

Remote Working for Game Development

Today's Lecture

- ❖ Covers some of the best-practices for remote development
- ❖ Frames this event in wider history of the games industry (*the very real silver linings*)

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- ❖ This discussion is for *your benefit* - **Please** ask questions whenever they come up

Overview: What is there to gain?

- ❖ **Managing work-life balance is an important skill to learn**
 - ❖ Practice of time management improves quality of life
- ❖ **Remote teamwork requires differentiation of roles**
 - ❖ Closer to the practices of industry teams
- ❖ **This is (hopefully) where the industry is moving**

Overview: Challenges of Remote Work

- ❖ **Managing mental health takes effort**
 - ❖ Work-life balance becomes harder
 - ❖ Requires self-discipline
 - ❖ Establish spatial, temporal, and emotional boundaries between work and leisure
- ❖ **Can be difficult to stay on the same page**
 - ❖ Requires effort and infrastructure for communication

Responsibilities of a Remote Developer

- ❖ ***Your first responsibility is to hold yourself accountable for your work***
 - ❖ Task management tools become critical
- ❖ ***Your second is to hold your team accountable***
 - ❖ See “*Staying on the Same Page*”



Holding Yourself Accountable

- ❖ **Treat your classwork like an appointment**
 - ❖ Separate working and living spaces
- ❖ **Set a daily schedule and hold yourself to it**
 - ❖ Morning check-ins with your team are a great solution
- ❖ **Treat your work appointment like you have a commute**
 - ❖ Wake up, shower, get dressed, and go outside **before** you start your work.
 - ❖ This is **important!**

Staying on the Same Page

- ❖ **Remote workers can't easily gather around the same screen**
 - ❖ The team must work to carefully define each member's role, including what information a team member **must share**, and what information **must be shared with them**.
 - ❖ Like CRC Cards, define APIs between members
- ❖ **Rely on “living documents”**
 - ❖ Keep some specification documents that can be edited and commented in real time as changes are made to gameplay / data structure / art.

Staying on the Same Page

- ❖ **Weekly team meetings are even more critical**
 - ❖ Host meetings digitally
 - ❖ Summarize your week of work, display any work that is necessary to show the full team, and announce your work for the upcoming week.
 - ❖ This is your opportunity to show off deliverables to team members who don't have access to builds (such as some artists)
 - ❖ Designate a note taker for each meeting

Remote Work in the Industry

- ❖ **Remote working just makes sense for small games teams**
 - ❖ Mitigates issues of commute, colocation, office culture, etc
 - ❖ Games industry has a history of remote work (Unreal engine was developed remotely until the team topped ~18)
- ❖ **Industry has pushed against remote work, but Coronavirus is shifting mentalities**
 - ❖ Riot games office recently went remote

Remote Work in the Industry

- ❖ **Ultimately, this is an experience that will benefit you**
 - ❖ Remote work is impressive on a resume or in conversation with industry insiders
 - ❖ The games industry will (hopefully) move in this direction, many indie games are already developed independently

In Conclusion

- ❖ **Remote work will require more effort from you and your team**
- ❖ **Be mindful of your mental health, and work on separating work and leisure**
- ❖ **The experience you gain will be both useful, and impressive to prospective employers**
- ❖ **You will be prepared for a wider range of jobs in games teams and software teams**