**2nd Website Design Report:**

**IndieGameDevZone.com**

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# Development of an Indie Game Developer Social Site, IndieGameDevZone.com

## Team Members

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## Motivation

Many sites exist online to help people collaborate on software and team projects, yet they fall short on a missed demographic. Independent game developers, in particular college students, are full of great ideas. Here at UTD many such students have trouble getting their project noticed. Ultimately many of these projects end up being put on indefinite hold after they exit college.

We intend to design a website, [IndieGameDevZone.com](http://IndieGameDevZone.com) (domain pending) that brings these student developers together and helps them gain the visibility they need. With our site they will sooner attract fellow students to assist them on their projects, as well as the eye of potential investors.

### Some Examples

The websites researched that are similar to our website’s goals are:

[Kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com) – This is an amazing resource for any new business or project team to raise some capital and attention to their work. Our website will be on a much smaller scale (for now), but ultimately this is who we hope to be for game developers specifically.

[igf.com](http://www.igf.com) – The website for the Independent Game Festival is a great way for new developers to get word of their game out. The IGF has hosted such games as *Audiosurf*, *Minecraft*, and *Narbacular Drop,* the precursor to Valve Software’s *Portal*.

[indiegamereviewer.com](http://www.indiegamereviewer.com) – A host of game development news and aggregated blog posts.

## Users

Our initial target audience is the students here at the University of Texas at Dallas. The site will advertise projects to users majoring in Arts and Technology, Business, Computer Science, and others with interest in video game development, and to bring them together to successfully complete their projects to present to the school and industry.

Our user types are: registered users, non-registered users or visitors, video game companies, and other partners of the website.

### Registered Users

The primary user will be young indie game developers who need help gaining attention and project members. Project portfolio pages are created by registered users, and are unique to the project. Project pages include a list of all project members, and a registered user may have more than one project page they belong to.

Registered users may also comment upon other users’ projects, leaving words of encouragement and voting on their favorite projects. This, along with project activity, will be used to select the most popular projects or hot new projects to present to visitors. A new selection will be chosen daily, depending on which projects are trending up or down.

### Non-registered users

Non-registered users, including fans of indie game studios, will have the ability to browse the site, and download demos offered by game developers. By allowing a public audience to see the projects and other content on our website, it will encourage more users to register, as well as increase the visibility of our registered users’ projects.

We expect a percentage of non-registered users to try the games with demos available, and donate to the projects from PayPal links or other such links on the game’s project page.

### Video Game Companies

Established game companies may register on the site to create a page themselves, so that they may connect with and hire new developers, as well as advertise their own released games.

We expect this element of our site to be particularly popular. Dallas has many successful game studios in the area constantly looking for new talent, and our site will provide them dynamic information on such talent from UTD. Also, UTD alumni have formed new game studios here in the past, and our site can allow them to get a head start with finding new hires.

Of course, the process to create an official company page on the site would need to go through a process on the site to distinguish it from normal user pages, and to ensure that it is truly the real company being represented.

## KEY USER QUESTIONS

### The typical user, the game developer, will want to know:

**Q: Can registered users upload game demos?**

A: Demos can be uploaded for free download, or a link to an external page for a paid download.

**Q: How can user projects gain visibility with fans and industry?**

A: Registered users can browse other projects and connect with them, as well as sign up for ads.

Companies will also connect with developers to invest and hire them. Donation links will be embeddable in the site.

**Q: May projects advertise positions that need filling?**

A: All project pages have a section advertising open positions. Users can connect with other projects and add connections to company pages which will increase visibility, ultimately aiding in obtaining project members.

**Q: Will the website protect the rights and copyrights of the developer?**

A: Our site will make an effort to protect and respect the rights of all users, and to protect their intellectual property from the theft of others.

### Visitors and fans of the site will want to know:

**Q: Is registration required?**

A: Registration is only required to make a profile page, and to connect with profiles. All site content is open for the public to view, but visitors will wish to register so that they might interact with the site and connect with projects and other users.

**Q: Can anyone download demos, and if so, is it free?**

A: Demos hosted on the site are free, if the developer of the demo so allows. Non-free demos must be hosted by the developer at some external site. Similarly, anyone may donate to projects through embeddable donation links, but donations will be left to existing services external to our website, such as PayPal.

### Companies will be interested in:

**Q: The ability to find and contact quality game developers.**

A: The site will sort and track project pages to evaluate and find the best developers on the site, and highlight these projects daily on the browsing page, as well as on a user’s home page.

## Main webpages

There are four main webpages designed for the site. These are:

### Welcome page

This page serves as a login page for logged out users, and a user homepage for logged in, registered users. Here users will also be able to access navigation to all other major pages, such as registration and the browse page.

Users will also see the trending projects, and logged in users will see projects selected to their specifications, such as favorite projects they have connected with to track updates.

### Registration

Here the user will fill in all requested information to register for the site, including user information (which they may fill in and edit later on their profile page). Information includes name, email, current work, education, basic background and interests, as well as projects they are working on.

### Profile page

This is the primary functional page of our site. A project profile pages displays a list and user pictures of project members, images and descriptions of the project, its current progress, and any other relevant news.

Project demos, videos, and donation links are also displayed. For registered users, additional information such as the number of users who have voted for, or “favorited”, the project and a place to comment upon the project are available.

An area might also be dedicated to project sponsors, such as a particular school of UTD or even companies that choose to sponsor or fund a project.

### Browse page

The Browse page is the premier navigational tool to all of our users, both registered and non-registered. Here, all the many projects are represented by tiles of pictures and names. This list of projects may be sorted alphabetically, or by a series of different categories, and by popularity.

A ‘highlights’ category would portray current popular projects chosen by the users or by the website, as well as a category for official profile pages of video game companies and project sponsors.

### Other pages

A legal page will display important information regarding the legal protections and guarantees offered to our users, as well as outlining the protections we cannot guarantee. Frequent questions, sampled from our initial users, will be displayed and answered on our FAQ page. Also, an area of the site will be reserved for basic contact and support information, and all pages will have a space for advertisements by project sponsors and website partners.

## Development Strategies and Technologies

### Development plan and strategy

Our main tool for website creation is Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 and .NET 4.0. We are following a loose agile development strategy, where we have quick 30 minutes meetings twice a week to review weekly goals, and to assign web page improvements to each team member. Thus each week is roughly a sprint in our agile process.

To aid in this development pattern is the use of GitHub to manage project files and each version. GitHub allows team members to experiment and rapidly update changes to the website without fear of data loss or corruption.

Coding Practices

Where appropriate we intend to use javadoc style documentation throughout our code. For variable name conventions we intend to keep it simple and use camel case variable naming. Variable names and the overall code will have no-nonsense names that are self-documenting. Upon this we will still document as to have the purpose of the code clear and manageable for all future development.

### Technologies and Tools used

The following is the technologies and tools we are using in our goal to have a functioning website that works in all modern browsers (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera, Safari, etc.). Should time allow, effort will be made to design the website to be comfortable on other devices such as a mobile device. Our priority is to have it work on your average desktop monitor.

* Technologies Used
  + HTML: The markup language that is made use of to display the webpage content.
  + CSS: Cascading Style Sheets helps in stylizing the HTML content.
  + JavaScript: Facilitates client-side scripting that can achieve data validation, UI effects etc.
  + jQuery: jQuery is the cross-browser JavaScript library used in designing the website that simplifies the client-side scripting of HTML.
  + ASP.NET - Active Server Pages: The server-side script-engine for dynamically-generated web pages. All the webpages for the website would be for dynamically-generated ASP pages.
  + C# : The code-behind for the webpages (ASP.NET framework)
* Database
  + Microsoft SQL Server: MSSQL server is the relational database used to store and serve the data content for the indie game development website.
* Creating sprites/mock-ups
  + GIMP -GNU Image Manipulation Program: Open Source tool to create/edit/modify images used for the development of the website. Primarily used for image retouching.
  + Adobe Photoshop: Advanced graphics editing program used for manipulation of logos/banners/images used in the webpage design.
* Versioning Repository
  + GitHub: GitHub is the web-based hosting service that hosts the software development project . It makes use of the Git revision control system. Team members can work on code in their respective modules and commit changes to the master branch. All changes would be tracked by the repository.
* Coding tools
  + Microsoft Visual Studio 2010: Microsoft Visual Studio is the integrated development environment (IDE) from Microsoft that is used to develop the web site. Visual Studio also includes a web-site editor and designer that allow web pages to be authored by dragging and dropping widgets. It is used for developing ASP.NET applications and supports HTML, CSS and JavaScript. It uses a code-behind model to link with ASP.NET code.
  + Notepad++: Notepad++ is an open-source text editor/source code editor for Windows. One advantage of Notepad++ over the built-in Windows text editor, Notepad, is tabbed editing, which allows working with multiple open files.

## Use case diagrams

## Class Diagram