

ADVANCED RPG Maker

Tutorials, News and Reviews

Issue #4 October 2015

Online gaming in RPG Maker?

Tiled Map Editor

The background of the cover features a vibrant, anime-style illustration. In the center, a young girl with short orange hair and a crown of orange and white flowers is depicted in a dynamic, joyful pose, holding a large white scroll. To her right, a blue, bear-like creature with white stripes is shown in a similar energetic pose. In the bottom left corner, a character with long, flowing white and blue hair and a green and blue outfit is shown in a dynamic, action-oriented pose. The overall scene is set against a bright, hazy sky with soft clouds.

RPG Maker MV!

A new title announced for 2016

Hello, and welcome to *Advanced RPG Maker*, the online magazine dedicated to showcasing the wider RPG Maker community on the Internet. This issue brings big news, with the upcoming release of RPG Maker MV. We'll also look at ways of extending RPG Maker through scripts and plugins, including a conceptual look at how to create an auto-updater, and look at whether or not an MMORPG is feasible as an RPG Maker project.

Finally we'll be looking at the artist behind some of the most popular resource packs at RPG Maker Web, and marking the loss of some of the largest RPG Maker fansites of the era, RPG RPG Revolution and RPGMakerVX.net.

Thanks for reading, Amy



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Online Gaming in RPG Maker?

Over the years one of the most frequently asked questions about RPG Maker, other than portability to consoles, is *can RPG Maker create online games?*

The answer is yes, but there are many caveats.

RPG Maker is not built for online functionality out of the box. While people have attempted to create user friendly online systems they have always fallen short for various reasons. If you are going to create an online game, you will be literally creating the online engine from scratch.

This involves learning Ruby. Along the way you will learn that RPG Makers XP through VX Ace use a limited form of Ruby which cannot load binary files. This means being limited to socket and TCPsocket scripts created by RPG Maker users, and there is only really one floating around. It is buggy.

You will be creating every aspect of your online game from making players move around, to creating a chat system that isn't too laggy.

The main pitfall however is none of this. *You know* an online game will be a lot of work: creating a game is in general. The main issue is one which is always overlooked in RPG Maker online systems: security.

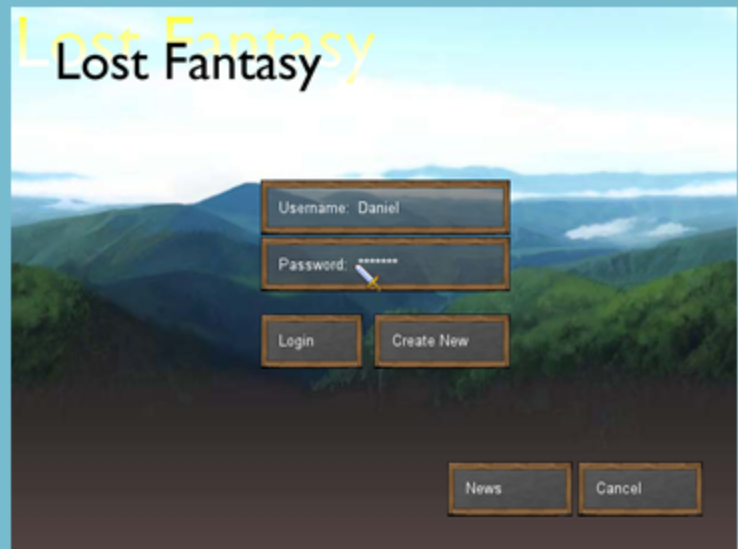
Security is important. Not just because you put your game at risk.

By creating an online game you are requesting data from players to be stored in a database. This makes you liable to the terms of the Data Protection Act, amongst other things. You are obligated to treat this data safely and securely.

In short, you need to know what you are doing.

The creators of Netplay+ unfortunately didn't. Netplay+ 2.0 is vulnerable to SQL injection. This is one of the simplest, most common, and most

damaging ways of hacking a web service, and it is one that really should be known about before starting an online game.



Lost Fantasy was my first venture into the world of Netplay+.

When sending passwords (which are sent plain text across the network - this is itself a bad thing!) the Netplay+ 2.0 server requests from the SQL database some info. It asks: does this password match a user in the database? It does this by inputting the submitted password string into a string of SQL and then sending this to the database.

But this is untreated. If, for example, one were to send an end quote character, or an escape character, one could end the SQL command and start a new one. This new command could do anything:

- Rewrite data in the database
- Delete the database entirely
- Access player passwords

It's scary to think that a system could be out there that is vulnerable to SQL injection, but the simple matter is, if you are new to online gaming, you

probably won't even think this kind of thing can be done. It sounds implausible.

You can take basic web security courses. W3Schools is a good place to start. Learn PHP if you have time (if you don't have time, don't make an online game) as many of the requirements of PHP processing will be the same as making an online game in Ruby.

The other pitfall is what leads one to question whether RPG Maker is a good piece of software for online gaming to begin with.

Any game which is played on the client side is vulnerable to hacking. Most RPG Maker games can be opened up with ease, and edited. This means that the characters within them can be edited, thus when your game tells the server your character's stats, it should be assumed that these stats are just made up on the spot and could be anything. This makes leaderboards, player versus player combat, and many other multiplayer features pointless.

The solution is to do the game processing on the server. This is costly in server processing time, and it means that very little is done client side. All your game will be for is to give the player a graphical representation of what is happening on the server, and to tell the server when the player moves, presses the enter key, and so on.

RPG Maker can be good to create this basic client, but a lot of whittling down needs to be done. You also need a very good server to run the game.

One alternative, one which I have been experimenting with, is a light solution half way between an MMORPG and a normal RPG. In this kind of game the actual game and content are on the client, hackable and editable for those who really want to. We can't prevent that. Basic data is sent to the server to create a limited online functionality: chat, message boards, user online counts, etc. Also, data about who is in what map, and general player activity is sent to the server. It should always be assumed that such data is hackable, but it can be used to create a general setup where maps are tailored to who is playing.

Maybe everybody is in the centaur land at the moment. So let's make centaur shops available, because there are people to defend against them.

Perhaps there is no activity in the mighty dark cave dungeon: it gets darker, because less people have torches.

I have called this system a cooperatively created world, and combined with chat and other multiplayer features, there is no reason persay why this cannot be referred to as an MMORPG, although one would refrain from doing so in order to appease complainers. It is a different kind of experience.

I created this system by using a file download script. By requesting PHP pages from the server with parameters, I was able to generate plaintext files that merely contain a few variables to be plugged into the gameplay. This kind of system is not perfect and not ideal, but it may be the best we can hope for for RPG Makers XP through VX Ace.

RPG Maker MV offers better opportunities. As games can be released in HTML5 and Javascript form, we can do *anything*. We are already in a web environment, so using AJAX in this way is simple and built-in functionality. We shall have to wait and see if and how this will work out however I am certainly planning to use it for a cooperatively created world game. (Maybe CCWRPG is the term?)



Afar++ was my latest venture into online gaming, and is a CCWRPG. I will be restarting the project in RPG Maker MV when the program is released, as the HTML5 and Javascript functionality will provide a much better system.

RPG Maker 2000/3

Following our request in a previous issue, Enterbrain and Degica have indeed released both RPG Maker 2000 and RPG Maker 2003 in English. Fantastic news! It is great to see the history of RPG Maker recognised, but it also legalises a lot of past RPG Maker titles which otherwise would fade into obscurity. It opens the doors for many games to be remade and rereleased *legally*.

Before RPG Maker XP came along, there was never a legal English release of PC RPG Maker. This meant that for the majority of people, unfortunately, piracy became common. For others, buying the Japanese version and applying a no more legal patch translation was an option, however there were complications with purchasing from abroad.

Now we have two new engines to play around with, and they're as swift and well formed as I remember them being. We have new graphical assets to use, and can experience the fun of pre-scripting RPG Maker - having to do *everything* with events is very fun.

RPG Maker 2000 and 2003 can be purchased at a variety of places: Steam, the Humble Store, or RPG Maker Web are just a few. It's amazing to see them all over the net rather than just at a few Japanese importers making a killing as middle-men.

Thanks, Enterbrain/Degica!



Resources

Sharm's new resource pack is a small extension to the Old School Modern tiles, especially for Hallowe'en. Full of completely modular tiles for creepy gothic mansions, leaded windows, iron fences and the tattered interior to a haunted house, it's the perfect seasonal release.



As an extension of the existing resource pack it's far more useful - making games with the set that little bit more interesting. While the tiles were made for Hallowe'en there's nothing to say your gothic mansions and broken floorboards can't find a home in any game scenario.



The original Old School Modern tile pack is available in the RPG Maker web store and costs the tiny amount of \$8.99. For what you get it's more than worth it. Compared to most commercial software, the DLC for RPG Maker is both plentiful and also inexpensive, providing a way of supporting the engine and future resources while not taking you too far out of pocket. It also contains 56 character sprites and extra animated objects. We'll discuss it later in the issue, in our featured artist spot!

Creating an Auto-Updater

If you are creating an online game, or even just one that is in a constant development phase, you may require an auto-updater. This can actually be a simple system to achieve. In this conceptual tutorial we will be discussing the basic ideas - the functionality is down to you.

A file downloader

To begin with, we are going to need a file download script. There is a nice one created by Berka that works well for RPG Maker XP and VX.

It is a complicated and lengthy script but all we need are these two lines:

```
Net::HTTP.download("url", "directory")
```

The above line downloads a file from a given url into a given directory.

```
Net::HTTP.loaded?("filename")
```

This tests to see if a file has successfully downloaded.

Our versions file

In order to know which files need updating, so that we do not download the whole game every time, each file needs a version. The simplest way to do this using least system resources is a text file on the server. At the start of each game play we download this file. It may be in a form such as:

```
Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile1.png|1  
Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile2.png|1  
Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile3.png|3  
Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile4.png|2
```

We download the file and test it against an old version, if it exists. (Which it should, we should always ship out games with an initial versions file).

Basically, if the new file contains the line "Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile3.png|3" we do nothing - the file hasn't changed since last time.

If, however, the file does not contain that line, we know that we need to download that file.

```
Net::HTTP.download(  
"Graphics/Autotiles/Autotile3.png", "./")
```

We run a loop until this is downloaded.

```
until Net::HTTP.loaded?("Autotile3.png")  
  Graphics.update  
  # run tests to see if we're ever going to  
  # load it  
  # such as checking if we're online!  
end
```

Once every file has downloaded in this way, our autoupdate is complete.

Every time we change a file we upload it to the web directory and edit the versions.txt file to have a new version number for that file.



Using this as a basis I was able to create a perfect functioning auto updater for my game, however there is still a way to go. How do we test if all files downloaded completely? (Edit the old file each time a file downloads rather than overwriting the file as a whole.) How do we know if we are connected to the web? (Send a ping request.) Autoupdaters are complex and need to be fine tuned to *your* game.

The Fall of Giants

The largest English RPG Maker website to exist was Gaming World, which is still around as *saltw.net*, but lost all of its content and is now just a hangout for old friends. After that comes HBGames, which is a shadow of its former self as RMXP.org but thankfully kept all content after 2006 (there was a hack at the time and also the loss of RMXP.net, itself a substantial website). Next comes two other websites: RPGMakerVX.net and RPG RPG Revolution.

This year has been an especially sad one. The owners of *both sites* pulled the plug with no warning and no explanation. All content has been lost, and many friendships and relationships shattered. These huge empires of the RPG Maker community were among a few that formed the pre-RPG Maker Web world, where we had no official forum to roam. All RPG Maker support was provided by the community for the community. While this still lives on in some places, it is sad to mark the loss of two fantastic resources for indie RPG creation.

RPGMakerVX.net was created during the hype for that engine in much the way that RMXP.net did before it. It soon became the go-to site for VX resources, scripts and games, and indeed many of its staff find a place in the team at RPG Maker Web.

RPG RPG Revolution on the other hand has a much longer, and more turbulent past, having been formed in early 2004, before RPG Maker XP was even released. It initially focused on RPG Makers 2000 and 2003, and soon became one of the most active RPG Maker sites spawning titles such as Legionwood.

The sites live on in spirit - amongst RPGMakerVX.net, created when Ace was announced, and at RPG Maker Web. The dark question is, who will be the next to fall?

When you have been at a website for over ten years it very much becomes a home and a big part of you. To have that ripped out of you is painful. Thankfully while websites come and go, the people stick around, even if it takes a while to rebuild contact with one another. RPG Maker lives on.



While remnants of RPG RPG Revolution still exist on Archive.org, RPGMakerVX.net is actively blocked from appearing on this service.



Gaming World was a true behemoth - the first RPG Maker website to hit 1 million posts.

Why RPG Maker?

One of the things that makes RPG Maker so powerful is that at its base is a well functioning game engine. On top of this RPG characteristics have been added, with database systems, mapping, tilesets and windows, but ultimately at its core is a very good Ruby based visual game engine, and that is well worth the price tag alone.

As a result of this, many game developers start off with RPG Maker and then whittle it down to its basic engine, working upwards again from this to create their games. We end up with games that use very little of the RPG Maker structure. This is why games oughtn't mention they're made in RPG Maker in Steam and other game browsers: there's no need, it is just a game engine like any other. Guild Wars uses Unreal Engine, to name just one. In-game credits are sufficient, but technically unnecessary.

This is *Nightmaiden*, posted to HBGames by user BeeAr. It is a story driven game with no scripts, no battles, and no complicated systems, but it is in fact fully animated using 3D graphics. So why is it using RPG Maker? Because the graphical engine that RPG Maker provides as an absolute base is as good as, or better than, many of the alternatives out there. It is well polished and functional, and we end up with games like this:



Scripting Ideas

Now that we know RPG Maker MV will be able to export games in a HTML5 and Javascript form, there is plenty of potential for scripts using the system. Here are a few ideas.

IRC Chat

There are many Javascript IRC chat scripts out there - plugging one into RPG Maker MV would not be too difficult and would provide a stable, standard chat system for an online game.

Engine Crossovers

Use Construct 2, Gamedev Studio, or other engines to create cutscenes or minigames within the main RPG game, using their own HTML5 export tools.

In-Game Manuals

Use a Mediawiki Wiki to create an encyclopedia on the web, then use Javascript to load this into your game.

Online Databases

Replace your game's database with an online one edited on the fly, so that any tweaks, nerfs and buffs are live and sent to all players. It doesn't have to be an online game!

Social Media



Use social media to create bulletins and other interactivity within the game. Even associate with Steam to add an extra layer of gameplay.

Automatic Updates

Create a semi-online system where the game checks for updates and downloads them. This is doable in RPG Maker XP onwards, but even easier in RPG Maker MV.



A NEW RPG MAKER FOR 2016

JAVASCRIPT BASED

MULTI-PLATFORM SUPPORT

SIDE-VIEW BATTLE SYSTEM

MOUSE & CONTROLLER INPUT

IMPROVED MAPPING

HIGHER RESOLUTION

FEWER RESTRICTIONS

It's hard to imagine that it's over ten years since RPG Maker XP was released. I haven't been this excited about an upcoming engine since then. We now know that a new title, *RPG Maker MV*, will be hitting our screens in 2016. Created using much input from the RPG Maker Web community, MV represents the biggest game changer since XP introduced Ruby scripting and full graphics capabilities in 2004.

News and information about the maker is being strategically leaked across the Internet. Here's what we know as of print:

Javascript Based

Instead of using Ruby as the scripting language, Javascript will be used. In many ways programming in Javascript is similar, so it will be easy to pick up. The main reason for its use is that games will be exportable in HTML5/Javascript form. This provides a web

standard format, which excitingly means games should be cross compatible with pretty much any modern operating system - provided they have a modern web browser. This brings RPG Maker in line with other game creation software such as Game Maker Studio or Construct 2, which have been providing HTML5 exportation for a few years now.

In theory we even have console compatibility, although it is unlikely that such games will be usable with the marketplace apps on such consoles (users will have to navigate to them using web browsers or other apps).

For the first time we will have full access to the engine, being able to view and edit the *default scripts*, that is, the tilemap, viewport, window or plane scripts, which form the basis of the game engine. This may mean a slightly slower engine - we shall have to see - but being able to change these scripts opens up so many options for advanced game makers.

RPG MAKER MV

Mouse Input

Mouse input will be provided, and in theory Javascript will allow web access, which opens up even more doors for controlability. We may even be able to use social media API to integrate with web services such as Facebook or Twitter.

Multiple Battle Systems

For the first time we will be able to choose which battle system we want to use: front-on, like that seen in RPG Makers 2000, VX or VX Ace, or side-view, as seen in RPG Maker 2003. Though these systems have been available as third party scripts for years, having a default system in place properly tested and assetted is a real game changer.



We have an improved mapping system, using three layers, something that was added in RPG Maker XP but then removed in RPG Maker VX and VX Ace, much to the frustration of those who had got used to XP's style of level creation.

There are also fewer restrictions in the editor. As far as we know, many limitations set at 999 have been expanded to 2000, possibly even higher. Believe it or not, many games out there do hit these limits, and have to breach them using complicated scripts and other wizardry!

Higher Resolution

The default resolution is increasing, and tiles themselves are moving from 32x32 to 48x48. This is a standard size in mobile gaming and with our new cross platform support, we should see games working fantastically in iPhone and other devices.



For the first time however this tile size is not fixed, as we will be able to import maps made in Tiled, at 16x16, 32x32, or 48x48. This means that provided the engines themselves are owned, we can easily use graphics from all English RPG Makers in our RPG Maker MV projects, as well as all assets from the RPG Maker Web store.





RPG Maker MV will accept maps from Tiled Map Editor, available at www.mapeditor.org

This is free map editing software similar to, but more complex and expansive than, that found within RPG Maker. It is a standard amongst indie games. Maps using tiles made with 16x16, 32x32, or 48x48 tiles will work, although it is unclear as of yet what form the tilesets in RPG Maker MV will take, so it is too early to begin mapping for our projects. There is nothing to stop us practicing, however!



Although MV will use 48x48 tiles in the editor, by importing from Tiled we can use any graphics from any English RPG Maker, including all of those found in the RM Web store. We will still be able to parallax map, too, of course.

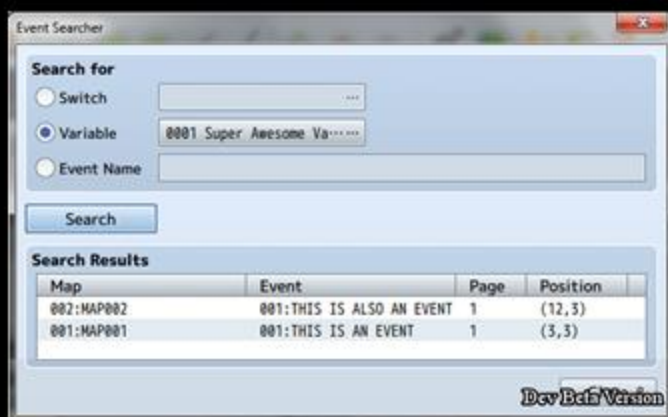
If you want you can donate to support the development of Tiled using the bar on their website. There are a few perks for this such as merchandise.

Plugins

For the first time, RPG Maker MV will use plugins for scripts. Managed, self-contained plugins mean individual systems can be turned on or off and debugged much easier, and it makes their distribution much more user friendly - a user just "plugs in" the new system and types in some parameters and the scripts all get to work.

Event Search

We can use the new event search tool to quickly find events with a certain name, that use a particular switch, or variable, within a whole project. This can be really helpful in large maps or in which events are duplicated across maps - we can find every instance of a certain event or find those who are triggering a switch and breaking the game later on.



A New RTP

As with older engines there will be a new RTP in this one providing graphics. It looks like a few are edits from VX or VX Ace, although the battlers are a really nice standard.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

- OS** Windows 7/8/8.1/10 or Mac OS X 10.10
- CPU** Intel Core2 Duo or better
- RAM** 2GB or more
- HDD** Installation needs over 2GB
- GFX** Compatible OpenGL
- Res** 1280x768 or better

Graphics Generator

The generator seen in VX Ace has been vastly improved. The generator now creates side view battle sprites as well as the face and actor graphics used in the field. This has many more layers of editability, too, with fields such as eyebrows, wings and tails, and many colour options for each item.



Online Service Integration?

Something that we can only speculate about at the moment is integrating our games with other online services. In theory, because games are exportable as HTML5 and JavaScript, we should be able to then edit out games in other software to some extent. Enough to be able to extend our games through use of other online services, integrating our games with systems such as wiki based game manuals, web forums for discussion which could even be turned into in-game representations such as bulletin boards or a postal service, or social media widgets. It should also be easy to use HTML5 animation or Flash files to provide FMV style movies within our games.

The main boost here is that games will not need to be downloaded in the traditional sense. The player clicks play on the game's website and is instantly immersed in the game world. This takes out the main issue with drawing in players.



In Conclusion...

All of this is speculation. It's important to take the hype in the build-up to RPG Maker MV with a pinch of salt. However, from what we have seen and heard thus far, MV will be an engine that will completely change the RPG Maker scene, in the same way that RPG Maker XP did so many years ago. We are certainly excited.

As we now have a public interface with Degica, the English language publishers of RPG Maker, through RPG Maker Web and awesome folk such as Nick Palmer, there is a higher chance of our thoughts and opinions making their way to Enterbrain in Japan. MV certainly seems to have been built to a lot of the suggestions and complaints of the English RPG Maker community.

RPG Maker Base Classes

In the past, scripts have been used to add to the basic system of RPG Maker. Some scenes have been editable, such as battles and shop sequences, but the general structure has remained unchanged. As this was made in C, it was compiled, and not particularly interchangeable with the Ruby scripting system, so this made some sense. In RPG Maker MV we will have access to this base system however, and using WebGL graphics too.

Base classes invisible to RPG Maker XP include:

Graphics, Bitmap, Sprite: basic image handling

Viewport, Tilemap: the game display and mapping

Table, Math: basic structures for data

RPG: the main basis of RGSS; some of this is viewable in the Help File, although not all of it

Window: draws message boxes and other windows

Some of these base classes have been remade in Ruby, although this does lower the speed somewhat. It is possible to add to these classes with Ruby made functions, and many have done so.

RPG Maker VX and VX Ace have similar base classes, with a few differences, such as the different mapping style between XP and VX. They still remain hidden to the user.

HTML



CSS



JS



As part of the build-up to RPG Maker MV's release, as the software will be switching to Javascript instead of Ruby, RPG Maker Web have set up a special board for those wishing to learn Javascript before the release.

For further reading we would thoroughly recommend W3Schools. Going through the relatively quick guides on HTML, CSS, Javascript, PHP and SQL provide the standard entry to web programming which is encompassed by Javascript and HTML5. It is always good to know PHP security before branching out, which RPG Maker MV will undoubtedly encourage.

Humble Store

If you're interested in playing RPG Maker games, the Humble Indie Store currently has Aveyond as a bundle or individual games - Gates of Night, Lord of Twilight, The Darkthrop Prophecy and The Lost Orb. £6.99 each or £19.99 for the set.



Keep an eye on the store, weekly sale and the Humble Bundle itself, as many RPG Maker games and even the engines themselves crop up from time to time.

Ludum Dare

Ludum Dare is an Internet wide Game Jam. It is an accelerated game development event, aimed at getting developers to get something released and out there, and have fun doing so. Ludum Dare events take place every April, August and December, and have been running since April 2002. The next Ludum Dare is number 34!

During Ludum Dare you spend a very short amount of time making and releasing a game. Upon finding out the theme your game must conform to, you have merely a weekend to create your game.

RPG Maker games are frequently entered into Ludum Dare competitions, and many RPG Maker websites run simultaneous or similar events.



Almost Heroic, by BilouMaster of save-point.org, an entry for Ludum Dare 33



Save Point is a small but long established corner of the RPG Maker world, having been founded in 2004 as *RMXPUniverse*, later known as *RMVXP*. It also contains the archives of the second rendition of *RMXP.org* (unrelated to the *RMXP.org* that became *HGames*).



Above: April was a Fool, Rachael, RPGMaker.net
Left: Pedrovin at RPGMakerVXAce.net



Above: Dragon Fantasy, EphiamOrcuna, RPGMaker.org



Above: Demon's Revenge by Yin at Chaos Project





Above: Lunacity, OceansDream at RPG Maker Web
Left: Escalia, BCj at RPG Maker Web

Game Pages Update

Games are a big feature at HBGames.org. People flock from all over the RPG Maker community to share their projects. We decided to make this process easier and more powerful by creating a games manager style system, but recognising our forums are our best asset, used the forums as a base. What we have created is a games section to rival RMNet, without using heavy external packages that might weigh the site down. There is still a long way to go!

Games Listings

The complete games listing shows a visual representation of each game, along with basic info, and some quick search tools. Sort by categories such as release date, author, most viewed or most talkative.

	Othello Author: kory_toombs Release date: 07 Sep 2015, 09:30 Engine:  Comments: 0 (view)
	The Seventh Door Author: sriden Release date: 10 Aug 2015, 19:26 Engine:  Comments: 1 (view)

We have gone through retrospectively adding logos for these games, and we now have over 400 games in the system ripe for the plucking.

Galleries

We created a gallery system, using again the forums as a basis, turning a basic resource or artwork forum into a visual gallery with attribute sorting so that you can pinpoint that exact resource or asset that you're looking for.



Game Page Features

Within each game are buttons taking you to individual sections for that game.

Comments

Players can leave comments on a game as they play it, and discuss games they haven't played yet.

Screenshots

Each game has its own screenshots gallery using the new gallery system. Anybody can post a screenshot for any game.

Reviews

Those who have played a game are able to give it a review, and reviews can also be left for games which are not yet at HBGames.org.

Development Blog

Development blogs are personal forums attached to a game where developers can discuss its creation as they go along. Other members are able to discuss these blog posts.

Dev blogs, screenshots and reviews are all aggregated and can be viewed as a whole, forum-wide. They also exist for Games in Development as well as complete games.

Console RPG Maker

RPG Maker has a longer history than just the PC based game engines we are used to. In 1997, RPG Maker was released for Playstation 1 (in Japan as RPG Tsukūru 3). This became hugely popular, spawning sequels RPG Maker 2 in 2002 and RPG Maker 3 in 2004.



Gameplay and creation was limited by the hardware available, and sharing games was complex. In theory games could only be shared by swapping memory cards with friends, similar to the level editors in games such as *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*. In practice there were several unofficial tools which could be used to extract these game files, and websites were spawned around sharing these files. Of these, the largest still in existence is *RPG Pavilion*, available at www.pavilionboards.com.

While the site has branched out into *RPG Maker XP* and *VX* it has never built momentum enough to switch entirely, and there are still huge repositories of games available for those who have the tech and the patience.

Outside of the English community RPG Tsukuru continues to be launched in various forms in Japan, with titles such as *RPG Tsukuru DS*, *For Mobile*, and *DS Plus*. Some graphics from the Nintendo DS form are available from RPG Maker Web.



Fatal Insanity, by tjoris9



Centurion, by Tsunami



I'm sorry, we'll leave!
The door was open!
Shut the @\$% up!

A Dragon's Destiny, by OmegaDragon



Blinding Souls, by Gerald Joubert



Bomberman Tournament 2, by Ezalb

The RPG Tsukuru series goes back even further in Japan however. The first ever title was called Mamirin, released for the PC-8801.



In researching RPG Maker, we were able to find it still available - in Rom form - thankfully saved by kseiha and up for download at:

<http://mishkafaulken.com/2014/12/30/mamirin-on-pc-8801/>

In total there were 29 Japanese releases before the first English PC release, the RPG Maker XP that we know so well. It's amazing it took so long! Although many features so basic as having *sound* weren't even available to begin with. RPG Maker has been through a laborious and lengthy process to come to where it is today. That's ignoring all of the other engines to spawn from it of course, such as Fighter Maker, Sim RPG Maker, or the delightfully sounding Sound Novel Tsukuru.

ASCII



RPG Palace is another of those sites that's been around forever. It is mainly known as the home of The Inquisitor, and his amazing and ubiquitous Medieval tileset range for RPG Maker XP (also usable in other engines). A commercial license is available, for a relatively small cost for the sheer amount of resources you get.

The tilesets are split into three matching sets: Medieval Interiors, for inside maps, and Medieval Exteriors, for the field, are reminiscent of *Ultimate Exterior* maps from the time: they are huge collections of tiles, all made by The Inquisitor, to make any kind of medieval area you could imagine. The third is an overworld map, the World Map, which contains over 4,000 tiles, including many which have other potential uses such as various different categories of ship.



With a few pallette swaps and other edits the tiles are a good compliment to Pixel Myth: Germania.

RPG Palace is found at www.rpg-palace.com





finalbossblues

With the advent of paid downloadable content for RPG Maker, it's easy to forget that there are real people out there making these sets for us to enjoy. *Final Boss Blues* is the online home of Jason Perry, creator of sets such as the recently released *Time Fantasy*.



What sets *Time Fantasy* apart from other sets is the high level of thought that has gone into the technical process, including a PDF guide distributed with the resource pack explaining concepts of the resources and how to best go about making updates to them.

From *Final Boss Blues* you can find much more in-depth tutorials, spawning from a mind that has been in the RPG Maker scene for well over a decade. These are split into Pixel Art tutorials, RPG Maker tutorials, and more general Game Making tutorials. If you are ever planning on making your own game assets, even if this just entails editing and updating other peoples' work, the pixel art tutorials are a must read. They are a game making equivalent of W3Schools, guiding you through basic concepts everyone should know such as colour palettes and working with light.

Perry has created graphics for years, including sprite templates such as the *Geredreth*. On his website are tutorials for making these bases yourself. This is one of the key aspects that can make a game your own, breaking the RPG Maker cliché and tailoring assets to your game. He also created the *Old School Modern* resource pack, useful for creating *Pokemon* or *Earthbound* style games.



Sometimes the simplest looking tiles are the hardest to pull off. When working with basic outlines and cell shading, mistakes are much more prominent, and when using so few colours palette choice is immensely important. If nothing else, *Old School Modern* is useful for learning these concepts, and for grabbing a nice palette to work with. Once you know what you are doing, adding new tiles is relatively simple, allowing great scope for creating a unique game quickly.

Final Boss Blues is found at finalbossblues.com and both *Old School Modern* and *Time Fantasy* packs are available at *RPG Maker Web*, ranging from \$8.99 to \$14.99 - mere pennies compared to most game making assets.

Beyond REALITY

Beyond Reality is not just the name of a game - it is also the name of a concept. To change your lifestyle to a new one is part of "going beyond reality".

Thus, if we were to use "beyond reality" as part of that concept, it would involve stating that your current lifestyle is your reality. Going beyond that is to change it.

That's what my game - Beyond Reality - for the IGMC 2014 contest was about, but because it was so popular, I've decided to expand it into a multi-hour adventure that spans a landmass at least five times the size of that found in the original game. Much of the

basic premise of the story remains the same, though many new gameplay elements have been added such as HP bars, sidequests and rare loot, weapons and items.

Another thing to note is that Beyond Reality will be a commercial venture, with my first port of call being Steam Greenlight. I will also be seeing other distribution platforms as well though, so don't feel pressured into buying from Steam if you don't want to. If you do not have the money to buy the game, don't fret - you can simply watch a livestream or Youtube video of it instead in order to enjoy the story, as I will be ensuring that a few livestreamers/Let's Players get a copy of the game.



On the note of the actual game itself, it has been a really interesting development process, particularly since I am expanding on something I made a year ago. There are things I'd change after a year of development and discovering new tricks but I cannot, since it is too late in the development cycle. They will be kept in mind for my next game though, should I make another.

When making a commercial game, there is a lot more to consider - not just in terms of licenses, but also how accessible the game is to a wider potential audience. This has resulted in some compromises having to be made, but I have a lot more sympathy for game developers these days as a result. For example, the wider audience means that there will be less seasoned gamers who may be interested in buying your game but you don't want them to hit the refund button on Steam simply because the game is too hard or intuitive. Therefore, it is important to establish the player knows all the controls - even if they already allegedly do, having played many other games in the same vein - because your game may differ slightly from others. It is not enough, nor

professional enough, to simply ask a player something like: "Have you ever played another RPG Maker game before?" (Without even going into the debate of how RPG Maker games are perceived in the market, this is a long discussion)

The simple face of the matter is that there are more variables, and you have to polish your game up a thousand times more than if you were simply to submit your game for free. It is not enough to think that bugs can simply be fixed in patches, because it could damage your initial reputation. It is not enough to quickly gloss over passabilities, as your player may end up skipping a large section of the story by accident. It is not enough to have just a couple of people testing your game to make sure it is easy to understand.

There is a lot more that can be said on the topic of developing and releasing a commercial game, but I hope this at least gives you some idea of the additional challenges you may face should you do so.



And another thing...

Thank you for reading *Advanced RPG Maker Magazine*, we hope you enjoyed it. If you want to read back issues you can find them at www.arpgmaker.com, and if you want to discuss or submit anything for future issues, you can do so all over the RM web where we have threads on the major forums, or you can do so at our website.



A big thank you to **Dungeonmind** for sharing the eZine on their blog, www.dungeonmind.com, where you will find info on their game, *Pale Winds of Eternity*.



A few issues ago we held a mini-contest for the World Cup in Brazil. We had a grand total of zero entries! Congratulations to all of the worthy winners.

I'd like to apologise for the late arrival of this issue, coming some... 15 months overdue. I would like to come up with a brilliant reason to explain myself, however it mostly boils down to us having no team. Beyond a few welcome submissions everything is done by me, and one person is unfortunately not a solid system on which to build an empire... er.. magazine. Maybe the sporadic release structure makes it quirky, maybe it just makes it annoying for those who have been waiting so long for a new issue to read. Either way, I will try my utmost to get things back on track, and the next issue should be much swifter. It's not as if there has been a lack of content, with there being yet another massive contest in the time between issues.

Why not start a community?

The RPG Maker world is so vibrant because it has always had quirky little corners. From Phanx Games to Save Point, RM Collective to Blade 2k, over the years there have been many little communities all doing their own thing. Why not start your own?

Not everyone can be successful, and there comes a saturation point, but starting a website can be a great way to learn programming skills. Even a Proboards forum can provide a good start in JavaScript programming, especially useful with the announcement that RPG Maker MV will be using the language.

Alternatives are free forum software such as phpBB, or some website hosting tools from InvisionFree to Forumer. Every big site started somewhere!

Social Media

Social media is growing as a means of sharing game creations. Unfortunately it is, mostly, a disposable medium, and groups are often private. They do not provide the same structure and permanence that you can get from forums or solid blogs. We would like to feature more blogs here, however, so please send us suggestions as to your favourites so we can show them to the world.

Corrections

We haven't found any (rejoice!) bar a few typos, however some interesting things have come of previous issues. Since we moaned about RPG Maker 2000 and 2003 being ignored in issue 1, both have been released in English for the very first time.



Issue 24 of HBGames.org the eZine has been released, although it is getting a bit weak. It's clearly gone down in quality and content. Still, it clings on, and in this issue we look at cliff mapping, RPG Maker MV, and HBGames.org the Game, an ambitious project in which users create rooms within a wider game, playing online amongst

other players. ZenVirZan has succeeded where so many have failed and has created a working online game, with a unique and interesting premise.

The prestigious HBGames.org Game of the Year is about to be announced following a public vote. Previous winners include *Project: Grid*, *No-one Has to Die*, and *Finding Eden*. The entries for this year include *Lucid Awakening 2* and the popular *Little Briar Rose*. Actually, as I write this I am closing the poll and posting the winners thread. This is fun, reporting live from the scene... No, bad connection, no spoilers here!

RPG RPG Revolution

Does anyone know what happened to RPG RPG Revolution's eZine? From memory, five issues were created, some time around 2010. They seem to be lost to the Internet. It would be a shame to lose them, as Kaz and Ariel had put a lot of work into them amongst others. It would be great if we would be able to host them alongside ARPGM though we'd need their permission of course, and for somebody to have them saved somewhere! RPG RPG Revolution may be gone but it doesn't have to be the end for the community.

Didn't feature?

We probably missed you! We try our best but the Internet is a big place. Give us a nudge.

STEAL THIS ISSUE



We intend this magazine to be an introspective into websites all around the Internet, to provide overview and insight into anything RPG Maker. As such it's not tied to any specific site. We may have an official base, but please feel free to **redistribute this issue** amongst friends, your website, your community, or the wider web. Reupload it, rehost it, print it off, fire it on a rocketship into the Sun, it's up to you. We just ask the following:

- Don't claim anything as your own that isn't
- Don't imply that this is your website's magazine
- Don't edit the magazine in any way without our explicit permission
- Don't use the magazine for profit

Apart from that it's relatively yours to do with what you will. Feel free to upload it to your website and post it as a news feature, etc. You'd be doing us a favour and we'd be doing you one.

Credits

Thank you to HotfireLegend for creating the article in pages 17-18 on *Beyond Reality*.

Thanks to Sharm for the sneak peak on page 4.

Most of all a big thank you to every game featured and everybody who is active in the online RPG Maker community - we wouldn't be here without you.

If you want to submit anything to the eZine, you can do it in any way imaginable, although a private message on RPG Maker Web or a post on arpgmaker.com would be cheaper than a chartered aeroplane skywriter.