portfolio building that DigiPen requires is how I like to learn. With the hands on and in teams’ approach DigiPen students don’t just study theory but apply that theory in projects that model a real workplace environment. Graduates from DigiPen have an un-paralleled level of skill and knowledge, as well as a deep respect from employers. This is exactly what I want from a school to help me achieve my goal of a career in game design.