XDS18

XDS 2018 - EVENT SCHEDULE

This version of our event schedule does not reflect session times or locations, special events, speaker Q & A, or dedicated networking breaks.

Session Title & Description	Speakers
EXECUTIVE PANEL: INSIGHTS FROM THE TOP FLOOR ON EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT Executives representing a cross-section of the industry will provide insights on the state of External Development within their organizations. The panel will address areas such as the continued importance of external development as games get larger and more complex, opportunities for advancement, trends/predictions, and opportunities to push the needle. Additional questions will be collected from attendees in the lead-up to XDS.	Victor Lucas, CEO/Founder, EP Media Ltd. Andrew Day, CEO, Keywords
THE DEVIL IN THE DETAILS: RICH UI EXPERIENCE IN GAMES AND FILM Stunning graphics and compelling gameplay are at the heart of a successful franchise, and UI and UX are filling in the gaps for an even more seamless experience. When considered as integral, rather than approached as a functional overlay, UI can enhance quality of gameplay and support world building. And, through well designed UI, developers can reach beyond the game and craft a unique brand experience that helps to create a franchise that can be further developed and expanded. PlayStation and Territory Studio believe in the value of rich, cinematically inspired UI and brand in games franchises. In this talk, creative director Marti Romances from Territory Studio and producer Simon Bastow from PlayStation will draw upon their collaboration on Killzone and Horizon Zero Dawn. They will talk about how the crossovers in narrative approach to UI and UX design can strengthen the brand franchise, elevate in-game narratives, and underpin gameplay experiences.	Marti Romances, Creative Director, Territory Studio Simon Bastow, Manager of Video Production | Producer, Sony PlayStation
DEVELOPING GAMES AT SCALE: A DEEP DIVE INTO THE DISTRIBUTED INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKFLOWS USED WHEN CREATING GEARS OF WAR Discover how the Coalition, the developers behind the Gears of War franchise, establish a complete distributed and global game development pipeline. Join Phil Cousins (Lead Tools, Build and Automation Engineer) and Joe Vogt (IT Services Lead) as they walk through everything from how they setup their advanced infrastructure and pipelines through to monitoring partner health and fielding support requests. This presentation will discuss the advantages of working in a distributed pipeline as well as past challenges the Coalition has tackled as well as those they continue to face throughout the industry's ever growing need to scale development. Phil and Joe will also be sharing their learning's as they continue to expand their external development to over dozens of different partners ranging from a single engineer to entire development studios across multiple continents.	Phil Cousins, Lead Tools, Builds and Automation Engineer, The Coalition - Microsoft Joe Vogt, IT Services Lead, Microsoft / The Coalition

EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIALS: 3-STEPS FOR BUY-IN SUCCESS External development for video games is constantly developing and growing, and so are our studios goals and expectations. In order for us to meet these ever-growing targets, we also need to evolve our pipelines and processes, but it isn't always that easy. Gaining buy-in from our internal teams on new or changing directions isn't a simple task, but the way we approach these new visions can be catered towards individual people, scenarios and circumstances. This presentation will focus on fool-proofing your vision, strategizing your management to increase universal buy-in success, and monitoring external performance to reinforce your strategy.	Carla Rylance, Outsource Manager, The Coalition
CRAFTING SHADOW OF THE TOMB RAIDER CHALLENGE TOMBS COOPERATIVELY Crafting innovative and memorable experiences for gamers was at the heart of Eidos Montreal's mission for Shadow of the Tomb Raider. In this talk, Max Belanger, Director of Production Operations at Eidos Montreal and Richard Turek, Senior Producer at Virtuos Shanghai, share their hands-on experience in co-creating one of the most iconic elements of the franchise: Tombs. Only this time with an added twist: Online Coop. They take a candid look at how this partnership was formed, and how they structured development around a series of core principles to create an environment where creativity could flourish.	Richard Turek, Senior Producer, Virtuos Games Max Belanger, Director of Production Operations, Eidos Montreal
A GREAT IMAGE IS WORTH 1000 WORDS – CINEMATICS PRODUCTION FROM AN EXTERNAL PARTNER PERSPECTIVE Producing high-end narrative content for games requires versatility and capacity, as well as various technical and production approaches. From the perspective of an external partner, Victor Rainville, Executive Producer and Patrick Beauchamp, CG Supervisor for Meduzarts, will propose the different approaches to the production of cinematics and video game trailers: CG (pre-rendered), in-game (captured) and in-game (real time), in all their pros and cons and in all their facets to keep partners happy. Along with Philip Dennison, Senior Outsourcing Producer for Monolith Productions, they will also study the collaboration between the two studios for the production of CG and in-game cinematics for Middle-Earth: Shadow of War.	Victor Rainville, Executive Producer, MEDUZARTS Philip Dennison, Senior Producer, Outsourcing, Monolith Productions
SONY LONDON: ACHIEVING SCALABLE, INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT AT HIGH VOLUME FOR 'BLOOD & TRUTH' Join Ciaran Daly and Raymond Baines from Sony London Studio, as they discuss how they altered their approach to external art and development on the studio's latest PSVR project, Blood & Truth. By adopting and developing new tools and workflows, they will cover everything it takes to rethink ways of working with external teams. Exploring their open and collaborative development approach with partners, they will discuss how this led to London Studio unifying their toolsets and offering a global platform for distributed development. Achieving fully scalable, high volume and integrated development teams across the world for their projects, and the key advantages they have learned.	Ciaran Daly, External Art & Development, Sony London Studio Raymond Baines, Principal Tools Programmer, Sony London Studio

FOR HONOR: WHAT MAKES A WARRIOR? – A CO-DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UBISOFT MONTREAL & STUDIO GOBO The session will outline the steps we took to build a successful co-development collaboration with Studio Gobo. By sharing our project culture, pushing the "one team" concept and providing significant ownership, we have established a strong relationship to help us deliver AAA entertainment. We will also discuss how both teams dealt with challenging issues and what we learned to improve our process and forge a stronger single team. Throughout the presentation Simon Desjardins, Co-Development Associate Producer at Ubisoft Montreal and Mike Rouse, Production Director at Studio Gobo will share their perspectives on the relationship and the project.	Simon Desjardins, Associate Producer - Co-Dev, Ubisoft Xu Xiaojun, Game Director, Studio Gobo
EVOLVING FROM OUTSOURCING TO CO-DEVELOPMENT For over 17 years, Jagex been leading the charge in running rich live games and those games have grown in size, content and popularity. Arun Honnegowda, Outsource Manager from Jagex, will share the journey from Outsourcing model to Co-development model. The talk will address the reasons Jagex moved to co-development model, the lessons learned throughout the process, including selling the co-development model internally, selection process, setting up the project, and bridging the Internal and External teams.	Arun Honnegowda, Outsource Manager, Jagex
TELLING TALES – NAVIGATING THE PATH TO FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNERS FOR YOUR STUDIO Our hero quality is on a journey chased by the zombie walkers of cost and time. This is the story of how Telltale Games is levelling up our external partnerships to fully support both first and third party developed titles effectively and efficiently. We will cover best practice and approach from both a client and partner perspective, and will share the successes as well as the challenges and pitfalls uncovered along the way as we continue through this process of trying to enable the ultimate success of our key relationships.	Ben Wibberley, Managing Partner, DAQA Dennis Cooper, Director of External Production, Telltale Games
OPTIMIZE YOUR AUDIO PRODUCTION WITH EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT Four veteran audio directors with perspectives from internal and external studios share nearly 100 combined years of experience via case studies about how to get the most out of your external audio teams. We will discuss the benefits and potential pitfalls of working with an external studio and how to overcome those pitfalls so that you can optimize your audio pipeline. Example topics to be addressed will include how to effectively communicate in emotional terms, how to manage large projects with thousands of assets and how to work in 3D VR and AR Audio. Case study projects will be referenced including Alien Descent VR, Blade Runner VR, Harry Potter: A Hogwarts Mystery, and Game of Thrones: Conquest and others.	Dale Crowley, Creative Director Somatone Interactive, Inc. Jeff MacPherson, Audio Director, Electronic Arts Richard Ludlow, Audio Director, Hexany Audio Guy Whitmore, Composer/Creative Director, Foxface Rabbitfish, LLC

HOW TO LEVERAGE THE 3 PILLARS OF EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT TO GARNER BUY IN Larry was tasked with the challenge to create a business strategy for his external development initiatives. This strategy would be shared with the League of Legends leadership to give visibility, but more importantly, garner buy in to make adjustments to Riot's external development practices. His Director's advice on how to approach this new challenge was summed up in one word. "Simplicity". But how do you simplify something as potentially complex as external development, and still gain the confidence of the people you are trying to support? Larry will discuss the steps that were taken, and provide examples that will help you achieve your goals as well.	William Larry Colvin, Art Outsource Manager, Riot Games
UNDERSTANDING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT A presentation to inform the audience on intellectual property rights and their relationship to video games and more importantly their significance to external development arrangements. It will explore some fundamental aspects about the most relevant intellectual property rights, (namely copyright) and key IP concepts and issues arising in outsourcing agreements. It will highlight real world examples of when things go right and when they go wrong, whether from the perspective of a supplier or a customer. The main takeaway is to give the audience a better understanding of the contractual drivers and hopefully a more balanced approach when entering into outsourcing agreements.	Nav Sunner, CEO, Navatron Limited
SETTING THE PROPER TONE: WHY FEEDBACK STYLE CAN BE AS IMPORTANT AS CONTENT Alex will explore the most critical aspect of the client-external developer relationship: communication. How does the simple become complex? Is simplicity the same as clarity? How is the benign interpreted as malignant? Are we preoccupied with assigning blame for misunderstandings, or working together to alleviate them? Topics will include language, time, style, and cultural differences, and how those can become impediments to effective communication. Equally if not more importantly, we'll focus on how stature, economics, and the perceived and inherent imbalance between client and service provider can colour perceptions and assumptions. The struggle to gain buy-in from the internal team and represent outsourcing well, and the pressures and frustrations of production can easily be reflected in your feedback to providers, in ways imperceptible to you but glaring to them. We can't remove these external factors, but we can address feedback tone, and how simple changes in language and the amount of information shared can make all the difference in keeping external teams motivated and moving forward.	Alex Stein, Lead Artist/Outsourcing Art Manager, Treyarch/Activision

QA VENDOR INTERDEPENDENCE – THE OPEN RELATIONSHIP THAT REALLY WORKS! UTILIZING VARIETY TO NAVIGATE EVERYTHING FROM AAA SIZED CHALLENGES TO INDIE HICCUPS Sony Interactive Entertainment (SIE), being one of the major publishers in the video games industry, has proven its ability to influence and shape the gaming landscape worldwide. As both a trendsetter and market-leader, SIE values the experience players get when playing any game on PlayStation®, especially their own first party games. Join Worldwide Studios Quality Assurance's Director of Business Services & Operations, Davina Mackey, & Principal Vendor Analyst, Natalia Craddock, as they take a deeper look into managing the dynamic QA outsourcing needs of SIE's first party games. Delve into their strategy behind global title allocation, overcoming resource and time-constraints while still ensuring the highest quality standards for first party games; and share a general overview of QA operations & services using examples of award-winning games like God of War and the PlayLink titles.	Davina Mackey, Director WWS QA Business Services, Sony Interactive Entertainment Natalia Craddock, Principal Vendor Analyst, Sony Interactive Entertainment
THE COMPOUND INTEREST OF EXPERTISE: WHEN RETAINING A TEAM SAVES MONEY Vendors often recommend that their clients retain a dedicated team for a whole project. I was wary of this arrangement because I didn't want to risk paying for resources when I couldn't guarantee we could provide work without interruption. But I wasn't sure my anxiety was valid so I built an elaborate spreadsheet to test it. I discovered it's often cheaper to keep talent, even when you can't always keep them busy, than it is to start and stop engagements. This session will explain the spreadsheet's inputs, review the results with various scenarios, then solicit discussion on the assumptions and test any new inputs attendees would like.	Philip Dennison, Senior Producer, Outsourcing, Monolith Productions