Michael R. Budram

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Producer / Technical Designer

A creative and detail-oriented game development professional with 9 years of progressive experience across a broad range of disciplines while working in highly collaborative teams.

WHAT I DO

Assess the intersection of business, design, and technical goals in a given context and design effective solutions.

Bring a relevant historical and academic perspective to the game design process.

Architect features to minimize technical debt and maximize the ease of supporting future iterations.

WHAT I USE

CSM Certified · Confluence · Unity · Visual Studio · Excel · Ps · Id · Ai
MySQL · (Jira) · Python · axure · LUA · C# · C++ · JS

2016 – 2020, PLARIUM

SKYBREAKER: DAWN OF CONQUEST

Primarily responsible for assessing, validating, and communicating business and design goals to a remote development team of Engineers, Artists, PMs, QA and Marketing professionals. Initially, this meant writing individual documents, but quickly grew into an extensive purview of features, future iterations, and product management responsibilities.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Constructed the bulk of the Systems Design/Information Architecture.
Used competitive, historical, and UX research to plan out a robust, extensible ARPG structure that supports modern user experience and monetization requirements.

Identified the need for a centralized dynamic Combat Effects system.
Structuring the project this way potentially saved thousands of development hours over three years and empowered non-technical team members to experiment with complex core gameplay actions without developer assistance. Combat Effects became so integral to the core experience that it was the primary vector for improving player retention during soft launch.

Facilitated an effective Agile working relationship between the design team and remote developers.
Updated/automated project processes, drastically improved documentation standards, and closely collaborated with the developers to move away from Waterfall style practices that did not fit well with the project.

PRODUCTION
• Roadmap
• Feature Ideation
• System Design
• Backlog Management
• Remote Collaboration
• Sprint Retrospectives
• Data Analytics
• Resource Allocation
• Live Ops

DESIGN
• UX/UI Research
• User Testing
• Combat System
• Collaborative Iteration
• Technical Validation
• Prototyping

DOCUMENTATION
• Grooming Management
• Technical Documentation
• Design Documentation

2020 - 2021, SCOPELY

UNANNOUNCED MOBILE PROJECT

Helped lift a mobile gacha game out of a stalled development cycle.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Developed and managed the roadmap for all art in the game.
Implemented a complete plan to deliver all art needed for soft launch. This included the creation of an outsourced live ops pipeline for delivering art content at a regular cadence once the project is live.

Oversaw a complete art direction overhaul. Collaborated with the art directors to manage all the logistics of exploring a new art direction in a game where art is what is being monetized.

Managed art budget and resources. Identified a need for more internal resources and made the case for new internal hires. Additionally, ensured that the $110,000 / month outsourcing budget was accounted for and spent where it would make the most impact on the project.

PRODUCTION
• Roadmap
• Backlog Management
• Remote Collaboration
• Sprint Retrospectives
• Resource Allocation
• Outsource Management
• Live Ops

2014 – 2015, DIGITAL INNOVATION INSTITUTE (DII)
SMART NEIGHBORHOOD

Led and organized Unity3D PC client game development on the 6 modules of the $2 million NSF Smart Neighborhood grant.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Completely refactored the previous architecture. This reduced project complexity and allowed developers of varying skill to easily collaborate.

Created a UGUI extension DLL that was used in most modules. This allowed reuse of UI logic across all modules, saving development time.

PRODUCTION
• System Design
• Resource Allocation
• Backlog Management

DEVELOPMENT
• Client Development
• UI Development
• Tools Development

DOCUMENTATION
• UML Modeling
• Technical Documentation

2014

WE'VE GOT ISSUES - BASE EDITION

Pitched a non-digital game idea in a graduate class, which was implemented and later published.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Maintained balance between narrative and mechanics in a game which featured challenging subject matter.

Wrote a formal game analysis in order to submit a poster to the Meaningful Play 2014 serious games conference.

Wrote and edited most game text and promotional material.

DESIGN
• Card Balance
• User Testing
• Background Research
• Design Analysis
• Paper Prototyping

2014, GAMES FOR ENTERTAINMENT & LEARNING LAB (GEL LAB)

SPARKS OF ETERNITY

Developed a point-and-click adventure game for Frankel Jewish Academy.

KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

Extensive use of NGUI led to a polished UI experience.

PRODUCTION
• Systems Design

DEVELOPMENT
• Client Development
• UI Development
• Tools Development

WHERE I'VE STUDIED

Michigan State University
Completed 30 credits toward an M.A. in Media and
Information from 2012-2015

• Concentration in Human-Computer Interaction

• Serious Games Certificate

UMBC
B.S. in Computer Science, 2011

• Game Development Track

WHAT I'M INTO

Comics

Film & TV

Games

Traveling

Gardening