



Game Industry Crediting: A Snapshot of the Present

April 2006



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About the International Game Developers Association (IGDA)

The International Game Developers Association is a non-profit professional society that is committed to advancing the careers and enhancing the lives of game developers by connecting members with their peers, promoting professional development, and advocating on issues that affect the developer community. For more information on the IGDA, please visit www.igda.org or e-mail info@igda.org.

Introduction

Crediting in the game industry has become a hot topic in recent years. As development teams grow bigger and outsourcing becomes more prevalent, the informal crediting procedures used become increasingly insufficient to describe each developer's exact role within the development process. Additionally, the non-standard naming procedures for job titles that have thus far characterized the free spirit of the gaming industry have now become a liability for those who wish to prove their skills when moving from one company to another. A movement to standardize crediting procedures and titles has never been more needed.

The IGDA Credit Standards Committee is a group of volunteers who have come together to study, document and propose voluntary game industry crediting practices that properly recognize those responsible for the creation of games. To do this, we are creating two documents: one which details the current methodology of credit assignment as well as catalogs a set of the most accepted job titles found within the industry; and another report to propose a set of "generally accepted practices" which can be adopted voluntarily by developers within the industry to resolve difficult crediting dilemmas.

The purpose of this document is to address the former: the catalog of roles found within the industry and the process for how those credits are currently applied.

Because of the vast number of titles and roles within the industry, this snapshot focuses on the development side of the business. In future papers, efforts will be taken to include areas like Marketing, Public Relations, Localization, Administration, Creative Services, Information Technology and Customer Support.

How Game Credits Are Currently Applied

Programmer, Artist, Designer, Producer. Who determines who has done what on a project so that they can be credited correctly?

Currently, the vast majority of game studios are extremely informal in determining who worked on a game, and what function they provided during development. This can be as informal as passing around a sheet of paper where the employee is expected to write down whether he worked on a game and what role they provided, or an oligarchic process where the top managers of a project sit together and try to remember who all touched the game and what their capacity was. In most cases, the bulk of this duty is given to the producer and their staff to assemble and verify this list and present it to the publisher for inclusion in the manual (if credits will be included in the game's manual) or to the developer in charge of including credits in the game.

Because of print times the list of credits may be less complete in paper manuals, which require a certain amount of development time before a game ships, than in the game

itself, where credits can be added or subtracted on or near the day it is shipped for duplication. Credits in the game can also conceivably be included in a game after shipping, if the game can be patched remotely via an Internet connection.

In most cases, the crediting procedure is usually a last minute affair, and can suffer because of this rush. Generally, it is up to the individual employee to verify whether his or her name has been included on the list and has been assigned the correct role and has been spelled correctly. Due to the hectic nature of the final phases of shipping a game, this additional burden is often prioritized below most other tasks, and can often ship with errors that can cause frustration later on.

Assigned Titles and Roles

Below is a list of job titles that are commonly used throughout the game industry today. Because of the constant evolution of how games are developed, this list should be considered a living document that will grow and shrink as need be as the industry develops. This is a descriptive list and is not an attempt to dictate which titles should be used. This list was created and filled in by the IGDA Credit Standards Committee members and will be transformed into an online survey to acquire more information on these specific roles, as well as to add other roles that may have been passed over.

Tier Structure

As development teams grow, the management structure grows with it. While most small developers still have a fairly flat managerial structure, larger teams are creating more depth. Currently, the most popular trend uses the following nomenclature to determine tier placement:

Lead: This tier is the highest tier applied to a job title before straight management. Though it is possible that a Lead is only doing managerial tasks, this tier still requires extensive experience in the duties of those employees they manage, and may require the employee to do development work in addition to managerial tasks.

Senior: This tier is the highest development role that generally has no managerial tasks assigned to it. Those employees in a senior position generally are given higher priority, high visibility tasks, and are expected to be mentors to the less experienced members of their development team.

Untitled: This tier is usually the largest tier, being populated by general developers who are given no extra managerial tasks beyond the scope of their role.

Associate: This tier is a step up from “Assistant” with little, if any, extra duties.

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Assistant: This tier is usually used in conjunction with Producer roles. The assistant takes on a portion of the Lead’s duties that the Lead isn’t able to do in the time available to them.

Junior: This is generally the lowest rung on the tier structure. The Junior role is generally an entry-level position given basic duties and low visibility, low priority tasks.

Programming/Engineering Roles

Title	Comments
Chief Technical Officer	The CTO is the driving force behind the selection and development of technology used and created. (Designing & developing most (or all) facets of technology; the department and infrastructure of IT, web.)
Technical Director	Programming equivalent of an “Art Director” for art or a “Creative Director” for game design. Also sometimes called “Chief Engineer” for example. It’s a role equivalent to or higher than Lead Programmer for a large team or for someone overseeing programming work across several projects.
System Programmer	Usually given to someone that operates an assortment of inter-related, interdependent programs for medium-to-large companies. Individual responsible for writing & debugging code fragments for use in a computer game.
Software Engineer	Person who actually writes programs/codes for software to be sold retail. Examples range from system software (such as MS Windows), to a database software, even source-code for a game engine. Synonym for “Programmer”
Software Tools Programming	Responsible for creating software ‘tools’ that are designed for maintenance, or de-bugging, or ‘help’ with a specific software application, such as a level editor, or a graphics pipeline.
Program Manager	Can be a synonym for “producer” and would belong under the production category, though this position can have technical responsibilities associated with it as the individual interfaces closely with the software product. Also can be a variation of a “Project Manager”, whereas a “Project” has finite duration, a “Program” can be ongoing.
Lead Programmer	The person in charge of programming a particular project (or projects). On small projects this person also does the lions share (or all) of the coding. They are (ultimately) held responsible for engine quality and they also work with the PM/Producer & Game Designers in forecasting the schedule. A variation you see sometimes is “Lead Graphics Programmer”

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	where you have “subleads” for different areas of programming on a large team.
Senior Programmer	Often interfaces between the Programmers and the Lead Programmer regarding current state of the development studio’s technology and engine code. Itemizes any requirements and advises Lead Programmer of status/risks.
Programmer	The “nuts-n-bolts” people of the game code. These folks often know art-programs and/or several programming languages. They are often given specific tasks to write and implement into a game, such as AI programming, Ballistics, Pathing, Physics, etc.
Rendering Leads	These folks are in charge of rendering graphics; helping to keep the polygon count low, to prevent frame-hits, etc.
Camera Programmer	Designated to ‘pathing’ and ‘scripting’ camera angles. To prevent the camera from “looking into a wall” and designing what views and/or control the player has of their camera view.
Artificial Intelligence Programmer	Responsible for AI programming of in-game entities.
Script Programmer	Responsible for AI action/reaction scripting within the game. May also be the title for engineer responsible for creating proprietary scripting language used within the game.
Event Programmer	Engineer responsible for creating in-game “events” or encapsulated game sequences combining both action and cutscene within the larger arena of the game. These events are usually too complex or require too much specialized programming to be done with general editors by the designers.
Battle Programmer	Concentrates on creating behaviors associated with large-scale conflicts between armies or large amounts of individual units.
Combat Programmer	Concentrates on creating behaviors associated with small-scale conflicts between individual units.
Gameplay Programmer	Responsible for creating and implementing the complex game mechanics and behaviors that constitute the core of the actions the player and computer entities can do while within the game world.
Lead Scripter	Responsible for managing scripting staff and determining overall task division and scripting strategy.
System Optimizer	Responsible for culling/optimizing code base to help overall game performance.
Graphic Optimizer	Responsible for culling/optimizing graphics code base to help overall game performance.
Data Optimizer	Responsible for optimizing data flow within the game to increase overall game performance.

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Simulation Algorithm Programmer	Creates algorithms that mimic real-life effects on in-game entities.
Graphics Programmer	Responsible for creating code base focused on rendering a game's graphic output.
Network Programmer (or "Comm. Programmer" or "Communications Programmer")	Multiplayer code and network specialist responsible for code that allows one instance of a game to communicate with another over various types of connections and protocols.

Design Roles

Title	Comments
Creative Director	Oversees the projects a studio undertakes, in charge of graphical/artistic facets of a game studio, can be the person responsible for all creative facets relating to design and vision within a game or company. Likely the go-to guy for pitching a product internally. Generally the manager of the game designers.
Director	A tier level of management responsible for a large subsection of the company. Design Director, Technical Director, Art Director.
Assistant Director	Another tier of middle management whose job is defined by the duties of their lead.
Design Manager	A managerial role created specifically to handle a diverse group of designers that float from project to project. Responsible for assigning projects and hiring and firing personnel.
Lead Designer	Highest level game designer, also may be called Lead Game Designer or just "Designer" depending on size of team. Responsible for creation of game design doc, overseeing the design aspects of the game, managing lower level designers. This is usually the "vision guy" for the project. Lead designer can also be the term for the lead level designer. Can also be called "Design Director".
Senior Designer	An experienced designer usually tasked with the most important/sensitive/complex design tasks. A Senior level designer would be responsible for the demo level, or the E3 level, for instance.
Designer	General term denoting anyone who touches the design side of a project. Designer can be the lead designer of the team, with level designers underneath him, or it can be the lowest level of designer, depending on size of team.

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Lead Level Designer	Manager of level/mission designers. May or may not actually create levels, depending on managerial duties. Usually has a voice in design aspects of the game. Responsible for assigning levels to level designers, oversight of the development of the levels, and working with the lead designer to maintain the game's vision through the levels. Works closely with lead artist and lead programmer to help producer keep track of tasks, current level of quality, and current state of milestone completion.
Level Designer	Creates levels for the game. This can include creating levels in 3D art package, creating textures, writing dialog, writing scripts for AI entities and placement of art objects.
Lead Scenario Designer	Responsible for managing Scenario designers. See Lead Level Designer.
Scenario Designer	See Level Designer.
Scenario Director	A specific design management role, when design is broken into several categories. The categories could be one of horizontal layers (scenario designer, quest designer, world designer) or vertical columns (responsible for the Roman Campaign, responsible for the Chinese Campaign, responsible for the Mayan Campaign). Reports to Design director or Lead Designer.
Planner	A design role concentrating on the design document.
Concept Author	Create initial concept, which is then spun into a game.
Concept Designer	Create initial design of game, which is then given to a studio to create.

Production Roles

Title	Comments
President	President of the company, responsible for well-being and profitability of the company.
Executive Producer	When there is only one EP, they are the 'holder of the vision' for the studio's creativity. They (whether there is one or more) may represent key franchise/licenses of the company (or studio) in corporate and strategy meetings. Organizing reports and updates from the various producers and their projects, and working with other department leads (Finance, QA, Marketing, PR and HR). They may acquire licenses and work business negotiations as well (depending upon the presence of a Director of Development).
Line Producer	Producer who does all the hands-on work, getting his/her hands dirty, working most closely with the project.

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Director of Development	Often the same as Executive Producer, however, they are “above” the Executive Producer (in rank) and often have more technical and business acumen than the EP’s. When a Publishing company has Dir. & EP’s the Dir is often considered the “studio’s development head” and is therefore responsible for the life and breadth of all developmental aspects of the studio. From signing NDA’s to being final authority on hiring new employees, contractual negotiations, first party relations and the like.
Senior Producer	Very similar to Producer, but this position takes a more active role in the budgeting, scheduling and deliverables of one or more projects.
Producer	Takes a huge hand in what the game’s end result will be. Is often the “holder of the vision”. Producers are more like conductors of an orchestra, facilitating all immediate aspects of game development. .
Associate Producer	Assists the Producer by performing many of the tasks the producer performs yet cannot get to in a day.
Assistant Producer	See Associate Producer.
Production Coordinator	Assists the producer and assistant producer in a variety of tasks.
Production Tester	Game Tester dedicated to the Production team. Sometimes considered as a grooming spot for a career in production.
Project Coordinator	This position relates to the Project Lead as the Associate Producer relates to the Producer.
Project Director/Leader	Manager to whom an entire project or game answers. Is ultimately responsible for the health and timeliness of the project. May manage more than one project at a time.

Art Roles

Title	Comments
Art Director	Manages all artists within a studio, or is the lead artist on a project, depending on size of studio. If just for a single team, then responsible for artistic concept of game, as well as look and feel of all art in game.
Senior Art Director	Similar to the Art Director, but takes a more active role in budgeting, scheduling, and hiring of artists.
Graphic Designer	Artist generally responsible for 2D art, and/or assets outside of the game (e.g., packaging, CD cover, web site, etc).
Lead Artist	Lead artist on a development team. Responsible for the look and feel of the game. Responsible for managing all artists unless under an art director.

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Lead Technical Artist	Technical artists help with bringing art from the artists into the game by using arcane conversion methods and tools. This lead position would also include managerial tasks covering the technical artists assigned to them. Technical artists usually are responsible for creating helpful tools using Maxscript or MEL for the rest of the art team.
Senior Artist	An artist whose level of experience allows them to be trusted with higher visibility/priority projects.
Artist	A general term used by very small teams for artists who wear all the different hats.
Production Artist	See Artist
Background Artist	Responsible for non-interactive staging art placed behind the bulk of the game, such as skies or 2D environments.
Background Modeler	Responsible for non-interactive 3D staging art placed behind the bulk of the game, such as mountains or buildings.
Background Texture Artist	Responsible for textures placed on non-interactive 3D staging art placed behind the bulk of the game.
Texture Artist	Responsible for the creation of textures that get mapped to 3D objects. Sometimes referred to as a "mapper".
Concept Artist	Illustrates and mocks up concept art for characters, environments, UI. Often credits include artist type: i.e. Character Concept Artist.
Character Modeler	Creates 3D Character models and often textures.
Character Designer	Works in pre-production to create signature characters for game.
Cinematics Director	Artist in charge of production of cinematics and cutscenes.
Cinematic Lead Animator	Responsible for creating and rendering in-game movies.
Lead Animator	Animator with managerial tasks. Responsible for risk assessment and day-to-day managing of animators.
Animator	Creates animation and/or designs mocap specs, drive mocap session, selects mocap and integrates into game.
Animation Supervisor	A managerial role for projects with a large amount of pre-rendered cinematics. Responsible for a large number of animators, as well as the final look-and-feel of all in-game cinematics.
Interface Artist	Responsible for the creation of game interface, such as menus, HUD and other aspects of the game that allows the player to navigate.

Audio Roles

Title	Comments
Audio Director/Audio Manager/Sound Producer/Sound Design Manager	Person in charge of overseeing the sound design team. They may also be involved in the actual creation of sound effects. Coordinates with recording studio. Equivalent to the Supervising Sound Editor in the film world.
Sound Producer	See above.
Sound Design Manager	See above.
Sound Designer	Not only does he/she create sound effects, but will also create backgrounds, or ambiances. FX are often broken down into “Hard FX” and “BG FX” (or “AMB” for ambiances). Also could author games levels in music games.
Sound Engineer	Often refers to the engineer of the department – the one responsible for maintaining the audio equipment. Could also be applied to a mixer or other audio personnel.
Sound Programmer	Responsible for the implementation of all of the audio assets into the game engine. Much heavier on the Programmer than the sound part.
Sound Mixer	Mixes music, dialogue, effects.
Sound Editor	Edits music, dialogue, effects.
Sound Mixer/Editor	See above.
Sound Effects (Electronic)	See sound designer.
Foley Artist	Artist that performs sound with found objects.
Foley Supervisor	Person in charge of the Foley recording session. Keeps things running smoothly and makes sure the artists have the props they need. Must spot Foley, creating a list of what needs to be performed. Often, they will cut the Foley as well.
Foley Mixer	Recording Foley is a two-person job. The Mixer runs the session and controls what is being recorded. The Recordist is responsible for recording the audio, making sure that all the takes are named correctly.
Foley Recordist	Recording Foley is a two-person job. The Mixer runs the session and controls what is being recorded. The Recordist is responsible for recording the audio, making sure that all the takes are named correctly
Musicians/Composer	Creates the musical underscore that helps to drive the action, support the drama, and enhance emotional impact. Works with live musicians and virtual synths, samplers, and sound libraries.
Singer/Vocalist	Person or persons that sing the words to a song or cue. Many times in game soundtracks, this can be in a foreign language (Latin, Russian, etc.)
Lyricist/Songwriter	Writes lyrics for songs that require words. Also has a hand in creating initial melodies and harmonies that accompany those lyrics.
Orchestration	The person who takes the score from the composer and creates the individual parts for each member of

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	the orchestra.
Score Engineer	The person in charge of mixing and master the orchestral recording. The engineer and Recordist work as a team to record the score
Recordist	The person in charge of placing mics and performing the actual recording of the orchestral performance. The engineer and Recordist work as a team to record the score
Score Copyist	The person in charge of translating a performance into a written and readable form. They also check for correct ranges, notation, symbols, etc...
Orchestra Contractor	The person in charge of finding and booking an appropriate orchestra for a given title. They handle negotiations and make sure the orchestra has everything they need.
Choir Contractor	Similar to "Orchestra Contractor" but works with the Choir or Choral group.
Concertmaster	Leader of the musicians (often times the first violinist). Will tune the orchestra. He's the sergeant of the orchestra. He's the boss, until the officer (conductor) shows up
Score Assistant	Can be responsible for many duties during the development of the score
Sound Assistant	Also known as the assistant sound editor, the sound assistant has many duties that can range from database management, location recording, and sound editing. Often gets to do a bit of everything
ADR	A position mostly used in film. ADR stand for "Automated" or "Automatic" Dialog Replacement. Dialog that cannot be salvaged from production tracks must be re-recorded in a process called looping or ADR. However, the use of the term ADR in videogames is not exactly meaningful, as there is rarely any production dialogue, thus there is nothing to replace. Most game companies just use the term "Dialogue". See "Dialog Recordists", "Dialog Editors", etc, above.

Writing Roles

Title	Comments
Story Writer	Writes the plot of story and backstory before game design begins, and may also be involved with more detailed parts of the script.
Scenario Writer	Writes the plot of the story in the most general terms, or sometimes writes a detailed plot of one level of the game.
Script Writer	Writes the dialog and camera directions for the game.
Text Writer	Writes all manner of text found in the game, including backstory tomes found in game, and text elements in

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	the UI.
Dialogue Writer	Writes the dialog portion of the game script.
Copy Editor	Edits strictly for correctness and consistency within the game script or game UI.

QA/Test Roles

Title	Comments
User Testing Specialist	Usability Lab technician or psychologist.
Test Manager/Director of Test/Supervisor	Manages entire staff of testing personnel. Oversees scheduling, assignment and staffing issues.
Senior Project Lead	Managerial Role overseeing multiple projects.
Test Lead / Project Lead	Responsible for team of testers; often on a single platform. Develops test plan and manages testing process and bug database
Tester	Tests the game; reports bugs into bug database.
Balance Tester	Highly skilled tournament-level player used to balance strategy games for multiplayer gaming.
Database Administrator	Tester dedicated to building, running and maintaining bug databases.

Contributors

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Further details on the IGDA's Credit Standards Committee can be found online:

<http://www.igda.org/committees/credits.php>

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