Making Friends In 48 hours

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Is it possible to make friends that fast? Well maybe not friends, but when you have to work with others to create a game in less that 48 hours, then you might meet some awesome people! On January 29th through January 31st, the CADRE Media Labs worked with the Game Dev Club to host Global Game Jam 2021 at SJSU. If you don't know, Global Game Jam is the largest game making event in the world! In the year we hosted, 2021, over 28,000 people registered with 585 game jam sites with a total of 104 countries participating.

Games

Here are games that were showcased at the of the jam (note: these are all the games submitted to our site, go here to see the full list: https://globalgamejam.org/2021/jam-sites/san-jos%C3%A9-state-university)

Aqua Hero:
You play a raindrop that has fallen to the ground and must travel through a landscape of fire and death to reach the top of a tree.

Bark and Found:

You're a lost dog who must talk to the local humans to find your owner. Of course this is a game so in order to get information, you have to do them a favor!

Grand Violent Fantasy:

Four princesses have been kidnapped, and the king has asked you to embark on a treacherous journey to rescue them.

Little Echo:

The cave is dark and you can't see a thing, but you're a bat so it's ok! As a bat, you use echolocation to navigate a pitch black cave while avoiding dangerous spikes.

Little j in little room:

In this cute point and click game, you try to find your cat who is hiding behind objects scattered around the room.

No one is home:

This is a two player game where one person is in a haunted environment looking for signs to escape while another player has the full code. The player with the code must help their lost friend escape the dark abyss.

Did we make friends?

I asked some of the game jam participants about their experience making a game in 48 hours. With sleep, eating, jobs, and other responsibilities, you never really get the full 48 hours to work. Furthermore, you must balance interesting ideas with a manageable scope. Creating a game under these circumstances is intense, so I was a little worried when I reached out to others for their experience (this article would be such a downer if everyone had a horrible time).

Lucky people had a great time participating in Global Game Jam, and although there were many hardships, creating a game was a valuable learning experience. I asked what was the most difficult part of making a game in under 48

hours and a common thread was trying to not be too ambitious. Having a large scope can lead to crunch and failing to finish your game in time. Rafael Perez, who worked on *Aqua Hero*, added that synchronizing tasks between team members was difficult. He says that "our different skills fit perfectly to make a game, but the toughest part was to make them work together by using tools like github, and since you have to choose between working or managing at times that made it harder."

One of the unique opportunities that our game jam provided was the chance to work with different disciplines. Every team that was formed had at least one programmer, artists, and sound designer/musician. When I asked what it was like to work with others who had different specializations, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Christian Acosta was part of the team that made *Bark and Found* and said that working with other talents was "a great learning experience. Not only do you learn their perspective on creating the game, but often you learn a little about their specialty."

Even though this game jam has ended, the jammers' relationships with each other have not! Creating new connections with others opens up future opportunities for collaboration. I asked Amy Devorkin, a team member for *Little Echo*, if she would work with her team again and she said "I would gladly work with any of them again. I feel like we had good vibes and let me work the way I like to while still keeping me on track to finishing." The best games aren't made alone, so if you're looking to form a team around an awesome pitch, then you should know people of different talents who would be willing to collaborate.

Finally, when asked if she made a friend, she responded saying, "I wouldn't say that I made a new friend, but that's only because the distance and discord lag makes my social anxieties more pronounced. I certainly hope I can work again and possibly become friends."