Loot for Learning: Virtual Currency in a Game Design Program

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Coins, coins, coins

Let’s Google “eq platinum for sale”

Then came Bitcoin, now we have crazy ICOs (initial coin offerings), $250m*

Much of it is hype

Money has value if people think it has value. What does this ticket admit you to?

Political and social side of money not being addressed, money seen as a neutral agent whereas institutions of money are significant

In any case virtual money is a thing

*http://www.businessinsider.com/the-10-biggest-ico-fundraises-of-2017-2017-12/#1-filecoin-257-million-11

What's the potential of…

Imperial Coin

VS

Useful Coin

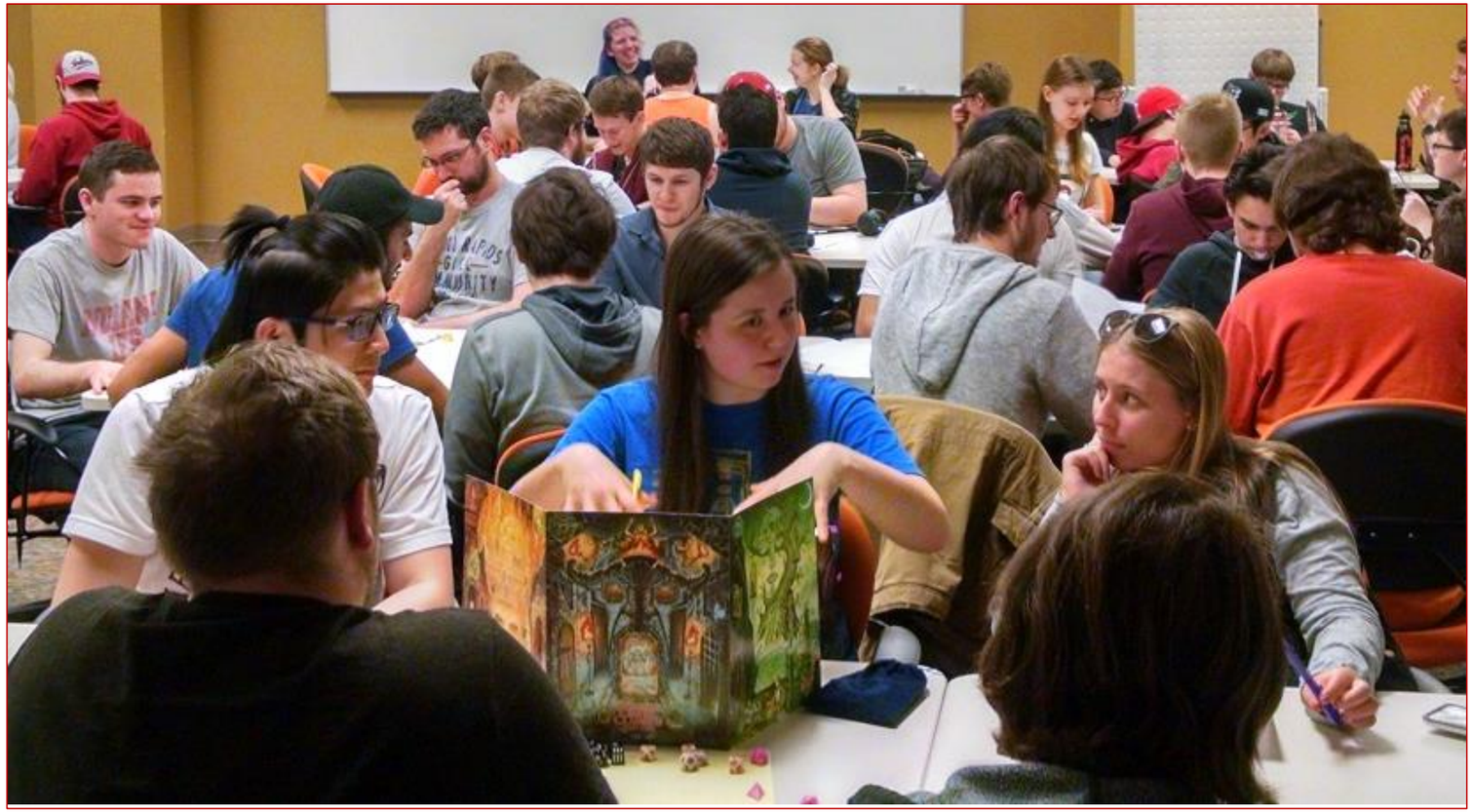
Local coin in an academic program

Indiana University

BS in Game Design

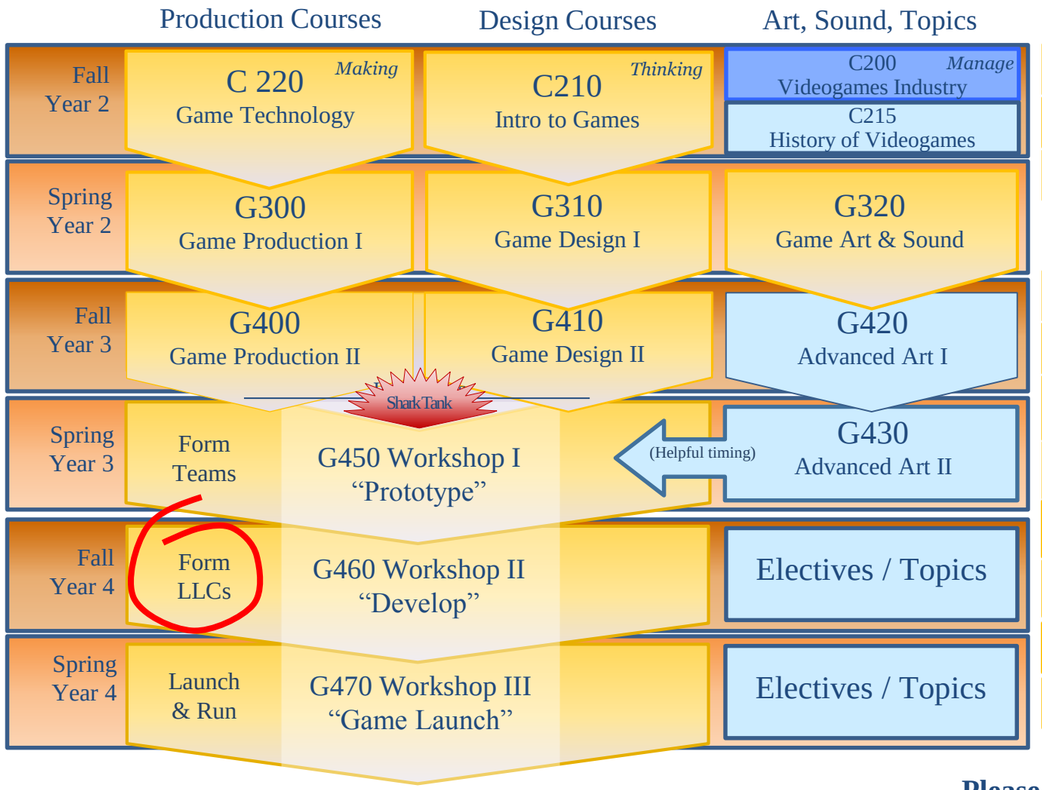
- Full undergraduate major

Launched 2015



Indiana University B.S. in Game Design Course Map

As of March 2017



Graduation

Other Requirements and Options

- C101 Media S&H
- Critical Approaches*
- Oral Communications
- English Composition
- Intensive Writing*
- Mathematical Modeling*
- Foreign language requirement (see bulletin)
- A&H: 4 courses* (CASE and major courses)
- S&H: 4 courses* (CASE and major courses)
- N&M: 4 courses* (CASE and major courses)
- *Thinking, Making, Managing**
- Diversity & Culture*

15 Credits of Electives
including 9 Credits from one of these areas:

- Art
- Design
- Management
- Programming
- Sound

Other Requirements
(GPA, residency etc.)

Key

- Pre-requisite
- Required
- Recommended
- Optional

*Fulfilled by various courses

Please see Bulletin for your year of matriculation and MSCH Academic Advisors for additional details.

Indiana's Game Design Approach

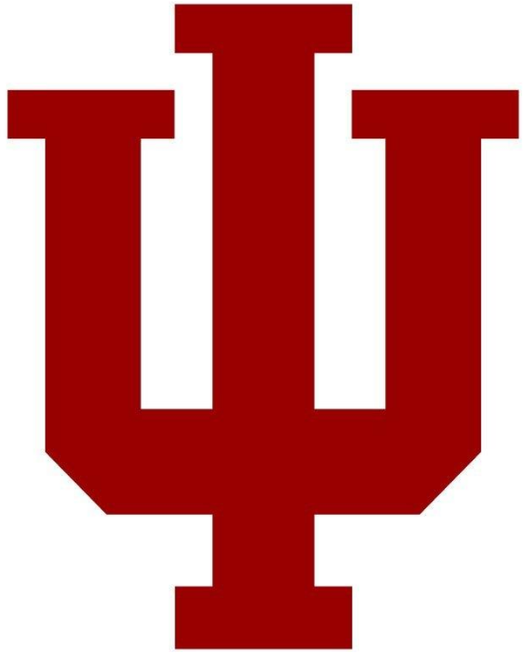
Work on 1 billion teams

Fail on (1b -1) projects

Publish that one project for real

Be crunchy

Be community



We are become system
Hoosier Gooses
The Media School

On Crunchiness

We teach games as systems: Parts / loops / wholes.

Every graduate knows enough programming, art, sound, production, and design to be dangerous in any of those areas

The design track emphasizes quant skills in a team setting: Excel, systems theory, game theory

Holy Scripture

The Prophet Mike Sellers

Games

Tori (Steam)

Witch of the Woods (Wordpress)

Slug Slasher (Steam)

Feedback

Indie devs

“Your students effectively have 1-3 years of industry experience” – senior producer*

“Are you guys hiring?”

80% placement

*Happy to tell you privately who it is

Community

Hoosier Games

- Student-run studio
- Incubator of lore-worthy scoping failures
- Invaluable learning site

CEWiT

- Center of Excellence for Women in Technology
- Game Design SIG

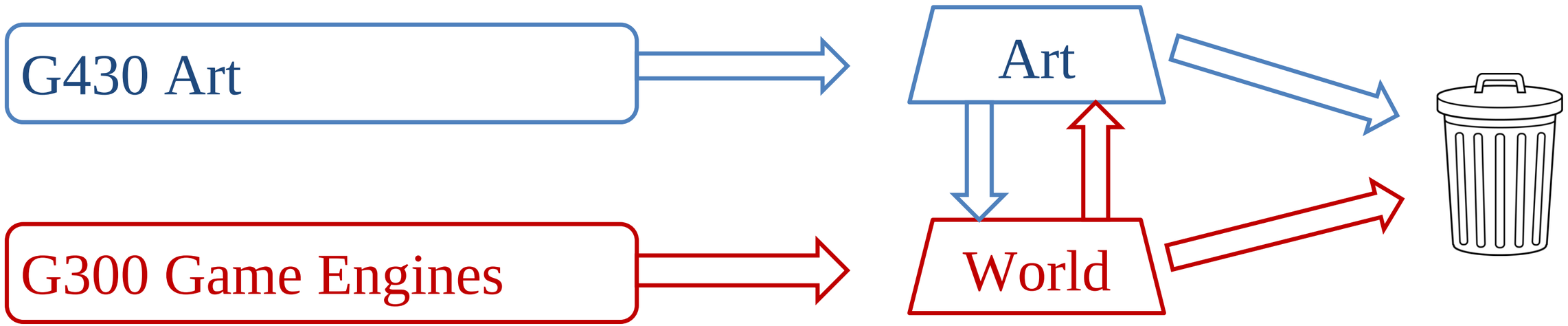
Game Camp

- 2D
- 3D
- Code Camp
- Girl Powered!

Slack community

This is where the story of the Crimson begins

The practical problem of collaboration across classes



A virtual currency can

- Facilitate student exchange
- Let students practice outsourcing / freelancing
- Make community thicker
- Be a platform for fun

The Crimson ₡

Soft launch in December 2016. Just started handing them out

Gradually developed policies for a year, let it evolve

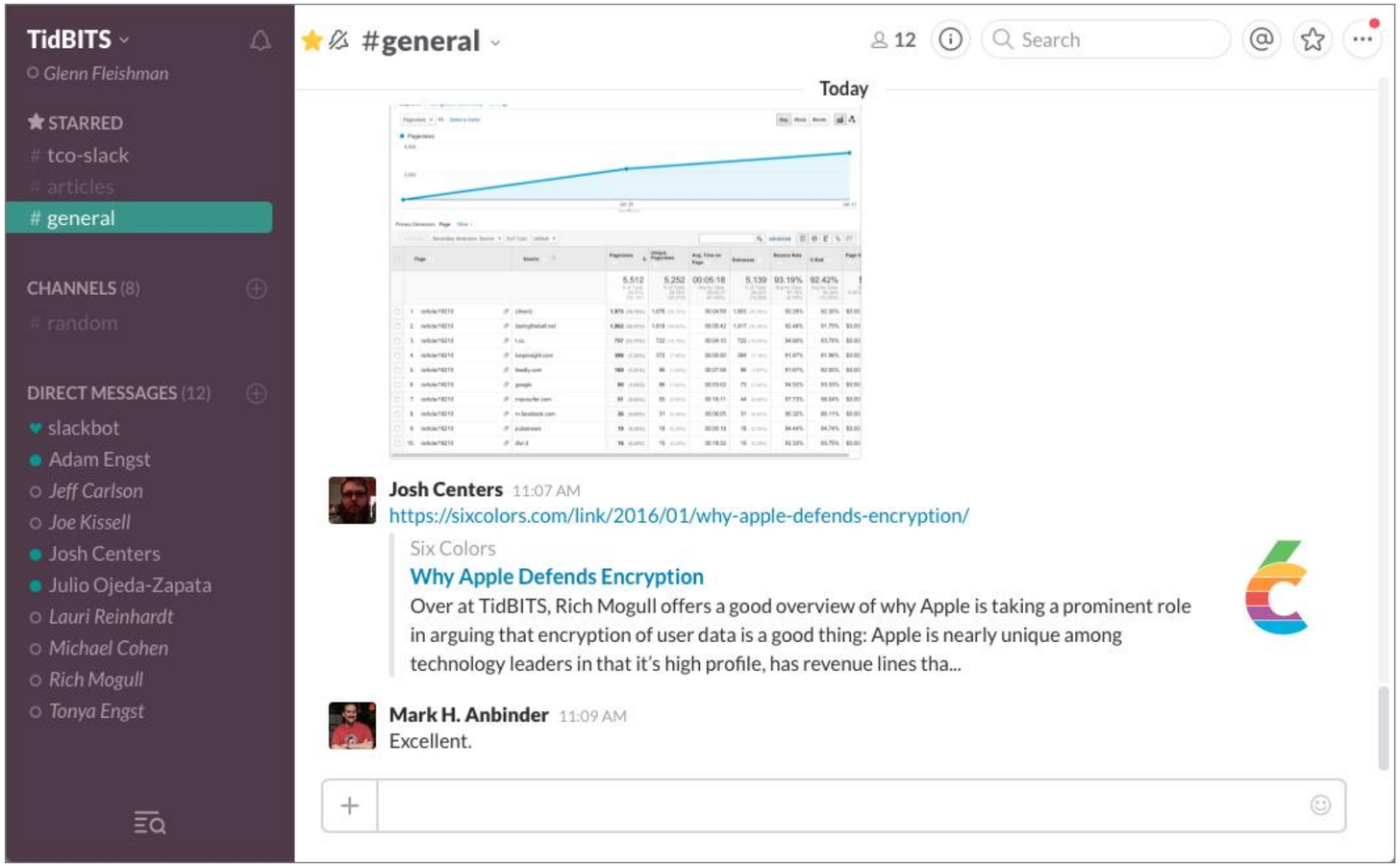
1. How we did it
2. What happened

Slack's API

A brief tour

Demonstration

- /tip
- Transactions

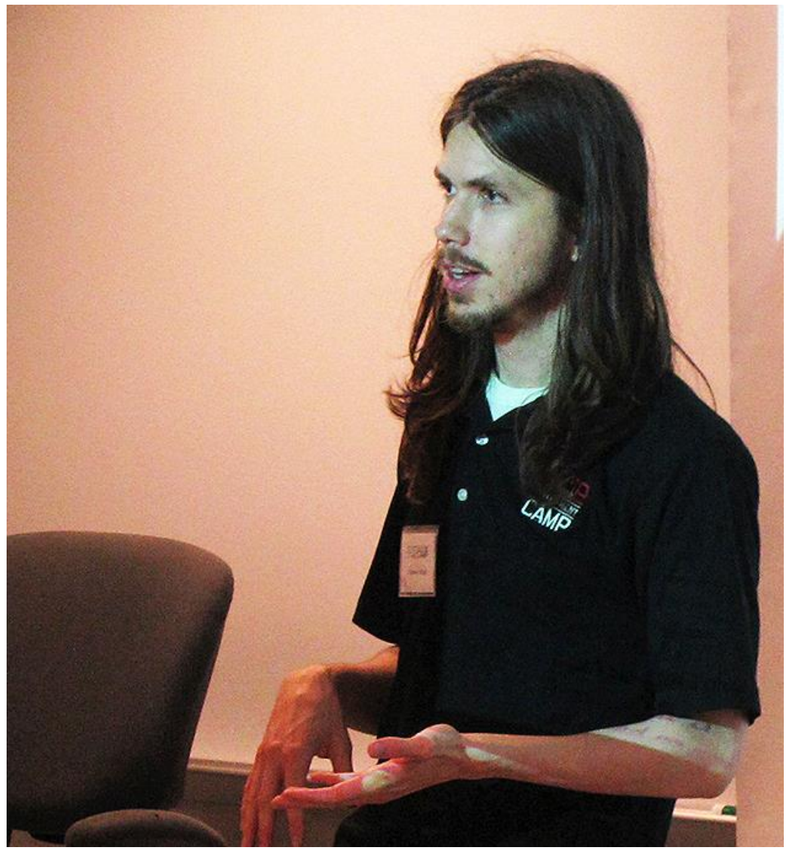


TECHNICAL OVERVIEW OF SLACK VIRTUAL COIN SYSTEM

Slack commands

Money in accounts is updated

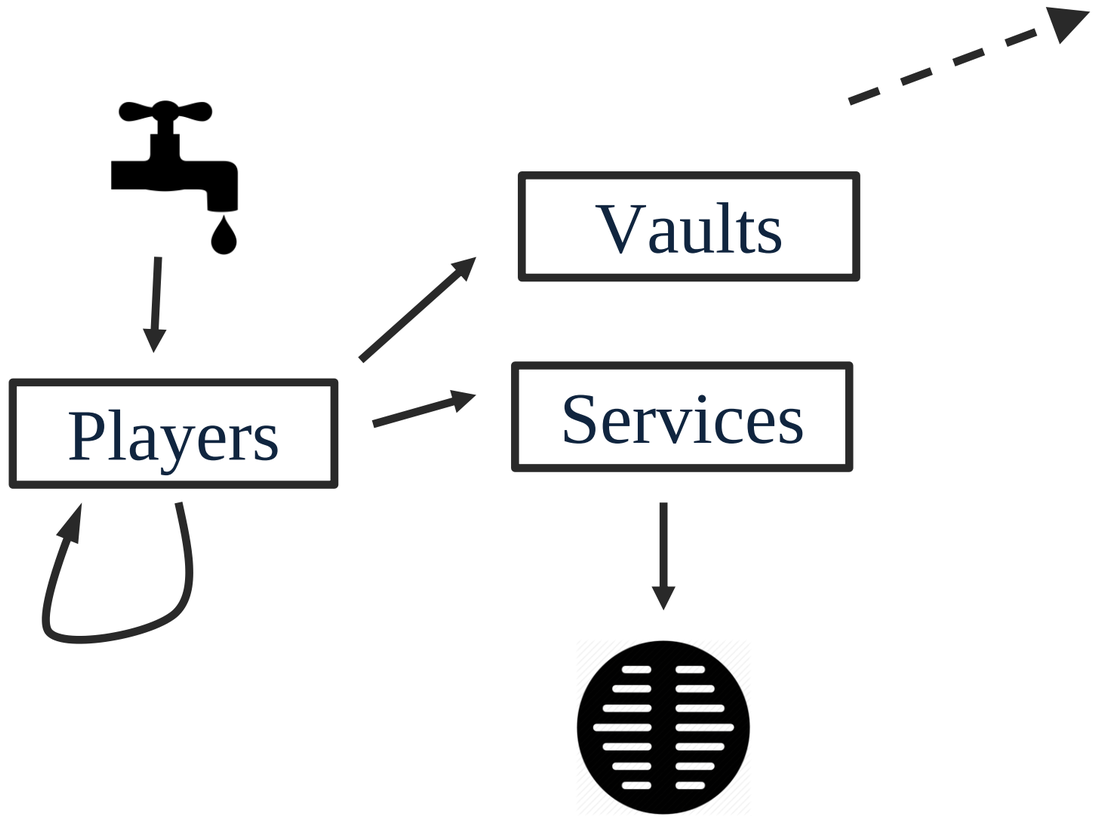
Chabane Maidi* created the Crimson, a virtual currency in Slack, in November 2016



cmaidi@indiana.edu

*Pronounced sha-bahn’ mah-ee’-dee

Crimson money system design



Faucets

- Tips for good answers in class, helping people, etc.
- Payment for jobs (give building tour)
- Hoosier Games Bank

Drains

- Assignment extensions
- Swag auctions
- Laptop Stickers

Student to Student

- Hoosier Games work
- Asset work
- Clerical / PR
- Playtesting
- There’s a grey area

Timeline Highlights

Date	Event
2017 Spring	
Jan 20	First sale. Unity hat for C22
Mar 24	First set of policies posted in #Auction
Mar 29	Dramatic appreciation: Tshirt sells for C2
Apr 10	Socks for C7
Apr 24	First S2S: Mentoring for a class
May 15	Graduating senior leaderboard. Highest: 109, lowest 0

Timeline Highlights

Date	Event
2017 Fall	
Summer	Student mines C all summer, gains over 200. Watching GDC videos, working for professor, students
Sept 6	Molag Bal sells for C70. Student looks up price on eBay ($90) and broadcasts “real-world value” of C
Sep 8	S2S: soundscape for C50
Sep 9	Saga of the Blue Rope begins

Mabyn and the Blue Rope

I posted this: “Quest. If you go room 030J and look out the North window, you will see a noble elm tree. Among its leaves there winds a blue rope, left by laborers. The rope saddens the wood-nymph who takes care of that grove, she has asked me to have it removed. I am anxious to retain the dryad's good will and fear misfortune should she become displeased. Therefore I will give C300 to the student who brings me that rope.”

3 minutes after posting this, a student was observed hauling a ladder down the stairs.

10 minutes after that, the rope was in my office and C150 given to two students.

Later that day…

"Hello, would it be possible for me to attend the next game design faculty meeting to discuss the Crimson system? Obviously, I can't speak for all students, but I know that for some (myself included), recent transactions have been disheartening and confusing. I am working on a presentation to articulate the issues I see/have faced and offer potential solutions.

The main speaking point is in the value of the crimsons and a want for payment parameters that appropriately reflect behaviors that should be encouraged in the program."

Jon Brown, Executive Producer of Hoosier Games

A policy discussion ensued

JB gave a powerpoint, with suggested price-points for faculty to follow.

Three days later, a faculty meeting was devoted to the Crimson pricing system and basic regulations evolved

Formal regulations announced October 3 and went into effect November 1 2017 as the “Crimson Monetary Regulation Act.”

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NU6L-O3leqSq2amHDWYALXR2AYw-MRctw-D6lGhbgWk/edit

Example text

3. Money Supply

1. Faculty will make windfall distributions of ₡ to small number of student groups each year.
    1. Student leaders of Hoosier Games and Workshop 1 projects will create organization accounts on Slack.
    2. A lump sum of will be deposited into these accounts:
        1. On September 1 for HG: ₡2000
        2. On January 1 for W1 projects: ₡1000
2. Professors in Design and Production 2 may grant amounts of up to ₡100 to individual students to facilitate outsourcing.
3. Professors may issue small ad hoc amounts for program contributions, side quests and the like. These side issues should not exceed ₡5 per student.

Meanwhile...

The blue rope situation persisted.

- People took sides, Mabyn (the dryad) vs the “Cult of the Blue Rope”
- There must be dwarves in the tunnels
- Artwork and performance gets devoted to it

- It turns out that a lot of the rope was still up there. The first students only got half of it.

- Videos
- Interviews
- Rituals
- ARG

The weird thing: the rope disappeared after the last ritual and nobody claimed doing it.

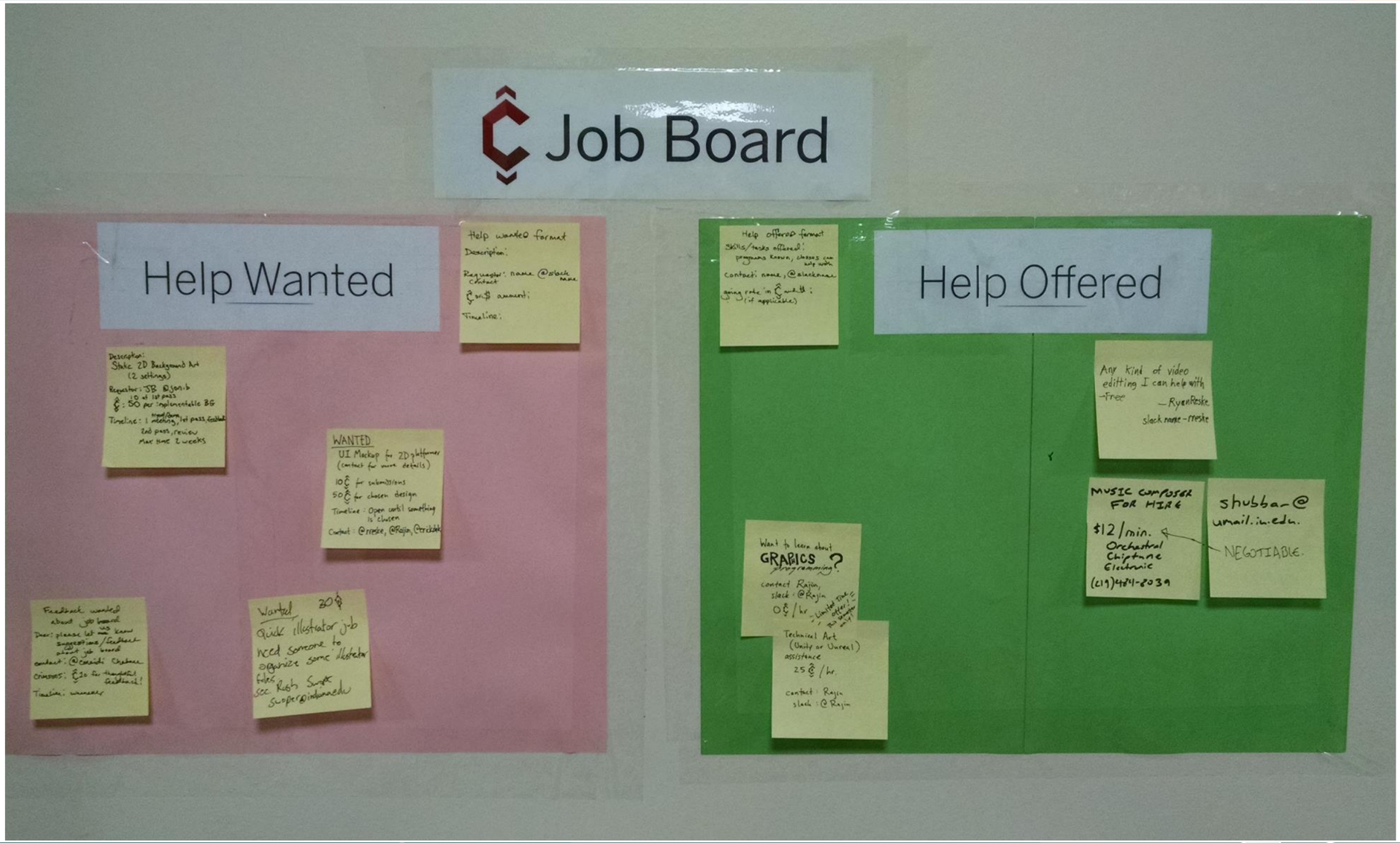
Autumn Almeida

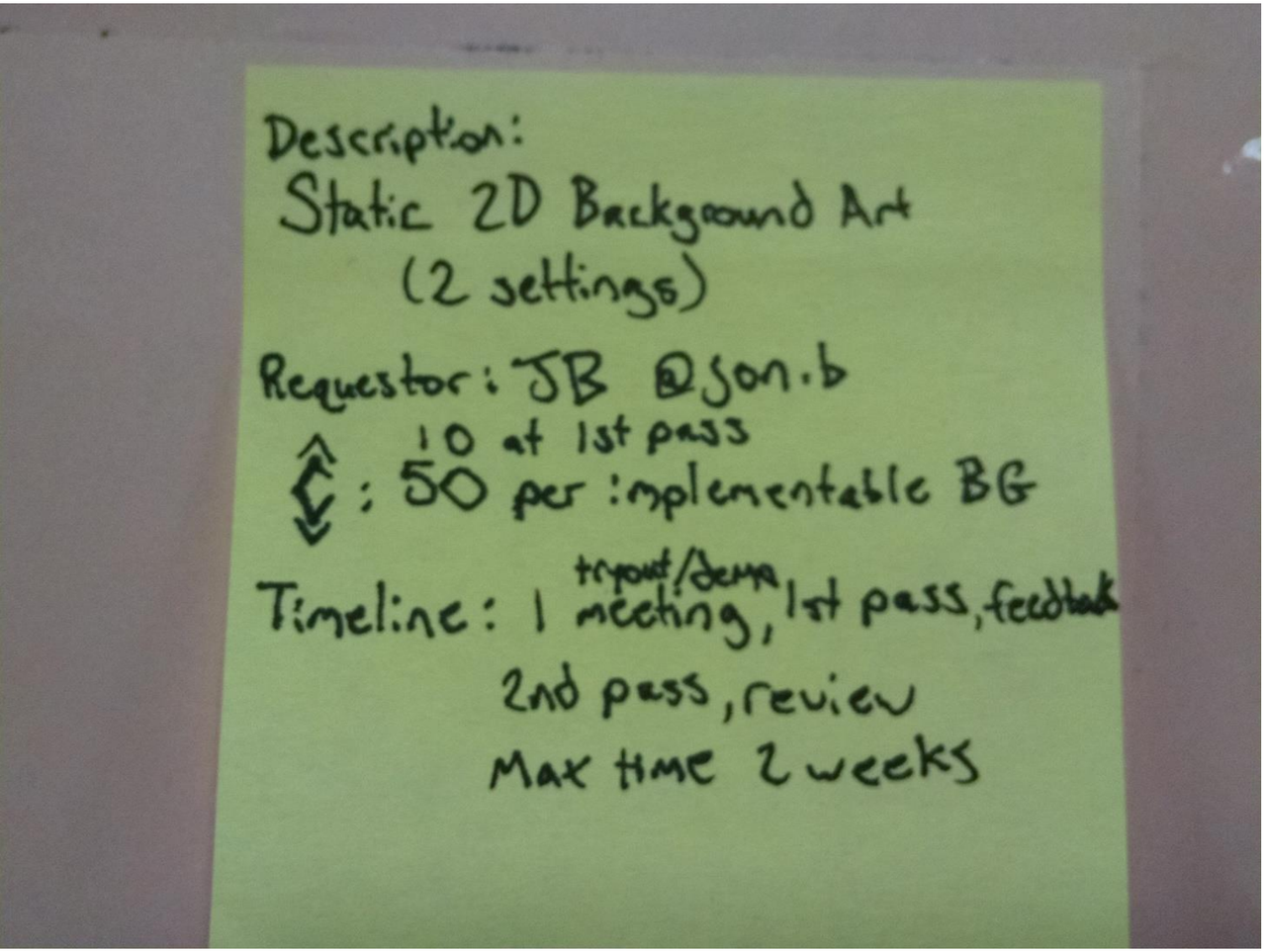
Steady State

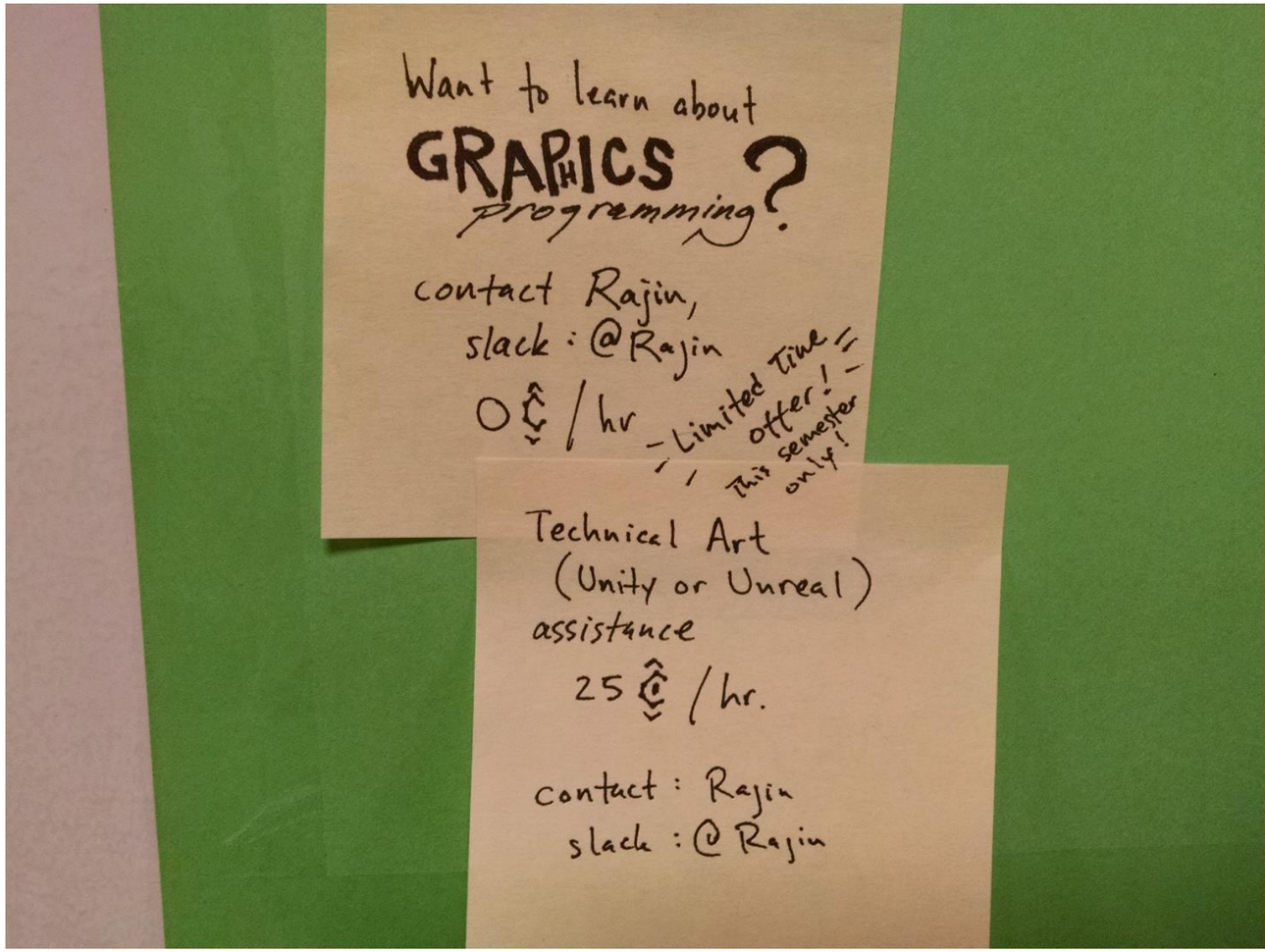
The system has settled down into the occasional auction and the occasional S2S exchange.

Most common faucet: Faculty giving C for specific class-related tasks

Most common drain: Students paying for extensions


Job Board
Help Wanted
Help Offered
Help wanted format
Description:
Requestor: name @slack name
Contact
Timeline:
Description:
Static 2D Background Art
(2 settings)
Requestor: JB @jon.b
10 at 1st pass
50 per implementable BG
Timeline: 1 meeting, 1st pass, feedback
2nd pass, review
Max time 2 weeks
WANTED
UI Mockup for 2D platformer
(contact for more details)
10 for submissions
50 for chosen design
Timeline: Open until something is chosen
Contact: @rreske, @Rajin, @crickdek
Feedback wanted about job board
Dear: please let us know suggestions/feedback about job board
contact: @emaidi Chabane
Timeline: whenever
Wanted 30
Quick illustrator job
need someone to organize some illustrator files
Help offered format
Skills/tasks offered:
programs known, classes can help with
contact: name, @slackname
going rate in
(if applicable)
Any kind of video editting I can help with
-Free
-RyanReske
slack name -rreske
MUSIC COMPOSER FOR HIRE
$12/min.
Orchestral
Chiptune
Electronic
(219)484-8039
shubba-@
umail.iu.edu.
NEGOTIABLE.
Want to learn about GRAPHICS programming?
contact Rajin,
slack: @Rajin
0 / hr
Technical Art
(Unity or Unreal)
assistance
25 / hr.
contact: Rajin
slack: @Rajin


Description:
Static 2D Background Art
(2 settings)
Requestor: JB @jon.b
10 at 1st pass
€: 50 per :implementable BG
Timeline: 1 tripout/demo meeting, 1st pass, feedback
2nd pass, review
Max time 2 weeks


Want to learn about
GRAPHICS programming?
contact Rajin,
slack: @Rajin
0€/hr
Limited Time!! offer! This semester only!
Technical Art
(Unity or Unreal)
assistance
25€/hr.
contact: Rajin
slack: @Rajin

Innovations

Hoosier Games uses Crimsons to motivate work

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1cZi-SkF64rzXSZGMedfMbp56Sc9rb26R-V6ljXFkSwI/edit?ts=5a73ab80#gid=0

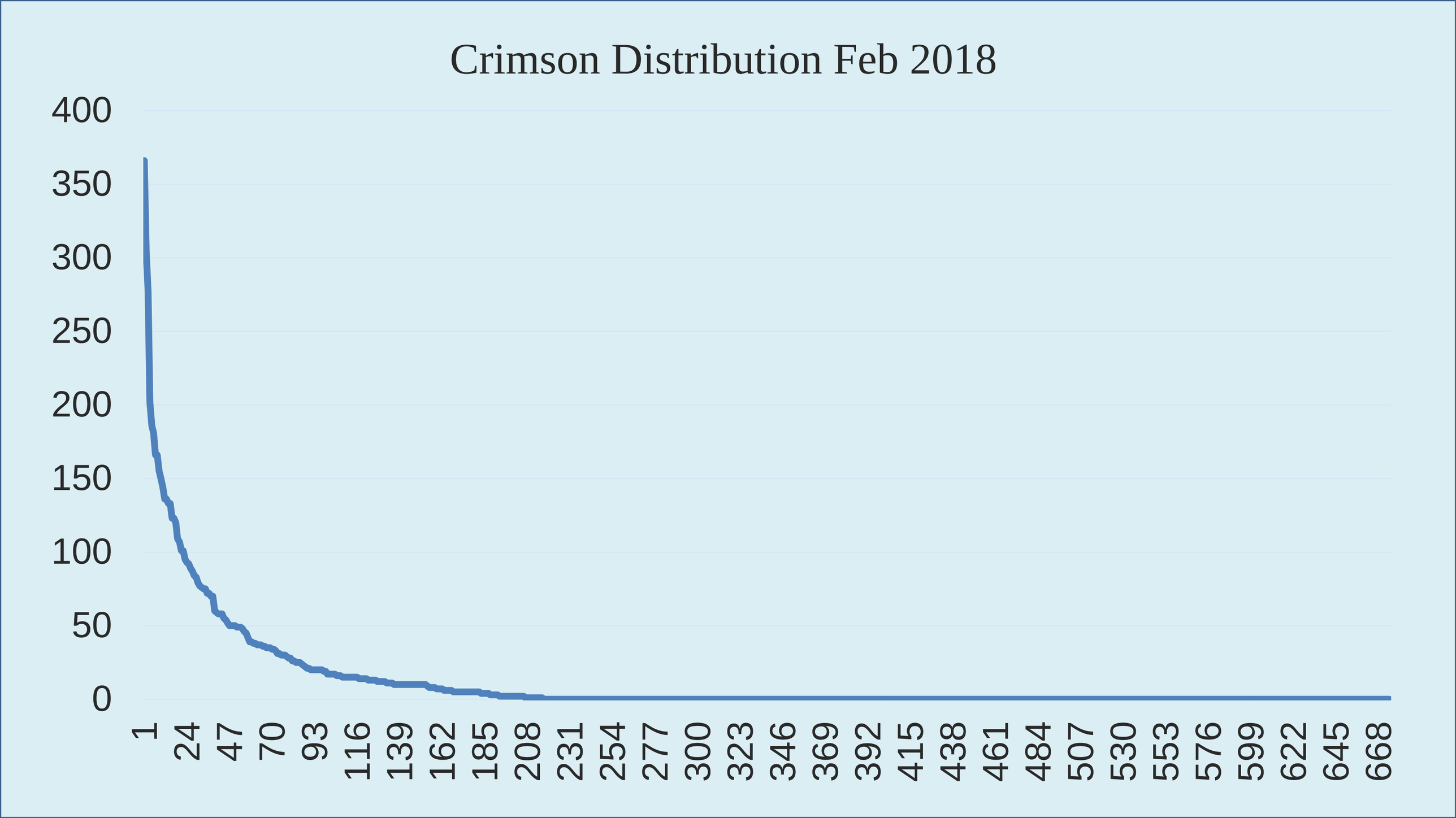
Romeo and Juliet

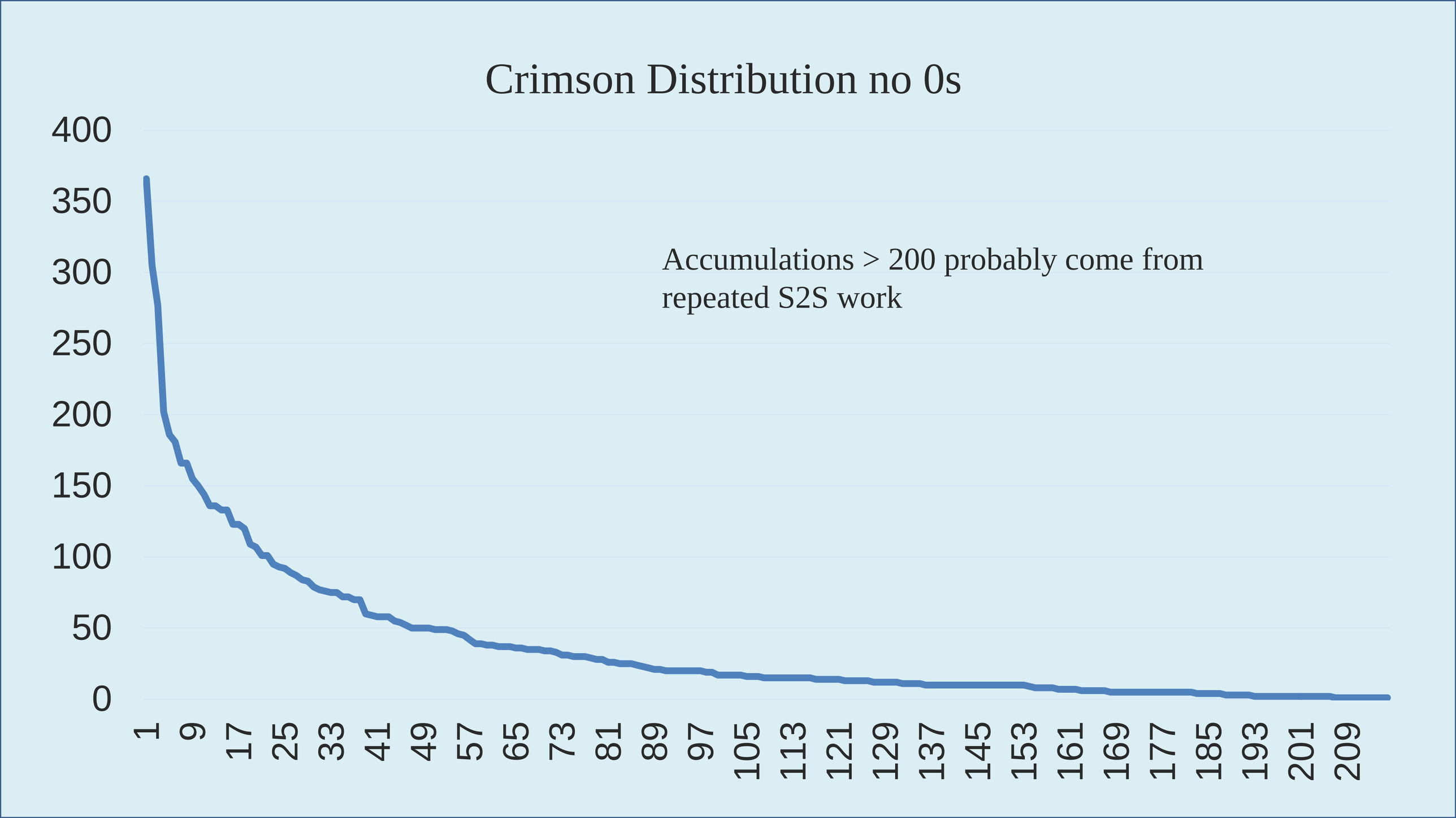
- R2J: C30 cutie ;)
- J2R: C1 A PENALTY FOR BEING TOO CUTE
- R2J: C1 Cuteoclastic!

Auction types: silent, “flurry” etc.

Charity (A gives B C10 for an extension)

Politics: Faculty gives C5 to male students who attended a CEWiT event


Crimson Distribution Feb 2018
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
1
24
47
70
93
116
139
162
185
208
231
254
277
300
323
346
369
392
415
438
461
484
507
530
553
576
599
622
645
668


Crimson Distribution no 0s
400
350
300
250
200
150
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17
25
33
41
49
57
65
73
81
89
97
105
113
121
129
137
145
153
161
169
177
185
193
201
209
Accumulations > 200 probably come from repeated S2S work

Matters for concern?

So, I need to get a ride home this Thursday sometime around 2:30pm. I'm willing to offer C10-15 and/or whatever dessert I happen to have around my house at the time (currently looks like chocolate chip cookies)

Rumor: $10 for C13 for an extension

Takeaways

- The Crimson is at least a harmless and fun community builder
- There is a S2S market
- Don’t let faculty go rogue
- Needs a steady stream of faculty-driven activity (payouts and auctions)
- Money is socio-political, not just technical
- Think more about small money

Questions?

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BS in Game Design

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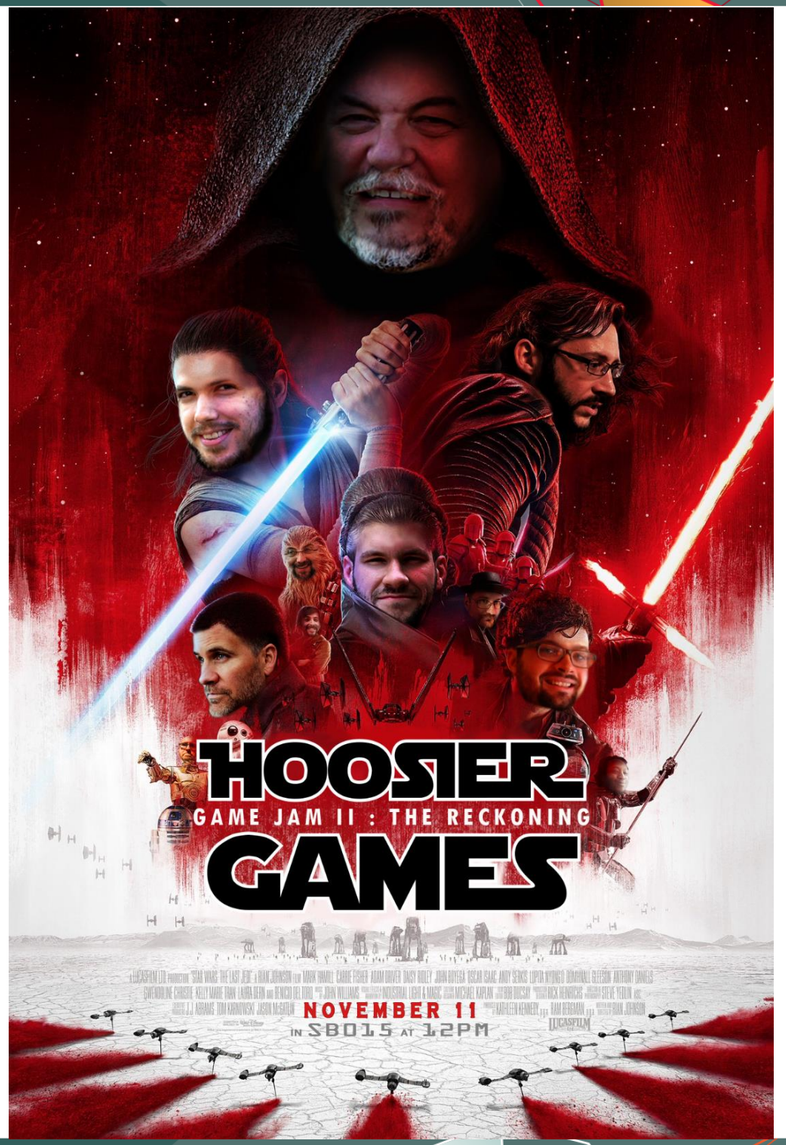
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