

Lecture 17

Festivals & Promotion

Today's Lecture

- Based on John's experience with *Gathering Sky*
 - He gave this lecture four years ago
 - Most of this material is from his slides
 - Hopefully things have not changed too much
- Primarily covers *promotion & marketing*
 - How do you get people to learn about your game?
 - How do you get people to download/buy it?
- But also talks about the nature of *festivals*

Marketing Essentials

- **Website**

- Shows off your gameplay (trailer or demo)
- Gives people a way to contact you
- Must make it *mobile friendly*

- **Trailer**

- Shows off your gameplay and narrative
- May want to have *professionally* done

- **Screenshots**

- Good *variety* of “action shots”

The Press Kit

- All of these items plus a **press release**
 - All of your game information in one place
 - Has materials a journalist can use in an article
- Make use of **presskit()**
 - Tool for quickly making standardized press kits
 - <http://dopresskit.com>
- **Example:** Ridiculous Fishing
 - http://vlambeer.com/press/sheet.php?p=Ridiculous_Fishing

Two Schools of Thought

- **Closed Development**

- The silent force (Blizzard, Microsoft, most AAA's)
- Depend on putting out consecutive high-quality games
- Build hype through mystery, little leaks of information
- Requires a dedicated PR staff

- **Open Development**

- Practiced by many independent developers.
- Build hype through information, **community involvement**
- Every engaged community member becomes an evangelist
- **Example:** *Crowfall* (Bill Dalton's visit)

The Press Release

- Treat “everything as news”
 - Upcoming release?
 - Public beta?
 - Entering Early Access?
 - Won an award?
- Key requirements for the release
 - Should be about a page (no more)
 - Should have news content, plus screenshots
 - You are writing their blog post for them

Corporate vs Game Press Release

- Many resources online for press releases
 - They all look very corporate
 - Everything is in third person
 - Personal bias is avoided
 - Sounds very detached
- This is not how to write your release
 - You want to get your game “voice” across
 - Not quite ad copy, but close

Apsis

A short, artistic game about guiding a flock of birds

Apsis begins with a single bird. Pressing (or clicking) draws the bird towards your finger (or cursor), allowing you to direct it around the world. As you explore each of the five regions that make up the game, you will stumble upon lost birds and build your flock. As your flock grows in size, it becomes more difficult to keep from losing birds to the elements – sharp rocks, high winds, and predators threaten to scatter your flock into the wind.

Website: <http://apsisgame.com>

Trailer: <http://youtu.be/HHBihNwBq4M>

Beta Signup: eepurl.com/LhpH9

Platforms: **Android, Windows, Mac, Linux**

Beta: **Feb 2014 (Open now)**

Release: **July 2014**



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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1upCkdemRUthY4y9kHQSUP6TaNyM4b-ZFGNGltcBL_bs/edit



Are you a fan of small cubes of animated meat?

Do you enjoy the sound of buzz saws?

When you hear the term “wall jump” do you get excited?

Well, what if you woke up to find you were made of a lump of juicy raw meat, your girlfriend was made of band-aids and to top it all off she had been kidnapped by a fetus in a jar wearing a suit and monocle? Would that be totally awesome? or just kinda awesome?

Well I'm hoping you chose totally awesome, because that's basically the premise of Super Meat Boy.

In Super Meat Boy you take the role of a small animated cube of meat on his quest to save his lady love Band-Aid girl from the clutches of the evil Dr. Fetus! Sliding his way through saw mills, salt factories and even hell itself, Meat boy jumps into action in this fast paced and extremely challenging platformer that will “melt your face off”.

Super Meat Boy is based off the popular flash game Meat Boy hosted by Newgrounds.com. <http://www.newgrounds.com/portal/view/472826>

Super Meat Boy will be completely remade from the ground up for its release on Wiiware™ and will feature over 100+ single player levels, insane boss fights, competitive vs modes, beefy co-op play and a slew of unlockables that are rumored to fill your life with great happiness!

SMB (best abbreviation ever) is being designed by Gish co-creator Edmund McMillen, Tommy Refenes and “Bill” Jon McEntee.

We will be documenting Meat Boy's rebirth for Wiiware on our development blog via Supermeatboy.com so feel free to pop in and tell us all your lame ideas we will never use!

Thanks for the support! and keep indie gaming alive!

-Team Meat

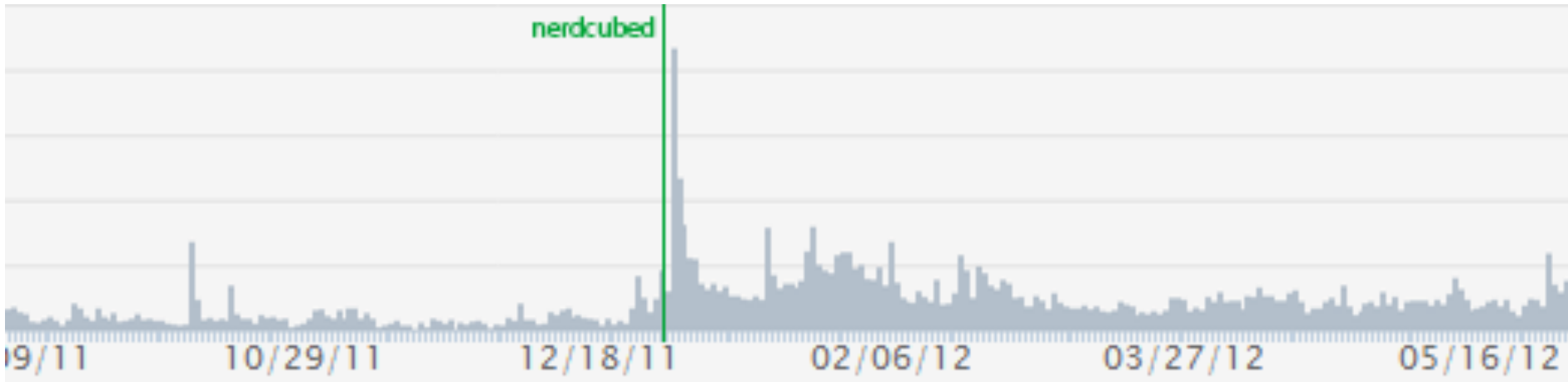
Press Releases

- Everything can be news (within reason)
 - Want to keep your game from being forgotten
- Keep track of who you have contacted
 - And better yet, who has actually replied to you
- Personalize your emails when you can
 - An exclusive press relationship can go a long way
- Make cold calls
 - Always be trying to make new contacts

Videos and Streaming

- Streaming is the modern games journalism
 - Can have more impact than a game website
 - Allows people to see the gameplay in action
 - Even negative results can give sales (Flappy Bird)
- There are lots of streaming venues
 - Let's Plays
 - Video Reviews
 - Twitch.tv

YouTube Effect



Overgrowth preorder sales before and after nerdcubed released a Let's Play

Social Media

- Facebook Page, Twitter
 - Good long term, but high upstart/upkeep
 - Social Media is the modern day mailing list
- **Twitter** is especially important
 - Large Indie Games community
 - Worthwhile getting engaged
 - Keep the contacts you already made
 - Keep communication open with journalists

Game Festivals

- Excellent way to get initial press
 - Getting past selection marks you as notable
 - Can meet many journalists in person
- Popular festivals in increasing *selectiveness*
 - Boston Festival of Indie Games (BFIG)
 - CasualConnect (IndiePrize)
 - IndieCade
 - Independent Games Festival (IGF)
- And there are many more



BOSTON FESTIVAL OF INDIE GAMES

Event: September

Deadline: April 22nd (Monday)

INDIE CABE

Event: Typically October

Deadline: March 25th (late April 25th)

INDIE
INDIE

Two Months Earlier than Last Year!

Event: Typically October

Deadline: March 25th (late April 25th)



INDEPENDENT
GAMES FESTIVAL

Event: March 2019

Deadline: Fall TBA



Event: Often January (USA)

Deadline: Fall TBA

Game Summits and Meet-Ups

- **IGDA** (Independent Game Developers Association)
 - Join them and look for meetings
 - Have long thought about having a student chapter
- **GDC** (Game Developers Conference)
 - Not player facing (like PAX), but other developers
 - An excellent place to make connections
- **Meetup.com**
 - Find active developers in your local area
 - Game development cities have a large indie scene

What About Virality?

- No one knows how to make something ‘viral’
 - Companies have tried for many years
 - Forced virality comes across as spam
- Marketing is really all about *luck enhancement*
 - Get your word out there in multiple forms
 - Hope that something catches on
 - “50% of ads are worthless, but not sure which 50%”

Actually Selling the Game

- For pushing sales, an **Apple feature** is king
 - A feature will dwarf even the best press
 - So much that Apple has considered selling features
 - But then this might hurt their value
- *Gathering Sky* did good sales for a student title
 - A minimum wage+ job for the entire team
 - John believes it was entirely due to store placement
 - They lost potential sales because no iPhone version

Useful Tools

- **presskit()** (<http://dopresskit.com>)
 - Used to create your initial press kit
- **Promoter** (<http://www.promoterapp.com/>)
 - Used to track your press coverage
 - Also great for sending out promo codes
- **MailChimp/MadMimi** (<http://mailchimp.com>)
 - For e-mail marketing to press and early players
 - But personalize the important contacts