

Ready to be a Game Designer?

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Video games, they are tremendously popular and hugely profitable. World-wide they represented a market of \$25.4 billion in 2004 and according to a recent forecast by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the industry will continue to grow at an average compound annual rate of 11.4% reaching \$46.5 billion by 2010.

With games representing such big business, and average game development budgets growing from about \$40,000 in the early 1990's to over \$10 million today, game design is hotter than ever, and lucrative too.

According to the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), there were 144,000 full-time employees working in video game development in the U.S. in 2005, up from 50,000 in 1998. The ESA estimates this number will grow to over a quarter of a million workers by 2009.

With entry-level game developers earning about \$67,000 per year, I'll bet you gamers out there must be thinking – a high-paying job making video games, what could be better!

So where can you get started? Well it just so happens that you have some options in Sault Ste. Marie. If you are between the ages of 11-16, Adventures in Computing Camps at Algoma University offer one week summer day camps in video game design, 3D/First-Person Shooter game design, and new this season, Role-Playing Game (RPG) design.

These one week camps take students through the game design process, learning the principles of game design, level design and 3D character design, while creating your own original 2D, 3D, FPS, and RPG games. Adventures in Computing Camps are in their 7th season in Sault Ste. Marie, and host about 100 students each summer. Visit www.computercamps.ca for more information.

Did you know that Algoma University will be offering a Masters Degree in Computer Games Technology beginning in September 2007? The program is the only one of its kind in North America, and is offered in cooperation with the University of Abertay Dundee in Scotland.

The program is 12 months long, and Students will study Game Design and Development, Programming for the Xbox and PC, Console Games Programming, The Games Marketplace, and Artificial Intelligence for Games, among other courses.

Potential applicants require a computer science degree and should be skilled C++ programmers to be accepted. The program is offered via video-conferencing with University of Abertay curriculum and instructors. Students will work on cutting-edge equipment and complete their own gaming projects during their one-year of study, and graduate with a Masters degree recognized for its excellence world-wide. For more information visit www.algomau.ca/gaming/index.php.

The future of gaming is bright. Video games are pushing the envelope on technology, leading the development of faster PCs and consoles with ultra-realistic graphics capabilities. And this is only the beginning.

With all of these exciting opportunities to learn about video game design locally, perhaps in the next several years we may actually see a game development industry spring up right here in Sault Ste. Marie.

Wouldn't that be cool...