Achievement System

**For – PROG3105 F14, Simulation and Game Development**

# What is the Achievement System?

This is a component of your grade in this class that is largely self-directed. Several aspects of Game Development have been ‘captured’ within small portfolios that contain contribution and expert assignments. The intent is that each student can pick which of the assignments from these portfolios that they wish to complete, offering a way to personalize the course to their strengths or interests.

# How do we participate?

1. Finish ‘Contribution’ Tasks – Each of the Achievements below has 2 contribution tasks available for you. **You need 4 Contributions**, in any order/combination you wish from the Achievements listed for this course. Contributions are typically discussion board based tasks, or single-task focused assignments. Completing these tasks to the requirements will grant full marks for the task (e.g. Completing a discussion board post, meeting the contribution length requirements would net the full points for the task).
2. Finish ‘Expert ’ Tasks – Each achievement has 2 associated Expert tasks. These are more complex and are subject to some amount of scoring from the instructor. **You must complete 2 Expert tasks** from the same or differing Achievements to round out your Achievement score for the course.

**Examples of use:**

*Bob decides to complete the following:*

Completion Tasks: Game Review & Greenlight (both Steampunk), SET: The Game! (Ninja), SDK’s (Matrix)

Expert Tasks: Poster Project (You shall not pass!), Workshop (Steampunk)

*Wendy decides to complete the following:*

Everything in You Shall Not Pass! (2C, 2E), and Game Review & Greenlight (both Steampunk, +2C),

# Achievements

**** You shall not pass! – There’s a lot going on in the world of video games that is highly controversial. The propagation of violent, sexist and xenophobic behaviours is of great concern to many people (parents, politicians, newsmakers on a slow day, etc), but on the other hand there seems to be little in the way of hard evidence that Grand Theft Auto has actually decayed our society more than any other factor. What about game addiction? What about video games as a portal to extend gambling addictions?

**Completion Tasks:**

**Discussion Group A** – Within the discussion forums, make a 300-500 word, including references, post outlining the controversy over a popular game franchise (any era of video games is appropriate). Take a stand – Should this game be allowed, or should it be banned (and why!).

**Discussion Group B** – Surely society has survived the apocalypse of changing values and popular culture in the past! From a historical perspective, provide a 300-500 word review (include your references) on some other disruptive social trend that previous societies feared would bring about their doom. Did this trend bring about doom? Was this trend anywhere near the same scale as video games?

**Expert Tasks:**

**Essay** – Delve deeply into an important social issue that involves video games, by providing a 1000-1200 word document with a min. of 5 different references to support your research and conclusions.

**Poster Project** – Create a poster that calls attention in a visual way to an important social issue that involves video games. If you had space on the wall in 2A314 or elsewhere in the college to bring about positive change, what would it look like? Think of this much like putting together a science fair project or trade show’s poster board (which of course you’ll need to do for capstone). Chat with the instructor about your specific ideas before deciding on this project.

****Steampunk – Valve’s STEAM service has become a very successful way to not only sell games, but to bring together gamers. Get involved with the SETGAMEDEV group on Steam in order to start working on this achievement!

**Completion Tasks :**

**Game Review** – Review a game in Steam. The review should be thorough, and provide 3-5 paragraphs of commentary on what worked and what didn’t work for a particular game. Cover gameplay and technical aspects of the game as well. Post your review in the SETGAMEDEV group, or if you commented within the game’s site on Steam, provide a link to your review in the SETGAMEDEV group for us to follow up on.

**Greenlight** – Take Steam’s Greenlight service for a spin, and look over a number of promising (or not!) games that are looking for support to make it to Steam’s marketplace. Select 4 games that you either approved of, or not, and give us a quick overview of your choices in our SETGAMEDEV Group.

**Expert Tasks:**

**Workshop** – Some Steam games feature Workshop support, allowing us to modify our favorite games and share our mods with others. To complete this task, create a workshop offering for a game, and post it to the community. Discuss this option with your instructor before embarking on it, so the scope of the mod will be agreed upon and appropriate. Previous work you’ve done in workshop CAN be considered.

**Host a Game** – One issue many people cited in the week 1 lab was the potential challenge in finding other players to game with/against. How well does Steam solve this problem? Arrange a time for a 1-2 hour multiplayer session of a game, and invite the class to participate (esp. The instructor!). Although you’ll be tempted to play with the group, you must keep an eye on the multiplayer factors that occur during the hour. Did Steam make it easier for people to come together to play? What factors were challenging? After the party is over, provide a 300-500 word report on the event in the SETGAMEDEV group, outlining the contributions Steam made (or did not) to the gaming experience. ***NOTE – This requires coordination and we MUST have a decent number of people partake. One MP scenario in Company of Heroes 2 with yourself and one other student won’t do.***

 NINJA! – Better than pirates or robots, Ninja are masters of the deadly arts who master many skills in order to best their opponents. Although the historical origins of the Ninja are debatable, their adaptability and creative solutions (esp. in overcoming much more heavily armed opponents; use of stealth and non-conventional weapons, etc.) are well studied. Even the world of business self-help/strategy is not immune from the teachings of Ninja! (Proof? See here - <http://www.slideshare.net/licoreis/applying-ninja-strategies-to-our-business> ). For this class, the successful Ninja is one who can blend successful strategies and diverse tactics for game design purposes

**Completion Tasks:**

**SET: The Game!** - Develop and share a Box Back and GDD (similar to the week 1 lab) for the SET Program. If you had to portray the SET program as a video game, what would it be like? RTS? Simulation? RPG? FPS? \*Ahem\* - Please be considerate and professional. Tongue in cheek is fine, but do not use this as an outlet to get revenge for your ASQL marks =)

**Discussion Group C** – Research 2 examples of games becoming wildly popular for reasons in addition to their gameplay. Was it a successfully licensed product? Cross-genre/platform success? Did Social Media play a role in success? What about negative publicity? Ninja must use all the tools at their disposal to make a game successful! Post a 300-500 word (include your references) article to the discussion groups for this task.

**Expert Tasks:**

**Seek a Master’s Guidance** – Reach out to someone in the game development world, perhaps an indie game designer, and find out if you could interview them with 3-4 questions concerning their game design/development experience. Prepare a report of 800-1000 words as a target covering the wisdom you’ve gained from this master!

**Master of Many Forms** – Beyond coding, is there another aspect of game development that you enjoy and are practiced in? Do you like to create artwork assets, sound effects, music, or gameplay mechanics? Consider this challenge if you think you’d be in a position to offer some non-code based assets to the course’s group project towards the end of the semester. Talk to the instructor to right-size this task before setting off on it.

****The Matrix – Red pill or blue? It’s time to load up the kung-fu and demonstrate that you own the code! These tasks are largely code-oriented, and might be fairly complex in scope. Don’t take them lightly, and talk to your instructor early about any of these projects.

**Completion Tasks:**

**Framework review** – Provide a 300-500 word review of a game development framework, such as XNA, Quake, Half-Life, etc. This review will require you to spend some time configuring at least a demo version of this framework so that you can genuinely get basic experience investigating the toolset. What was easy or challenging about getting set up with this framework? Would you want to use this for professional game development? Why or why not?

**SDK’s** – Implement and make use of the Triton and Silver Lining SDK’s in your team’s final project. We’ll look into them during the course, but it would be awesome if you took up the challenge of incorporating them into your final project!

**Expert Tasks:**

**Java** – If you’re taking a red or blue pill, you might as well swallow it down with some Java. Take the sample code from 2 different weeks of the course and develop Java/OpenGL based versions of those labs. The concept here would be to provide a differing view on the same technical challenges we addressed with GDI support in weeks 2-3 (for example). Confirm with your instructor on the suitability of your idea before pressing ahead.

**RNG Module** – Develop a random number generator in C# that you will share with the class. This RNG should provide greater randomness than the typical pseudo-random generator that is in our core libraries, and should support a range of options passed to it, such as number range, quantity of numbers to generate, and the ability to save a sequence of numbers out to text in order to support ‘replay’ for game testing purposes.