# Game Jam

**Alan Chatham**

HCII, Carnegie Mellon &
Exertion Games Lab
Pittsburgh, PA, USA
chatham@cmu.edu

**Florian 'Floyd' Mueller**

Exertion Games Lab
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia
floyd@exertiongameslab.org

**Regina Bernhaupt**

University Paul Sabatier
Toulouse, France
regina.bernhaupt@ruwido.com

**Rohit Khot**

Exertion Games Lab
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia
rohit@exertiongameslab.org

**Sebastiaan Pijnappel**

Exertion Games Lab
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia
sebastiaan@exertiongameslab.org

**Cagdas 'Chad' Toprak**

Exertion Games Lab
RMIT University
Melbourne, Australia
chad@exertiongameslab.org

**Menno Deen**

Fontys Serious Game Design
Eindhoven, the Netherlands
menno.deen@fontys.nl

**Ben A.M. Schouten**

Playful Interactions Institute
Eindhoven University of
Technology
Eindhoven, The Netherlands
ben.schouten@fontys.nl

## Abstract

Game Jams – energized, fast-paced get-togethers of developers and artists to make digital games – have recently emerged as a way to generate and inspire novel game ideas and new ways of thinking. We intend to introduce the CHI community to this collaborative, fast-paced method of design by holding a game jam with an emphasis on developing novel user inputs as a way to explore HCI and to connect participants from diverse backgrounds. This game jam will introduce a successful model from a related field to the HCI agenda while developing collaborations between the two growing areas.

## Author Keywords

Videogames; interface design; rapid prototyping; game development

## ACM Classification Keywords

H5.2. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): User Interfaces.

## General Terms

Design, Experimentation, Human Factors

## Introduction

In the past few years, a number of new technologies have redefined how consumers interact with video games. Devices such as the Nintendo Wii and Microsoft

Kinect are successful examples of how we can use games to drive new ways of interacting with digital systems. However, we argue that the ways in which humans physically interact with video games remains underexplored. For example, the fixed hardware of existing systems can often only support predefined user actions. Human motion, however, offers a nearly unlimited space to draw interaction from, and we are only beginning to explore this space.

Meanwhile, in recent years a focus on rapid prototyping and creativity has led to the rise of 'game jams', events where participants from diverse backgrounds (art, programming, design, etc.) meet to create entire games in a short, predefined timeframe [5]. This rapid, collaborative approach to design allows for high-quantity development of wildly creative ideas [7]. As game jams are time-bound and unconstrained from the traditional commercial concerns, they provide a unique opportunity to push the limits of game design.

The rise of game jams has been a worldwide phenomenon [4], and as such has attracted the attention of the research community [7]. So far, results suggest that the game jam format can be valuable for other disciplines [7], and we believe that the overall CHI community can benefit from this approach. Similar to Fullerton et al. who argue that the best way to learn how to do game design is to design games [3], we propose the best way for the CHI community to learn about game jam methods is to actually participate in one. Furthermore, we believe that as HCI researchers and practitioners, we are in a unique position to extend the traditional game jam by focusing on the entire interactive play experience, not just the digital game component [2]. Therefore, we propose a game jam

workshop that focuses on creating games and novel play interaction experiences. Over the course of the workshop, we will create games and interfaces, both in hard- and software. Through this, we will explore how we can interact with digital play and drive discussion on the future of digital game interaction.

We feel the diversity of backgrounds and skills CHI brings together are ideal for taking exciting new ideas from conception to reality [1]. Furthermore, we provide the community with an opportunity to fully examine how we interact with digital games through practice and reflection.

The collaborative nature of a game jam offers an excellent opportunity for participants from varied backgrounds to network and bridge gaps that exist between institutions, research, and industry. Additionally, the "Innovative Interface" student game competition at CHI 2013 provides us with a unique opportunity to engage students with relevant expertise on the forefront of research and practice.

**Goals**
Our overall goals are threefold. First, we will leverage the diversity of the CHI audience to push the boundaries of digital game interaction and reflect upon its nature. Second, this practice-based collaboration between researchers and practitioners will build new ventures and long-term collaborations between participants. Finally, through our practice, we will provide firsthand experience of the game jam method to our participants, providing them the experience and confidence to integrate this valuable method into their own practice.

## Workshop Plan

Prior to the conference, participants will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the visions submitted by other participants as part of the application process, and to think about tools and methods that they may be able to bring in order to build games.

The workshop will take place over two days. During the first day, participants will introduce themselves and pitch ideas, teams will be formed, and work will begin on prototypes.  At the end of the first day, we will close with short presentations from each group, sharing ideas and techniques, followed by an informal dinner to encourage cross-group collaboration. The second day will begin with continued work on projects, and will lead into informal presentations among the participants in the afternoon. The workshop will close by bringing the games into the common areas of the conference to expose participants' work to the broader community.

## Follow-up and Dissemination

We will document the attendees' process and results with photographs and video, and share this content online, linking to them from the CHI website. We may also share these results in a printed special feature, such as in *Interactions*. We will also publish a document outlining lessons learned during the process.

## Authorship and IRB

Like the 2012 CHI CrowdCamp Workshop [1], we will hold a discussion on authorship and credit to encourage broad collaboration and idea sharing. Similarly, the activities planned are intended to be pilots and prototypes, and as such, we do not anticipate a need for IRB approval for our projects.

## References

[1]André, P., Bernstein, M., Dontcheva, M., Gerber, E., Kittur, A., Miller, R. CrowdCamp: Rapidly iterating ideas related to collective intelligence & crowdsourcing. In Proc. CHI EA 2012, ACM Press (2012).

[2]Bernhaupt, R., Isbister, K. Games and Entertainment. In Proc. CHI EA 2010, ACM Press (2010).

[3]Fullerton, T., Chen, J., Santiago, K., Nelson, E., Diamante, V., Meyers, A., Song, G., DeWeese, J. That cloud game: dreaming (and doing) innovative game design. In Proc Sandbox 2006, ACM Press (2006).

[4]http://globalgamejam.org

[5]Kaitila, Christer. The Game Jam Survival Guide. Packt Publishing (2012).

[6]Macklin, C., Martin, J., Dikkers, S. Planning your game jam: game design as a gateway drug. Mobile Media Learning, Springer-Verlag 2012, 203-218.

[7]Musil, J., Schweda, A., Winkler, D., Biffl, S. Synthesized essence: what game jams teach about prototyping of new software products. In Proc. ISCE 2010, ACM Pres (2010).