OUR STORY & APPROACH

PLAYFORWARD: ELM CITY STORIES

Freeport, Maine
207-518-5065
Digitalmill, enables unique collaborations so organizations can build games that solve their problems.

We design games…
form amazing teams, and find…

novel uses for incredible game technologies.

Every project is treated as a unique solution we consider the widest possible solution set vs. limiting a game around the capabilities of developers first-at-hand.
OUR PHILOSOPHY

WHAT’S IMPORTANT

• Separate design & development to increase innovation

• Successfully managed client-developer relationships

• Provide expertise not found in-house and transfer it to you

• Seek comparative advantages of games to capture opportunities
HISTORY & SAMPLE CLIENTS

- Founded 1997
- 1999 First Game Effort
- Independent Games Festival Finalist 2001
- 2002 Co-founded Serious Games Initiative
- 2004 Co-founded Games for Health Project
# Areas of Activity

## What We Do / Have Done

<table>
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<th>Communities &amp; Events</th>
<th>Consulting &amp; Research</th>
<th>Game Design &amp; Production</th>
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<td><strong>Serious Games Initiative</strong></td>
<td>Research &amp; Adviseement</td>
<td>Pre-Production</td>
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<td><strong>Games for Health Project</strong></td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td><strong>Games + Crowds Day</strong></td>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>Production Management</td>
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WORK EXAMPLES
GALLERY
Digitalmill often works with great freelance designers from the games industry on a per-project basis.

For development & prototyping we partner with a variety of development studios and university based labs & programs.

Sample affiliations
Noah Falstein
Bob Bates
Ian Bogost
Larry Holland
360 Kid
Mr. Mike & Co.
Tiltfactor Lab
Totally Games
Thunderdog, LLC
Persuasive Games
Virtual Heroes
H O W  W E  W O R K
STEP-BY-STEP

1. Consume **background materials** & initial **client input**
2. Develop **key project assessment** & recommendations
3. **Design**, storyboarding, engineering tests & prototypes
4. **RFP/matchmaking** for dev team + contract advisement
5. Production launched! **Supervise dev/advise client**
6. **Testing** and certification of deliverables
7. **Completion**, post-mortem + post-development activities

Our step-by-step process works to hold off core-development as long as possible to explore ideas and engineering approaches when costs are low, and changes are easy.
• **Remove engineering bias** from initial design & strategy work

• **Focusing on the problem** environment & definition vs. the solution

• Seek "**difference makers**" best addressed by games & gameplay

• Teams & **peer review** to foster arguments, checks, and balances

• "**longhand design documents**“ & development manuals

• Preparing for **inevitable in-development changes** ahead-of-time
Common pre-production deliverables:

- Strategic documents
- Design Treatments (rough outlines)
- Design Documents (detailed outlines)
- Storyboards (visual outlines and details)
- Prototypes (paper or software)
  - Design prototypes test playability of design, rules of game, interfaces
  - Engineering prototypes seek to remove risk from full development
- Post Production documents
  (i.e. marketing, pr, user communities, teacher instructions, etc.)
WE’VE SEEN IT ALL

TOP MISTAKES

1. Never enough testing and adjustment
2. Poor pre-production process lacking effort to identify and test possible hurdles
3. Underlying model is too complex - game is too complex
4. Poor input controls and user interface
5. Goals of project not properly aligned, game aimed at wrong target output
6. Support for game in field is weak - nor considered at onset of project
7. Game too tough to explain to target users, hurting adoption
8. Not enough budget
9. Hired wrong developers, or developers with poor production methods
10. Client fails to provide constant support and vision to developer
EDUCATION

VIRTUAL U

- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
- Over 100,000 Downloads
- Over 1000 University Sales
- Independent Games Festival Finalist 2001
- Heavy usage in University Management Classes including Penn, Harvard, Indiana St.

Users learn how major university organizations operate.
SOCIAL IMPACT

BUDGET HERO

- Originally Funded by Richard Lounsbery Foundation
- Original Design by Digitalmill
- Helped select developer (360 Kid), developed title/brand
- Over 100,000 plays and numerous media mentions

Users build their own solutions to the U.S. federal budget
CORPORATE TRAINING

CISCO BINARY GAME

• Original Design by Jerry Bush @ Cisco

• Re-Design of gameplay by Digitalmill

• Selected and managed developer (Persuasive Games)

• Hundreds of thousands of plays

• Assisted in widespread promotion of title in mainstream media

Improves fundamental 8-bit binary math skills for students studying to pass Cisco Certified Networking Associate exams.
HEALTH

TIME FOR FOOTBALL

• Original design outline and architecture

• Management of both front-end and backend completion tracking system developers

• Selected and managed developers (Phantom Compass & BlueSpurs)

Time for Football helps youth ages 8-12 understand key behaviors and knowledge related to playing youth football safer. Topics include concussion symptoms and reporting, equipment safety, and hydration.
Develop comprehensive USAID game and strategy

Strategy + illustrative storyboards

Sourced multiple ideas across team of designers

Enable bidding by multiple contractors & funding partners
ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

MOBILE, INTERFACES, OFFLINE

EXPERIMENTAL UAV CONTROL GAME (DARPA)

CONSUMER ADVERGAME

IP PROTOCOL GAME

IPHONE EXERGAME

HEALTH QUALITY CARD GAME

“CHEMISTRY TETRIS”
1. Gamified Web portal offering specific mini-games, and leadership content.

2. Team training, using specific skills to explore interpersonal dynamics around diverse team

3. Managing personal and professional work-life balance & priorities

GAMES FOR HEALTH
PLAYFORWARD: ELM CITY STORIES

• Yale School of Medicine : NIH Grant

• Original design and project scope

• Assisted with RFP and contracting

• Executive producer during development

Players explore stories but advance via strategic mini-games designed to improve decision making & knowledge
PLAYFORWARD

ADDITIONAL SCREENS
PATENTS & PUBLISHED RESEARCH

- Helped develop patents for Yale (U.S. 20130309641 Pending), private developers (U.S. 20130275230 pending), and Humana, Inc. (U.S. 8747199 granted)

- We are co-authors on several peer-reviewed journal publications with Yale’s Play2Prevent project concerning the development of PlayForward
# Additional Projects

**Under Development**

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<th>Platforms</th>
<th>Release</th>
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<td>History</td>
<td>iOS/Android, Windows/OSX</td>
<td>Late 2016</td>
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<td><strong>Math Rogue</strong></td>
<td>Math</td>
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<td><strong>HealthyNomical</strong></td>
<td>Health Financial Literacy</td>
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<td><strong>Sports Entertainment Title</strong></td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>iOS/Android, Windows/OSX</td>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
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CUSTOM FIT
MANY FORMS & PLATFORMS

FLASH

IPHONE

SONY PSP

CARD/BOARD GAME

TABLET

PHONEGAP + JAVASCRIPT

NATIVE PC

HTML5
WHERE TO START?

• **Triage & Assessment**
  Review your current problem/project and provide 1-2 days on-site or videoconf + resulting strategy & assessment memo

• **Workshop**
  On-site 2-day training workshop on game design & production

• **Design Treatments**
  2-3 Specific designs (3-5 pages each) + wireframes

• **Design Document & Production Plan**
  Full-scale design document & production plan (30-50 pages) with wireframes & optional storyboards

*SUBJECT TO CHANGE*
WHERE TO FROM HERE?

• **Evaluate** if a game is a reasonable part of your plan

• **Decide** if separating the design process from the development process offers advantages

• **Model** amount of initial design & eventual production management assistance you need

• **Deliver** a full proposal and schedule for your consideration
CONTACT US

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