02/23/2014

Heem Patel

135 W. Hillsdale Boulevard

San Mateo, California, 94403

Hiring Manager

Naughty Dog, Inc.

Dear Hiring Manager,

My name is Heem Patel and I am currently a Master’s candidate at Carnegie Mellon University’s Entertainment Technology Center (ETC). I love media that makes me care about its characters. A lot of books and movies tend to do that in a really strong manner, but games tend to struggle with it. Quite a few games in recent times have actually achieved it: The Walking Dead, Bastion, and Braid to name a few. I thought The Last of Us took it to a new level. Not only did I care about the characters but also their relationships, like between Ellie and Joel, Ellie and Sam which made it such good example of story-telling. This is the reason why I want to really work for Naughty Dog.

For me to be a gameplay programmer, I knew I had to have technical skills which I had acquired during my Bachelors in Computer Science. In addition to that I knew I would need to understand the intricacies of design and what it is like to work in a creative inter-disciplinary team. This led me to pursue a Masters in Entertainment Technology from ETC. While at ETC I worked extensively with artists, designers, producers and audio designers to achieve the goal for the project we were assigned. I also got the opportunity to take up Professor Jesse Schell’s Game Design class. These experiences gave me insight on what I should start expecting when I start working as a gameplay programmer for the industry.

When I play games, and see an interesting mechanic, I immediately begin thinking about how the developers would have coded that. This has helped me think critically about the design of that particular mechanic and about how a problem can be possibly solved. Gameplay programmers definitely face a lot of interesting challenges, and I think one of the most important one is how to make a particular mechanic feel better? When I code games, I like to ask questions such as – “Does that jump feel appropriate?”, “Am I overshooting the jump?” “Is this what the designer really wants?” Then I would get feedback from the designer and keep refining the mechanic till it feels perfect, and I think that is the most satisfying part of the gameplay engineer’s work. I find it extremely interesting to refine and change mechanics, and find new solutions to make a mechanic better.

I think that given an opportunity, I would be able to contribute as a quality gameplay programmer and would bring to the table not only my technical skills, but also the design acumen that I have gathered. I hope I get an opportunity to prove myself and my abilities. I would be available for work after May 15th. I will be contacting you again in 2 weeks just to make sure that my application has been received.

Sincerely,

Heem Patel