

MEDIA INFORMATION

FEBRUARY 2014

GAME ON!

Teams set to do battle in Elgin over chance to create new video game

Moray College UHI in Elgin is on course to be the backdrop for the first ever Moray Game Jam, a 48-hour-long contest in which opposing teams of individuals interested in or with experience of games development come together to create a brand new video game.

The inaugural Moray Game Jam is scheduled to start at midday on Friday 14th March and end at midday on Sunday 16th March. Teams must register *before* Wednesday 5th March.

At the Moray Game Jam, teams with skills in programming, game designing and art will battle it out to create up a new videogame. On offer to the winning team is the opportunity to be mentored by Elgin-based games publisher, Hunted Cow Studios, to refine and develop their game idea with the aim of taking it to the market.'

This event signals the start of an exciting new collaboration between Moray College UHI, creative industries support body screenHI, and Hunted Cow Studios.

The game jam has become a global phenomenon since being introduced in 2009, but to date, the only ones to have taken place in Scotland have been in the Central Belt.

Anne Lindsay, acting principal of Moray College UHI said: "This is an exciting and innovative idea and Moray College UHI is delighted to be hosting this first event Moray Game Jam.

"Gaming is a growth market internationally reflected by the rapid growth of the Global Game Jam. There is no doubt the success and future growth of this type of event will put Moray firmly on the map and stimulate much needed local economic growth."

Amanda Millen, director of screenHI, an organisation which supports the creative industries in the Highlands and Islands and beyond, said: "Games constitute an entirely new type of media, which can incorporate music, film, the written word and so much more, within a unique interactive experience.

"Scotland has been a pioneer in the video games world for the last two decades. In 2013 Scotland's developers released nearly 100 games, across every possible platform, including the unstoppable Grand Theft Auto GTA V, the largest entertainment launch of any kind.

"We are delighted to be working with Moray College UHI and Hunted Cow Studios on the first ever Moray Game Jam."

Andrew Mulholland, co-director of Hunted Cow Studios, said: “As a successful creative business firmly rooted in Moray, Hunted Cow Studios is really pleased to be taking part in this event, the first of its kind in this part of Scotland.”

Applications to the Moray Game Jam open on Friday 14th February via the Moray Game Jam website <http://moraygamejam.com/> and close on Wednesday 5th March 2014.

Prior to making applications participants are encouraged to join Moray Game Jam Facebook and Twitter links for updates and if necessary to find people to create their teams.

Teams of up to five people can enter and all members have to be 18 or over. A welcome lunch will be provided by Moray College UHI.

The teams' efforts will be judged by a panel of experts, including Brain Baglow, Director of the Scottish Games Network, Phil James, a games industry advisor and writer, Andrew Mulholland, co-director, Hunted Cow Studios and David Cook, deputy editor of games website, VG247.com.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR **JUDGING PANEL**

Brian Baglow - Games Industry Expert

*Founder and Director at Scottish Games Network
Committee Member at BAFTA In Scotland*

“The convergence between games and the rest of the creative world is going to create entirely new types of experience.”

Brian Baglow works with and represents the games industry in Scotland, helping it to evolve and work more closely with the rest of the creative industries. He sees interactive media as being about much more than games, apps or digital art.

“It’s a transformative technology that is fundamentally changing every aspect of the creative industries,” he says. “From the way they’re created and distributed through to the way they’re monetised, consumed and even the way people experience them.”

Phil Harris - Games Industry Advisor

*Games Content Developer at One Thumb Mobile
Staff Writer at Scottish Times*

Phil Harris works as a Games Content Developer with One Thumb Mobile, working on their Celtic Heroes Massive Multiplayer Online Role Playing Game (MMORPG). He is developing his own tabletop roleplaying game, creating the background history for Pyre Studios upcoming board game Inevitable Betrayal, writing for online magazine Pixels for Breakfast and playing an active role engaging and talking about the games industry. Phil used to be Editor-in-Chief of Square-Go, an online magazine which he took from just over 1000 readers a month to 33,000.

Andrew Mulholland - Co-Director, Hunted Cow Studios Ltd

Director at Hunted Cow Studios Ltd

Andrew Mulholland graduated from Abertay University in 2003 after studying Computer Games Technology and went on to form Hunted Cow Studios with Glenn Murphy. He has over 10 years experience in the industry and has helped bring successful games such as Gothador and Fallen Sword to market.

Dave Cook - Deputy Editor, VG247.com

Based in Edinburgh, Dave is Deputy Editor at VG247.com, and winner of several GMA games press awards. He also writes comics and novels.

About ScreenHI

ScreenHI is a trade network which works with trade bodies across the UK and beyond in the sphere of Screen and Broadcast. It was set up as a not-for-profit organisation to provide unique job, training and networking opportunities and to encourage local economic activity within the Creative Industries across the Highlands and Islands, specifically in the Music, Screen and Broadcast sectors.

About Hunted Cow Studios

Hunted Cow Studios is a leading game developer and publisher which was founded in 2003 with the goal of producing fun and accessible games, but with a layer of deeper and engaging gameplay for experienced players. Their most popular browser game is Fallen Sword which has attracted over four million players since its launch in 2006.

About Moray College UHI

MORAY College UHI has been developing and expanding its range of courses since the inception of the University of the Highlands and Islands in 2011. The status of university provides greater opportunities for the college to develop its research activities and contacts with local industry. The new Moray Life Science Centre, known as the Alexander Graham Bell centre is also a recent addition to Moray College UHI. This £6.5 million project funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Grampian, European Regional Development Fund and Moray College UHI will provide facilities for, and expertise in life science research and education bringing together academia, research and business under one roof.

The college offers a broad range of courses covering many subject areas which is continually expanding, particularly within the Higher Education sector and prospective students can now study up to Masters and PHD level. The college also continues to offer courses from pre- employment training through all levels of Further Education.

This ensures that locally, prospective students can access education at any level to match requirements, abilities and qualifications. Many courses are offered on a flexible, part-time as well as a full-time basis to suit students' learning needs. Many students want to improve their qualifications or skills in order to gain employment or to improve their employment prospects. Others want to study for a qualification that they intend to use as a stepping stone to a higher qualification. Some will register for courses simply for leisure and interest. Moray College UHI can offer it all.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A Game Jam is a competition to create a new video game – and in some cases a board game). It usually involves the coming together of groups of individuals with an interest in or experience of video gaming either through programming or design.

Usually entering in teams, participants will not be aware of the theme until they arrive at the competition, the structure of which is common throughout the world.

Teams meet on a Friday afternoon and spend 48 hours creating a new idea/ concept based on the theme of the specific games jam.

A game jam may be centred around a theme, which all games developed within the jam must adhere to. The theme is usually announced shortly before the event begins, in order to discourage participants from planning for the event beforehand and from using previously-developed material. Themes are meant to place restrictions on developers, which encourages creativity.

Photo Opportunity available. For more information:

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