# IT Work

* What kind of work is done by the IT professional?
* What kinds of people does the IT professional interact with? Are they other IT professionals? Clients? Investors? The general public?
* Where does the IT professional spend most of their time?
* What aspect of their position is most challenging?

Shane Trewartha is a video game designer who has had many roles throughout his career, from Quality Assurance (QA) on games like Bioshock 2 to level design work on games such as where's my water, to developing his own video games such as Unfamiliar, to now teaching the next generation of games designers at the Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE). Shane has a vast range of experience and knowledge of the game design industry.

For this interview I got to sit down with Shane and speak about the time he spent doing QA at 2K for Bio Shock 2. Although he describes QA testing as ‘rote’ and ‘not the kind of glamorous thing’ you might think testing video games is, he also describes how ‘fulfilling’ it actually is, stating that ‘you know that you’ve had a pretty major impact on shaping the end result’.

The role of a Quality Assurance employee, it was Shane’s job to test and look for problems in the game. Then he was required to write reports and go through a process that’s referred to as ‘logging bugs’ when mistakes in the game were found. He would then have to enter them into the system, become ‘resolved’, and then come back to him to ensure they had been ‘resolved’. Shane highlighted that in games development it is heavily referred to as resolved rather than fixed as not all bugs found can be fixed.

He was required to complete what is known as a smoke test, or as they called it at 2K the ‘sanity test’ every day. A smoke test is where you check that the major systems in the game function, this is usually in the form of a spreadsheet that contains questions such as: can the player move? Can you pick up a weapon? Can you pick up a plasmid? Can you reload the weapon? Can the player interact with objects? And so on. This was to track the more general across play bugs that needed to be fixed.

Another type of testing included playing through a level to find bugs that are classed as ‘game breaking’ or ‘progression stoppers’ as well as others which might cause frame rate to tank or game play inconsistencies. Shane shared some of the bugs he had discovered such as the game breaking bug he found in the very last level of the game, this involved being able to shoot the antagonist character, the Big Sister, up on a roof which stopped player progression due to a following event that needed the Big Sister to complete, which she was not able to due to being pinned to the roof. Other examples Shane shared was that of a ghost, frame reducing, vending machine as well as a bug that actually made it into the final game that still haunts him to this day that involves discrepancies between levels. You can listen to the full interview to hear those stories and more.