

MEET THE STAFF QUESTIONS: < < < < < < < < < < < <



Brian Hudson

POSITION & COMPANY:

Game Designer, Electric Bat Interactive

WHAT VIDEO GAME FIRST GOT YOU HOOKED INTO GAMING?

As a child of the early 80s, I grew up with all the classic games on the Atari 2600 and Commodore 64, but my most vivid early memories of gaming were playing The Legend of Zelda, Ninja Gaiden, and Final Fantasy on the original Nintendo.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO THE INDUSTRY?

Through a fortunate series of coincidences, I had just lost my job as a web developer when a friend forwarded me a job posting for a "Game Master" at NCsoft. I figured it would be a fun change of pace and might be good to get my foot in the door, so I gave it a try. As soon as I saw firsthand that people got paid to write stories, design game systems, and build maps (all things I did as a hobby because I'm a giant geek), I decided I was in the industry to stay.

WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU DO EVERY DAY?

I'm responsible for designing the core game systems for WebLords, implementing data, and hooking up content and assets. I also work closely with both programming and art to schedule, brainstorm, implement, and verify every game system or content asset, and I report the game's progress to and take feedback from the executive team.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

I love designing game systems and watching them become a reality. Transforming ideas into a fun, playable game, and then watching people get absorbed in playing is one of the most exciting and invigorating experiences in the world.

WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT YOUR JOB?

When a major problem pops up at the last possible minute. There's a lot of moving parts in game development, and although you can minimize surprises with prototyping and good organizational practices, things will fall through the cracks, and when they do, putting out the ensuing fire can be a real challenge. A fun challenge, but a challenge nonetheless.

WHAT WAS THE MOST EMBARRASSING/MEMORABLE THING YOU HAD TO DO FOR/AT YOUR JOB?

Nothing has been particularly embarrassing, and there are no arcane hazing rituals or insane pranks, so it's been pretty comfortable on that end.

The most memorable experience has to be when our company scheduled a paintball trip on an afternoon that ended up in engulfed by a torrential rain. With the paintball field unwilling to reschedule, we all stepped up to the unique challenge of playing capture the flag in the rain, slipping in mud and trying to decipher whether that was a hit or just a large rain droplet. Needless to say, hilarity ensued.

WHAT MAKES WEBLINGS AND WEBLORDS STAND APART FROM THE OTHER SOCIAL ONLINE GAMES?

Unlike other games, we've turned the internet itself into our game world, fusing the real and virtual worlds together. We want to add a layer of fun and gaming to things that people already doing, like surfing the internet. Now when you check your favorite news site, do research for a school project, or pick your NCAA bracket, you're

still playing the game, and need only to click on the Gamebar to be rewarded for it. You don't have to commit your life to play a game; we commit our game to being a part of your life.

ANY PARTICULARLY HEATED DEBATES OVER WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO CUT?

Personally, the most heated debate in WebLords I've been a part of has been over the specifics of avatar customization, which started as a concern over a lack of character creation options and degenerated into a yelling match (mind you with the CEO) as to whether every option was actually meaningful or useful, and whether we'd have time to implement them.

In the end, it led to some great compromises which led us to much better player customization and more robust options for character creation, and despite the tension, the game is better for it.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY GAMING CHARACTER, WHAT/WHO WOULD YOU BE?

Link from all the Legend of Zelda games; who can say no to crazy awesome sword skills, bows, arrows, boomerangs, bombs, grappling hooks, instruments that allow me to time travel and teleport, and the uncanny fact that anything breakable around me drops gems and money?

WHAT GAME IS IN YOUR CONSOLE RIGHT NOW?

Final Fantasy 13, but I'm still working on Darksiders and trying to beat some of my friend's scores on Trials HD. I'm going to pick up Battlefield: Bad Company as soon as I'm done with one of those.

WHICH GUILTY PLEASURE GAME DO YOU OWN, THAT YOU DON'T LIKE TO ADMIT YOU PLAY?

I'm not really ashamed of any games that I own, but if I had to pick one that might get me made fun of by my current gaming friends, it's either the Sims games or the old Pokemon games for the Game Boy and Game Boy Color. Pokemon Snap on the Nintendo 64 is also an old favorite.

WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO GET A JOB IN THE GAME INDUSTRY?

Love making games so much you want to make them in your own time. Find online resources and communities to learn more from. Work with other aspiring developers to learn the ins-and-outs of collaboration and team dynamics. Pick up an engine toolset like Unreal, Steam, or even Neverwinter Nights and just build some maps. Learn enough programming and scripting to implement and prototype your ideas. Build a portfolio. Find a school that teaches you what you want to know: a lot of great undergraduate programs have popped up in the last decade that weren't there when I graduated high school. If you're confident in your skill set, apply everywhere and anywhere you can. Be prepared for rejection. Be prepared to move across the country. Whatever you do, don't get discouraged and never give up.