About Me

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About Me

I am Garrett Huxtable, a 24 year old student of design. Prior to my time at DigiPen, I attended two other college institutions. First, was Cal Poly San Luis Obispo where I started as an English major before attempting to transfer in the history major. I spent two years at Cal Poly studying a combination of English and history before realizing that I had gone off track. Having been interested in game design from a young age, I decided to begin looking into schools which specialized in game design education. I decided upon DigiPen, but believed that I needed to supplement my education thus far before applying. As a result, I spent two years at a junior college called Los Medanos where I studied graphic design and fine arts. Finally, I applied to DigiPen and have spent the last two and a half years studying game design.

I have been interested in game design for as long as I can remember. I created my first board game when I was 5. It was a simple game in which players rolled dice and moved down a track with different squares of the track affecting the player’s progression. It was similar to the games I had played up until then, such as Candy Land or Chutes and Ladders. As I grew older, my games became more complex and I often played them with friends to find out what needed to be fixed and what simply wasn’t working. I continued to create board games throughout elementary and middle school, and even modified a few playground games which I would play with my friends at school. Many of my designs were simply modifications of existing games. I loved creating my own Digimon cards, and actively tried to balance them with the existing systems. However, I managed to create a dozen or so original games during this time. My favorite game utilized Star Wars figures on a 3x3 foot board and was a simple army management game. At this time in my life, the idea of making games for a living, especially video games, was not even an option. I did not have video games as a young child. My only exposure was a friends houses, playing Sonic and later Star Fox. It wasn’t until 2002 that my household had a video game system in it. I haven’t been the same since.

Christmas morning, my sister and I woke up to find a PS2 connected to a new TV. I was shocked. My parents had always been so adamantly against video games in the house, going as far as making me return an old Gameboy pocket a friend had given me when he upgraded to a Gameboy Advance SP (I would later be given it again and kept it hidden under my bed for years). While having games in my home did wonders for my exposure, skill level, and enjoyment of games, it did not improve my game creation practices. I actually stopped designing games for a while, preferring to play them instead. I continued to dream up game ideas, but now they were merely concepts of video games which I had no hope of creating on my own. It wasn’t until I received my first laptop, 2004, that I started creating again.

Having my own laptop opened up new avenues of game creation and design for me. It began with numerous word documents of game ideas and systems. Few of them were deeper than a page or two description, but some got as far as full system descriptions with mathematical backings. When I started to buy video games for my laptop, is when I discovered modding, and my journey into video game design truly began. My first attempts at modding where the utilization of the map editors in Warcraft 3, and Battlefield 2. I experimented with both, but found that with my skill level I couldn’t do much more than map creation. Eventually, after many trials and tribulations, I finally managed my first true mod. In Battlefield 2, I created a mode in which the players are in a maze with exploding barrels under the ground. Shooting the ground would do nothing, but if a player managed to find one of the barrels which rose from the ground at random intervals, they could explode the entire map. This would cause the player to a loose a point due to causing their own death, but would also grant them a point for each enemy killed. Looking back on it now, it was simple and goofy, but I was certainly proud of it at the time. Once I started college, my experimentations with game design and modding halted until I landed at DigiPen.

Here at DigiPen, I have been a part of four digital team projects, eleven digital solo projects, and countless analogue games. When I think about GAT 399 and what I want to get out it, one subject stands out above the rest. How do I direct a player in a game with numerous possibilities? As my education here at DigiPen has progressed, I have taken on a greater interest in level design and would love to know how to properly use psychology to manipulate players into making certain decisions within the context of level design. Despite the fact that last semesters GAT class was an introduction to 3D environments, there was little in the way of how to properly utilize the environment. We were given examples of environmental archetypes, but didn’t really touch on how to properly utilize them. As it is, I am excited for what this class appears to be, and I am sure that there is much to be learned.