

# **GAME PROMOTION & MARKETING**

## **COURSE 8 – OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS PART**

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# Funding your game

There are other alternatives that you can use in conjunction 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.



\*Wikipedia

# 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)



**WE WANT YOU!**  
**FOR EARLY ACCESS**

# 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
  - AI 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:


- [Humble](#)
- [Desura](#)
- [Steam \(Early Access\)](#)



# The Humble Widget



**The Girl and the Robot - Alpha** **\$5.00**


Flying Carpets  Buying this alpha version at a low price will grant you access to all updates and the final version when it's finished.

☐ Purchase as gift


Select one of the payment options below to complete your purchase.


Check out with **PayPal**

The safer, easier way to pay

Pay Now 

**amazonpayments™**

Buy with  **Google**

 Humble Store

# 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](mailto: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 Labs (<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



\*Indie Fund

# Homework

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

# Bibliographies

**Dropbox link to course presentations:**

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