

Post Mortem of the „CreateAndInspire“ Game Jam (by Djamel Berkaoui)

Background information:

The createandinspire game jam was an idea I had long ago. The jam was intentionally made to motivate new developers to take the first steps into creating their first game. The starting steps of game development, in my experience are the hardest to take. You are full of uncertainty and being overwhelmed of the possibilities what you can create, so you won't start at all.

Going through the first phases of development myself, I wanted to contribute some experiences to make the kickstart smoother, with creating pages of the first steps and tutorials directly on the jam site and also setting the time frame to a reasonable one, to not overwhelm the developers. Also creating the rules to be a bit stricter (like creating only one level) has added a nice touch.

Why did I decide to create this project for the game-jam?

I always wondered how you could motivate non-developers to get started with their first creative project. Having the same problems in the early starting phase of my development path, I decided to create this jam, aiming at newbies. I had collected a lot of steam keys during the last year and wanted to create some prizes to motivate the developers. I also decided to create custom art as advertisement for the jam to show authenticity and give a qualitative impression of the jam. In my opinion, there are a lot of creatives out there who needs to take the step to create their own project, but didn't know how or simply don't think about starting a career as a game developer, cause there are from a different field of expertise. I also decided to add the rules that all assets are made of the same developer, to see and hopefully understand most aspects of game development.

Time management and methods:

As a guideline I used Jupiter Hadley's suggestions on how to create a neat game jam and added some of my own ideas „<http://www.indiegamejams.com/2014/08/make-decent-gamejolt-jam/>“

I used Unity and a voxel engine to create the assets for the advertisement of the jam. The music was made with Fruity Loops.

I planned the jam a month before it started and posted updates in special time frames to add additional visibility on social media. I mainly used Twitter but also Facebook, Gamejolt forums, Newgrounds forum, Deviantart, Instagram and Youtube to promote the jam.

What went wrong?

After getting enough feedback, I understood the rules were too hard to understand at some points and suggested to be more restrictive in terms of asset creation than I wanted them to be.

I also didn't had enough free time to create more quality advertisement in form of animations as I have planned for the half of the jam and for the end.

What went right?

In terms of visibility, feedback and the quality of the entries, the jam was a personal success for me, and also for the developers and their entries ;)

The structure of the jam site was more qualitative than my first jam and I was quietly satisfied with the features Gamejolt is offering us.

Summary & advice or what I learned by this project:

I made a huge leap from my first jam to this one trying different methods for improvement and it was a great success in terms of quality and the result I was aiming at. The jam was aimed mainly for new developers and the majority of the entries were indeed in the target group. When I plan my next jam, I'll take the feedback I got to create a better ruleset which is not as strict and also try new methods of promoting the jam.

What I disliked:

- It is still hard to get the needed coverage in social media and reaching your target group, because there are a lot game jams going on at the same time.
- The ruleset was not clear enough and probably some misunderstandings (like there was no need to use sound and music, but the rules suggested to create all assets by yourself) were responsible for the low

What I liked:

- The participants of the jam were exactly the ones the jam was aimed for
- The chance to improve my artistic skills for promotion
- Improving the way I host a game jam
- Communication with the participants
- The general outcome of the jam

What's next?

Taking all the feedback I got to improve my next jam, while adding new easier rulesets and new prizes, as the unclaimed ones are still available ;)

Wishes for the future:

- More participants
- More media coverage
- More creative games
- More newbies taking the chance to get into developing a game for the first time

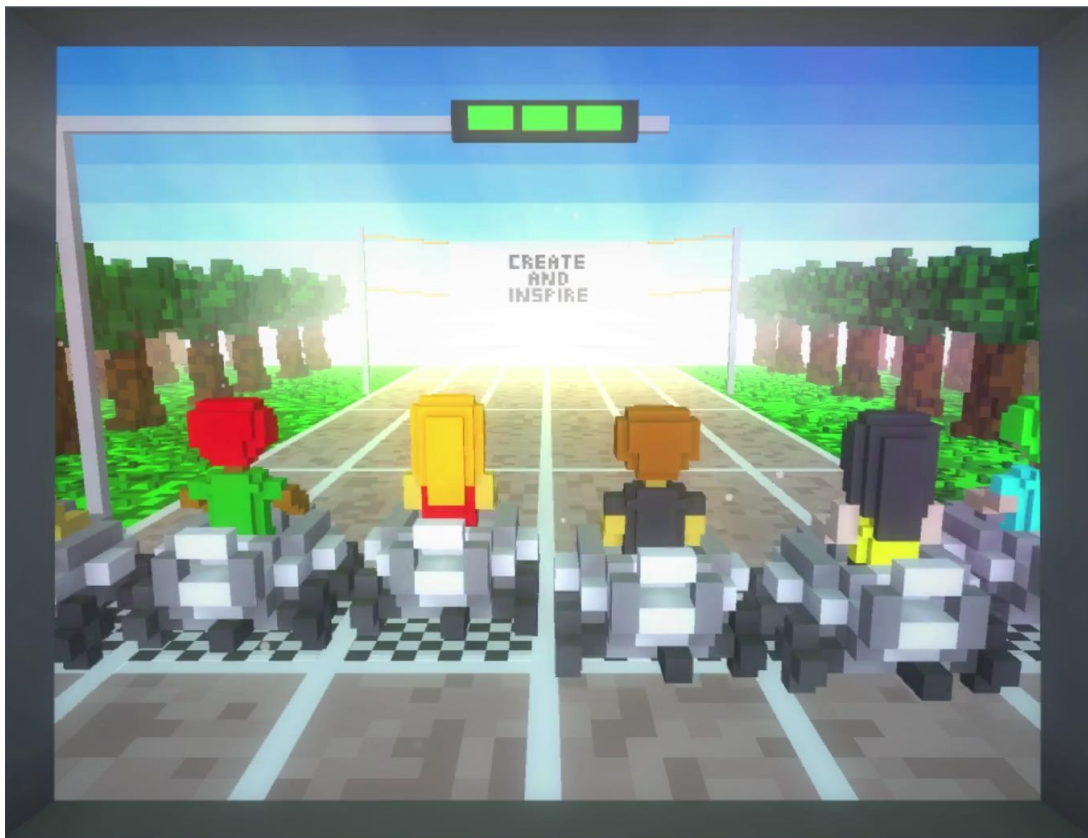
Assets of the jam:



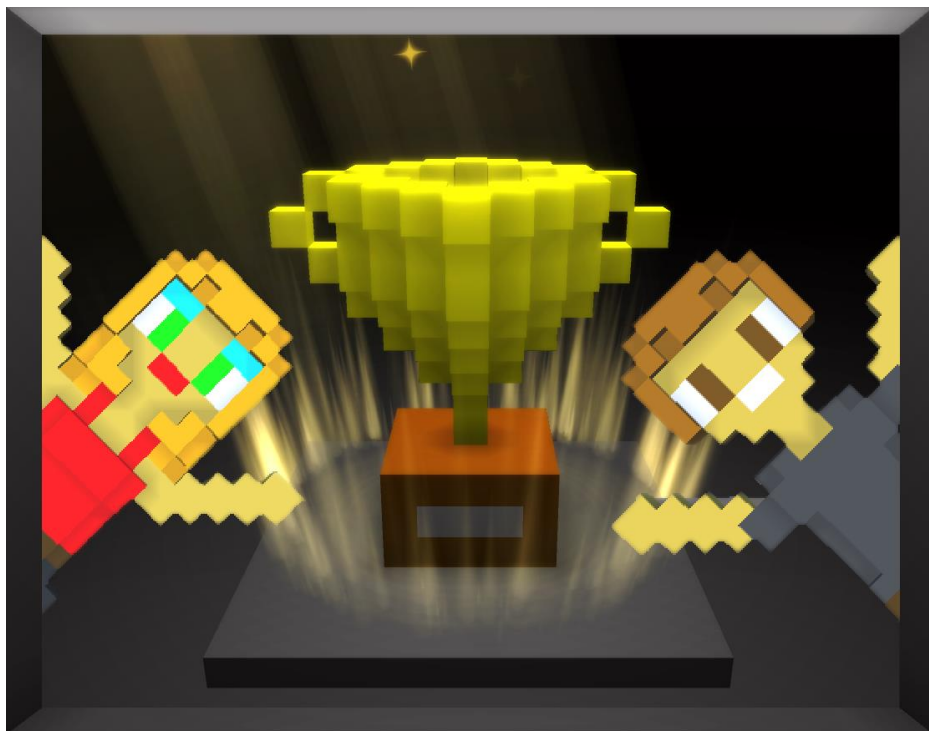
Advertisement jam banner



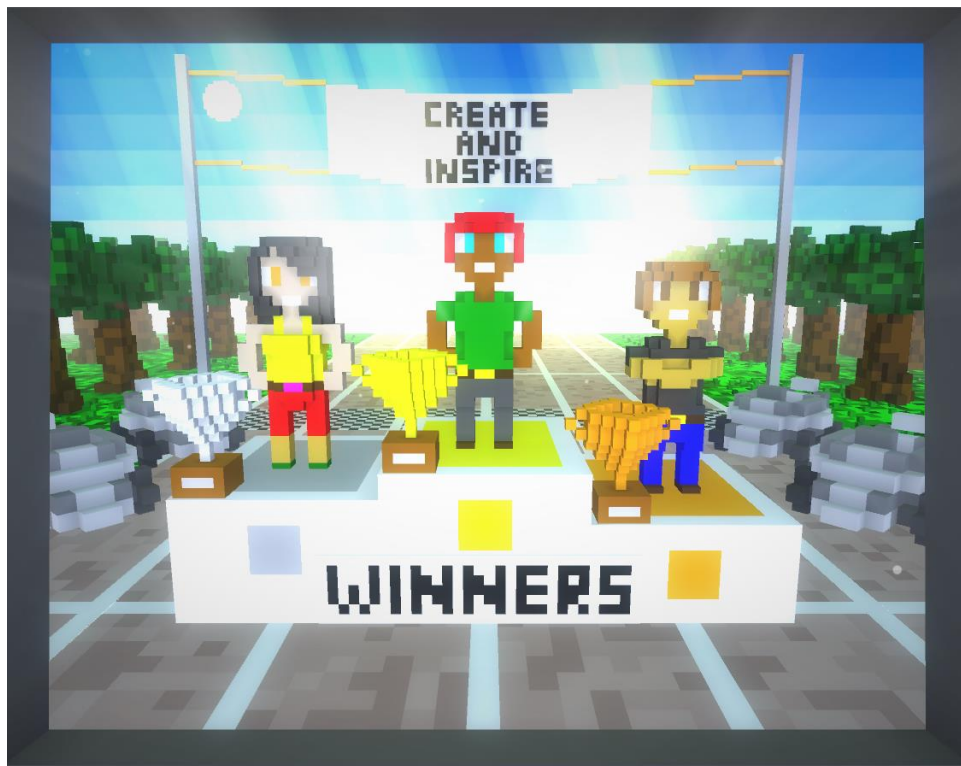
The countdown banner, a short time before the jam started



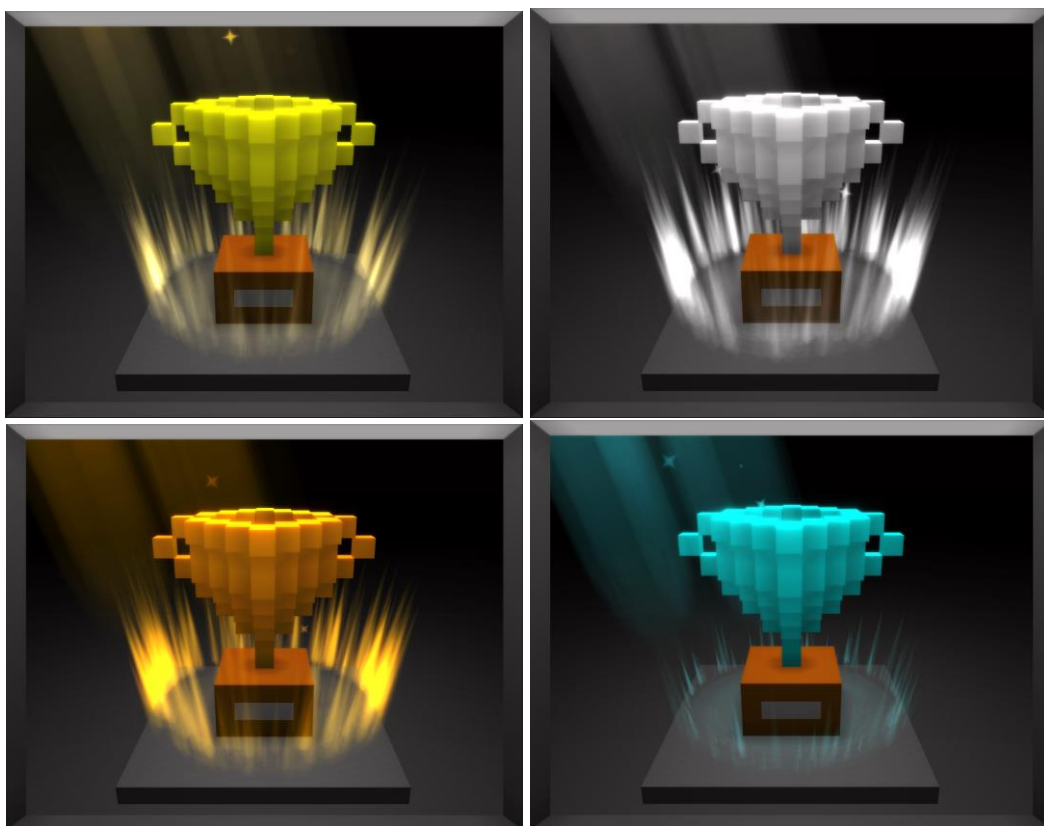
The animation was made for the start of the jam
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYO117dSXnM>



Motivational banner to show the stretch goal prizes



Announcement of the winners banner



Visual awards for the winners