

Zac Peel-Yates

Games Engineer

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Experience

Tools & Systems Engineer | Playground Games

2024 – 2026

- Experienced the life-cycle of an AAA project, *Forza Horizon 6*, in an agile team, through Pre-Production, Production, and Shutdown. Utilized industry-standard technologies (Azure DevOps, Perforce, Confluence) to plan, cost, and document AAA-quality C# and C++ solutions within a proprietary editor and runtime. Ensured quality and stability through peer code reviews, and maintained a suite of unit and integration tests.
- Adapted to team needs during Shutdown by migrating to the Systems discipline to fix critical bugs in game systems required for ship, ensuring stability for developers and players. Quickly learned a new development environment, resolving complex low-level issues in the proprietary ForzaTech C++ runtime.
- Collaborated across many disciplines to understand their unique and evolving requirements throughout the project. Planned, developed, and maintained bespoke tooling solutions - along with iteration and upkeep on legacy systems - allowing content and design teams to author and deliver world-class assets and experiences.
- Championed the Vehicle Handling team. Took ownership of core technologies, updated legacy dependencies, modernized tools and workflows. Leveraged clear communication to align with their needs, delivering high-quality solutions with low turnaround time. Automated key time-consuming processes and deployed custom pipelines to TeamCity, reducing user downtime.
- Provided multi-disciplinary user support for technical issues spanning tools, content pipelines, and the game runtime. Frequently adapted to unfamiliar workflows and documented solutions for future reference.
- Invested in development of the Tools and Systems team as part of individual goals, up-skilling peers by delivering in-house talks. Shared findings and pitfalls discovered when maintaining large legacy systems and pipelines which interact with many disciplines and areas of the project. (e.g., SQL queries/databases, inter-op with Third-Party programs such as Excel, and utilizing legacy software from partner studios).

Specialist Visiting Lecturer | University of Gloucestershire

2025

- Created and delivered lecture materials for the Game Engine Programming module, to a class of 30+ second year students. Consolidated industry knowledge on how to develop robust and reliable code, focusing on Unit Testing and Test-Driven Development.
- Delivered presentations and CV/Portfolio workshops for the University's "Your Future Plan" initiative, assisting 100+ second and third year students plan for their journey into the Games Industry.
- Member of the industry panel at the University's student showcase conference GAMEX, judging BSc and MSc Games Programming final projects and presenting awards as part of Playground Games' Outreach program.

Projects

Rollback Netcode in Unity/C#

github.com/zacpeelyates/unityrollback

- Implemented a deterministic, multi-threaded Rollback Networking demo, showcasing an emerging industry-standard networking approach within Unity, C#, and .NET.
- Produced a companion video detailing the implementation as a free learning resource, receiving over 6000 views and overwhelmingly positive feedback: "*Determinism, Decoupling, Demystifying: Rollback Netcode in Unity/C#.*"

Education

University of Gloucestershire | First-Class BSc (Hons) in Computer Games Programming

2023

Accolades

TIGA | Outstanding Graduate of the Year (Programmer)

2023