Space Engineers in Early Access: from Idea to Successful Franchise

Marek Rosa
Founder and CEO, Keen Software House

GDC 15 'Cn

游戏开发者大会·中国
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE CHINA
SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER
SHANGHAI, CHINA · OCTOBER 25-27, 2015

INTRODUCTION

- Miner Wars (released in 2012)

- **Space Engineers**
    - 1.5+ million copies sold
    - 2.5 years in development
    - 2 years on Steam Early Access

- **Medieval Engineers**
    - 15 months in development
    - 8 months on Steam Early Access
    - 200k copies sold

- **GoodAI**
    - General AI research and development company
    - Started 1/2014, announced to the public 7/2015

www.KeenSWH.com

Space Engineers

www.KeenSWH.com

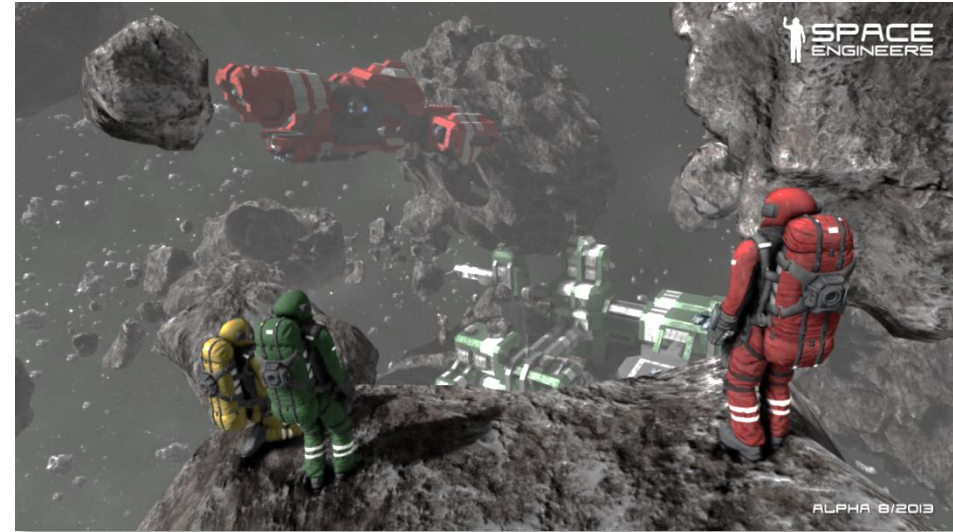# Medieval Engineers

World: Candor Fort
Author: Teigen

www.KeenSWH.com

WHY TWO EARLY ACCESS GAMES?

- "Engineers" franchise

- Chance to reuse our engine

  and experience

- Each game is beneficial

  for the other

www.KeenSWH.com

UPDATES

- Updates every week

- New features

- Weekly update videos

MARKETING FOCUS

- Viral marketing and public relations

- More on the community than the press

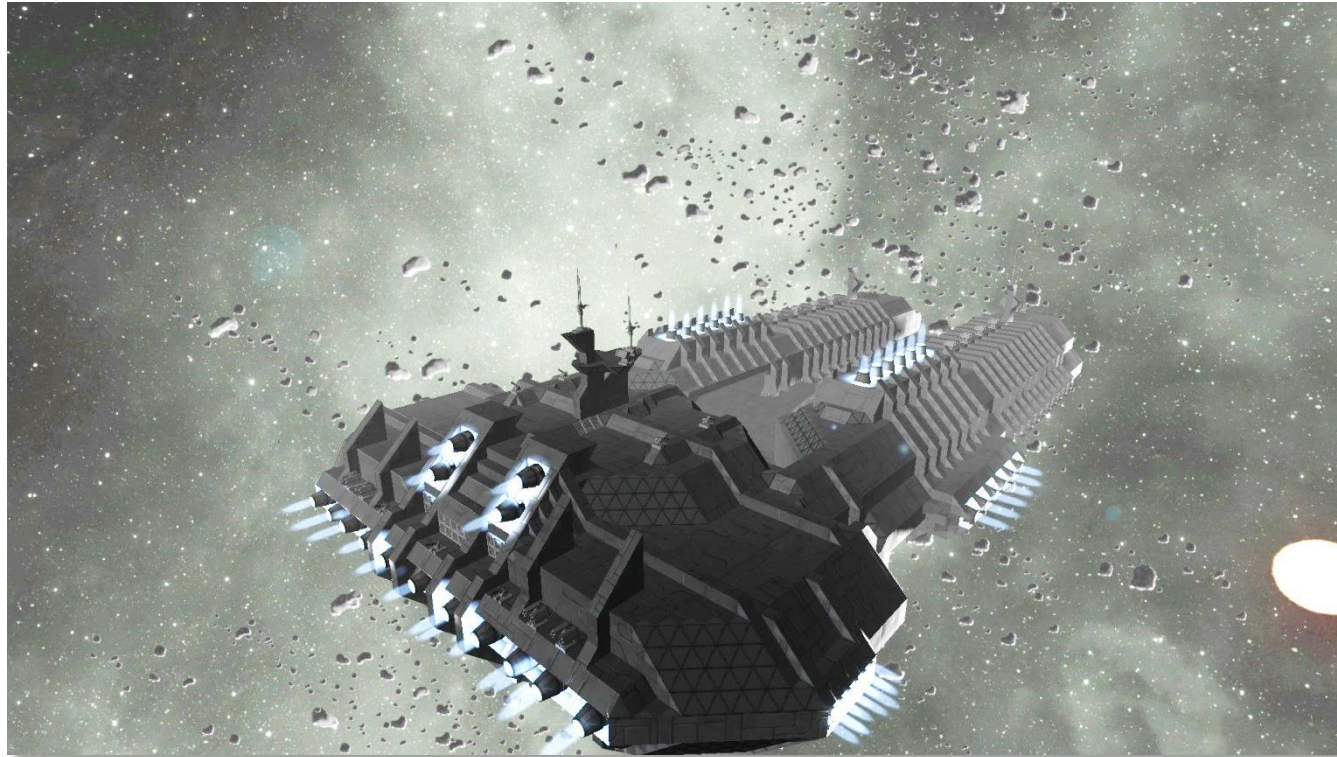- Involve the community in making our games better and more viral

www.KeenSWH.com

DEVELOPING IN EARLY ACCESS

- Feedback

- Weekly updates – Tuesdays and
    Thursdays

- Parallel development

- Playable game at every moment
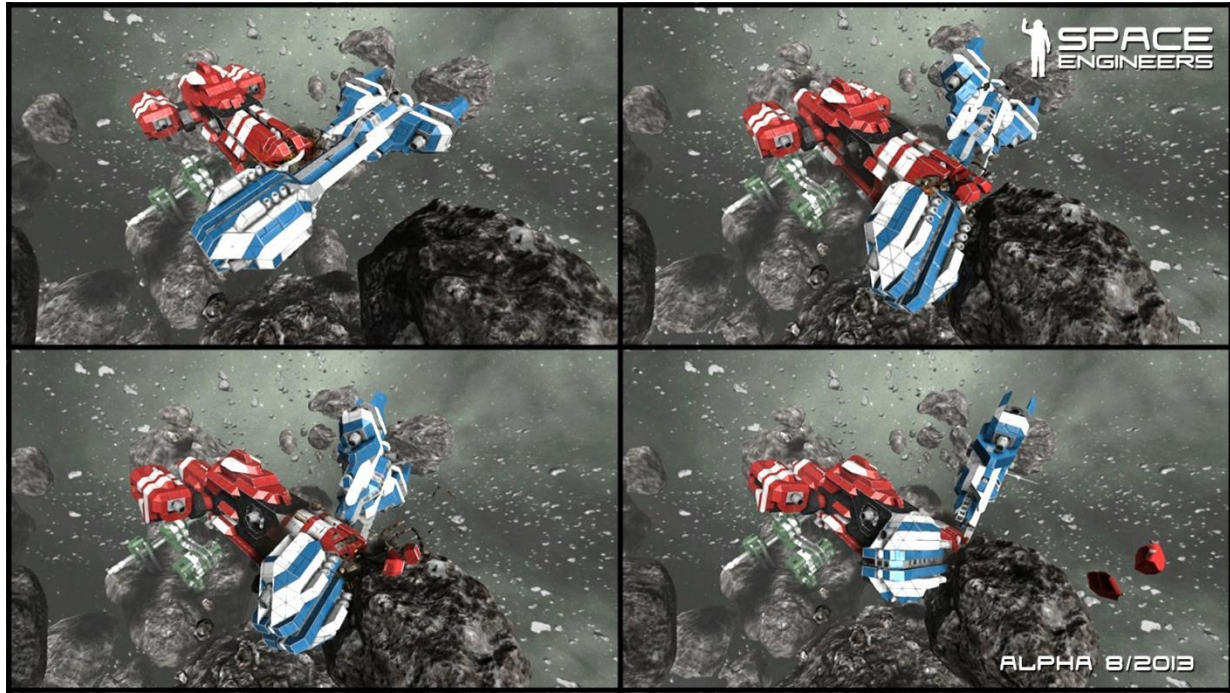
- Sandbox object-oriented mechanics

- Testing

www.KeenSWH.com
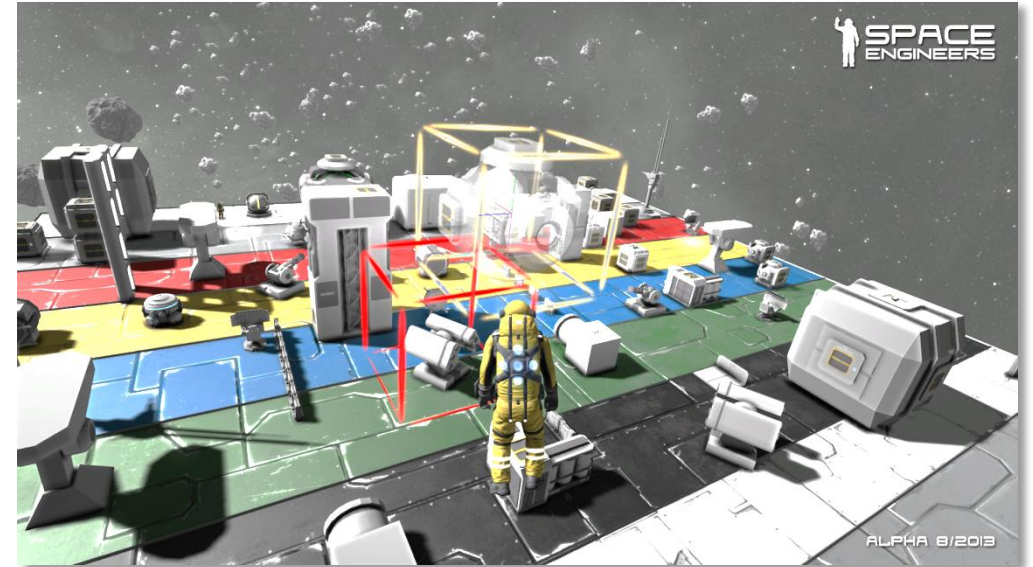
PROJECT PLAN

- Roadmap – our vs. community suggestions

- How do we decide?

www.KeenSWH.com

PRIORITIZATION

- Deadline / Scope=features/ Quality
- Prioritization / attention management
- Important tasks first
- Decide what not to do
- Only features with high ROI
- Dynamic to-do list

www.KeenSWH.com

ADVICE

- Game business = almost a lottery

- Trends are hard to predict

- Keep trying, testing, experimenting – iterate as fast as possible without running out of money

www.KeenSWH.com
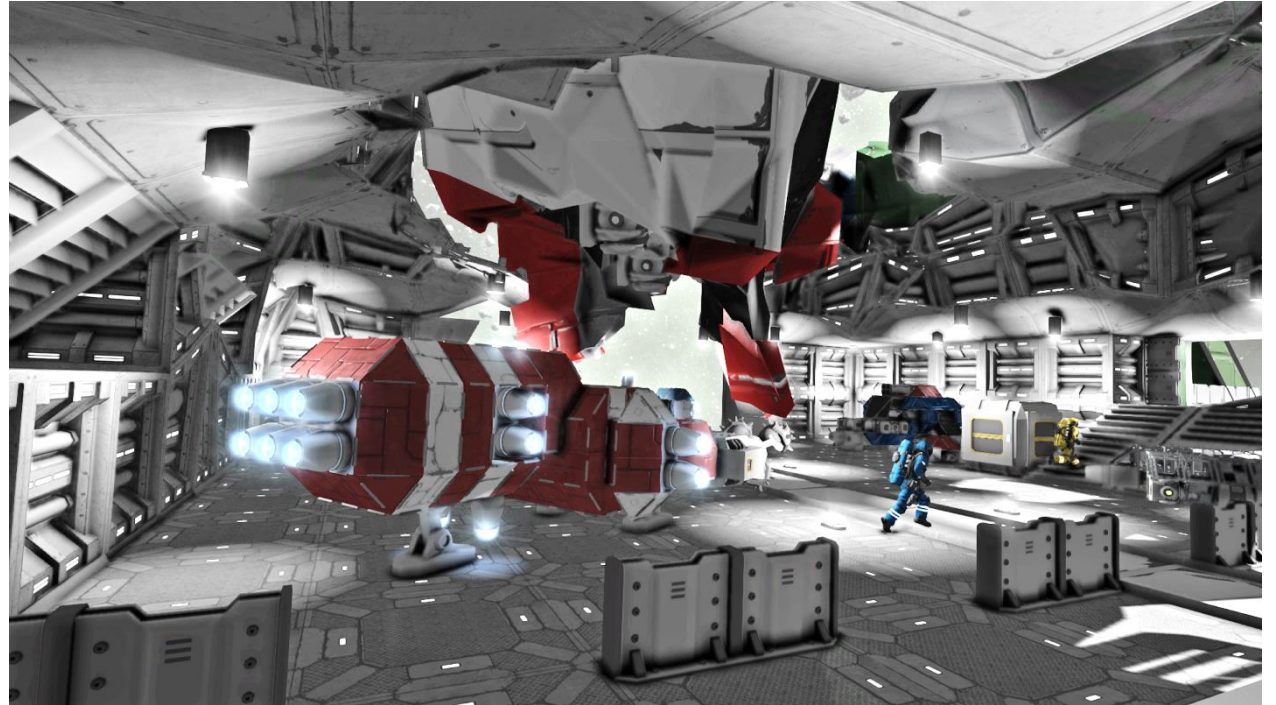
DISADVANTAGES OF AN EARLY ACCESS BUSINESS MODEL

- Downside
  - customer never pays more than the base price
  - Difficult to monetize

- Upside
  - A viral game is spread by the community = less marketing work for us
 - Satisfied customers will come later (for a new game)

www.KeenSWH.com

COMMUNITY

- Community managers

- Blogging – be open and honest, and explain every potentially controversial decision (anticipate what the community is going to ask)

- Use for viral promotion of the game

Medieval Engineers

World: Castle City
Author: Allen Walker

INTERESTING FACTS

- SE started as a sequel to Miner Wars

- We didn't plan the deformable and breaking physics – it came as a byproduct

- We didn't originally plan weekly updates

- Performance limits

KEEN SOFTWARE HOUSE™
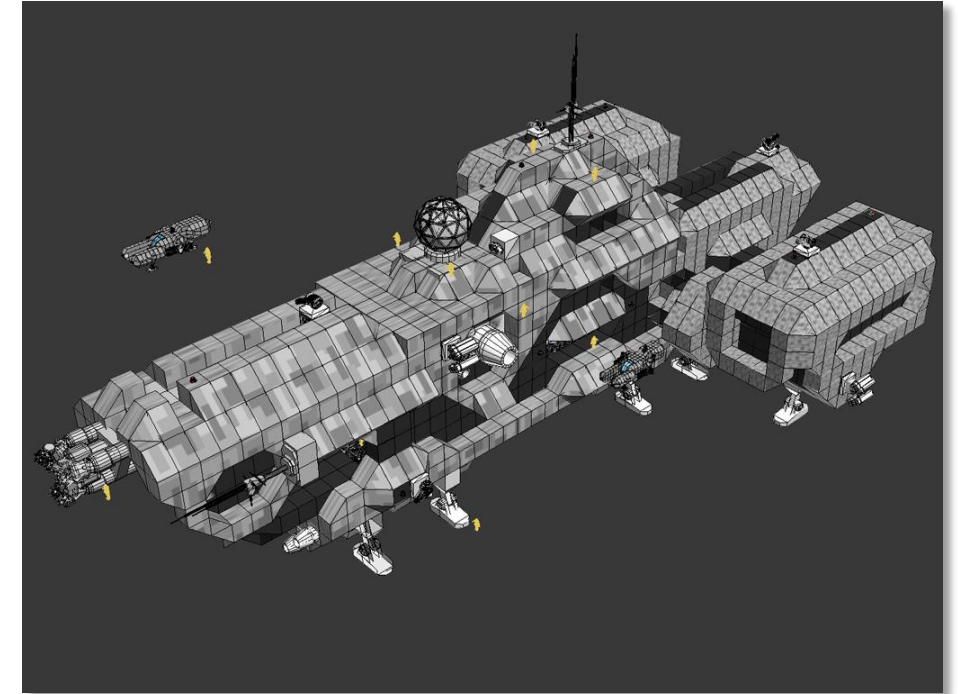
VRAGE 2.0

- C#

- Havok

- Flexible

- We understand it

- We can optimize it

- Open source

powered by VRAGE

KEEN SOFTWARE HOUSE

Questions?

www.KeenSWH.com

blog.marekrosa.org