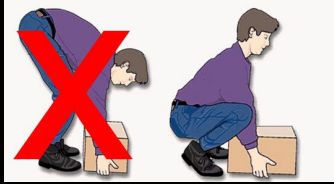


14. Working in Game Audio



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Working in Game Audio

- Exploring career avenues
- Preparing a demo
- Wading through the production process
 - Budgeting
 - Rights
 - Delivery
 - What's next?

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Pathfinding for Audio Careers

- Creative
 - Composer/Sound designer
 - Gameplay designer (audio elements)
- Technical
 - Audio programming/Scripting
- Both/In-Between
 - Sophisticated interactive music
 - Physics-driven sound effects
 - Heuristic mixing

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Networking for Game Audio

- Game Audio Network Guild (GANG)
- Interactive Audio Special Interest Group (IASIG)
- Music4Games
- General Game Resources
 - IGDA
 - GamaSutra
- Local composer groups
- Banding together
 - Getting an agent
 - Forming an audio production company

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The Game Audio Events Scene

- Conferences (location)
 - Game Developers Conference (SF)
 - Austin Game Developers Conference (Austin)
 - NAMM/International Music Products Association (LA)
 - Audio Engineering Society (LA, NY, etc.)
- Concert Series
 - Final Fantasy
 - Video Games Live
 - One-off events

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Getting Visibility

- The Armchair Method: Publications, Demos, Blogging
 - Research/writing about current state of the art
 - Development of original theoretical research (hopefully w/ application)
 - Creating original content (creative, repurposing, etc.)
 - Community game sites (GamaSutra, others)
 - Audio reviews of titles, audio tools, etc.
- Meet other composers, sound designers, audio programmers
 - Apprenticeships/mentorships
 - Subcontracting and learning opportunities

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Getting Visibility (Cont'd)

- Producers, game designers, audio directors
 - Demos (GDC, E3, other conferences)
- Programmers
 - XNA GSE, Casual games/game 'enthusiasts'
 - Often for small-scale games (mobile, flash, etc.)
 - Beta testing audio creation tools
- Programs for Game Composers
 - GANG annual student/apprentice competition
 - Xbox 360 Registered Content Creator Program
 - Middleware Company 'preferred vendor' programs (learn their tools)

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The Demo Reel

- In many ways, similar to standard demo
 - Short music/FX tracks in varying styles, perhaps in cutscenes
- Potential differences/standing out
 - Self-contained application that shows interactive music (or other easy demo medium)
 - Content addressing game audio challenges ([explain](#))
 - Production values using synthesizers
 - Custom demos: music written with a specific game (e.g. the one you're applying for) in mind

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Industry Opportunities

- Consoles
- PC (Windows) games
- Portables
- Cellphones and mobile devices
- Other consumer devices (toys, instruments, etc.)
- Arcade and slot machines

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Selling Your Soul/Music/etc.

- Be selective with your demos
 - Does this person actually hire composers?
 - How will my demo stand out from the mix?
- Website/e-mail
 - Take the time to register a domain
 - Name versus branding?
- Self-promotion

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Show Me the Money

- Determine game's overall budget
 - Production versus total
 - Prepare your ask in terms of this budget
 - The allure and danger of "all-in" budgets
 - OK to ask advice (no published set game fee schedules)
- Financials: be able to draw up a budget
 - Musicians
 - Engineers
 - Support staff (copyists, orchestrators, etc.)
 - Equipment
 - Your time, gear, etc.
- Justify/evangelize audio as integral part of the game rather than a "line item" expense

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Sign on the Dotted Line

- Typically work for hire
 - Developer 'owns' created music
- Understanding the rights
 - Composition copyright/royalty
 - writer's share often left out
 - Performer royalties (if composer also performer)
 - Performance royalties: some game publishers attempt to take these (can't)
 - Producer/publisher royalties
 - Get legal review for even "boilerplate" contracts
 - NDA/Non-Competition Agreements
- Ancillary rights
 - Game developers as music publishers
 - Cataloging, ASCAP/BMI affiliation, etc.
 - Using third parties to manage publishing

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Delivering the Goods

- Spell out deliverables in detail
 - Length of time for music (if linear)
 - Sketches for music prior to final recording
 - Number and quality of sound effects
 - Format for deliverables (compression, SR, etc.)
- Have an iteration and resolution process prepared

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Staying Involved

- Additional audio needs for international releases?
- Assist with cataloging (for music publishing)
- Archive all data
- Active involvement in game mix, testing, etc.
- Offer game promotion (more visibility!)
 - CD release
 - Tracks from game on website (writer's share?)
 - Interviews with audio and game mags

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After It's All Done

- Post Mortem
 - What went well/could use improvement
 - Evaluate budgeting for next project
- What's the dev team doing next?

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Q & A

- Questions, comments?

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