

GAME PROMOTION & MARKETING COURSE 8 – OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS PART 1

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Funding your game

There is other alternatives that you can use in conjunctions with Kickstarter.

- Alpha Funding
- Game Incubators
- CMF and Governmental programs
- Transmedia and selling swags

One important option that is starting to seriously compete with Kickstarter is **Alpha Funding** (Early Access).



Alpha Funding

Alpha Funding (Origins)

Alpha Funding is when consumers pay for a game in the early stages of development and obtain access to playable but unfinished versions of the game, while the developer is able to use those funds to continue work on the game.*

This funding method was widely popularized by the game Minecraft.

Prior to release in 2011, over 1.8 million players had purchased the alpha and beta releases, with over \$33 million raised from these early sales.



Alpha Funding from a Dev perspective

Alpha can be convenient for indie game developers because:

- You get funds before release, which helps covers development costs
- The funds you receive are **not loans** or publisher deals; your only obligation is to provide the alpha version and updates when they are available.
- You get valuable feedback from your fan base (bug reports + suggestions)



Alpha Funding from a Dev perspective

But, there is also some **risks** involved.

- If your updates does not show any good progress, or if you never release the game, you take the risk of **ruining the name of your studio**
- Since alpha funding is a new concept, many players thinks that an alpha version should be as good as a final version and judge it accordingly. This can generate negative publicity.

Alpha Funding from a fan perspective

From the perspective of a fan, alpha funding can be advantageous because:

- You get to play a game you are interested in early
- You can benefit from a discounted price or reward because you supported the game early
- You get to contribute on the making of a video game by giving your suggestions and reporting bugs

But also, fans might:

- Be spoiled of the experience before experiencing the final version of the game
- Feel **impatient** if progress on the game is slow

Making a game for alpha funding

Some games are better fit for alpha funding than others!

Your game has a better chance of success if...

- The game focus more on gameplay than the setting and story.
- The game is highly re-playable (new game situation every time)
 - User generated content
 - Al and random generated content
- The game is easy to learn and jump back into
- The game is **single player** or the online feature is solid from the start

Setting up your game for alpha funding

Right now, the most popular distribution channels that support alpha funding are:

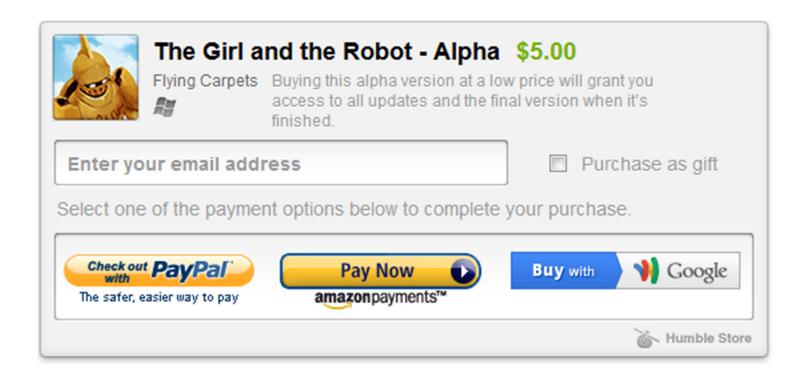
- <u>Humble</u>
- Desura
- Steam (Early Access)







The Humble Widget



Alpha Funding on Humble

You can do alpha funding using the Humble Widget.

First make you widget here:

https://www.humblebundle.com/forms

Each time you update your game, you will need to send the new build to: builds@humblebundle.com

You will also need to **email all the people that bought the alpha** (from a mailing list provided by Humble) to let them know of the update.

Note: Humble is a new company and so there is a lot of thing you have to do manually. Humble takes 5% of sales.

Alpha Funding on Desura

Alpha funding on Desura is easier.

You just go to the **developer section of your Desura Client** and upload your new build.

An email is automatically sent to users that says that a new version is available.

Note:

I did not try Steam Early Access yet, but I suspect that it is very similar to Desura.

Desura takes 30% of sales

Alpha Funding Strategies

Some Alpha Funding strategies:

- Offer the game at a **low price first** and raise the price as you get closer to release. This will be seen as an incentive to your fans.
- Rewards people that helped you report bugs and gave you suggestions (names in credits, Easter eggs in the game, etc.)
- Give a clear warning on your site that the alpha may spoil the experience and that goal of the alpha is to help with development
- Use your **dev blog, vlog and forums in conjunction** with alpha funding to promote discussion around the development of your game with your fans

Alpha Funding Case:

Overgrowth: http://www.wolfire.com/overgrowth



Incubator Programs

Game Incubator

A game incubator is a company that provide funding, office space and development support for teams or studios to complete a video game project.

Game Incubator often **ask for a share of the profits** or a share of the studio in return.

Each team is usually followed by a **mentor** that coach the team with development and marketing advices.

Some incubators in Montreal

The two famous incubator programs in Montreal are:

Execution Laps (http://executionlabs.com/en)

They accept new submissions each year, you need to put a team together first.

Critical Hit (http://www.criticalhitmontreal.ca/)

They also accept new submission each year. This incubator is shorter (a few months) and focus on games that are innovative and experimental.



critical hit 14



Game Incubator, good for you?

Game Incubator can be **great for new developers** because:

- They get funding to finish their game
- They get advices from experts if they need help
- Depending on the reputation of the incubator, they might get more exposure.

But also this means that developers might:

- Give up some creative freedom to answer to the terms of the incubator
- Give up a share of the profits
- Follow a schedule and respect datelines set by the incubator

Indie Fund (incubator-ish)

Indie Fund is a funding source for independent developers, created by a group of successful indies (Jonathan Blow, Kelle Santiago) looking to encourage the next wave of game developers.*

- They give more freedom (no milestones)
- They take 25% of your revenue when the game is release until your pay back double their investments



Homework

- Work on assignments from other courses
- Enjoy the weekend!

Bibliographies

Dropbox link to course presentations:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3zhrwn6nxrr5ywh/AACKUZSxAv30yzCH9qopVmlia