

Indie Game Dev Start Up

Hosted by:
NinRac and Sage Coffey

NinRac ʍ(ʌ°)ʍ @NinRac

www.nrutd.com

- Started building NR, utd. In 2003
- Project Director
- Website Designer
- PR Management
- HR Managemnt
- Project history:
 - The Adventures of F.L.I.M.
 - Crystalline Cauldron
 - Tinker Time
 - Mantis Shuffle
 - Summon the Chaos
 - Elemensional Rift (in production)



Sage (^ω^)=3 @SageCoffey

Games

Lead Artist – Mantis Shuffle (2010)

Various Preproduction work- The Grind (2014)

Animation

Character Designer and Layout Artist – Samba Seniorita(2013)

Layout Artist – Nothing is Stopping You BIG SEAN Music Video (2013)

Layout Artist – Be Like One (2012)

Layout Artist and Storyboarder - Cluey (2013)

Comics

Dirty Diamonds (2014)

Punky Doodle Dandy (2013)

Screwloose (2014)

Italian Crisis (2014)



Industry Behavior

A_A

- The Fast, Friendly, Talented Rule
- “Reputations take a long time to build, and can be obliterated very quickly by poor handling of situations” - @DarkestKale
- Networking is key. Everyone knows everyone.
- Professionalism is huge. Casual is fine, don't be a bum or a hermit.
- Attitude is everything.
- You can't please everyone. Know your work load, your work ethic. ect.
- Follow through! Do NOT be the bigger bark than bite type.
- You're not going to get every job but at least they'll know you're name.
- People see what you post on social media, even strangers. Don't talk bad behind someone's back as it will get around.

I'm here for the interview.

Industry Realities

- Ideas are worthless. What you do with the idea and how you deliver is the GOLD
- Each game is honestly a gamble
- SEVERELY underpaid industry
- HEAVILY overworked
- Expected crunch time
- You're only as good as your previous game.
- Keep your deadlines to the best of your abilities. If you don't meet them without prior notice, it is a permanent red mark.
- Self-imposed deadlines should be very seriously.



Starting up a company

- Complete and file articles of formation
 - (Must do for each state before doing business within)
- LLC / Sole Proprietorship / C Corporation / S Corporation / General Partnership
- Acquire EIN
- Business license filed with state
- Business bank account



The Pitch

- Be strong and confident
- 30 seconds, no more.
- DO NOT USE BUZZ WORDS! If you can't explain the mechanic/process, you don't know it well enough to make it and are viewed as inexperienced (at best). (buzz word examples: Metroidvania, roguelike, minecraft, _____-like, etc.)
- KNOW the game.
- Don't latch onto something because it is trendy. Ensure it fits!
- Focus on the core details, not every last bit.
- Emphasize what is unique in a way that they will understand without confusion.
- Practice! Practice! Practice!
- Evolve it as the game grows. It does and will change.



PRISONSCAPE

Primary Financial Sources

- Personal/Family Savings
- Business Loans
- Investors / Equity Funding
- Publisher
- “Day Job”
- Credit Cards
- Fundraising
- Grants
- Profit Sharing

Newer Financial Alternatives

The background is a pixel art illustration. At the top, a character with a rainbow-colored body and a 'NAUGHTY' tag is visible. Below them, several other characters are scattered across a grey, brick-like floor. A large, vertical rainbow bar is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the list of financial alternatives. The overall style is reminiscent of early 2000s indie games.

- Crowdsourcing
- Incubators
- Capital Funding
- Government Programs / Grants
- Seed/Early Stage Venture Capitalists
- Public Funding
- Alpha-Funding
- Contests

Fear's effects have subsided.
Mortipede uses Fear on you.
Feared!
Mortipede inflicted fear on you.
Fear's effects have subsided.
Ghost uses Ethereal on self.
You use Depossess on yourself.
Reverted to imp form.



The Art Side

- Just because you can _____ doesn't mean you should.
- Be flexible.
- BE A TEAM PLAYER!
- Walk before you run. Know the fundamentals of 2D and Design before progressing into 3D. (Anatomy, Color theory, ect.)
- Evangelion 8:88 "I can't ____ because it's (not) my style"
Get in the robot, Shinji!
- Work outside the studio. Don't throw away your personal projects!
- DEADLINES ARE VERY IMPORTANT!!



Level 12
Imp

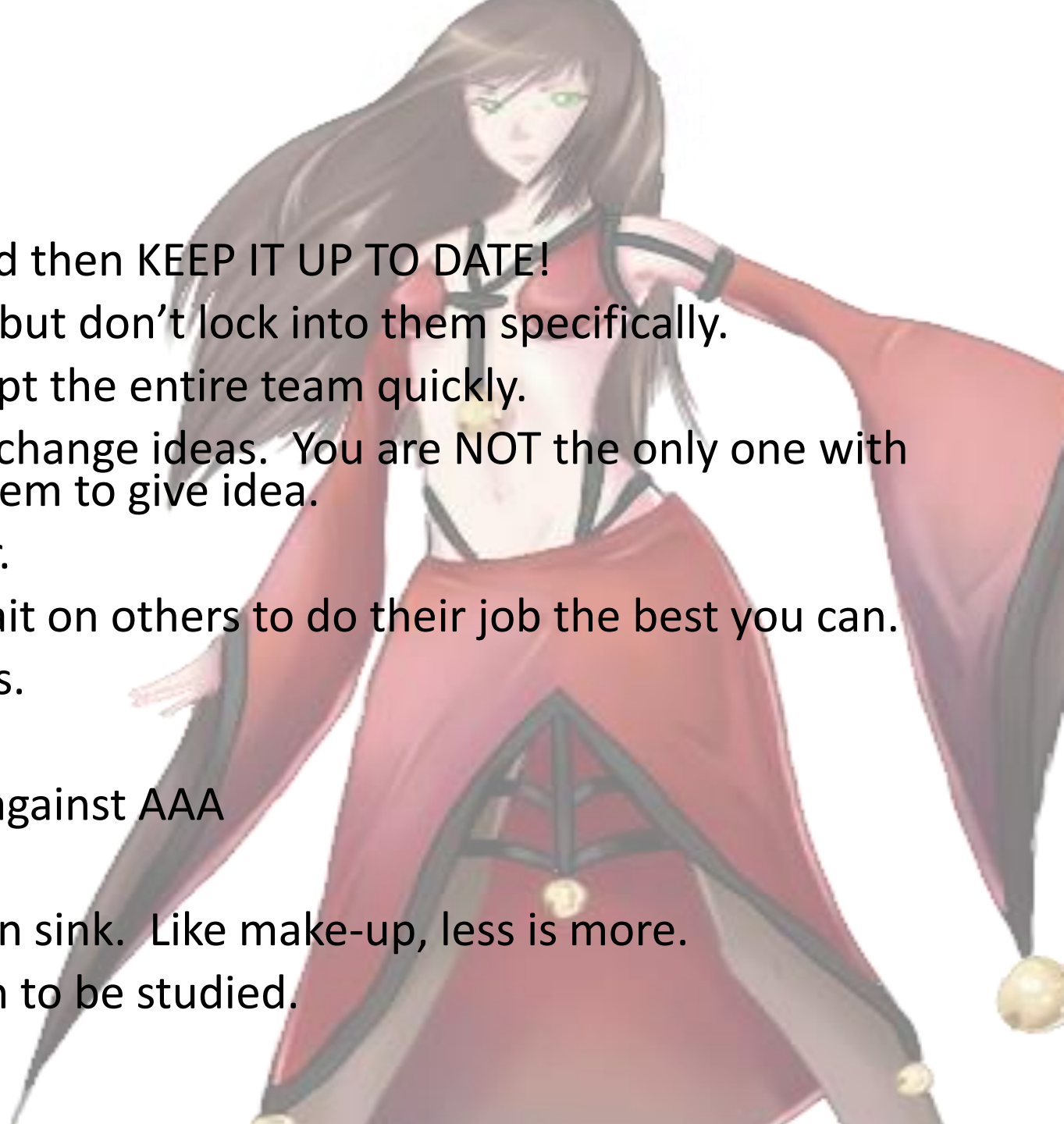


Programmer Side

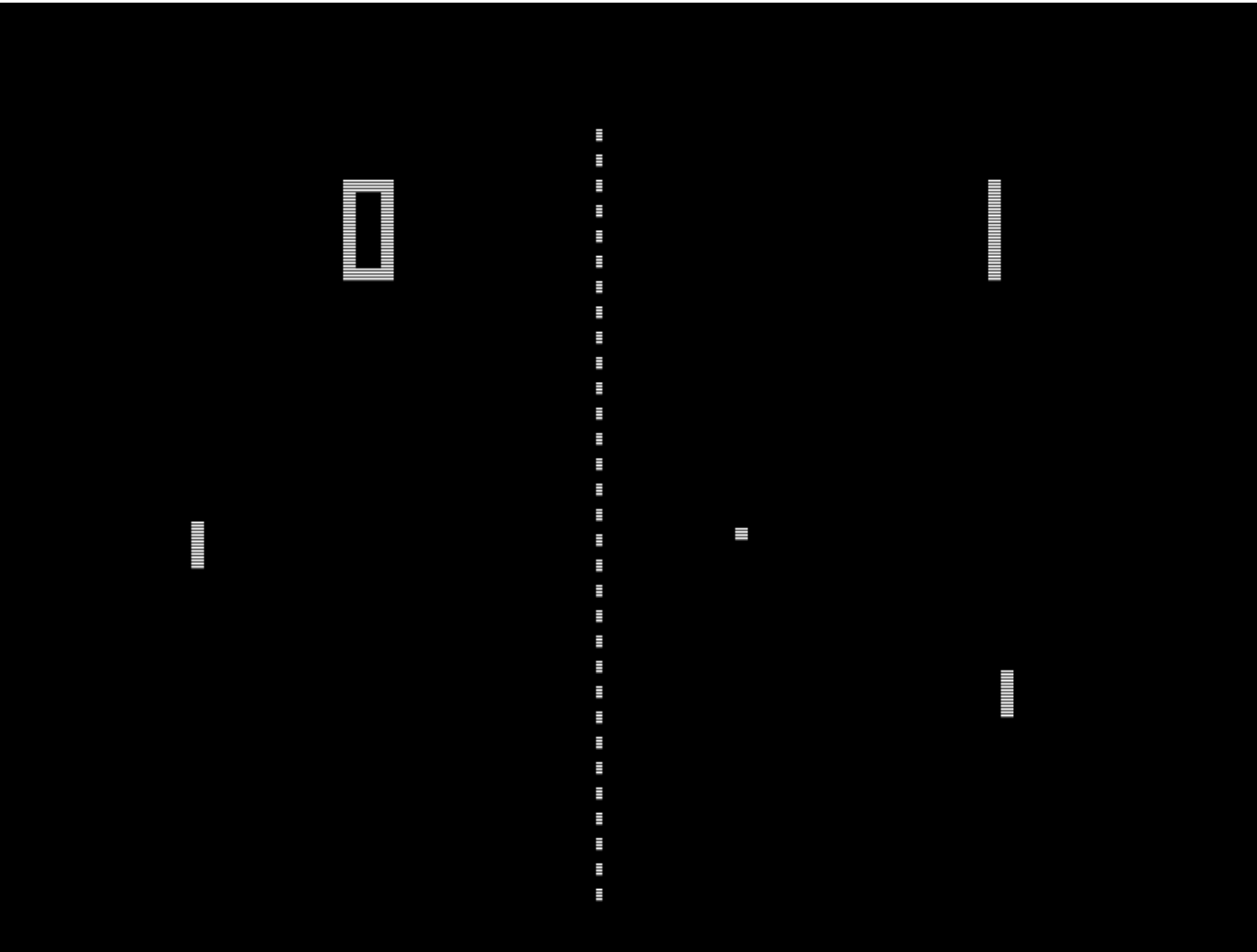
- **COMMENT YOUR CODE!** No, seriously! COMMENT!
- Adhere to consistent naming conventions throughout the project.
- Don't forget your flow charts
- Code for testing efficiency
- Flexible code is very important (but avoid needlessly flexible)
- Choose your engine carefully
 - (If making your own, REALLY make sure this is the right choice)
- Don't be afraid to ask (or ask for help)
- Core before glisten
- Design to add others' work in as soon as it is ready. It pays off for team morale and focus in the long run.
- After fixing a bug, comment the area of code with details .

Designer Side

- Write the game design document and then KEEP IT UP TO DATE!
- Have a target audience, know them, but don't lock into them specifically.
- Know all other fields and how to adapt the entire team quickly.
- Listen to your team members and exchange ideas. You are NOT the only one with ideas for the game and encourage them to give idea.
- Learn to let go and learn to fail faster.
- Order tasks so that nobody has to wait on others to do their job the best you can.
- Embrace critique with big, open arms.
- Read between the lines
- Unless you are AAA, don't compete against AAA
- Pay close attention to market trends
- Don't have everything but the kitchen sink. Like make-up, less is more.
- Board games should not be forgotten to be studied.



Development Growth Process 1



- Visual display
- Audio
- Gameplay cycle
- Interaction with the player
- Win/Lose condition

Development Growth Process 2



- A.I. interaction
- A.I. personality
- Power-Ups
- Difficulty growth curve
- Environment / Decoration



Development Growth Process 3



- File reading in/out
- Gameplay occurrence outside of the screen
- Gameplay game states
- Gameplay continuing between screens and states

Development Tools

Industry Standard

- Unreal, Unity, XNA (legacy)
- Expect to know most of the Adobe Suite.
- Maya, 3DSMAX, Z Brush, Xara Designer, Corel Painter
- Storyboard PRO
- Visual Studio .NET
- Fruity Loops, Reaper, ACID, REASON
- Renoise

Indie Standard

- GameMaker, MMF, Torque
- GIMP, Paint Tool SAI, Paint CLIP lab, Hexal and MSPAINT (seriously)
- Sculptress, GMAX, Maya (Free Version), Blender, GraphicsGale
- MindMup
- Monostudio, Borland
- Musagi
- BFXR, Audacity, LabChirp, MilkyTracker

Lenna's Inception alpha

Story and Gameplay

Art Side

- CONSISTENCY!!!
- Preproduction is important.
- Visual development should compliment story & gameplay
- K.I.S.S.
- Don't fight the game, let it develop organically.

Programmer Side

- CONSISTENCY!!!
- Don't get stuck in eternal demo
- Design mechanics for consistent, automated, & adaptable behavior
- K.I.S.S.
- Design for flexibility but know where the flexibility is needed

Designer Side

- Consistency!!!
- BE THE FOREFRONT! Keep the work flow ahead of dev
- Know art of balance, counter-balance, & counter-play
- Fall in love with your work
- Don't be afraid to try new things or change and know your competition

I finally made a game! What!? Only half of the work is done!?!?!?!? SERIOUSLY?!?!?

- Marketing
- Press
- Promo
- Website
- Networking/Convention
- Launch analysis
- Conversion rates
- Bundles
- Did you make a plan yet? At least make a plan!

General Advice

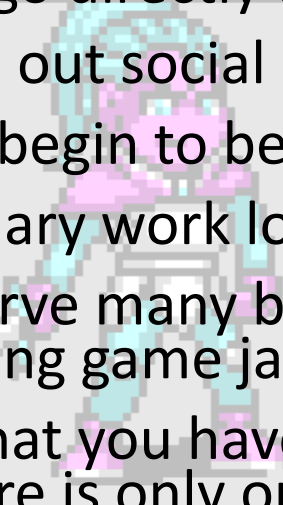
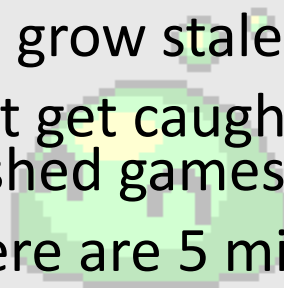
- Its all about the game! (VGHS)
- Don't be a @#\$%!!!
- Learn to let go/when to redo work
- Have plans for handling team members leaving the project. Better safe than sorry
- Take critique! AND MORE CRITIQUE! Fail faster!
- Keep references and hold onto rather than deleting.
- Be honest and open about your opinion on the game.
- Work isn't just work. Have fun with it!
- Be involved with everyone on the team, not just your department.
- Don't make excuses for yourself. Own up to what you do. DON'T DON'T DON'T DON'T PROCRASTINATE. NOW! NOT LATER! NOW!!!

General Advice 2: Electric Boogaloo

- DON'T MAKE A MMORPG FOR YOUR FIRST GAME!!!!!!!!!! (Sorry, Shivers)
- Working with friends should be done with caution.
- Apply to what makes your team unique whenever possible.
- Start small and work your way up to that big game you want to produce.
- Know your limits, your budget (if any), and your team's limits/availability.
- Just because you can't now doesn't mean you can't learn during development.
- No one is going to steal your ideas. Sharing ideas with friends is a good way to get initial (FREE) feedback.
- Not every game is going to be successful but that doesn't make you poop!
- Have REASONABLE goals (Ideal goals are okay to push yourself...NOT YOUR TEAM)

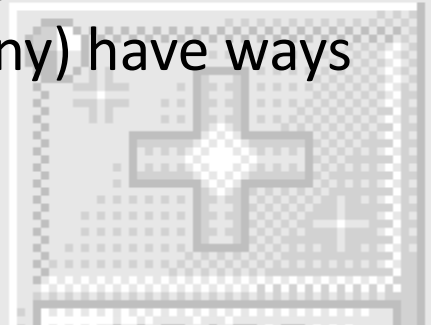
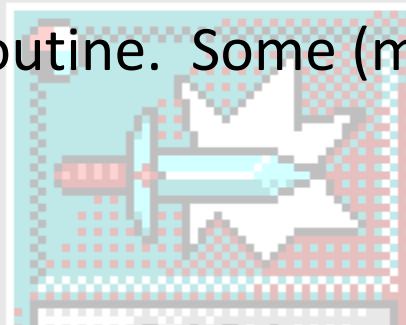
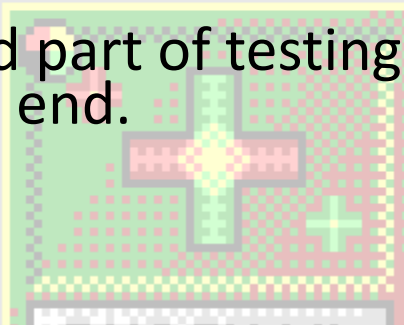


General Advice 3: Trilogy of the Fallen Typo

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- 
- Learn to compromise for your dream game. Sometimes it is better to build up to it rather than go directly to it.
 - Thoroughly fill out social media profiles.
 - If distractions begin to become consistent, begin cutting them off.
 - Have a secondary work location if work flow begins to grow stale.
 - Game Jams serve many beneficial purposes but do not get caught up in exclusively doing game jams. Released some full, finished games.
 - Remember what you have that is unique to share. There are 5 million kinds of plants but there is only one you ;D
 - For ideas that won't happen, document and then let them go.
 - This is a creative field. Remember that when it comes to scheduling.
 - Keep completed bugs on file and part of testing routine. Some (many) have ways of returning, especially near the end.

16 LEFT

Graphics
Adventure



OVER 9000 SALES! FINALLY DONE? RIGHT?
PLZ? OTL $L(\bar{\cdot} \bar{\cdot} \bar{\cdot})_7$

- Know what you have to work with and your growth decline before planning for the next one
- Don't stop promoting (it can still be sold years after launch)
- TAKE SOME TIME OFF (after it is done)! YOU JUST HAD A CRUNCH!
- Health > Games > Sleep
 - Real talk though ^
- If next will be with a team, don't forget the Game Design Document
- Don't start getting an ego just because your game becomes a success
- And your ideas are still worthless but more people will listen to you now.

Support Community and Feedback

- Have a strong personal support network (non-developers too)
- Burnout, depression, and anxiety! OH MY! $\neg(\triangle \cap \triangle)\neg$
- Learn the art of filtering (too much or too little has negative impacts)
- Try to not let it become personal (easier said than done, we know)
- Read between the lines of feedback.
- Don't get caught up in ego clout
- Learn how to release. Bottling it up can lead to meltdowns.
- Support those who support you. It all comes full circle.

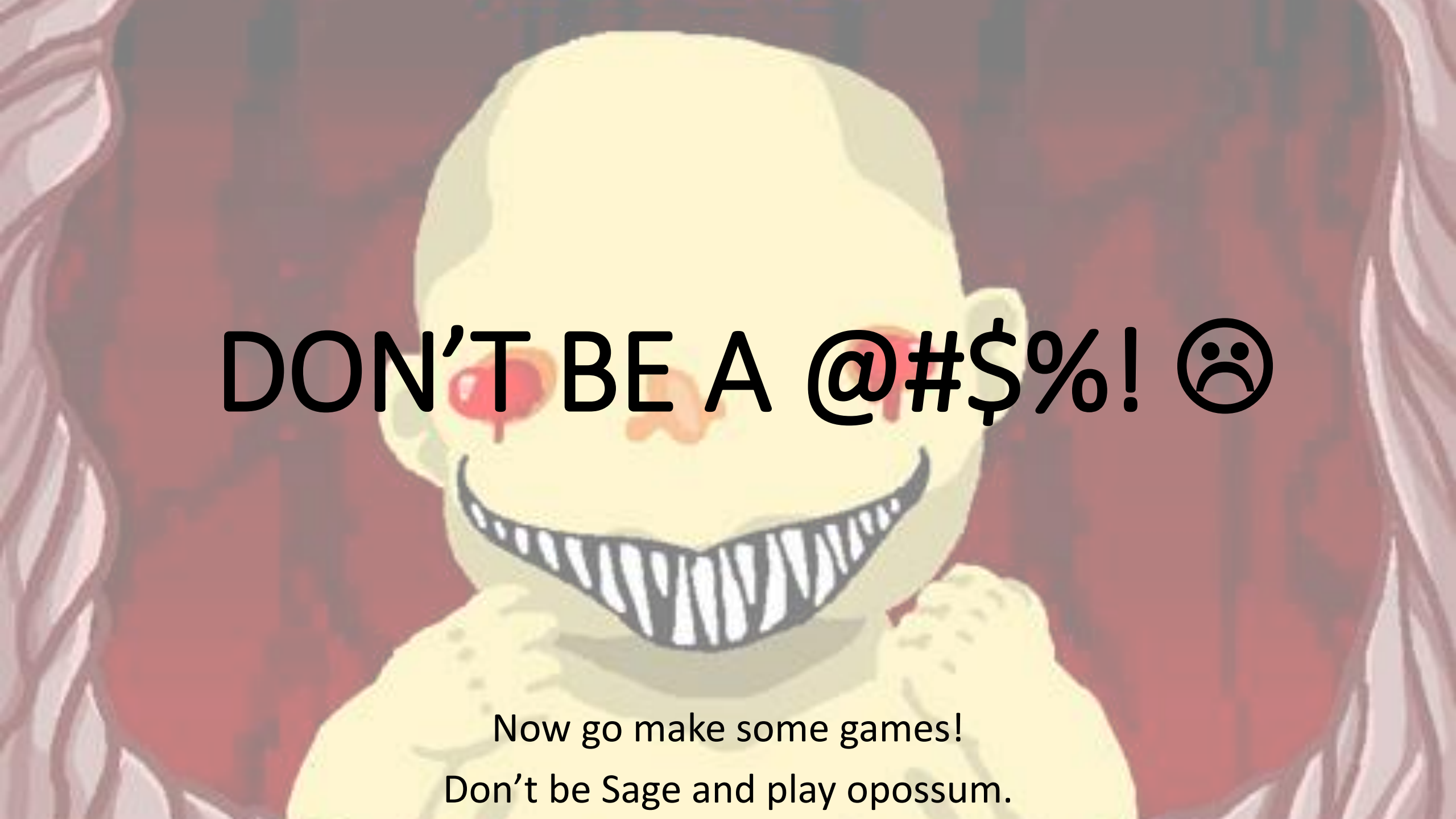
Question Time (Come on! Grab your friends)

But not too hard ;(

PLZ?

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DON'T BE A @#\$%! ☹

Now go make some games!
Don't be Sage and play opossum.

Bow before THE NR



Also the HAWT Sage Opossum xoxo u v o)/ ~ <3

KANT

the Social Justice Cleric

Intellectual Troll

For Additional Information...

- www.Gamasutra.com
- Extra Credits (YouTube)
- <http://www.gdcvault.com>
- <http://www.pixelprospector.com/indie-resources/>
- <http://vimeo.com/94259578>
- <http://www.worthlessbums.com/blog/2013/11/30/game-feedback/>
- <http://noblekale.com/zone/node/457>
- <http://www.worthlessbums.com/blog/2014/05/22/the-indie-game-market-2014/>

► Request the spirit of r/philosophy aid you in your quest

Intellectual Troll uses Summon Dark Forces

The troll begins calling upon powerful malevolence from the depths of the web.

Thanks and Contributions

- NR, utd – @NinRac – www.nrutd.com
 - Elemensional Rift – www.nrutd.com/ElemensionalRift/index.html
 - Mantis Shuffle – www.nrutd.com/MS/index.html
 - H-o-H – www.nrutd.com/HoH/HoH.html
 - Summon the Cha-os – www.nrutd.com/StC/SummonTheChaos.html
- Nonadecimal Creative – @Nonadecimal – www.nonadecimal.com
 - Afterdeath – <http://nonadecimal.com/site/afterdeath/>
 - Social Justice Warrior – <http://nonadecimal.com/site/SocialJusticeWarriors/>
- Lianne Booton – @liannethy – www.liannebooton.com
 - Narcoleptic Chicken Kid – <http://sadbrains.liannebooton.com/chicken.html>
 - NSFW Day – <http://sadbrains.liannebooton.com/nsfw.html>
 - Let's Make Idiot Babies – <http://sadbrains.liannebooton.com/lmib.html>
- Tom Coxon – @tccoxon – www.indiedb.com/members/tccoxon
 - Lenna's Inception – <http://bytten.net/devlog/lennas-inception/>
- Kitsune Games – @Enichan – www.kitsunegames.com/
 - Midboss – www.midboss.net
 - Color Graphics Adventure – <http://www.kitsunegames.com/cga/>
- Superdupergc – @Superdupergc – www.superdupergc.com
 - Black Ice – <http://superdupergc.com/BlackIce.html>
- Doppler Interactive – @DopplerInteractive
 - Ball of Woe – www.ballofwoe.com
- SuperBossGames – @SuperBossGames
 - Intruder – <http://superbossgames.com>
- Jennifer Dawe – @GMShivers – www.happyufo.com
 - Illutia – www.illutia.com
- Heaviest Matter – www.heaviestmatter.com
 - Prisonscape – @Prisonscape – www.prisonscape.com
- Kris Truit – @Kistruit
 - Master Spy – www.masterspygame.com
- Noble Kale – @DarkestKale – www.noblekale.com
- Yuroran – @Yuroran – <http://yuropyon.tumblr.com>