

IGN Code-Foo Challenge

Trevor Boone

Question 4 - Creatively prove to us that you meet our value - Fire - that this would be more than just a job to you, and that you are passionate about us.

At my current job today, if I were to say “I’d totally give Todd Howard a Sky-Rimjob for 30 minutes with The Elder Scrolls 5,” nobody would understand half of that sentence, and I’d probably get fired. I feel like IGN is where I belong, and not just so I can make dirty jokes about game developers (that joke could also work for Diablo, by the way), but because we care about all the same things. I love video games, and not just playing them either; I love gaming as an industry, and I make video games as a hobby. And I don’t make video games just because I love them, but I also love coding; I have ever since I first figured it out in seventh grade, and I’m pretty sure I’m awesome at it. Every time I’ve tried my hand at a new programming language I’ve been able to get up to speed pretty quickly, and I can usually figure out how to do whatever I set out to do on my own. Finally, I LOVE San Francisco! My wife and I lived in the bay area for about 6 months after we first got married, and we can’t wait to get back. Oh, and also, I love Batman. You jerks should have made him #1, but we can argue about that when I get there.



My wife and I with The Behemoth’s Dan Paladin at last year’s PAX. If I’m guilty of being a fanboy for anyone, it would be for The Behemoth.

This is an amazing time to be in the gaming industry. The barrier to entry for game development is diminishing to almost nothing, and while that isn’t necessarily dissolving the traditional relationships between game developers and monolithic publishers, the most exciting growth in the industry is happening outside those relationships. This puts the gaming press in an exciting position. While the obligation to cover the biggest game releases is still there, there are countless opportunities to expand your audience, be it by supporting the various emerging niche markets for games, by catering to the underserved members of rapidly expanding gamer demographics, or by offering guidance in finding hidden gems on platforms that have become saturated with shovel-ware garbage. IGN has made some excellent strides so far: the My IGN features allow users to create their own mini-communities to engage one another with their more specific interests; the “Comment Comeback” articles are a novel way to interact with your audience and show them that you really do read through the sea of hostility that appears beneath each article; and the fact that you have a section of the site devoted to smart phone games shows that you recognize the smart phone’s importance as a platform alongside the major consoles. I would love to join your team, help to push the evolution of the IGN network through this most exciting time for the video game industry, and become a part of gaming history.

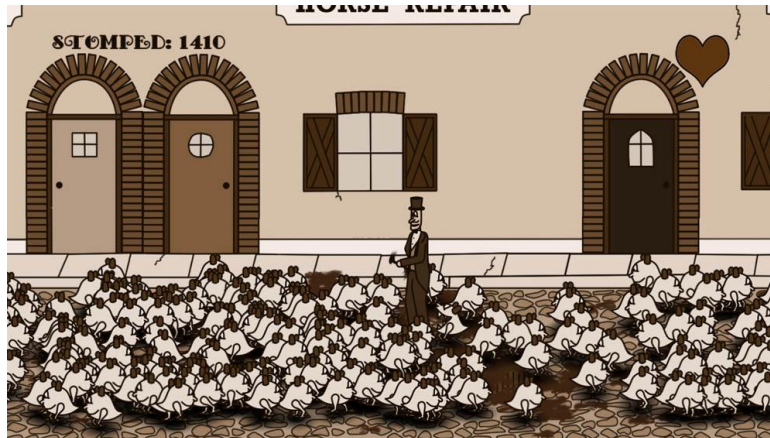
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I've been making video games as my main hobby for a little over two years now. My first game, Goblyn Stomp, is available on the Xbox Live Indie games. It's a fairly simple game that pits a single player against ever-increasing hordes of ankle-biting "goblyn" monsters. Here are some codes to check it out if you'd care to:

BYK4Q-PHK7D-YBTMC-K6H2W-8737D
V3XJD-TPX8B-XGGFK-3B6KB-4F2DT
GGVJR-Q9MYG-GQYT4-BTYHC-PPCDW
XD22C-MPTC3-B6JMQ-QKG8P-TT7VM
F6F9T-P8FMR-6K6JY-RJQWB-48YHQ



Goblyn Stomp!

I've created a series of youtube videos that cover my latest adventures in game-making and feature me geeking out over a few things. You can see them all on my youtube channel

(<http://www.youtube.com/tdboone>), but here's a few you might find interesting:

<http://youtu.be/5m2hKKO5vy4>

Here I talk about how my attitudes towards video games have evolved since I first got the NES at 5 years old

http://youtu.be/kgMXKy_lZ44

Here I talk about reorganizing the code in my current project and cuss at Super Meat Boy

<http://youtu.be/QyGvb41vlac>

This shows the match gameplay for my current project, the 3D game "Warm Milk Pong"

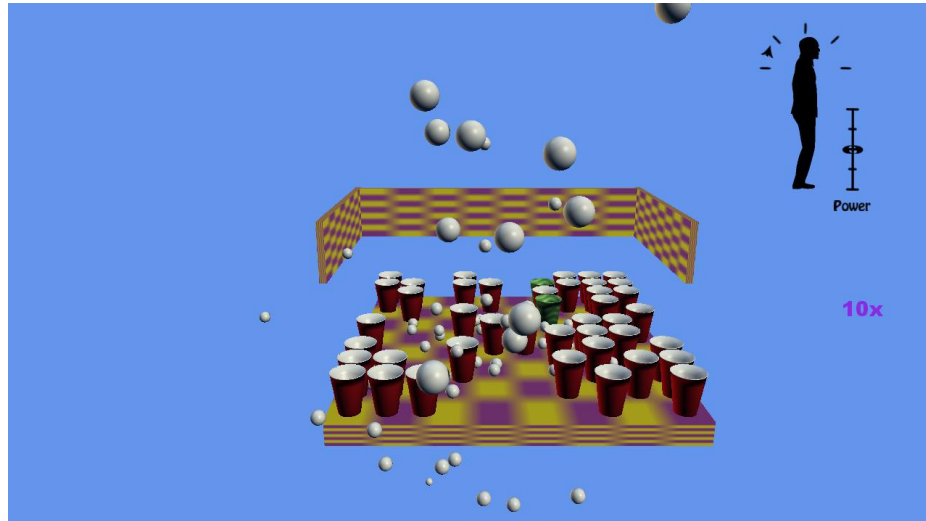
My current project, "Warm Milk Pong," has given me the chance to solve some coding problems that I'm really proud of. I'm particularly proud of how the ball collision physics work: I use a coarse screening method to conserve resources when checking for collisions between lots of balls and lots of objects, I use the bisection method I learned in my numerical methods class to find the precise point of collision

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when collisions do occur, and I created a generic “collidable object” class that I can inherit from in order to create objects with many different geometries for balls to bounce against while leaving the code that controls ball behavior untouched.



Warm Milk Pong's ball-collision physics allows for hundreds of balls to be thrown at 100 cups, creating quite a spectacle!

One of the things I love about coding is the way it lets you quickly test new ideas. While I'm sure a lot of work goes in to developing new features for a triple-A website like IGN, I would imagine that you could quickly put together a prototype and rapidly test iterations of a simple improvement to the site, such as a tool to find your favorite editorial articles. Whenever I see a process, such as a work flow or a user interaction, my brain immediately goes to work identifying potential for improvements to make things faster, easier and/or more accurate. I currently work in the medical device industry, which is necessarily risk-adverse (as you would hope when you're making things to go into people's hearts and brains), but the redundant control mechanisms and extensive review required to make changes means that I can only make a fraction of the improvements that I'd like to. I feel like a work environment that's willing to take chances on new ideas, has the capability to quickly iterate on those ideas and doesn't have people's lives at stake would really give me the opportunity to thrive.

While I haven't really coded professionally, I'm very passionate about it and I am determined to get there eventually. My wife and I have actually been saving about a third of our income for the last two years with the goal of saving enough for me to leave my current job and work on coding for games and websites on my own full-time. What you're offering is an amazing opportunity for someone like me who loves coding, loves video games, checks IGN.com multiple times a day, but just doesn't have the experience to be taken seriously any other way. I feel like the Code-Foo Challenge was meant to find someone just like me. I hope my submission makes you agree, and I look forward to hearing from you.