Interactive Design and Production I

USC School of Cinematic Arts, CTIN-532
Fall Semester 2015

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Meeting Information:
Room: SCI L114
Day and Time: Monday 3:00 PM - 5:20 PM, Friday 3:00PM – 5:20PM

Units: 4

Course Website
http://www.richardlemarchand.com/classes/ctin-532-2015

Course Description:

"A sense of place is so critical (…) because you want to go into another world. Every story has its own world, and its own feel, and its own mood. So you try to put together all these little things—these little details—to create that sense of place. It has a lot to do with light and sound."
David Lynch

"…half the job is doing the job, and the other half is finding ways to get along with people and tuning yourself in to the delicacy of the situation."
Walter Murch

Imagination and design are inexorably interlinked. The dreams we dream at night and by day can lead to the greatest accomplishments in art and literature, science and technology, industry and entertainment. But until we make decisions and act upon them we are not designing, only speculating.

Even a small game or interactive media project requires us to make thousands of decisions; some of them major, many of them minor, although it might not always be apparent to us which type of decision is which. How can we stay in control of this decision-making process, ensuring that we make good-quality decisions, and don't run out of time to make them? This class aims to show you how.

This course is partly a digital interactive design and production "boot camp" where you will work in small teams and learn to create short, innovative digital game and interactive media experiences that have a longer development time and meet higher standards of polish than any that you have created so far in your IMGD career.

The class is also an art class where you are free to explore your digital game and interactive media design practice, learning to innovate and hone your craft in experience design, game mechanic design, interaction design, and interface design. You are also free to address new and wide-ranging subject matter and new modes of audience engagement.

You are expected to enter this class having paired up into a team of two people over the summer break. Teaming up for this class will allow you to continue to develop your collaborative skills throughout the semester, focusing on communication and the professional management of interpersonal dynamics as you deal with the tension between control and cooperation in a collaborative work environment. You are also encouraged to recruit additional team members from outside the class to help work on your project, although this is not required.

Don't worry if you don't get to pair up with the person who is your "first choice" — every working relationship offers us opportunities for learning, and a few challenges regarding project management and interpersonal skills will make for an even richer learning experience. Please email me if you have any questions or concerns about pairing up.

It's ok to have some initial discussion of the kind of project you'd like to make in class before the semester starts, but please don't begin work on your project in earnest until the semester begins. The first three weeks of the class will be spent in an ideation phase, creating small prototypes and other ideation materials, which will discuss in class. We will then spend the remaining eleven weeks of the semester working through the preproduction, full production and postproduction phases of the semester's project, including Alpha, Beta and Gold Master milestones, with Gold Master (the final milestone of the project) arriving on Monday of Week 15.

You can expect to do well in this class if you apply yourself earnestly to the course, pay close attention to the methods being taught, do your best to follow those methods, and keep an open dialogue with me, the class instructor.[1]

Within the framework of the class, you have almost total freedom to create any kind of work that could be regarded as a digital game or piece of interactive media. You might find that the biggest challenge you face in exercising this freedom is coming to an agreement with your team partner about what to make. The class is designed to help you make the right decisions about your project at the right times, but if you ever find yourself having a difficult time reaching agreement with your teammate about your project, please talk to both your teammate and to me about it. I recommended that you and your teammate let go of any preconceived ideas you might bring to your project, and follow where your early prototypes lead you.

A large part of the course's content will be focused on in-class discussion, group critique and problem solving for each project. It is very important that you treat the development of your design projects professionally. You will be expected to participate actively in the discussions and

[1] I acknowledge that the methods taught in this class are not the only way to design and produce a project, but as IMGD MFA students you are required to use this industry-acknowledged set of best practices for at least this one semester. Hopefully the tools and skills you acquire in this class will stand you in good stead for the rest of your IMGD and professional career.

critique sessions that take place in class, giving and receiving feedback that honors your fellow students with its depth of analysis and respect for their work.

Ideally, the work you produce in this class will be good enough to be included in your creative portfolio, shown at an internship interview, or submitted to a festival. However, it really doesn't matter if your project doesn't work out well; in fact I hope that in this class you will make—and learn from—any production mistakes that you are prone to, so that you don't make them during your thesis year. Even if you're not happy with the way your project turns out, you can still receive a good grade in the class as long as you have been attentive to the course subject matter and to the advice given to you along the way, you have met the required milestones and completed the assignments in the class, and you can reflect lucidly in your postpartum essay about what went well and what could have gone better.

The experiences you create in this class will offer your audiences access to the interactive systems of beautiful, intriguing miniature worlds; maybe those worlds will be richly systemic and full of emergence, maybe they will be meticulously authored to create a particular experience—or maybe you will find your way to entirely new game and interaction paradigms. I'm very much looking forward to seeing what you create in our class, and to accompanying and guiding you on this next stage of your creative journey.

— Richard Lemarchand, 3rd July, 2015

Learning Objectives
What a student is expected to learn and how these goals fit with the IMGD program and School of Cinematic Arts learning objectives

The course builds on the skills and knowledge introduced in the first year of the IMGD MFA program. You will learn what it means to work 'playcentrically' and collaboratively in greater depth than before, by working on a single project for a whole semester.

You will design iteratively in an intensive cycle of decision-making, implementation, playtesting and design revision. You will learn what it means to hold onto the vision of a project experience goal while using an iterative design cycle over a longer time than you are used to. These are core learning goals of the IMGD MFA program.

You will learn to tackle bigger challenges of collaboration than you have in the past, as you learn to apportion work, take responsibility for your individual and shared tasks and negotiate with your teammate to solve problems and resolve conflicts. These are core learning goals of the School of Cinematic Arts.

You will learn a design and production methodology based on the "Method" used at studios like Naughty Dog and Insomniac and which also incorporates attitudes and elements from "Agile development". You will learn to use this methodology to properly plan, scope and build a project in a way that reliably results in finished work that has a very high level of quality, while minimizing uncontrolled overwork.

The class will include some discussion of world building techniques and practice, and without question the whole class is a world building exercise of the 'bottom up' kind. However, you

should not come to class expecting to create an expansive story world or a long experience. Instead, you should aim to create a short, very polished experience.

> **Prerequisite(s):** Open to IMGD MFA and iMAP PhD students, as well as other interested and qualified students, by interview with the instructor**.**
> **Co-Requisite (s):** none
> **Concurrent Enrollment:** none
> **Recommended Preparation**: a foundational level of game and/or interactive media design and development education, including an introduction to Unity.

Course Notes
The Grading Type is this class is "letter grade".

Class information will be posted on the course website, rather than on Blackboard. Copies of lecture slides will not typically be posted on the course website: students are expected to take their own notes in class. Key class materials will, however, be made available on the course website, at:

> http://www.richardlemarchand.com/classes/ctin-532-2015

University guidelines recommend that students do two hours work outside class for every one hour spent in class. Our class meets for three hours and forty minutes a week; therefore I expect that you will spend at least seven hours and twenty minutes each week outside of class working on your project and reading, viewing or playing the class assignments.

However, uncontrolled overwork in this class—as in our professional lives—is very undesirable, and I do not expect anyone to do more then twelve hours classwork each week outside of class. If you find that you are working more than twelve hours a week outside class, please contact me to discuss how you can make your workload more manageable.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
For practical projects, it is expected that you will work in Unity, and so you should enter the class with at least a basic level of technical proficiency in Unity. If you want to work in a framework other than Unity and can present a good argument for doing so, please let me know.

TL;DR—don't worry about what skills you do and don't have; talk your concerns through with me and you'll have fun and make good work in our class! I understand that everyone will enter the class with a unique set of digital content creation skills covering 2D art, 3D art, animation, audio design, programming and version control. While it might be true that the larger the set of skills you have when entering this class, the better prepared for the class you will be, I recommend that you design a project that is tailored to the skills that you and your teammate bring into the class, and great work can be made with minimal sets of skills. That said, you should expect to teach yourself some new digital content creation skills while taking this class.

The hardware and software required for use in this class are available in the course classroom for those students who do not have access to them at home or on a laptop.

You are expected to bring an updated version your project to every class meeting, ready to either present it or work on it. If you do not have a laptop, the computers in our meeting room are available for your use—please bring your work to class on a thumb drive.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration

by Ed Catmull and Amy Wallace

This text is available in the USC bookstore or online at Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com.

Supplementary materials listed in the syllabus will be available on the web, as handouts in class or as digital files on the course website. Specific readings cited below may be subject to change as the semester progresses.

Description and Assessment of Assignments
What kind of work is to be done and how should it be completed, i.e. how the learning outcome will be assessed.

The class is comprised of a mixture of reading, viewing, playing, written and practical assignments. Reading assignments, viewing assignments, playing assignments and written assignments will usually be given on Mondays and will be due on the following Monday. The Friday class meeting will be used for regular in-class playtesting and project review sessions, so practical assignments will usually be given on Fridays and will be due on the following Friday. Clear and specific time-and-day milestones for each assignment, along with information about how to submit each assignment, will be listed on the course website.

Your work in this class will be assessed according to eight assignments:

Participation
I will be calling on every class member in almost every class discussion, and will assess your participation in class on the basis of your willingness and ability to participate in our discussions in a constructive and productive way, including your ability to demonstrate that you have prepared for each class by reading, playing and viewing each week's assignments. If you have difficulty participating in group discussions, please let me know and we'll figure something out that works for you.

Practical Assignments

Early Prototypes
You will submit the prototypes that you make in the first three weeks of class for assessment, along with some accompanying notes. I'll be hoping to see that you have performed a sequence of earnest and wide-ranging explorations within the bounds of your prototyping ability, arriving at a Project Experience Goal Statement.

Project Design Macro, Burn Down Chart and Vertical Slice
These materials are due at the end of the preproduction phase of the project, along with some accompanying notes.

Alpha milestone, Second formal playtest, Beta milestone, Gold Master milestone
At each of these milestones, taking place during production and at the end of the project, you are required to submit a working build of your project, along with some accompanying notes, and in some cases, some other documentation.

Each of these practical assignments will be assessed according to detailed requirements that have been discussed in class and which are laid out in the assignments section of the course website. For example, the Alpha milestone requires that your project be "feature complete". I will evaluate your work in the context of the notes that you provide with each assignment—so even if you struggled with a particular assignment, you can still get a good grade for the assignment if you can reflect clearly about the ways in which you struggled.

For all practical coursework, please note that while high production values in terms of visual, audio and interaction design will contribute to good grades, earnestly attempting to engage with the requirements of each assignment is a more important influence on your grade than high production values. The best way to demonstrate that you have taken note of and attempted to meet the requirements for each assignment is by reflecting on your process in the notes that you will submit with each practical assignment.

Project postpartum essay
A 'postpartum' essay from each individual student will be due in place of a final examination at 4 p.m. on Monday, December 14th, 2015. In this essay, which is styled after the popular 'post-mortem' GDC lectures and Gamasutra articles, you will be asked to reflect on what went well and what could have gone better in the course of creating your project. I will assess your essay based on the knowledge of your project that I gained during the course of the semester compared to how much self-aware reflection you describe in your essay regarding the process of creating your project.

Assessment and Grading Rubric:

A number of points will be awarded for each assignment, up to the maximum for each assignment shown in the table below.

Participation	15
Early Prototypes	5
Project Design Macro, Burn Down Chart and Vertical Slice	10
Alpha milestone	15
Second formal playtest	10
Beta milestone	15
Gold Master milestone	15
Project postpartum essay	15
Total:	100

Your grade for the class will be assigned according to this scale:

Grading Score >=	Grade
0	F
60	D
70	C-
73	C
77	C+
80	B-
83	B
87	B+
90	A-
93	A

Course content by class meeting

Before first class meeting:

Practical Assignment: form into a team of two people.
Reading:
This class syllabus
Catastrophic Prototyping and Other Stories by Chaim Gingold
http://www.levitylab.com/blog/2011/01/catastrophic-prototyping-and-other-stories/

Week 1 – First week of our Ideation phase

Brief self-introductions.
A review of the class syllabus, including a discussion of themes and goals of the course, an outline of the course content and the 'ground rules' for the class.
An ideation refresher.
Version control and housekeeping 1.

Practical Assignment: Create your first project prototype from a design prompt.
Reading: *MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research*
by Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc, Robert Zubek
http://www.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/MDA.pdf

Week 2 – Second week of Ideation

A discussion of *MDA: A Formal Approach to Game Design and Game Research*.
Communication skills: openness and honesty, project-focused feedback, trust and respect.
Version control and housekeeping 2.
Novel interfaces and designing for the other fifteen senses.

Practical Assignment: Create a second project prototype from a design prompt.
Reading: *Creativity, Inc.* – part one

Week 3 – Third and final week of Ideation

A discussion of *Creativity, Inc.* – part one.
Experiences, emergence, systemic richness and the Open Work.
Communication skills: what are our differences, and how will we handle them?
Version control and housekeeping 3.
Concentric Development: in design, everything matters.

Practical Assignment: Create your third project prototype from a design prompt.
Viewing: Cerny Method talk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOAW9ioWAvE

Week 4 – Preproduction begins

A discussion of *Creativity, Inc.* – part two.
Communication skills: accountability.
Agile mentality, *Method: A Model for Game Design* and Alex McDowell's digital production model.

Written Assignment: Create a Project Experience Goal Statement
Practical Assignment: Create a project prototype, building on the individual work done so far
Reading: *Creativity, Inc.* – part three

Week 5 – Reviewing the first week of Preproduction

A discussion of *Creativity, Inc.* – part three.
Project Experience Goals reviews.
Rhythmic structures in systems, stories and games; the Project Design Macro.
Communication skills: communication barriers and conflict resolution.
Version control and housekeeping 4.

Practical Assignment: Refine and develop project prototypes
Written Assignment: First draft of Project Design Macro
Reading: *Creativity, Inc.* – part four
Viewing: *Is your game 'juicy' enough?* by Martin Jonasson and Petri Purho
http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/178938/

Week 6 – Reviewing the second week of Preproduction

A discussion of *Creativity, Inc.* – part four and *Is your game 'juicy' enough?*
Class review of first draft Project Design Macros.
Are our projects meeting our Project Experience Goals?
Burn Down Chart in-class workshop.
The importance of grounded fictions.

Written Assignment: Burn Down Chart and second draft of Project Design Macro
Practical Assignment: Refine project prototype into a "Vertical Slice"

Week 7 – Preproduction ends: full Production begins

First Stand Up Meeting.
Vertical Slice in-class reviews.
Communication skills: empowering others, so that their passion can flourish.

Reading: *Creativity, Inc.* – part five
Practical Assignment: Move project 25% of the way to Alpha

Week 8 – Reviewing the first week of Production

A discussion of *Creativity, Inc.* – part five.
Are our projects still meeting our Project Experience Goals?
Seven types of testing.
Creating metrics tools.
'Stubbing in' content.
Preparing for a formal playtest.

Practical Assignment: Move project 50% of the way to Alpha and prepare a stable build for the first formal playtest

Mid-term conferences (by appointment)

Week 9 – First formal playtest

Playtest session with "Kleenex" playtesters.
Playtest decompression session.
IndieCade visit.

Practical Assignment: Move project 75% of the way to Alpha and implement metrics system

Week 10 – Reviewing the third week of Production

Project workshop with guests from IndieCade.
Being 'feature complete' at Alpha – are we done scoping yet?
Checking back to our Project Experience Goals.
Testing metrics tools.

Practical Assignment: Move project 100% of the way to Alpha and finalize metrics system

Week 11 – The Alpha milestone

Projects are feature complete!
In-class review of Alpha builds.
Game balance.
Being 'content complete' – planning to the Beta milestone.

Practical Assignment: Add the first half of the project's remaining content and prepare a stable build for the second formal playtest

Week 12 – Second formal playtest

Playtest session with "Kleenex" playtesters using metrics data-gathering tools.
Frame rate check.
Whether to leave anything for after Beta.

Practical Assignment: Add the second half of the project's remaining content and prepare a stable version for the Beta milestone

Week 13 – The Beta milestone

Projects are content complete!
In-class review of Beta builds.
Reviewing the results of the second formal playtest and analyzing metrics data.
Audio mixing.
Test planning and bug fixing.

Practical Assignment: Content polishing and bug fixing

Week 14 – Post-production

Post-production workshop: final project balancing, audio mix and frame rate check.

Practical Assignment: achieving Gold Master

Week 15 – Gold Master

Presentation of completed projects to guest reviewers.
Class feedback session.

Written Assignment (due 4 p.m. on Monday, December 14th, 2015):
Project postpartum essay, including reflections on five ways in which your project went well and five ways in which it could have gone better, and a conclusion about how your design practice has evolved this semester.

World Building Resources

Students interested in world building as a discipline should refer to the USC School of Cinematic Arts World Building Resources document (link below), created in 2014 by the SCA World Building Committee, which includes a comprehensive list of the many USC classes that are either specifically focused on world building (such as Alex McDowell's IML-599) or which include aspects of world building, and many of which are available to IMGD MFA students as electives.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dF0luZlfr3RRBImY4BK5DfWDX2-i-5YJnBT4zCnzVtA/edit?usp=sharing

Missing an Assignment Deadline, Incompletes

The only acceptable excuses for missing an assignment deadline or taking an incomplete in the course are personal illness or a family emergency. Students must inform the instructor ***before the assignment due date*** and present verifiable evidence in order for a deadline extension to be granted. Students who wish to take incompletes must also present documentation of the problem to the instructor or student assistant before final grades are due.

For assignments turned in after the assignment deadline without prior permission from the instructor, a penalty will be imposed equal to 10% of the total available points for the assignment, for each day or part of a day that the assignment is late, up to a maximum of seven days.

Attendance Policy
Punctual attendance at all classes is mandatory. Students arriving more than five minutes late to three classes, more than ten minutes late to a single class, or leaving early, will be marked as having an unexcused absence from class, unless prior permission has been obtained from the instructor. The following guidelines are from the Interactive Media & Games Division handbook regarding absences and grading and apply to all students.

Guidelines for absences affecting grading

- Two unexcused absences: lowers grade one full grade point (for example, from A to B)
- Three unexcused absences: lowers grade two full grade points
- Four or more unexcused absences: request to withdraw from course (instructor's discretion)

Excused absences are:

- Illness (with a doctor's verification)
- Family or personal emergency (with verification)

Social Media Use in Class
Social media use, including text messaging, Internet messaging and email, is not permitted in class unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. A 0.5% grade reduction will result from each occurrence of a student being found using social media in class.

Content Warnings
If you include content in the work that you produce which may cause distress to your fellow students, please tell me (the instructor) before showing the work in class, and make a verbal 'content warning' immediately before you present the work in class. Also include a written content warning, either at the beginning of a piece of written work or in the readme file of a project, when you submit the work for grading.

This is not intended to limit the subject matter that you address with your work: on the contrary, this simple approach is intended to create an environment in which you are free to address any subject matter that you wish, in a spirit of respect and consideration for your classmates.

Students who ever feel the need to step outside class during the presentation or discussion of work that warrants a content warning may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually.

Content which requires a content warning includes graphic depictions or descriptions of violence, sexual acts, racial, sexual or cultural stereotyping, abuse (especially sexual abuse or torture), self-harming behavior such as suicide, self-inflicted injuries or disordered eating,

eating-disordered behavior or body shaming, and depictions, especially lengthy or psychologically realistic ones, of the mental state of someone suffering abuse or engaging in self-harming behavior.

If you have any questions about what warrants a content warning, including visual, auditory or tactile depictions, textual or verbal descriptions, and meaning embodied in game mechanics and interaction patterns, please let me (the class instructor) know.

If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to material presented in class, either with the class or with me afterwards, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework.

Diversity
In making games and interactive media in a professional and ethical way, it is important that you consider diversity. When looking at your projects, you should consider who is depicted and how this work will impact others. What kinds of individuals and communities are represented in your work? What point of view does your work express? This class may assist you in learning how to make work that includes diverse viewpoints, and may discuss racial, religious, gender and sexual orientation issues in the context of games and interactive media.

Fair Use
Fair use is a legal principle that defines certain limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders. The Interactive Media & Games Division of USC's School of the Cinematic Arts seeks to apply a reasonable working definition of fair use that will enable students and instructors to develop multimedia projects without seeking authorization for non-commercial, educational uses. In keeping with section 107 of the Copyright Act we recognize four factors that should be considered when determining whether a use is fair: (1) the purpose and character of use, (2) the nature of the copyrighted work, (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole, and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. In general, we regard the reproduction of copyrighted works for the purposes of analysis or critique in this class to be covered by the principle of fair use.

Citation Guidelines
Where appropriate, all projects will need to include academically appropriate citations in the form of a Works Cited section, which covers all sources, in order to receive a passing grade. The Works Cited is either included in the project or as a separate document, as appropriate to your project. The style we use is APA 5th edition and you may refer to these guidelines: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Note for Students with Disabilities
Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to us as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301, and is open 8:30am - 5:00pm Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Disruptive Behavior
Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.

Syllabus Updates:
This syllabus is liable to change up to the beginning of class and possibly over the semester. Please check the posted syllabus regularly, and note all changes that are shared by the instructor in class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior- violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the *Department of Public Safety* http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems
A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* http://emergency.usc.edu/ will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

Instructor Biography
Richard Lemarchand is a game designer, an educator, a writer, a public speaker and a consultant, and works as an Associate Professor in the Interactive Media & Games Division of the School of Cinematic Arts.

Between 2004 and 2012, Richard was a Lead Game Designer at Naughty Dog in Santa Monica, California. He led the design of all three PlayStation 3 games in the *Uncharted* series including *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*, and *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves*, winner of ten AIAS Interactive Achievement Awards, five Game Developers Choice Awards, four BAFTAs and over 200 Game of the Year awards.

Richard also worked on *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, *Jak 3* and *Jak X: Combat Racing* for Naughty Dog, and helped to create the successful game series *Gex*, *Pandemonium* and *Soul Reaver* at Crystal Dynamics in the San Francisco Bay Area. He got his game industry start at MicroProse in the UK, where he co-founded the company's console game division. Richard has made storytelling action games the focus of his career, and he is interested in the way that narrative, aesthetics and gameplay work together to hold a player's attention and facilitate the expression of their agency.

A passionate advocate of indie and experimental games, Richard has been involved with the IndieCade International Festival of Independent Games for several years, and was the co-chair of the IndieCade Conference in 2010 and 2012. He regularly speaks in public on the subjects of game design, development, production, philosophy and culture, and organizes the annual GDC Microtalks, a session which celebrates games and play with short talks by diverse speakers. He is a former faculty member of the GDC Experimental Gameplay Sessions.

Richard grew up in a small town in rural England, dreaming of ancient civilizations and outer space. Perhaps as a result, he has a degree in Physics and Philosophy from Oxford University.