



The **IndieGameMagazine**
 Indie game reviews, previews, news & downloads

Issue 10: May/June 2010

puzzle bots



INDEPENDENT
GAMES FESTIVAL



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Machinarium



Osmos



Cogs



PixelJunk Shooter



RocketBirds

Indie Game Magazine Issue 10 - May-Jun 2010



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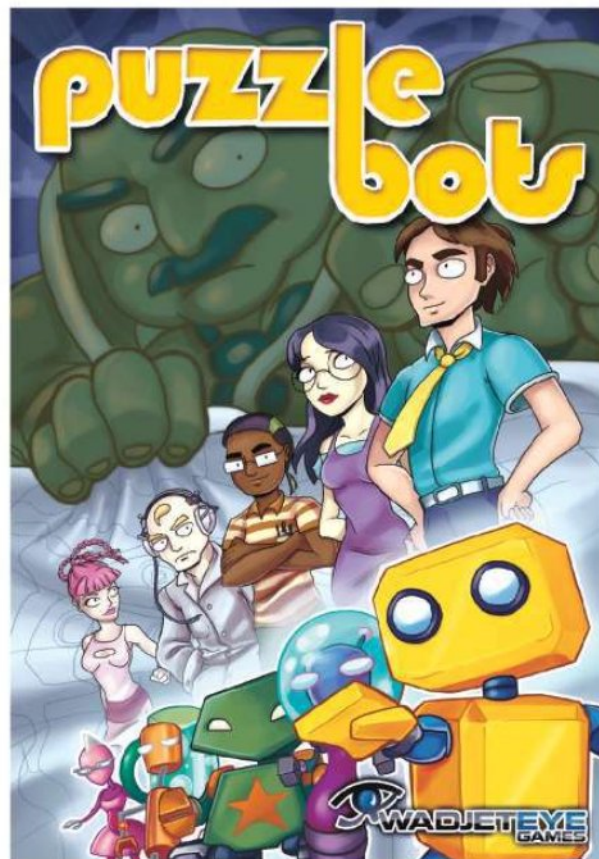
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We talk IGF, GDC and Puzzle Bots



About our Reviews

We rate all of our games based on their graphics, gameplay, sound, and lasting appeal. Each category is given a score on a scale of 1-10 (10 being perfect and 1 being horrendous). The average of these scores is tallied to give each game a percentage score and grade (A thru F). Games are more than the sum of their parts, so we do adjust our average scores based on our final assessment of the game, its appeal, creativity, uniqueness, and overall value.

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 0-59%

Beginners Guide to Indie Game Development Part 4 of 6 Your Game's Not Done When You Think It Is



A bulk of your indie development time will be spent on coding and programming your game. Putting in all your features, designing levels, debugging the game, updating graphics, and inputting sounds and music is a major portion of indie development, but don't think that just because your game runs and plays from start to finish means that it's ready for release. You should spend about the same amount of time perfecting your game's design and features that you spent coding the thing. Going thru the game with a fine toothed comb, working out all the blemishes and adding production value goes a long way. If you are finished programming and have finished graphics, sound, etc. in there, then it's time to start the following:

Marketing:

Marketing is never done and should always be in an indie programmers mind (because you don't have a marketing department so you have to wear both hats). When your game is far enough along, it's time for your first press release announcing your game to the press. When you think your game is finished, it's time for an alpha/beta announcement or to contact the press about doing previews of your game. After taking into account feedback from the gaming press, other indie developers, and a closed/public beta, improve your game and announce a release

4

date. There are other announcements that you can work in during the final stages of development too (new game trailer, first screenshots now available, new campaign/other game feature announcement). Finally, you'll have your announcement that the game is available and ready for purchase. The point of all of this marketing is to have a consistent and persistent flow of information about your game going to the press every couple of months leading up to your game's release. This will generate excitement for your game and get you press coverage.

Fine-Tuning:

It's very important to work out all the major bugs before a release, but it's even more important to make sure that a person picking up and playing your game for the first time knows what to do. There's a lot to be gained from user testing. Get as many of your friends and family playing your game that you can and then sit quietly with a notepad next to them. Observe what they're doing, don't help them or tell them what to do, just take notes. You should get a lot of ideas on how you can improve features, levels, etc. from doing this type of user testing. Sometimes the most obvious things have been looked over by the developer because they are so familiar with the game. You can also use a public or closed beta to get people playing your game. Offering a

preorder with the ability to download a public beta can be a great way to generate some cash and fine-tune your game. Just make sure that you are collecting comments and feedback and have an open and objective mind to sort through it all. Embracing this process will give your game that final coat of polish that will make it more valuable and enjoyable for the end user.

Publisher/Portal Contact

As you are finishing up your game, it is a good time to start contacting distributors, portals and publishers. Make sure to make your emails simple, strong and memorable. Think about how you would describe your game as a slogan or a picture. When approaching publishers, it's helpful to hint at or describe how your game will make them money: Pre-Sales have been 2x higher than our previous title, use press quotes and praise, gamers have been saying this, etc. It takes time for a publisher, distributor, or portal to release a game, so it's a good idea to contact them 30-60 days out from your game's release as part of the marketing process.

A lot of first time indies, don't think about marketing until their game is already out and don't spend enough time refining their game. Rushing a game out the door thinking that it will make money is an amateurish mistake. So many new indies get frustrated

because they release their game and wait weeks, months or longer to see their first sale. This result is almost always a result of a lack of traffic to their website, not marketing their game prior to release, and/or not fine tuning and improving their game enough to compete in the market. A good game has a conversion rate of somewhere between 1-3%. That means if your demo has only been downloaded 40 times, you probably haven't sold a damn thing.

Think about what a 1% conversion rate means:

- 1% of the people that play your free demo will buy your game
- Say you price your game at \$20 and hope to generate \$20,000 in Revenue
- The Payment Processor Takes about \$4 a sale, so you net about \$16 per direct sale
- You'll need to sell 1,250 copies at \$20 to make \$20,000
- To sell 1,250 copies, you'll need 125,000 Demo Downloads
- Assume that only 5% of web visitors take the time to download your game demo
- That means you'll need 2,500,000 visitors to your website!

Taking an extra 2 or 3 months to polish your game and raise that conversion rate even 0.20% is worth it. Be sure to install and utilize analytics on your website to optimize it and make it easy for users to download your demo quickly. The bottom-line is that it's tough to be an indie game developer; your game is never done when you think it is.

- Mike Gnade



Jetsom Sam - plasmaworks.com - iPhone

Jetsom Sam is an iPhone game developed by Plasmaworks, a company cranking out titles ranging from strategy to combo-based action. In elementary sidescroller with an elementary look, you play as Sam, who's goal is to rescue Kay from invading Aliens, and sometimes Robots. The cartoon look is unfortunately vacant of exaggeration that the medium would permit. I think this design choice is merely due to Plasmaworks pushing the game out more quickly and cheaper rather than any iPhone graphical limitation. Jetsom Sam employs the Rocket Knight Adventures mechanic of zipping across the screen via rocket boots and bopping Aliens on the cranium. Environments include a city, a volcano, and the invading enemy's ship. You control Sam by tapping the screen on the area you wish to fly, and Sam will boost there to the best of his ability. I say this because Jetsom Sam adheres to gravity and a strict physics engine; Sam flies in straight lines only and, thanks to constant momentum, lands more in the general vicinity than the exact bulls-eye. This leads to pounding on the screen more than necessary, grabbing coins scattered around the level. The coins, to my knowledge, are superfluous. Maybe there are certain level requirements of a set number, but I did reach such a level. Viewing the game is not an entirely lost endeavor; the character animation is fluid, with Sam spinning head over heels as he rockets around the map. This adds some characterization that is sorely needed. Even a small scene of Sam, our unlikely hero, donning these

rocket boots and blasting off, nervous but determined. This is all set to a pulse of Bucky O Hare space age discovery tunes, and the whirring of carnival laser zaps and blasts. Fortunately the sound effects slow an already choppy game, so that's more incentive to play on mute.

Level design is comprised of a constant background and a foreground of changing obstacles. The first level, City, has buildings that hinder Sam's progress, billboards with cute advertisements, and speeding cars. Modes of play include Survival, in which the camera pans right with Sam staying ahead of it, and kill X amount of enemies. There is also an endless mode. I'm sure that's cool. There is no real narrative tying any of this together, only a terse tutorial: "Fight the Aliens" and "Use [your] rocket boots to save Kay." It's difficult to be glib about Jetsom Sam. It's not so much intentionally lazy, boring and tiresome, but this is moot since the result is the same. Jetsom Sam just has minimal personality, and it feels like Plasmaworks is saturating the market with several hairbrained titles. Not that these need to make a profound statement, but the lack of any depth or complexity makes this a soulless effort. I'm not sure who Jetsom Sam's target demographic is: adults won't be caught dead playing it, so I guess kids who own iPhone's will get a kick out of imagining themselves as Sam kicking alien butt. Maybe I'm out of touch, along with this fossil.

- Colt Anaipakos

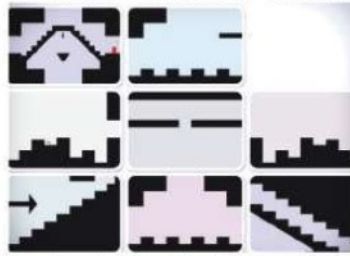
+ The Independent Games Festival

Nuovo Award



Tuning by Cactus

Student Showcase Winner



Continuity by RagTime Games

Excellence in Audio



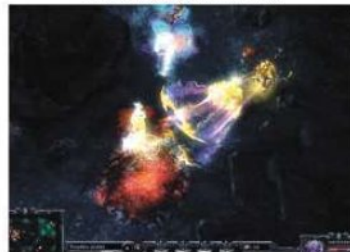
Closure by Closure Team

Excellence in Visual Art



Limbo by PlayDead

Audience Award



Heroes of Newerth - S2 Games

Excellence in Game Design



Monaco by Pocketwatch Games

D2D Vision Award



Max & Magic Marker - PressPlay

Best iPhone Game:



Spider by Tiger Style

Technical Excellence



Limbo by PlayDead

2000: Treadmarks



2002: Bad Milk



2004: Savage: Battle 4 Newerth



1999: Fire and Darkness



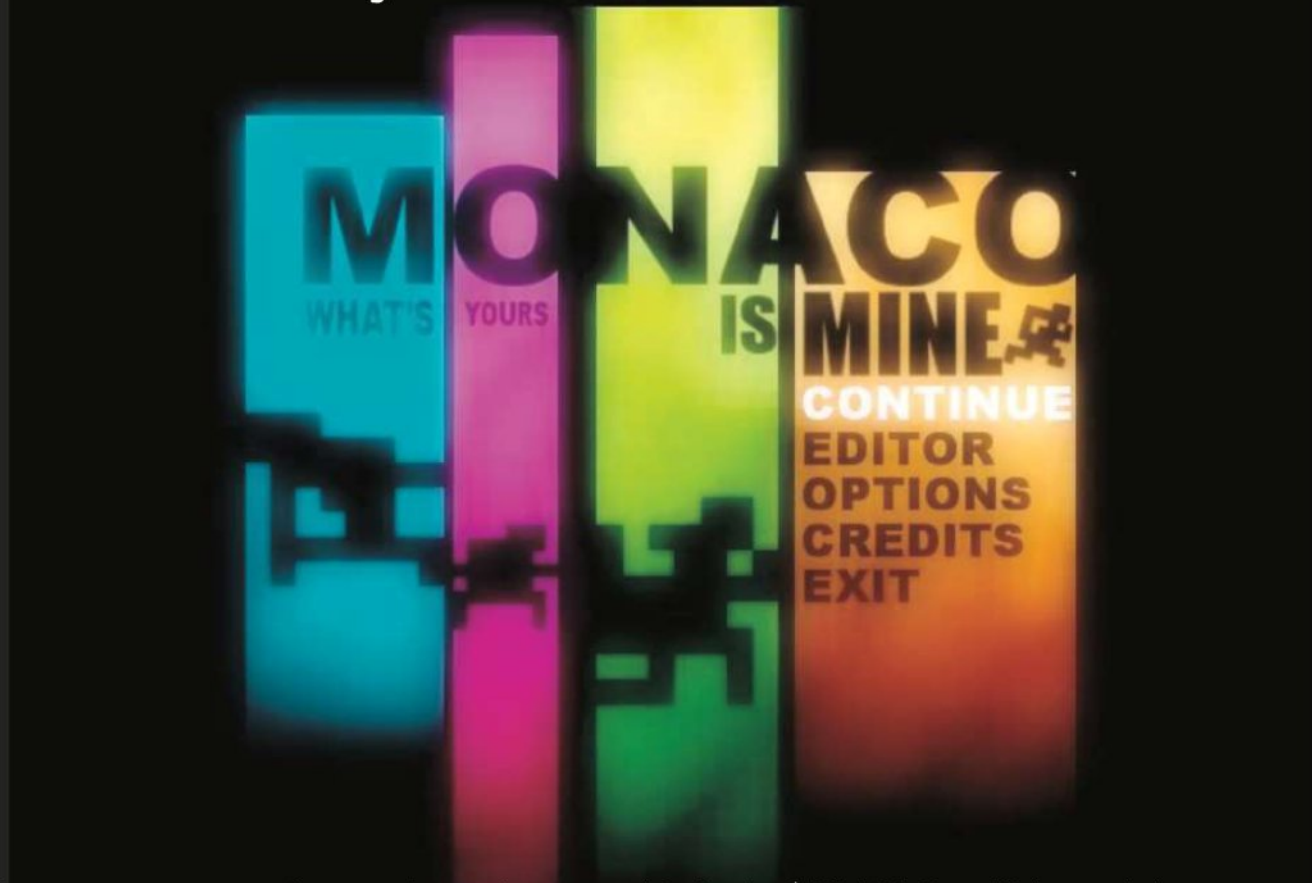
2001: Shattered Galaxy



2003: Wild Earth Safari



2010 Seamus McNally Grand Prize Winner - Monaco

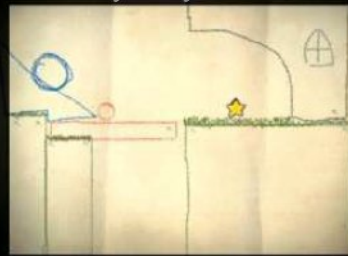


The IGF saw a great group of games, but only one could win the \$20,000 Grand Prize and that game was none other than Andy Schatz's Monaco. Monaco also grabbed the excellence in design award. Monaco is a 4 player stealth co-op game from Pocketwatch Games

2006: Darwinia



2008: Crayon Physics



2005: Gish



2007: Aquaria



2009: Blueberry Garden



+ IGF On Trial



#1: Rocket Birds

www.rocketbirds.com

Ashley: 7

Rocketbirds Revolution is a humorous look at a serious subject: oppression. Of course, it's really George Orwellian in the fact that the chickens must overcome their evil penguin suppressors, and there's one chicken that has just the right skills to get the job done. Rocketbirds is like a flash version of Splinter Cell meets Rambo, since you must stealth and gun your way through various levels of penguin guards and their robotic minions. The soundtrack is truly excellent and the visuals aren't bad for a flash game, so if you're looking for something to occupy a few minutes of your time, give Rocketbirds Revolution a look.

Andrew: 9

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to play Flashback as a chicken? Neither have I, but Rocketbirds Revolution decides to find out anyway. As Hardboiled, the, ehem, Cock of War, it's your job — nay, your patriot duty! — to put a stop to those communist chickens and their typically nefarious ways. With beautifully drawn characters, lush environments and the same stubbornly stiff controls you know and love, Rocketbirds promises six hours of action, platforming and puzzles that are sure to put the chickens to roost... yeesh, that was terrible. Oh well, at least this game isn't.

Mike: 9

Rocketbirds Revolution reminded me a lot of Shadow Complex. Like Shadow Complex, it's a Metroidvania adventure platformer that takes place in a military complex. Luckily, Rocketbirds keeps the gameplay but nixes the bland military drama for a humorous satire of a Penguin dictator and a Cock of War. The game features excellent visuals, incredible animations, and hilarious cutscenes. The great voice acting and polish throughout is quite impressive for a Flash Game.



#2: Igneous

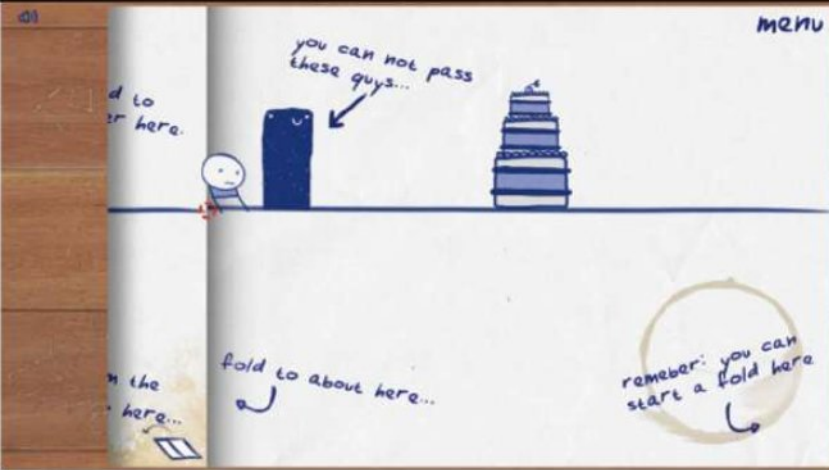
www.igneousgame.com

Ashley: 8

Igneous is a fast-paced action game that sees you trying to escape a raging volcano as it explodes around you. One of the truly excellent things about Igneous is the physics that are involved. You play a tiki that is hell-bent on escaping the fury of a volcano, and your only skill is rolling. Rolling really, really fast. The physics of the game prevent the same experience from occurring over and over, so even if you learn the different events as they occur, it will never feel as though you've truly learned the game. It's free, so definitely give it a shot if you enjoy fast paced reflex based games.

Andrew: 8

If you want to spend five minutes jumping over pits of magma while pillars of stone collapse around you and giant laser beams tear apart the ground beneath you, Igneous might just be for you. You won't do much beyond holding forward, jumping and praying, but you'll certainly do it with style. You play as a rock that can roll really, really fast, and you'll need to, as there is plenty of debris to dodge and lava to outrun. The game really does last only a few minutes, although you can pump up the difficulty to reduce your margin of error to exactly zilch. It's more of a tech demo than a full game, but it's an enjoyable ride nonetheless.



#3: Paper Cakes

<http://bamboo.wacom.eu.com/minis/en/>

Ashley: 8

With the release of Crayon Physics Deluxe, it seems a lot of developers are trying to capitalize on the old, "Here's a canvas draw what you want" spiel. Of course, this is a decent excuse for hand-drawn graphics that are subpar, but Paper Cakes is surprisingly delightful and fresh. You navigate the level by folding and unfolding a piece of paper until you reach the end and receive your giant piece of cake. Of course, the only downside to this game is that you'll need both Adobe AIR and Bamboo Dock software in order to play it.

Andrew: 8

Poor Doodle just wants to eat cake. Why must he be denied by incomplete notebook-paper drawings? Fortunately for Doodle, you're here to help. You'll fold and flip paper to reshape the landscape, allowing Doodle to get around incomplete walkways and statuesque baddies to get to his precious cake. This delightfully cheery puzzle game is light, airy and surprisingly atmospheric. Some puzzles can be a bit frustrating, especially once double folding is introduced, but it's so darn cute, how can you not keep playing?



#4: Continuity

www.continuitygame.com

Stew: 7

I hate tile puzzles. I have never been very good at them and as a result as the game grew more complicated, my fun level began to drop as my frustration rose. That said, Continuity is still a clever combination of the puzzle and platforming genres and works very well. Levels are divided into different sliding tiles that you have to mix and match to find the exit and its corresponding key. You slide matching pathways into each other, exploring each environment until you can find the proper way through. Really, I have no problems with Continuity. It's appeal may be limited depending on your tastes but it has some neat ideas and pulls them off well.

Ashley: 9

Continuity is a highly enjoyable flash game that is a mix between flash cards and a memory game. At first it seems rather simple: move the cards around to form the correct passage so that your stick figure can exit the level. However, as you continue playing the game and more cards are added to the screen, you'll soon begin to see what a challenge the game really is. It's like a flattened version of a Rubik's cube, and actually getting to the end of the game is a rewarding task. It's completely free, so if you love puzzlers, there's no reason this one shouldn't be on your list to play.

A Mainstream Look at Indie Games



What struck me as I browsed the wares offered at IGF this year was just how professional the games felt. The indie scene is all grown up now. Sure, that spunky antiauthoritarian spirit still courses through veins of the creators, and a good number of the games exhibited quirky ideas that would not have been green-lit at a major studio. But the care lovingly laid on these games by their small teams rivals anything the major studios put out on XBLA or PSN.

Take, for example, Super Meat Boy, a platformer whose precise jumping mechanic matches Mario's hop for hop. Or Shank, a gorgeously animated brawler that feels like controlling an interactive cartoon – and a gloriously bloody one at that. Or Monaco, winner of the IGF Grand Prize, whose simple graphics belie a fiendishly fun cooperative heist game.

Thankfully, the big boys have taken notice. Publishers have been gobbling up these titles to release on digital platforms much in the way the major movie studios embraced the independent film scene in the late 1990s. Look for all three of these games to appear on XBLA, PSN, or WiiWare soon.

- Brett Bates, Editor @ www.bitmob.com



5: Puzzle Bloom

Andy M: 8

Puzzle Bloom caught me off guard. First, it took over a minute to load, so all I had to stare at was the strange treatment of the title, which looks like something off of a self-published fantasy novel. Then, the start screen comes up, this glowing upside down green carrot is hovering in front of paper-style graphics. So already they've made three separate design choices that don't seem to mesh. And what's this? More loading bars?! Finally, though, I got into the game, and though I had little idea why my little Glomer was mind-melding with the electronically-enslaved walking sloths to get to the magic eco-friendly portals instead of just flying to them itself, I realized that I was in a classic escape puzzle game, which I happen to enjoy (younguns, think Exit; or maybe Kingdom of Kroz for those of you who've been around for a while). So I threw it into fullscreen mode, sat back, and enjoyed the few minutes it took me to get through the demo levels. The last puzzle actually took me a few times to get through (and I'm pretty sure my solution was more of a work-around than what the designer intended). So it caught me off guard because the hardest part to get right—the gameplay—actually worked. Design, story—those can be botched, but if the gameplay works it works.

Ashley: 8

Puzzle Bloom is like the 2008 release of Prince of Persia remade for the Unity browser plugin. No, really! It lacks the Prince and Erika, but you explore a 3D world helping to restore greenery to the land with the assistance of a tree spirit named Canotila. It's got fairly simplistic gameplay but it is wonderfully relaxing despite some of the puzzles being downright devious. If you love puzzle platformers and you want to help restore more fertile grounds.. er.. then you should definitely give Puzzle Bloom a look.

Andrew: 9

In an over-industrialized world, one little green... thing has decided to take it upon itself to bring nature back. To do this, it will have to hop from menial laborer to menial laborer, guiding them to push boxes and press buttons as you dodge annoying robotic supervisors and the usual assortment of deadly traps. Done in impressive 3D and played from an isometric perspective, Puzzle Bloom is a delightful gem of a game. The controls are smooth and intuitive, the world is well defined and the puzzles are challenging without being overly frustrating. In short, this game oozes personality and is a delight to play.



6: Star Guard

Ashley: 6

Star Guard is a throwback to the old Atari 2600 days in which you play a bright blob on the screen shooting other bright blobs. The gameplay mechanic have been done to death, but if you love pixelated shooters, then Star Guard could probably stand to receive your attention. The music is pretty forgettable and sounds like any other 8-bit track out there. In fact, Star Guard feels as though the developer ripped it straight from an Atari 2600 cartridge, which is both a good and a bad thing. Experience it for yourself and become a master of the stars.

Andrew: 7

If the recent success of the revived Mega Man series has taught us anything, it's that classic gameplay, when done well, really can triumph over flashy graphics. Star Guard places you in the role of a very pixelated, very green little man with a white hand-held blaster. You are tasked with infiltrating a yellow-trimmed black castle in what can best be described as an Atari 2600 classic. You must fight your way through hordes of red rhinos, red mages, red squids and, well, a lot of red things that want you dead. Why? Because a wizard needs slaying, that's why! It's not flashy and it's not lengthy, but it satisfies a certain nostalgic itch.

Andy M: 6

Total retro. If you're really in the mood for an 8-bit platformer with jumping and shooting as your most difficult tasks, this is the game for you. Well-made levels, fun music, and a story told to you through "text-over" as you play. It's nothing innovative, but it's fun and a great time-killer. If it had been anything more than this, I probably could have afforded it a few more points, but for what it is, it's good. It just isn't much more than that.

Stew: 9

Perfectly emulating 1980s retro style, Star Guard is the kind of awesome that never gets old. Built around simple, fast-paced platforming, it strikes a good balance between difficulty and accessibility. While each level brings with it new challenges, frequent checkpoints make them far more manageable, allowing for frustration free trial and error. If the game has any flaws it's that it can be too accessible at times. While I can't really call Star Guard a push-over, it gives you unlimited lives which really lowers the stakes when you reach a new obstacle. Despite some really cool enemy and trap designs, death is made a bit inconsequential when you'll just respawn five feet away to try again. Then again, the demo version doesn't give access to the Hard or Trial modes, so those might resolve this issue altogether. Either way, Star Guard rocks. Play it.



7: Cogs

Mike: 6

Cogs is a glorified sliding puzzle game. In my case, that's not a good start since I've never really liked that kind of thing. When I find these puzzles frustrating in the real world, why on earth would I want to slide tiles around in a virtual one? Lucky for me, Cogs does everything right once you get past the concept. There is great diversity in the puzzles. You'll start on simple 2D grids but graduate to 3D contraptions. While most puzzles revolve around Cogs (of course!), there's some good variety thrown in with steam pipes, gears and other building blocks. The graphics are nice and clean and the music is soothing. If you like Rubik's Cubes or Sliding Puzzle games, Cogs will be right up your alley. If you prefer blasting aliens over sliding puzzles, Cogs won't convert you.

Andrew: 6

Although it seems like a simple twist on the standard sliding puzzle, Cogs soon becomes a brain-busting experiment in patience. On either a flat board or a 3D cube, you must move tiles around to connect gears, direct the flow of steam, activate a music box, and do all sorts of things that involve, well, cogs. Though the ability to rotate objects adds enormous depth to the variety of possible puzzles, the flat, bland textures and the drab brown, yellow and gray color scheme may turn off those who aren't immediately pulled in by the challenge. And trust me, there is plenty of challenge here. The fewer moves you make and the more quickly you complete a puzzle, the greater you get rewarded. Unfortunately, a lacking presentation may be too much to overcome.

Ashley: 7

Cogs is a unique puzzler that resembles a steampunk rubik's cube with varying devices that you have to put together in order to advance. It's a unique take on a puzzler and the old genre of pipeline games, providing a fresh experience that's well worth the cash if you enjoy this kind of mindbender. Of course, the graphics aren't exactly revolutionary, but for a puzzle game they get the job done. You won't find yourself confused by your pixelated parts.



8: Spectre

Andy M: 4

There's so much potential here with Spectre: a combination of interactive narrative, simple platforming, and multiple endings. The artwork is arresting and the music engaging. The simple platform levels aren't too terribly conceived, but the voice acting and physics of the world leave much to be desired. That's not the real problem of this game. The problem is that it succeeds or fails on one thing—the power of the narrator's memories. Unfortunately, they're dull. The story, if written out linearly, would bore even the most casual reader. Clichés abound and most scenes lack even the most basic narrative arc. The concept of putting together a story from disjointed memories isn't necessarily novel, and so there's plenty of inspiration to be had from people who've succeeded in this style of storytelling. It's too bad that Spectre reflects none of that inspiration.

Stew: 3

Perhaps if Spectre had attempted to be more of a game and less of a freshman art project I would have enjoyed it more. The concept is certainly interesting enough. You play a man reflecting on his life's memories. The problem is that behind the stylized visuals and soothing, yet melancholy new age rhythms it's just not that much fun to play. Your character moves slowly in a floaty, dream-like state that is more annoying than anything else. The mini-games that make up the actual gameplay are boring and often share little connection to whatever memory the protagonist is recollecting. The memories themselves are dictated to the player while you work through the mini-games, and tend to come off as little more than pretentious and uninteresting. A lofty concept with good intentions that ultimately fails in execution.



9: Enviro-Bear 2000

Andrew: 5

Imagine it's 1988, and you're on your way to scout the newest releases. Upon your arrival at the store, a strange game on the shelf catches your eye: Enviro-Bear 2000. What's this? You drive around the forest as a bear, and the entire game is played using the mouse? You ask the clerk and he explains that your mouse acts as the bear's right hand. You steer, you press the gas pedal, you shift from reverse to drive, you grab fish off your dashboard, you clear clutter at your feet and on and on. Wow, it's like you really are the bear! Now imagine it's 2010 again. Guess what? The annoying controls no longer sustain the admittedly cool concept for more than a few minutes. Shame.

Ashley: 3

Enviro-Bear 2000 was nominated for the Nuovo Award for this year's IGF, but the real question is: what were these judges smoking? The game is pretty utilitarian in the graphics and gameplay department, as the only objective of the title is to drive around and stuff enough food in your bear face so that you'll go into hibernate mode. I know the purpose of the Nuovo Award is to award innovative and abstract games, but this nomination was just as abstract as the game itself.

Stew: 2

It's hard to find words to adequately describe how pointless this game is. You're a bear driving a car around trying to collect food before winter. Why does the bear have a car? Is he just too good to walk like normal bears? Honestly, even with the general stupidity surrounding this, I could have had some fun were the controls not the most heinously bad thing I've ever experienced in a driving game. You control everything with the mouse. To accelerate you need to click on the gas pedal with the mouse, but then using the steering wheel also requires the mouse. You can't accelerate and steer at the same time. It's kind of an issue in a game where the whole point is to gather food within a strict time limit. It gets two points just because driving into stuff is always mildly amusing.

Mike: 8

Am I crazy for liking this game? Maybe. I admit the controls are awkward and the graphics certainly look as if they were drawn in MS Paint, but who cares? The physics in the game are spot on, the gameplay is incredibly unique and most importantly Enviro Bear left a smile on my face. The controls are awkward, but it's hard for a bear to drive a car!

This Issue's Contributors

Nate Edwards

Nathaniel Edwards is a freelance writer and journalism student at Northwestern University. He contributes articles and reviews for Blogcritics Magazine and serves as gaming writer for Kidzworld.com. His own blog at LegalArcade.com covers news and opinions on controversial video games and video game research.

Colt Anaipakos

When I'm not playing Xbox or indie games, I read books by Erikson and McCarthy, watch movies by Cassavetes, and attempt to make music on Reason. I smoke cigarettes like a chimney and drink water like a fish. Dwarf Fortress, Cortex Command and Persona 4 are the current games in rotation.

Andrew Damiter

Andrew's been writing game news and reviews off and on for a few years, he spent a few months as head writer and editor of the Call of Duty section of gotfrag.com. He's also written for totalplaystation.com among others.

Ashley King

Ashley King is a freelance writer, gamer, and host of the indie games podcast 2 Girls 1 Game which has carved out a niche for itself as a premier source for indie related news and reviews.

Stew Shearer

Stew Shearer works as a freelance writer and has worked with GamesRadar, UGO and IGN. He currently writes a gaming column at Orson Scott Card's Intergalactic Medicine Show and when he's not working spends time with his wife in their home in Vermont.

Zak Gebelein

I've always been a sucker for RTS, but open to any game that peaks my interest. Give me a game with classy graphics and a keen sense of story and I'm hooked. Some of my past times include killing zombies, conquering the world (if not the universe!) and dwelling on games of yesteryear – call me traditional.

Meg Stivison

Meg Stivison has been a computer gamer since discovering text-based PC games as a little girl. She is a freelance writer and English teacher, currently based in Raleigh. She blogs at www.SimpsonsParadox.com

Andy Meisenheimer

Andy Meisenheimer is a freelance editor, writer, and casual gamer. He lives near Grand Rapids, MI with his wife and kid.

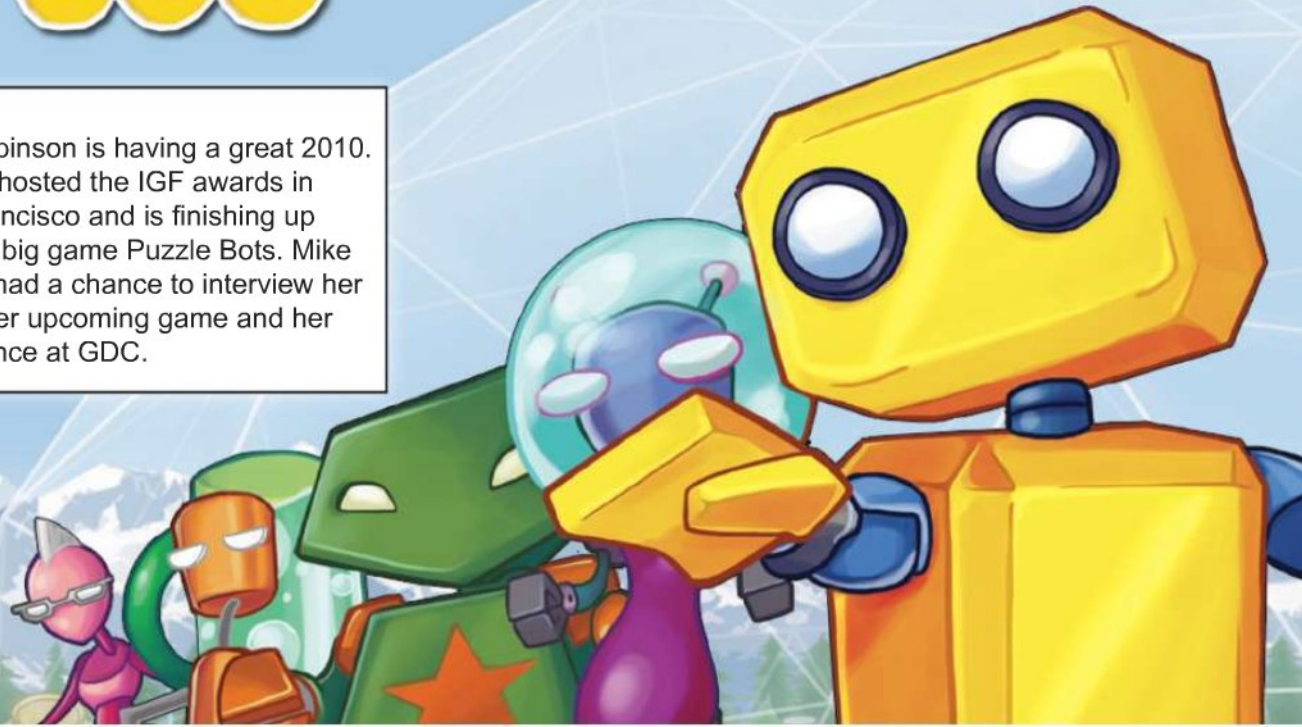
Mike Gnade

Loves Indie Games and only has a little room to write his bio. Looking forward to Shank.

Puzzle Bots



Erin Robinson is having a great 2010. She co-hosted the IGF awards in San Francisco and is finishing up her first big game Puzzle Bots. Mike Gnade had a chance to interview her about her upcoming game and her experience at GDC.



When did you start working on Puzzle Bots and where did your idea come from?

I started working on Puzzle Bots almost two years ago. I had made a little freeware game called Nanobots that Dave Gilbert enjoyed and he offered me the chance to make a prettier and more accessible version of the game. I really love adventure games, but I always thought the way they implemented verb choices was cumbersome so in these games, you can switch to different robots when you need to perform different actions. There's a robot who can pick things up, a robot who can push heavy things, one who can set things on fire...all the essentials really.

Well, it's a good fit with WadjetEye Games since they are known for adventure games like their Blackwell Trilogy.

Yep! Exactly! Puzzle Bots is definitely lighter in tone than the Blackwell games. Not so many dead people yearning for the other side. It's uncommon to start out by receiving funding for your first indie game.

How did Dave stumble on your freeware game?

No, this is true. And the money isn't nearly the same as what I'd get working for a bigger company. But it's worth it to me. Dave and I knew each other through the Adventure Game Studio forums. It's a freeware engine we used for our previous games. A few years ago he approached me to do the background

and character art for his game "Blackwell: Unbound" when I was still a student.

So are you more of an artist or more of a coder?

I actually don't code much at all. My interest is game design, although I can do cartoony art or pixel art in a pinch.

Is Puzzle Bots being done with a custom engine?

Nanobots and Puzzle Bots both use Adventure Game Studio, actually. And we are pushing our little engine to its limits, let me tell you. I'll refrain from making a "Little Engine that Could" joke.



What's your favorite moment in Puzzlebots - what do we have to look forward to?

Well, not to get too spoiler-y, but you can count on me for an ending that ties everything up nicely. There's also a point where a bird

gets into the lab and starts causing some trouble. I love that bird.

How was GDC/IGF?

Amazing! It really was. It was one of the most surreal weeks of my life.

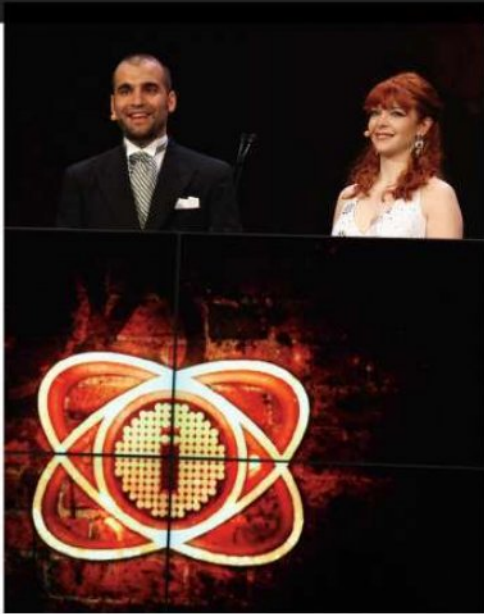
Was it your first conference/tradeshaw?

No, but it was only my second GDC ever.

"When Kyle Gabler and I were prep on Skype. The first message I sent is a con"

What was your favorite game that you saw there (not including puzzle bots, of course)?

Closure is looking really good. I love the new art direction and sound design. And Monaco is just a treat. I thought "A Slow Year" was a brilliant sort of exercise, but I was very bad at the actual game. I'm also going to plug "Cogs" because it's already out, and definitely worth picking up.



Any other highlights of GDC/IGF?

Heather and I had to pull together our presentation for the Game Design Challenge during the week, since we had both been so busy preparing for other things. I did a lot of the art at a Starbucks until a homeless guy with a guitar sat down next to me and started watching everything I was doing.

The tone of the Game Design Challenge was a lot more serious this year. Our game had to be about the death of a real human being. I meant human being not human boing. I'm sure you figured that out though.

I did, but who's to say that a good game couldn't be made about a human boing.

Maybe that'll be next year's challenge! Anyway we came up with an idea for some estates software that worked sort of like a will, so it was a game you prepared before you died.

Preparing for the IGF awards, we'd talk to him was, "I'm so indie, my phone computer"

Your family would have to guess which item in your house would go to who. And after they guessed, you'd see a video on your smartphone of someone (Grandma, say) telling a story about the object and why she chose the recipient she did. Whoever got the most questions right would win a large family heirloom, like a grandfather clock.

A little morbid, but an interesting take...I just don't think that's quite ready for the mass market yet.

Haha, no, not quite, but we came in second and won a skull. We named him "Skully". He flew home in my luggage. Thank god I wasn't searched but fortunately it is a rubber skull.

So when will Puzzle Bots be hitting the mass market?

I spoke to Dave this morning, and we are ready to set a release date: April 30 for PC - Indie Game Mag Exclusive!

I know it be available through Wadgeteye's website but will we be seeing Puzzle Bots on Impulse, Steam, etc?

I'd sure like to get it onto those other portals. Got any contacts? ;) But for now, it'll just be on Dave's website.



I wouldn't worry about it. You guys are pretty good at the marketing thing. In fact, I believe I saw you on GameTrailers TV not too long ago.

Haha, thanks! That all sort of happened by accident. I was at an IGDA meeting in Montreal, where I used to live and the thing about these meetings is that they're mostly attended by guys from the big companies, so I was getting a drink at the bar and when I turned around, there was this gorgeous woman standing there. And she said, "Hi! I'm Donna. So who do you work for?" I said, "Myself, mostly." So she said, "That sounds interesting. Want to be on TV?" I'm paraphrasing; the actual chat was a bit longer.

That story really speaks to the importance of conferences.

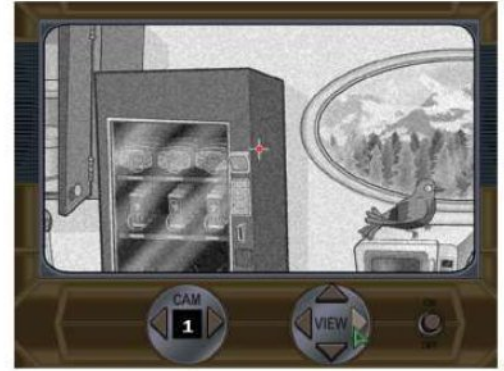
Yes, absolutely. Everyone, go to conferences! You meet the most amazing people, and you never know what one conversation could lead to.



What has been your biggest failure?

My biggest failure has been timing; I had a really bad idea of how long a game of this scope would take...Like, off by a year or so. I would have waited longer to announce things, but I've

definitely learned from the experience.



How did that sting you?

Well, I didn't expect to end up living with my folks again, temporarily. But at least I'm starting to lose this nagging doubt that I should be getting a "real job" because designing games is what I love.

What has been your biggest success?

The thing I'm most proud of is being asked to co-host the IGF awards. It was an honor and I'm still sort of reeling from it. I got recognized on my flight home and everything. In general the response from people has been really positive, and I'd love to have the chance to get up there again. Our jokes were sort of cheesy-on-purpose, and I think the people who saw that enjoyed the show. Even if not everyone got our UNIX epoch joke.

- Interviewed by Mike Gnade



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Osmos - www.hemispheregames.com - PC - Mac

In Hemisphere Games' Osmos, you play as a hungry organism in a primordial soup of other growing and drifting orbs. Smaller organisms are absorbed by bigger ones when they touch, so it's either absorb or be absorbed in this blob-eat-blob world.

Gameplay: In order to move quickly enough to catch smaller blobs and avoid the bigger blobs, you'll need to expel more matter, becoming smaller and making the Osmos world more dangerous. But drifting aimlessly into the path of larger, predatory orbs has its own challenges.

For most of the game, Osmos is relaxing and beautiful with an enjoyably slow pace. There's time to enjoy the swirling orbs and delicate soundtrack, all the elements I enjoyed in Music Catch and other ambient art games. But there's still a goal, even if it's the simple mellow goal to become the biggest, so there's still a sense of challenge and accomplishment.

The basic game challenge is finding a balance between expelling enough mass to move at the desired speed, without expelling so much mass that you become small, easy prey. Later levels add twists on this basic eat-or-be-eaten, with various success. Some levels include intelligent orbs to either chase or escape, or gravity forces that change the paths of the orbs.

I did want some additions to the basic, enjoyable become the biggest challenge, but I wasn't altogether pleased with some of the later levels. Certain levels require so much patience that it began to feel more like a tedious work assignment than

a game. Sure, the right mouse button can slow down or speed up time, but either way there's such a lot of waiting for orbs to collide.

There's an odd contrast between the relaxed music and floating orbs of Osmos, and the stress of some of the challenging levels.

Graphics: In the blobiverse, bigger blobs consume smaller blobs. Red blobs are bigger than you, and blue blobs are your size or smaller, which is visually simple and stunning. Other colors and patterns appear in later levels, and it's hard not to zone out watching the dance of the Osmos.

Later on, I had trouble spotting the black antimatter blobs on the black background, which may well be the point, but it didn't add to the enjoyment of the game.

Overall, Osmos has great style... the branching menu tree of available levels seemed to resemble molecular structure, for another touch of artistic science. Even the name evokes cosmos and osmosis, adding to the sci-fi feel.

Music: The music in Osmos really is wonderful. This relaxing ambient blend is somehow more than background music, without ever dominating the game. The musical pieces come from a variety of different artists, creating a varied but cohesive soundtrack.

Lasting Appeal: Osmos comes so close, but ultimately just misses the mark. Intensively challenging levels ruin the mellow

mood, but too many become the biggest levels seem repetitive. A near-perfect short game becomes an underwhelming longer game.

The first couple levels have excellent re-play value, since there's something addictive about mellow beauty of drifting orbs. I imagine I'll pick this game up again from time to time, for the relaxed playstyle, delicate soundtrack and sparkling orbs, but I also imagine becoming annoyed with the later levels all over again.

- Meg Stivison



**INDEPENDENT
GAMES FESTIVAL
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REVIEW

Gameplay:	7
Graphics:	8
Sound/Music:	9
Lasting Appeal:	7.5

Score: **81%**

Grade B



Who are you making this for anyways?

About a year ago, my Indie team decided to build a game idea we liked. We thought we had a great idea, but it turned out that we didn't put enough emphasis on a variety of basic marketing concepts that could have potentially saved our design for the better. Not that it was bad – just could have been better.

Since then, I've observed various Indie teams follow the same general process we followed: they come up with an idea they like, they think it will work, and they go for it. While some are perfectly fine with doing it that way, and surely some make big bucks doing it that way, my team no longer considers that a viable plan of attack.

Two sides of the coin

There are really two sides of the argument that I've confronted. On the one hand, if a team builds a game they themselves really like, it is conceivable that they will put every ounce of effort into making it good. On the other hand, if a team is tasked with building a game they themselves may not care for, it is conceivable that they may not put out that same level of effort, and the final product could suffer.

Maybe of course that is an over simplification though; just because one doesn't care for the concept doesn't necessarily correlate to output. But, and this is the important lesson we learned, chances are that regardless of how much effort you do or do not put in, the end product is ultimately judged by the consumer, not the developer. Aim your guns wisely; take care of your customers first – profit will come later.

Are you the consumer?

If the developer is themselves a consumer, and their interests are shared amongst fellow consumers, perhaps their personal interest and ambitions are well suited to sticking to just what they like. Perhaps those who are lucky to have that overlap have the same luck to be successful. Personally, I don't like taking risks I can't control.

The closer reality I've seen is that many developers have an interest that I would term as atypical of the general gaming population, or have an idea that is nothing more than an existing successful game with a slightly different interface and/or mechanic. Forgoing the later, which is a different article entirely (but all too common), when intelligent, skilled, and gifted people get together to make something, I'm not convinced that they are going to push something that a general audience is going to care for – not unless they really aim for exactly that. For example, my love would be for a super in depth WWII tank combat simulator, accurate to a degree unseen by any other, but that doesn't necessarily correlate to a marketable product. I'd love it, though.

But I'm not very profitable to market to by myself alone. Perhaps another way to see it is

by looking at the opposite end of the spectrum: when developers are pushed to do things that make their games appeal to a wider audience via dumbing down and/or removal of intricacies that define such genres to begin with. What effects do a wider audience appeal bring?

Hobby or profession?

It comes down to the real question any Indie team really needs to ask themselves: are they in this for a hobby, or are they in this for a profession? If they're in it for a hobby, then by all means, they should do what they find interesting. They don't have any obligation to anybody but themselves. When they are in this for a profession, however, now things take a different direction entirely. Now their biggest critic, the end consumer, becomes their boss.

Maybe some might not like to hear it, and maybe some will disregard what I've said – I've certainly have gotten into some heated debates with some people on this – but I'm not saying this to discourage a good game from being made. I'm saying that developers need to listen to their customer. Sorry if that hurts.

So how does one come to the end of meeting their customer's interests? Well, my team has learned a few tricks that we want to talk about. It all really comes down to marketing.

Five Indie Production Tips

First off, the direction one takes their group in defines the group's name. "We make games" is not good enough – brands need good definition to stand out (and remember there is no ctrl-Z in real life). This is of course basic marketing, and while there are many books that discuss more about this in depth, the way I like to think about it is this: define the ideal client. I've heard a few times marketers say "marketing is not selling a product; marketing is trying to figure out who your customer is" and I like to agree with this train of logic. I've observed that once one knows who they're marketing to, how they should define themselves comes next more naturally.

Second, it can't be said enough times, please base opinions on facts, not assumptions, and don't draw conclusions that can't be backed up with hard data – this includes written articles like this one. A great example is the recent survey my team took, and how we noticed that "social integration" was ranked as not one of the least, but the least interesting feature a game can have (citation available upon request). Although many of us can draw conclusions from the success of some such social based games, perhaps discredit the validity of our survey on such grounds, I'm saying, with hard data to back me, it looks like my customers don't care about your status updates about what you just did on whatever social game.

Third, think about how the game is going to be explained to others. This isn't an issue of trying to be clever, but simple. If the game can

be explained easily, and has a good catch, then guess what just got established? The unique selling point (USP). Games that have a strong USP and that rely on it as it's life blood will also have a strong ability to convey itself to others via referral.

Fourth, design needs to be iterative, complete, and incorporate appropriate risk and value analysis. This really gets down to the issue of ensuring the design is fully fleshed out while not spending too much time going down alleys that don't work. I like to think more of this as an issue of planning and reconnaissance; sending out the concept artists and designers to explore and report back before moving the team. If a route doesn't work out, it isn't an issue in abandoning the work put forward by a scout to go a different route simply because that work isn't lost if it leads somewhere better. Not to mention, think about the plan B's (also know as risk mitigations) – it's better to do something risky that has a backup than to find out your sinking without any life boats.

Fifth, hire good people, but know that there are assumptions being made about compensation that affects design. People aren't machines, and I've noticed that in Indie, with shoe string budgets common, if they aren't a part of the core design, they generally will not care about profit sharing as much as a paid salary. Now, obviously there are exceptions, but I've personally noticed that people are not generally very interested in helping other's realize their ideas if those ideas aren't theirs too. It comes down to an issue of risk ownership: who owns the risk pays the price to those who do not. One's ownership of such risk tends to be sold only at cost of project control. Are their interests going to be based on listening to the consumers?

What are you really selling?

To end this article, lastly, there is one piece of knowledge that I've come to understand. I have to be careful how I phrase this, since it is still just an opinion, but it is supported by reading many articles, observing purchasing behaviors, and really just being honest with myself. The knowledge is this: looks mean everything for that initial sell, and substance means everything for that brand loyalty. It isn't an either-or equation. If an Indie game doesn't have both, I don't see it making it. Perhaps there are variations on the idea, and I'm sure there will be those who argue to one side over the other, but I tend to feel the game industry is an industry based on one fundamental illusion: minimal input for the maximum output. What are consumers really buying?

Jonathan Wolf is the executive producer of the Indie group Rogue Pirate Ninja Interactive and has a B.S. & M.S. in computer science. Reach him at johannes.von.luck@roguepirateninja.com.



PixelJunk Shooter - www.q-games.com - Playstation Network

PixelJunk Shooter's one major fault is that it is over too soon and leaves you wanting more.

The game is as simple and addictive as they come; you control a small subterranean rescue ship on a mission down into the depths of a strange mining planet. The plot is simple and takes place in the future. Humans have done their thing and colonized worlds, used up resources, and gotten themselves into trouble. These miners have sent out an SOS and that's where you (and a friend) come to the rescue. There's no real plot to speak of other than some special miners/researchers who give you a short spiel about the planet when you find them. While the story won't drive you to keep playing, the gameplay certainly will.

Each level challenges you with rescuing every miner, but the real fun of this game comes from the fluid mechanics and environments. Don't be fooled by the game's title, frantic shooting only results in dead miners and your ship overheating. PixelJunk Shooter is a much more methodical game that feels a bit like Beakman's World meets Master Blaster. The game starts with you shooting holes in rock and controlling the flow of lava, but quickly evolves into your own scientific experiment. Before the game is over you'll be cooling lava, melting ice, grappling snow, creating gas, using magnetism, and having a blast. The hazards of the planet's

caverns are diverse and each level seems to offer something new to enjoy: from new environmental hazards to lava shooting suits and other upgrades. The game is instantly familiar and fresh. It's easy to digest the game's controls and shooting mechanics, but each level offers fresh new mechanics and interesting solutions. You'll be enjoying yourself so much, that the game will be over way too soon.

The game's graphics are much more impressive in motion than in stills. The game has a simple cartoon presentation that works. The style is unique and somewhat reminiscent of PixelJunk Monsters and would ultimately be mediocre and forgettable if it weren't for some amazing effects and physics. The fluid mechanics shine again. You'll start by being impressed by the oozing lava and rushing water, but will continue to be impressed by the crumbling snow and melting ice. By the time you get to the final area, you'll be blown away by some incredible magnetized oil and gas effects. The fluid mechanics and effects steal the show here.

The music is not nearly as memorable as PixelJunk Eden, but High Frequency Bandwidth does an excellent job capturing the subterranean nature of the game with some odd and retro inspired beats. The sound effects, like the game itself, are simple and to the point. You can't help but feel bad when you hear the curdling scream of a miner.

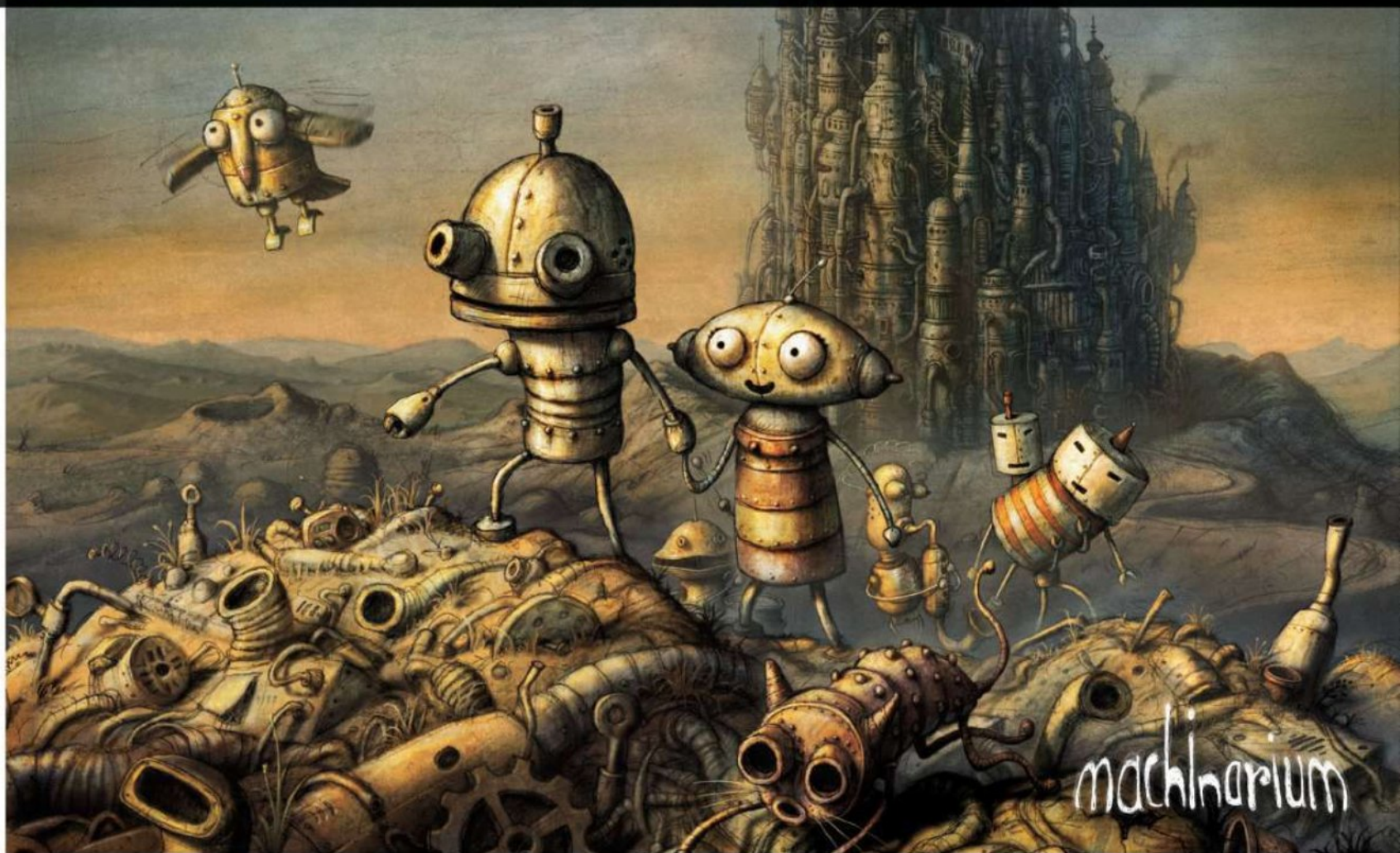
There is no doubt that you will want to experience every level of PixelJunk Shooter. While it will be over soon, there is some longevity to this game. It has an immensely fun cooperative mode. A friend can pop into your single-player campaign. While there's no real change in challenge with 2 players other than the fact that you tend to kill more miners if you don't coordinate what you're doing. There's a cool addition in Co-Op where you can grapple your buddy and save him from death. The game is so fun that you will likely replay levels to save all the miners and collect all the hidden gems and researchers. While the game value is certainly there, it would have been nice to have one more area and set of levels to explore.

- Mike Gnade

REVIEW

Gameplay:	9.5
Graphics:	10
Sound/Music:	9
Lasting Appeal:	9

Score: **93%**
Grade **A**



Machinarium - www.amanita-design.net - PC - Mac - Linux

As far as point and click adventures go, Machinarium by Amanita Design is a perfect 10 in my book; you can't get much better. The artwork, puzzles and sound devices create a unique steam punk world to click through on your quest to save Robot city. As for the story, the player takes control of robot that has been cast out from said city and must solve various puzzles to sneak back inside. Once inside, the player has to put together clues and solve puzzles to save his fem-bot and the entire metropolis from some robo-tugs and their bomb. This involves a lot of point and click trial and error and screen exploration. Honestly, I was hooked by the artwork before I even got to the first puzzle.

The gameplay of Machinarium is pretty straightforward when it comes to progression - it is a point and click adventure after all. Anybody who has

played Amanita's previous Samorost series of games will be instantly at home with Machinarium. For the most part, the sort of out-there style and basic mechanics work the same; point to a hotspot, click and let the robot do the rest. The protagonist, the robot, ventures through each level collecting various objects and "swallows" them for later use. The objects fit into a great scheme solving the ubiquitous puzzles presented throughout the game.

The earlier stages of Machinarium tend to keep the puzzles limited to a single screen, which can still stump the player for a good while. Luckily Amanita included some hints to help the us noobs along the way- myself included once or twice! A walkthrough is available (though you have to beat a mini-game first) along with these helpful little "hint bubbles." The robot tends to have to be next to the trigger spots for

the player to be able to click on them and start a sequence of events. This sometimes leads to a lot of clicking around the screen.

As the story develops, the puzzles become more complex and involved. From time to time the overall story is interrupted by mini-games that range from space invader clones to complex patterns involving different pull lever combinations and logic problems. In both cases the puzzles can often seem easier than they are. Some puzzles have clues to the solution drawn right into the scenery - so grab a note pad. For the more complex puzzles, the player will have to venture from one screen to another and return after completing missions. After a while it can seem like the routine back and forth of a typical adventure game. It might seem a little humdrum, but with the great artwork, the game flew by.



There really isn't enough I can say about the artwork. The depth of the Machinarium world is immense and vivid. Amanita obviously took a considerable amount of time and effort to enhance and develop the world the player is transported into – and it worked. The protagonist features beautifully drawn animations which convey a great fluidity and an almost intrinsic feel to the character's robotic expressions. If the robot can't do something you ask it to, it will let you know. Really, no detail was overlooked and I was pleasantly amused by the robotic rats, cats and owls as well as the varied and ingeniously presented

robotic denizens. Working through the game was like playing a piece of beautiful and quality hand-drawn artwork. This art was topped off with great music and sound effects creating a great overall experience.

The sound effects and music in Machinarium don't fall short either. From the sounds of dripping water to the clanks of the mechanical widgets, the sound effects were ingenious. Again I came to the conclusion that no detail was overlooked. The soundtrack has the endearing ability to make the Machinarium world all that much more real to the player. Amanita's



combination of sound and music delivers a coherent and uniform world. You have to ask if it could have been any other way. It's definitely something that can make or break a game, in this case – it makes it.

The only downside I could really find with the game is the replay value. The game is short enough to be completed in one sitting (a four to eight hour sitting), though it is longer than the previous Samorost titles. The game can be saved at anytime and since the game is flash based, reload time is mercifully fast. The story is self contained, so once you complete all the puzzles and objectives the game is over and there really isn't much more to do. This doesn't lend itself well to replay value. However, if you're like me you'll visit Machinarium again just for the aesthetics.

-Zak Gebelein



**INDEPENDENT
GAMES FESTIVAL
WINNER**

REVIEW

Gameplay:	9
Graphics:	10
Sound/Music:	10
Lasting Appeal:	8

Score: 93%
Grade A

+ Reviews



Saira - <http://nifflas.ni2.se/> - PC

Nifflas, the creator of indie platformer titles Knytt, Kynntt Stories, and Within a Deep Forest, has finally started charging money for his latest title (also a platformer), Saira. The eponymous main character, Saira, is trying to repair her teleporter in order to reach her former partner and find out what has happened to the rest of humanity, who have all disappeared. Parts of the teleporter are spread across different planets and satellites, where you face various platforming challenges combined with puzzles and minigames.

Though the majority of the game is about platforming, there are only a handful of explicit and difficult challenges in that department. The platforming necessary to get from puzzle to puzzle is pretty mild and simple. Terminals throughout the game contain the puzzles or minigames, presented on a small window within the game. While some of these are self-contained puzzles, some require you to use clues in the environment elsewhere in the level. A camera within the game can take pictures of the game world, so you don't have to take paper notes in real life.

The puzzles do their job of keeping the gameplay from getting repetitive, but the main platforming gameplay mechanic is actually under-represented in the end. The puzzles are sometimes compelling enough to stand on their own, but sometimes feel tacked on and too much like work. Nifflas' other games are often commended for being relaxing and letting you explore, but it's more difficult when puzzles provide constant chokepoints for you to overcome. But when you are given platforming challenges in Saira, most of that fluidity and purely fun

gameplay come across just as it was in Knytt. That's not to say it isn't frustrating at times when the momentum doesn't work out perfectly, but the challenges are pretty well-tuned in general.

The game provides an over-world (over-galaxy?) that allows you to choose between various levels to play, depending on if your space vehicle's battery will let you reach them. Trips between stars take a small amount of time, and you're allowed to listen to about six different "radio stations" in-game while you wait, or play a pretty entertaining modification of pinball. This choice between levels provides a little more sense of freedom and atmosphere, making a really nice addition.

In the graphics department, many in the indie gaming community have expressed their preference for the very simple (but beautiful) pixel art in Knytt over the mixture of photography with hand and computer-drawn animation in Saira. With their preference aside, the worlds in Saira are mostly very beautiful, and they all represent completely different atmospheres very successfully. The human characters, however, are stiff and generally not very human in their representation. Nothing in the main character ever shows any emotion, but she's nearly detailed enough for us to believe that she should be. She's caught between being a fluid animated character and a traditional pixel sprite in terms of emotion as well as technology. A little bit of immersion is lost there due to the character, but the worlds you play in do very well at counteracting that.

The music provides a great sense of atmosphere and stays consistently interesting throughout the game. The stuff on the fake radio stations is even more interesting at times, to the point that I'd sit listening to it beyond the time I could start playing the next level. You couldn't ask anything more of the game's audio.

One quick concern: This game is not as efficient and computer-friendly as Nifflas' previous titles. You should try the demo before buying, and make sure that runs smoothly enough to make for a fun game. I experienced mildly irritating slowdown on the five or so screens that were most filled with animated sprites.

Saira is a beautiful game, and Nifflas deserves the money after giving away his classic creations for free. The puzzles are hit-and-miss, but otherwise this a fine example to represent independent games. It will be interesting to see where future Saira episodes go, both in terms of story and gameplay. There is a fair amount of gameplay here, and the game is worth your money, even if there are, of course, flaws.

- Nate Edwards



REVIEW

Gameplay: 7
Graphics: 9
Sound/Music: 9
Lasting Appeal: 5

Score: 83%
Grade B



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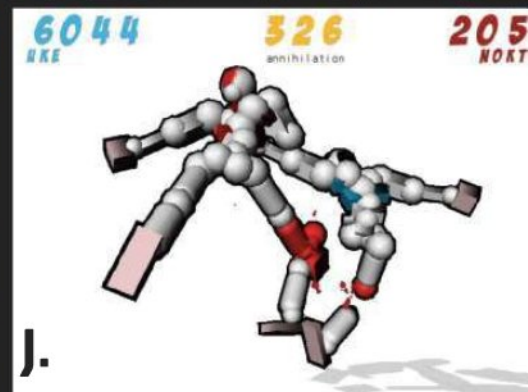
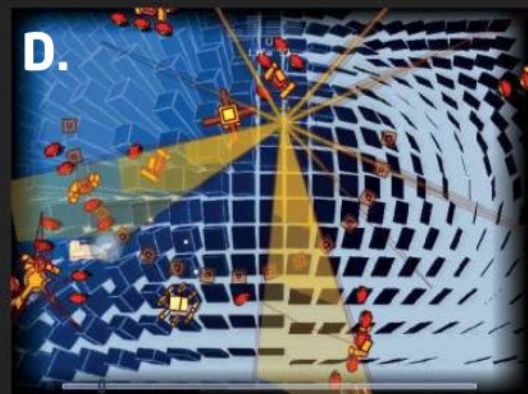


+ The Ultimate Indie Quiz



Match the Game Title to the Screenshot on the Right

1. Everyday Shooter
2. Starscape
3. Wik: Fable of Souls
4. Aether
5. Eets
6. La Mulana
7. Toribash
8. Spelunky
9. Cave Story
10. Drod



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Indie Game SATs

Example: BIRD : NEST :: beaver : dam

1. Derek Yu : Aquaria ::

- (A) Broken Pixel : Splosion Man
- (B) Dan Paladin : Alien Hominid
- (C) Edmund McMillen : Braid
- (D) Steve Swink : Flashbang
- (E) Wolfire : Overgrowth

2. Alien Hominid : Castle Crashers :: Lugaru:

- (A) Spelunky
- (B) Battle Block Theatre
- (C) Kudos
- (D) Overgrowth
- (E) fIOW

3. 2010: Heroes of Newerth :: 2009:

- (A) Cortex Command
- (B) Machinarium
- (C) Blueberry Garden
- (D) Osmos
- (E) Data Realms

4. Sam & Max : Telltale Games :: Starscape :

- (A) Hemisphere Games
- (B) Broken Rules
- (C) Moonpod
- (D) PopCap
- (E) Kokoromi

5. Cliffski : Cliff Harris :: Nifflas :

- (A) Nick Laskas
- (B) Nicky B
- (C) Nicholas Nakamura
- (D) Nicole Flagstaff
- (E) Nicklas Nygren

6. fIOW: thatgamecompany :: Darwinia:

- (A) Introversion Software
- (B) Cryptic Sea
- (C) Intuition Games
- (D) Bit-Blot
- (E) Hemisphere Games

7. Bit-Blot: Derek Yu + Alec Holowka :: 2Dboy:

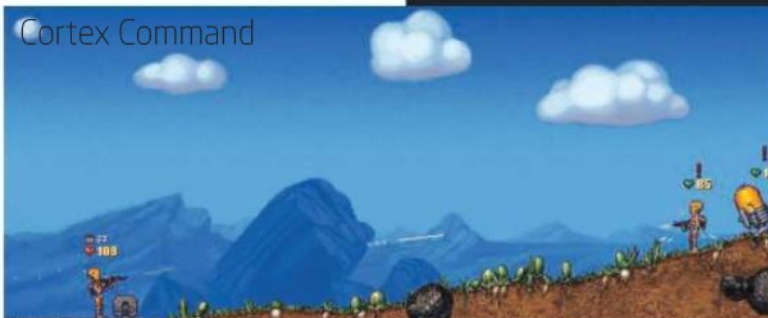
- (A) World of Goo
- (B) Matt Wegner + Ben Ruiz
- (C) Kyle Gabler + Ron Carmel
- (D) Edmund McMillen + Alex Austin
- (E) Kyle Gray + Kyle Gabler

8. Andy Schatz : Pocketwatch :: Cliff Harris :

- (A) Grubby
- (B) Blurst
- (C) Kudos
- (D) Infinite Ammo
- (E) Positech

Match the Game
to the Creator:

- 1. Jason Rohrer
- 2. Petri Purho
- 3. Daniel Tabar
- 4. Nifflas



Answers in Issue #11

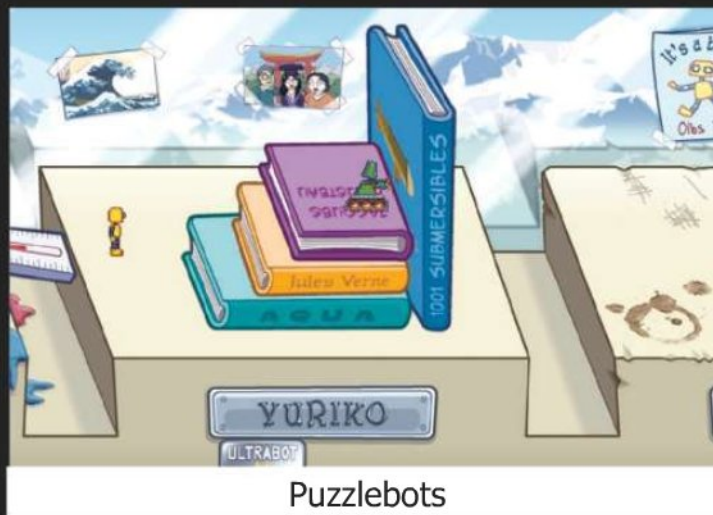
Next Issue



Zombie Driver



Peggle



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