



February 10, 2014

Agenda:

- Submit your game design documents
- Article of the Week—“Empathy: 'The super-tool that helps you in game development'” (Gamasutra)
 - http://gamasutra.com/view/news/210147/Empathy_The_supertool_that_helps_you_in_game_development.php
- Interesting Article—“App Store's latest craze Flappy Bird taken off the store” (Gamasutra)
 - http://gamasutra.com/view/news/210380/App_Stores_latest_craze_Flappy_Bird_taken_off_the_store.php
- Recap of this weekend’s Workshop
 - What else would you like to see?
- Checkpoint Schedule (tentative)
 - First Checkpoint—March 3rd
 - Second Checkpoint—March 31st
 - Final Checkpoint—April 21st
- Aurora General Game Jam part Deux—March 7-9
- Please bring your Membership dues by next Monday

Empathy: 'The super-tool that helps you in game development' by Christian Nutt

"I'm here today to talk to you about caring," Robin Hunicke -- developer on *The Sims* franchise, *Glitch*, and the wildly successful *Journey* -- told the audience at the D.I.C.E. Summit today.

She called empathy "the super-tool that helps you in game development."

"We spent a lot of time on *Journey* thinking about the people who were going to play our game, and the experience they were going to have. We wanted it to be genuine and authentic."

She said that the team at Thatgamecompany "wanted it to provide real value" to players. And so they did: The game won tons of awards, critical and financial success, and importantly to Hunicke, many fans who were deeply touched by the game.

"What does [real value] mean? Caring about the people who will experience your game. Instead of thinking them as eyeballs and downloads and installs, or even a walking wallet, you're thinking of that person -- that customer -- as people. People like you. Maybe even your friends and family."

Hunicke said that "in this act, we are only limited by our imagination -- our ability to imagine those



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people as people we genuinely care about."

And there's good reason to do so: "Games made by people who care about people are the ones that people talk about," said Hunicke. "They're the ones that go viral," she said, with "huge success out of scale of their marketing budgets or their teams." Her examples? *Broken Age*, *Gone Home*, and *League of Legends*.

Lately, Hunicke has been collaborating with Keita Takahashi, the creator of the *Katamari Damacy* franchise, on a new game -- which has taught her much, she said. "This game is about people, people of all shapes and sizes learning to connect with each other to make the world a better place." This is important, she said, because "it's about when you learn to care about people and see them as people like you that you have a better time in life. You are less concerned about the things we think as grown-up, and relate to the world more like a child."

Building games with empathy for the audience, she said, means that "you can reach people who aren't like you. And you can evangelize to them without talking about features or a specific genre." Said Hunicke, "You should appeal to something deeper than the level of mechanics: feelings."