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GAMING HISTORY - 13/08/09

Michael's gaming history began in the late 80s as a child, playing on his father's systems such as the BBC Micro and Amstrad CPC, and most notably moving on to the Amiga, the first computer he personally owned. Making games in his basement with his brother in AMOS Basic, and messing around in DeluxePaint are some of his fondest childhood memories. This is where he gained a love and appreciation for complex pixel-graphics, such as those by Psygnosis and Team17. Creating games, even when it has been unfeasible, has always been as much part of his enjoyment of gaming as the playing itself.

Favourite games from that era were Turrigan 2, Flashback, Lemmings 2 and Frontier (Elite 2). Later, in the mid nineties he ran a dial-up bulletin board hosting online text based games and ran a play-by-email RPG. Consoles were always something he envied when visiting friends, but he appreciated the flexibility and ability to be creative that home computers offered instead. His first console was the Playstation, favourite games being Soul Blade, Silent Hill and Final Fantasy Tactics (which he had to import from the US!).

Early forays into PC gaming; favourites were Wing Commander, Ultima Underworld and Doom 2, which he enjoyed making custom maps for. Tachyon: The Fringe was his first internet based multiplayer experience. Getting in to game creation he used RPG-Maker and "The Games Factory" to make little projects.

In 2001 he started using Apple's OSX and got to know and love a new game development application, now known as Power Games Factory, a 2D sprite based arcade game engine. He worked on games in this, helped test pre-release updates and offering advice to other users. His 2D platform game, Zombie Holiday, was made in this engine and was ultimately included with PGF itself to demonstrate its capabilities.

More recent gaming favourites have included Resident Evil 4, Siren: Blood Curse, Locoroco and Warhawk. His favourite games series by far is Silent Hill. He is a collector of "survival horror" games, having quite a comprehensive collection of often obscure titles.

He has been in many limited access beta programs, and some closed betas such as early (closed) Playstation Home, Alias Sketchbook Pro, Crossover Games (a virtualisation platform for running Windows games in osX and Linux) LOTR online, always offering useful feedback, bug and abuse reports. He recently became an official Sony beta tester.

Michael looks forward to advances in portable gaming and 3D in games. Currently the game I'm most looking forward to is the Wii Silent Hill remake and seeing how they will implement the motion controls, and the impact that could then have on later games.