

HBGAMES.org

The E-zine!

HBGAMES.org's Official E-zine!

Issue #21 July 2014



HBGames the eZine

Hello, and welcome to HBGames.org, and this, the *eZine*, our online magazine. This month as always we've got the latest new games, resources, introductions and forum developments, info on how you can get involved, and of course our spotlight, showcasing the best artwork and game material from the forums.

HBGames.org is an amateur game development community specialising in RPG games and RPG Maker, but branching out into all aspects of game development. We have a strong community behind us with off-topic forums and development space. The site is always updating, and new members always joining. Feel free to get involved!

This month we saw the passing of *RPG RPG Revolution*, unfortunately, and as such also their eZine, of which I believe five issues were produced in PDF form. Hopefully somebody saved them somewhere as ours were in the past (by Zeriab and Dervvulfman, who recovered issues 1-7 a few years ago now).

Well, without further space wasting adieu, here's the mag...

Quick Jump

Throughout this issue you'll see quick jump codes. I, Bill, invented them. These are just a simple way to link to posts and threads around the forums without wasting space in the magazine. To use them, simply go to the homepage and enter a quick jump code in the quick jump box below the left hand menu and press the enter key. Simple!

Just look out for this symbol:

QJ 123456

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On the cover...

This month's cover features concept art by Perihelion.

Canvas

Canvas, in development in the project forums, is a game "for those who love to explore, experiment and discover". A puzzle RPG, Canvas is a huge eventing extravaganza with custom built action battle system, pixel-based attacks and abilities, and intrinsically crafted enemies who have their own behaviours, movement styles and methods of attacking the player. Tied in with elevations, jumping, and other neat systems and



a variety of mini-games, Canvas is different. A demo can be downloaded in the Games in Development forum:

QJ 920774

Canvas is a project by **sbethune81**, who created *Manifest*, a complete 30 hour RPG that can be downloaded from the completed games board:

QJ 891510

HBGames the eZine accept reviews for any game. While we might not get around to doing any in-depth, useful articles, anyone else is more than welcome to make up for our crapness. Post your submissions in the submissions board, or send them to Amy. We will try and review games in more detail in future.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

The Concept Development board is a space to work out ideas, big or small, in front of an audience, getting input and feedback while you work out the finer details.

KYOJIN KILLER JACK

Baghead Johnson's game idea revolves around the tale of Jack and the Beanstalk, with twists. It is a barebone 8-bit style RPG. Johnson aims to create a limited scope game, to create a great game with a relatively low amount of content, such that it stays simple and developed.

Of course, as with any game based on a fairy tale, liberties have been taken with the story and it's become something bigger - and the happily ever after world creates a setting where people are blind to the reality of the situation.

INHABIT

Inhabit is Injury's game and centres around a unique mechanic idea: the ability to inhabit any NPC, putting them under player control and focus. This would lead to a dynamic gameplay experience, immediate replayability, multiple endings, and complicated scenarios. It will be a lot of work to pull off, but in the end will be worthwhile.

The game's world will be small because of the hardships involved in the development, and the game would be based around one event - perhaps a murder - in the game world.

THE HEALING BATTLE SYSTEM

Potion's concept initially sounded simple, a battle system in which the entire focus is on a character that is a healer. Similar to playing as a monk in a cooperative RPG format, you have no control over the other characters in your group, only being able to heal them.

The concept has evolved and is now a quite active thread, involving Potion's brother amongst others, hashing out their idea.

D is for Dungeon

In a world of monsters and kings there is a legend of a great evil that appears every 500 years to ravage the countryside. It is at this time that a hero appears bearing the mark of light to quell the darkness and return peace to the lands. It is an ancient tale that has been repeated time and time again without change. Until one day the evil returns...20 years earlier than normal. The search for the hero begins and the people scour the lands until they find their champion with the mark of light...in a crib. Can the hero of light stand a chance against the forces of darkness in this state? That all depends on you.

QJ 921361



GIRLS IN GAMES

Potion unwittingly started a discussion in *Post What's on Your Mind* that's been split into a thread in Gamemaking Discussion: Girls in Games. Is there a lack of strong female characters in video games? Is that a problem? What's the scene like at the moment, and could it be better?

A comic shows that there are indeed strong female leads in a variety of games, however Xilef pointed out that pointing out those that break the rule don't make the rule any less true (there are thousands more games around than those mentioned).

Many games focus on the looks of female characters in order to sell to a male audience; MMORPGs in particular are bad at this.

If anything, the push for "strong" female characters can be a problem in itself. Female characters are defined as strong in different ways to male characters: their sassiness, their looks, their control over emotions - they're reverse stereotypes which ultimately still rely on those initial stereotypes. Games shouldn't aim to have "strong" female characters, they should aim to have strong characters, some of which happen to be female and some of which happen to be male.

Consider Final Fantasy VII: it had a strong black character as the lead of the party, but ultimately Barret was a caricature and a mistake. Imagine if, instead, Hojo just happened to be black. It would have had more meaning and more impact - creating a character that is black, rather than creating a black character.

Jason pointed out that over sexualised female characters can actually turn people off games as it becomes obvious it's merely a sales tactic. Often the strength of a female character seems based on how much of their breasts they have on show. Even modestly dressed characters, such as the dervish featured on the previous page, seem more than happy to flash their flesh.

In a way I guess that's part of what is meant by a "strong" female character - one that isn't sexualised, half naked, boy obsessed and clumsy, but that seems at odds with many of the games mentioned in the comic that spurred the conversation.

So are things improving? I'd like to think so. There are some games which manage a

female lead on par with their male counterparts. They're few and far between however, and often when they are female that fact is jumped upon such that it becomes all the game is about. *Tomb Raider* was big because it was a game with a female character that didn't focus on her femininity, something that was lost on future games in the series evidently.



Which is a problem in itself. Waterstones (a book store in the UK) has a table for popular female authors, jumping on feminism to provide a showcase for good female talent. It completely misses the point of feminism. There shouldn't be a table separating female authors from male, there should just

be a *table*, where both genders are together and judged on their content rather than their authors. This is what games should be doing: characters should be judged on their strength as a character, not on the presence of breasts. A "strong female character" is finding out Biggs and Wedge were female pilots with deep voices, or Samus Aran before she was sexualised into what she is now. Essentially, before they felt need to point out she was female; before she was just a strong character with no need for a gender.

Sin Unsullied

This month's big new game is **Sin Unsullied**, in development by **legacyblade**.

With exclusively composed music and a great use of edits to the RMXTP, the game is visually pleasing and uses a great deal of animation in its scenes, such as transforming characters or animated backdrops like meteor showers.

The full game is now available.



Dancing in the Forest



Heretic's

COLLECTION OF ART AND 100% COMPATIBLE SCRIPTS

Heretic's **Collection of Art and 100% Compatible Scripts**, which you'll find in the **RPG Maker Scripts** forum, is a hefty piece of work that collects a range of scripts and art assets together that all tie in with one another (with permission of the creators if not created by Heretic). There is a huge amount of content, all compatible and working well together, with a demo based around a map in a future game to show it all off.

Every included script has a proper demo to show off its use, and there are a lot of scripts. Importantly they are shown as working with or upon one another rather than being separate systems, which can be a problem with this kind of collection.

Scripts include caterpillar, multiple message windows, XRS overhauled, pathfinding, simulated user input, cloud-like fogs, distortion effects, dynamic lighting and sound, and much more. Tied in with graphical resources to match the scripts, the overall package is immediately usable and provides a solid base for any RPG game. I'd certainly like to play the planned game hinted at in the demo.



This kind of package can be frowned upon, especially the larger ones, as credit is often not given or even known, but Heretic has put effort in to contact and gain permission for everything in the demo.

WELCOME

A wonderful range of new faces joined this month! We'd like to welcome **Baghead Jackson**, whose game idea can be found in Concept Development; **Allen2014**, a Chinese fellow who has posted a range of scripts to the forums this month, and also **Pog**, **Seryll**, **Ardow**, **Orihara**, **FuzzyCuffs**, **Brendon89264**, **TrueMiszou**, **Sparetoaster**, **Weary Owl**, **Azul120**, who all posted since joining in June.

We'd also like to welcome the many who joined but haven't spoken yet - let's squeeze something out of you!

The **Introductions** forum is one of our underperforming areas - please, if you can, open your arms and welcome new members to the site who make the effort to open an intro thread. Make them feel at home!

Repeatedly hit an enemy with the hammer/ 10-Hits



udivision has updated their thread for **Super Mario RPG: The Starlite Worlds** with some neat developer strategy videos, showing how the creators would have beaten the hardest bosses in the game. It's a cool idea and while spoilerfilled, does also help to show off the gameplay to anyone not turned on by the project thread, too. It helps current players, and shows disinterested players what the actual game plays like.

QJ 920922

If you have an idea for a contest, competition, game jam or other such event, prizes or no prizes, please let us know!

Feel free to post other contests at other sites in the game making discussion forum, for other members to have a crack at entering too. It's always nice to win a few thousand quid from work you were doing anyway!

Project 500

Project 500, which will be jointly posted between the **Games in Development** forum and the **Game Making Resources** forum, is my new project. Very relaxed in its concept, it is essentially an excuse to map a very large map, 500 by 500 tiles in size (hence the name). The idea is to create a game unashamedly like *Project Grid*, however with a fantasy theme, a flying dragon, a wizard girl and a giant landscaped map as the backdrop. With everything taking place in the sky, the game world itself can be complex and imaginative, with many tileset edits taking shape over the course of it. However, I want anything made for the game to be reusable, and as tiles, not parallax mapping. It should be detailed, interesting, and natural, while still being tileable.

it's also a starting point for several planned tutorials, one of which can be found in *Advanced RPG Maker* issue 3, on micro mapping. For the most part any time

I create something that looks sort-of-OK, I want to try and explain how I did it, in the hope it's useful to someone more talented.

I think the RTP is a much underused piece of equipment as the basis for further resources, and micro mapping gives the chance to use it to its full potential, using all the little hidden gems in tiles that otherwise go to waste or in the wrong tileset.



SPOTLIGHT



Oracle, Skyla Doragono

QJ 839933

Allen2014 has released a range of scripts this month which can be found in the scripts forum under the RPG Maker section. Here's one example, a shop system with limited inventories.

QJ 920578

Robin's having a bit of trouble with Game Maker and we're all stumped... any ideas?

QJ 919769



Xilef (video)

QJ 920978

Check out *ARPGM* issue 3 if you haven't already.

QJ 920737



Perihelion's concept art (cover), for which she's posted a walkthrough in the popular artwork forums:

QJ 921401



Potion

QJ 921282



Rey Meustrus

QJ 920385

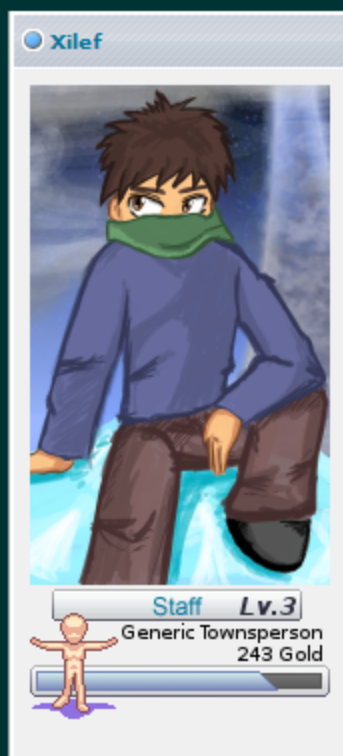


Melanii

QJ 919769

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Forum Development



Here at HBGames we've always been, and continue to be, an actively developing forum, tweaking and updating our systems with our own stuff wot works well. Recent times are no different, and in the *Site Discussion* board you'll find an interesting discussion that could go big places: *Custom Badge Management*, which has evolved into something bigger, possibly culminating in a little forum RPG, or at the very least more customisable user mini-profiles.

This leads on from and ties in with the points system, a recent addition, where you can gain points for posting worthwhile on-topic things. These points work as EXP and raise an EXP bar under profiles, and with this EXP you earn levels, badges, and a title.

The algorithms for EXP are such that the system is little exploited and perhaps counter intuitive for anybody trying to cheat their way through levels; any forum RPG system would be similarly bulletproof and would even have the ability to ban users from it, removing their mini-profile if they abuse the system.

But here's the fun part - as a member of the forum your input is important and valued. Get in on the action! Toss your suggestions around like you own the place. If it's no good, the worst that'll happen is your idea will be shot down along with your family and anybody else you hold dear.

QJ 921294

Thanks *for reading* *(assuming you did and can read)*

Back issues may be found at HBGames.org.

Black issues may be found in UWE's household.

Issue 22 should be out on or around August 1st, with *Advanced RPG Maker* issue 4 out in the interim (available at arpgmaker.com).



We rely on your submissions and content to stay afloat - but you don't need to submit stuff to the eZine to help. Just post around on the forums. Screenshots, videos, maps and other content can feature in the eZine, which is simply a summary of everything going on at HBGames.org.

Please consider donating if you have the time and money, as we are a not-for-profit and rely on member or staff donations to stay online!

Thanks to everybody whose content has featured.

Not happy with our content or style?

Say something!

We can only act on the feedback, comments and criticism we receive from you guys. Please let us know if we're doing a bad job and we'll strive to improve.

If something hasn't featured that you think is fantastic just let us know, we might not have spotted it. It doesn't matter if you made it or someone else.