Serious Games as The Next Level for your career

Agenda

- Intro
- About Me
- Serious Games?
- Why Serious Games
- How Serious can be Cool
- Q&A

GDC

Intro

- As this is the Game Career Seminar, I assume everyone here is looking to work in the game industry


- It can be hard to "break in" to the game industry
  - It's very centralized – Bay Area vs. Detroit
  - We do cool stuff, so job applications are like battle royales, applicant pools are very large

GDC

- You're at this talk to hear about another path
  - Not always as flashy
  - Sometimes overlooked
  - Still really cool if you do it right
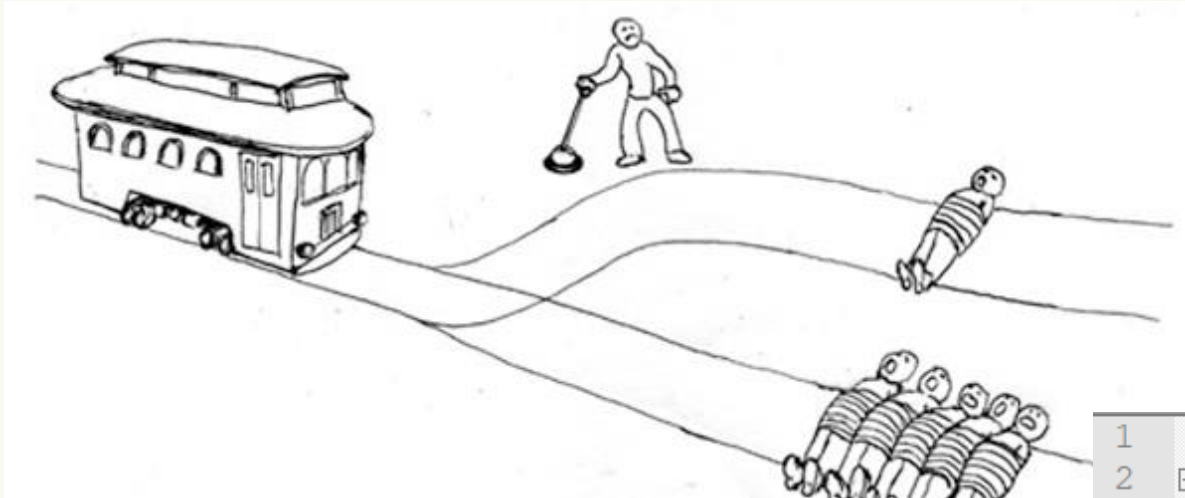


```
1    private void Road()
2    {
3        //start your path
4        Process p = new Process();
5        p.StartInfo = new ProcessStartInfo(OtherRoad);
6        p.Start();
7        //your goals
8    }
9
10   private void OtherRoad()
11   {
12       //change your outlook
13   }
```
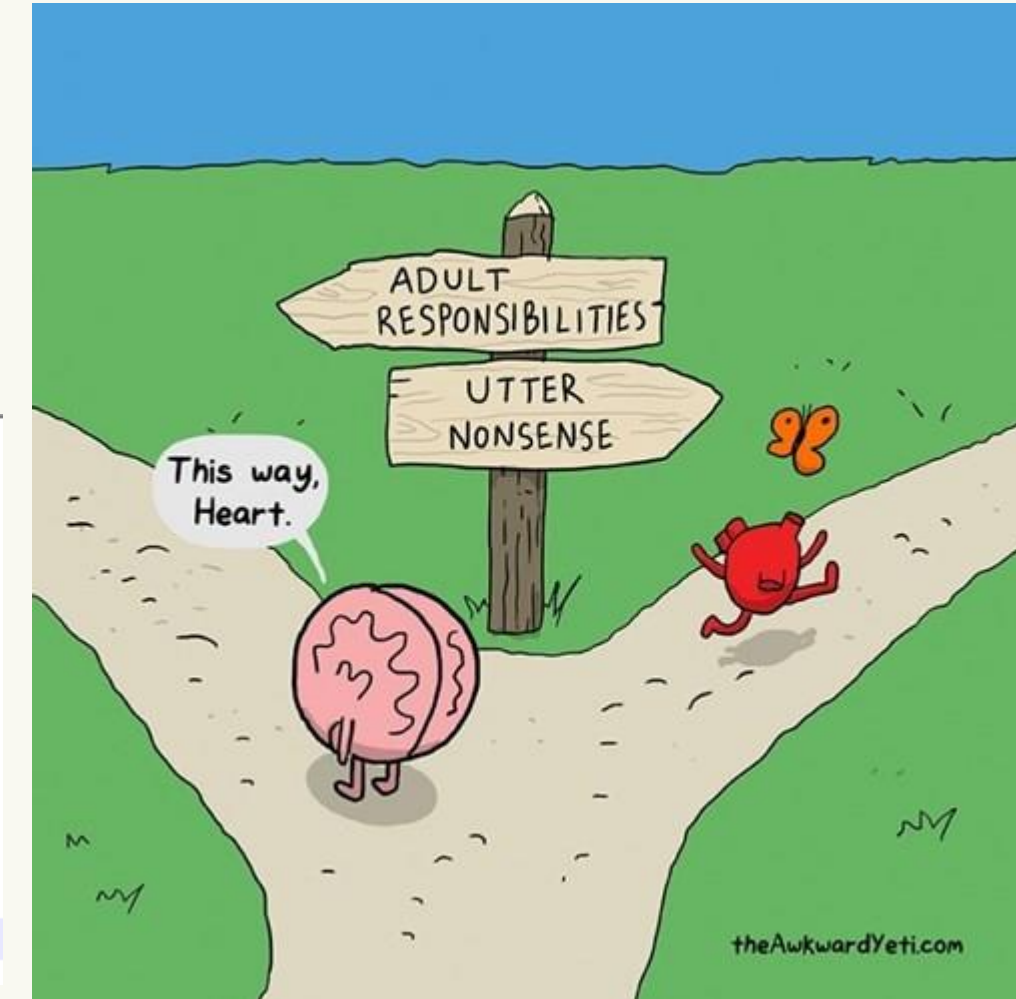
About Me

- From Detroit

- Went to Michigan State University for Computer Science and Game Design
  - Graduated in 2010
  - Somehow also learned Japanese because it seemed right

I lived here for a bit
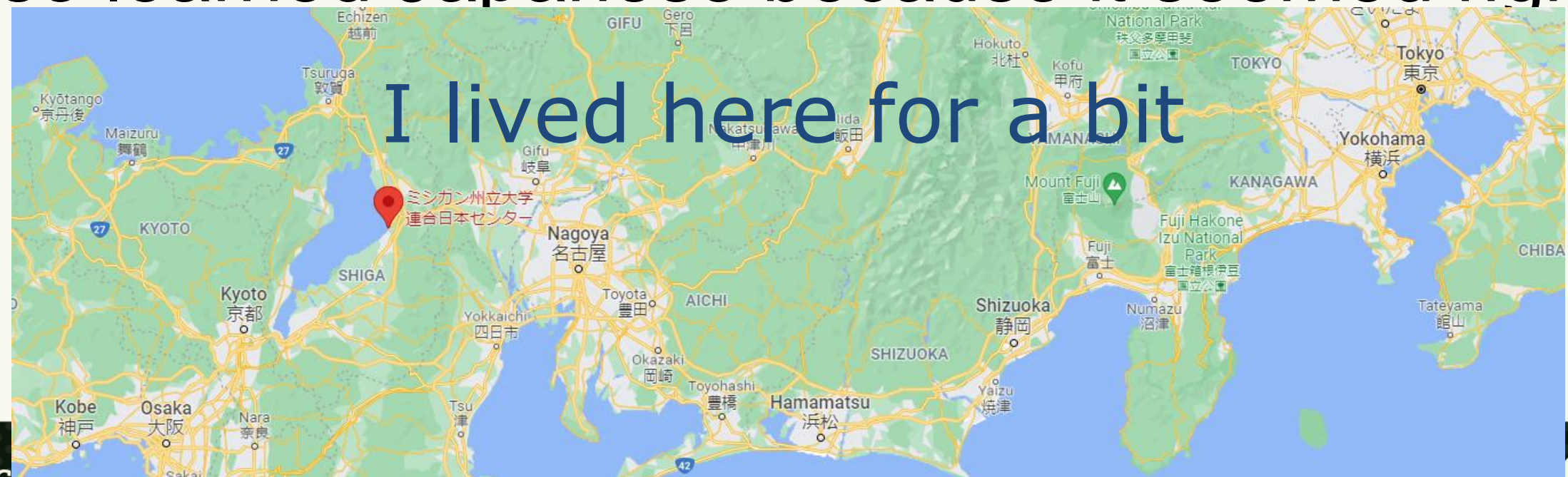
- Briefly worked in games when it was "bigger" in Detroit
  - I worked on *the* Man vs. Wild Game
    - Game of the year, I know
  - Game industry largely left (roughly 2011)
    - I'll rant about that over a beer

- Student loans, lack of support in the major hubs, other factors made it difficult to pick up and move


Coyote $21,000 in debt after wandering through university campus

VANCOUVER (The News Desk) — A coyote that has been seen wandering around the campus of the University of British Columbia has suddenly found himself with...
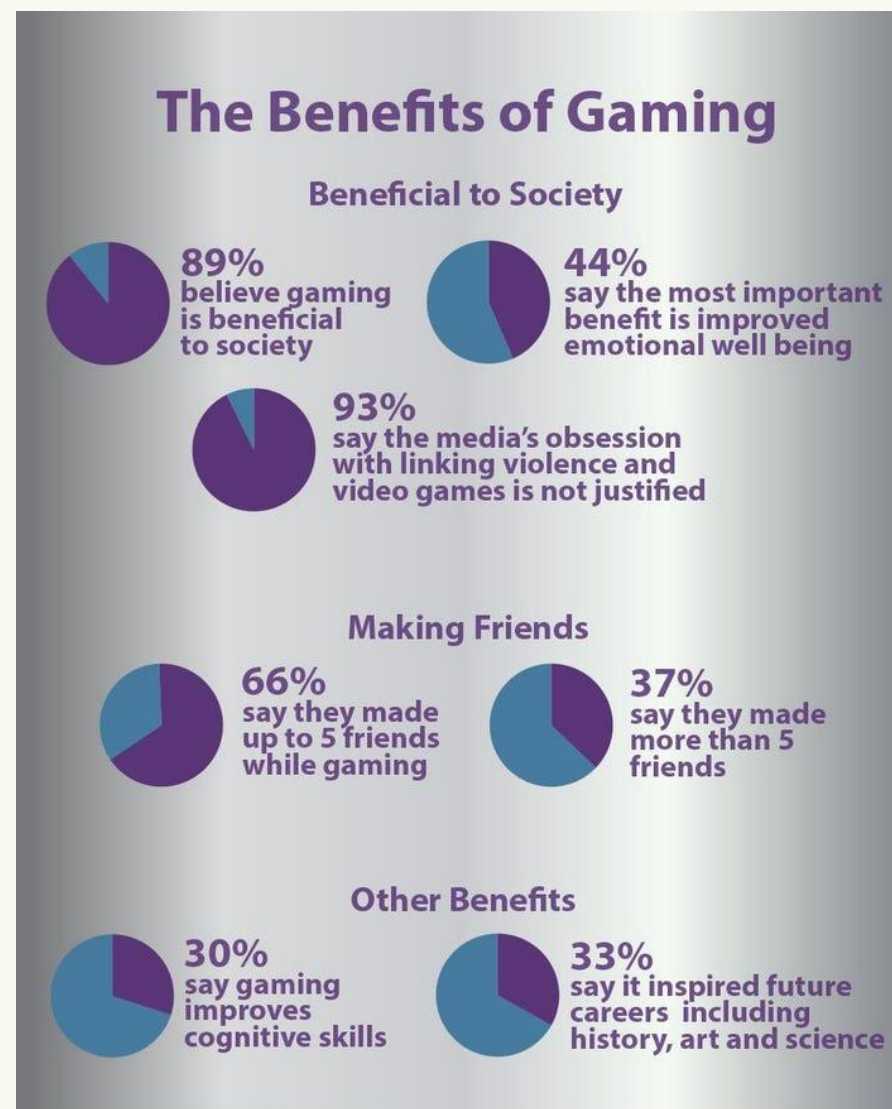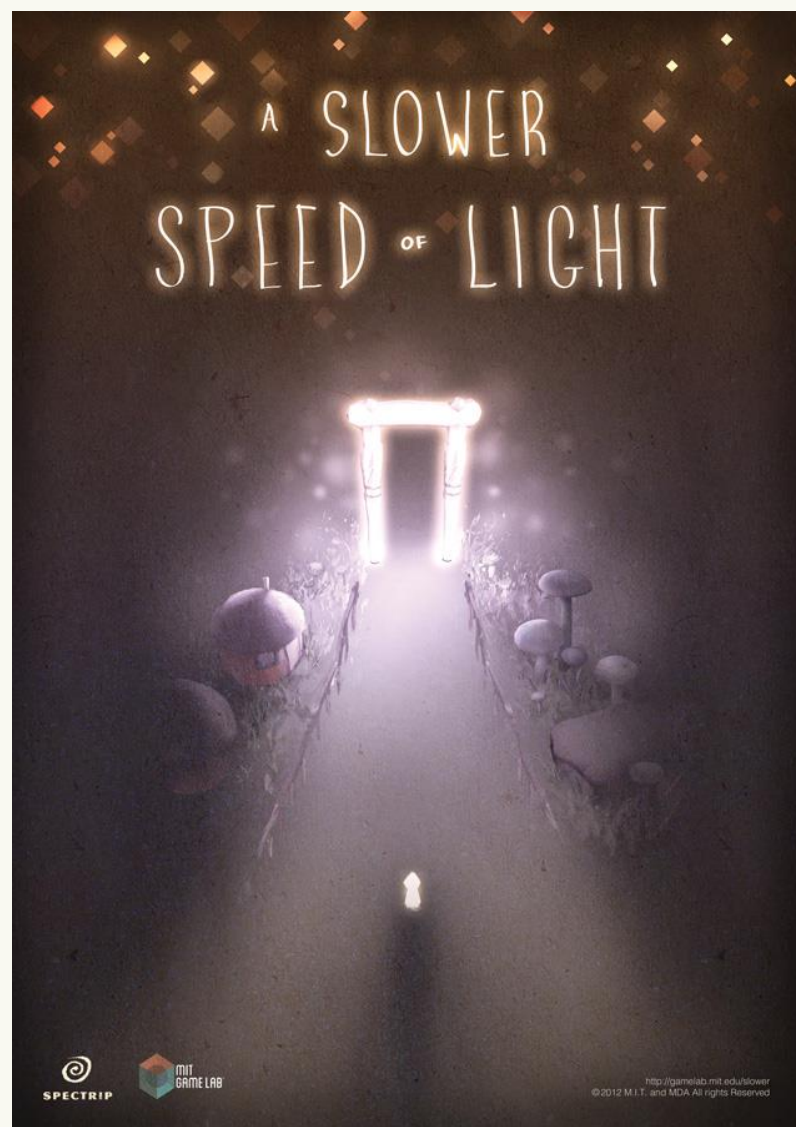
SYRUPTRAP.CA

Serious Games?

- The use of games/game technology for non-entertainment purposes
  - Education
  - Training
  - Rehabilitation
  - Research
- Serious != boring
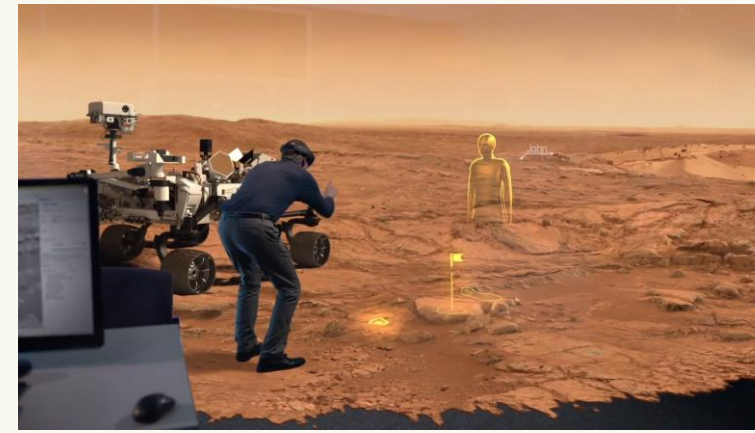
Why Serious Games

- First and foremost, do some good

Future Realities Summit: How NASA Has Translated Aerospace Research into Biofeedback Game Experiences

John E. Muñoz (Game Designer & Postdoctoral Fellow, Personal)
Alan Pope (Distinguished Research Associate, NASA)

A SLOWER SPEED of LIGHT
SPECTRIP • MIT GAME LAB
http://gamelab.mit.edu/slower
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The Benefits of Gaming

Beneficial to Society

89% believe gaming is beneficial to society

44% say the most important benefit is improved emotional well being

93% say the media's obsession with linking violence and video games is not justified

Making Friends

66% say they made up to 5 friends while gaming

37% say they made more than 5 friends

Other Benefits

30% say gaming improves cognitive skills

33% say it inspired future careers including history, art and science

Forbes

Leveraging Games in the Fight to Protect Local Cultures

Catherine P. Foster (Program Director , Cultural Antiquities Task Force, U.S. Department of State)
Kate Edwards (CEO / Executive Director, Geografy / Global Game Jam)
Paul J. Fischer (Senior Program Officer / Contractor, Cultural Antiquities Task Force, U.S. Department of State))
Victor Bankler (Lecturer / Game Designer, University of Skövde / An Otter Team)
Vania Castagnino (Event Coordinator / Creative Director, Sweden Game Arena / An Otter Team)
Joaquin Concha (Game Developer / Artist, Kay Pacha Studio)
Mateo Alayza (Game Director / Lecturer, Hermanos Magia / University of Lima)

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"Serious" Me

- A lot of code is the same to me

- My motivations:
  - cool problems
  - cool toys to play with
  - a childhood spent playing games since before I could effectively read
- So, I applied what I loved to what I did
  - Utility Theory AI as a basis for a Deli Kiosk
  - Using game UI as a basis for project UX at various places
  - "Hey, maybe we can use 3D graphics for this"
- I never shut up about how I could use games to make serious things better


GOOD NEWS EVERYONE!

I'VE TAUGHT THE TOASTER TO FEEL LOVE.

Which leads me to my current role…

- I currently lead a team of developers using game tech for automotive research and prototype visualization/promotion
  - I use Unity and Unreal in simulations
  - I make graphics that become the basis of press releases
  - I get to travel and present really cool things at conferences like CES
  - I have used "have we tried using holograms?" as a serious suggestion *more than once*
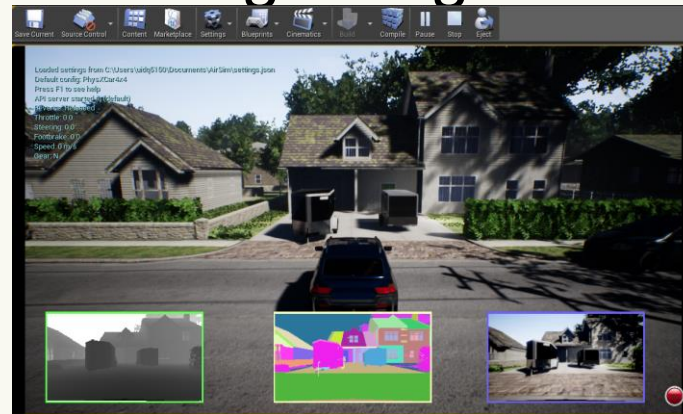

- Hobbies can often translate into skills you can use to stand out
  - In the era of the pandemic, time spent on things like Twitch and AltspaceVR became especially relevant
    - *And VERY in demand!*
  - My team was able to capitalize on this demand to do some pretty cool stuff

I AM YOUR GOD NOW
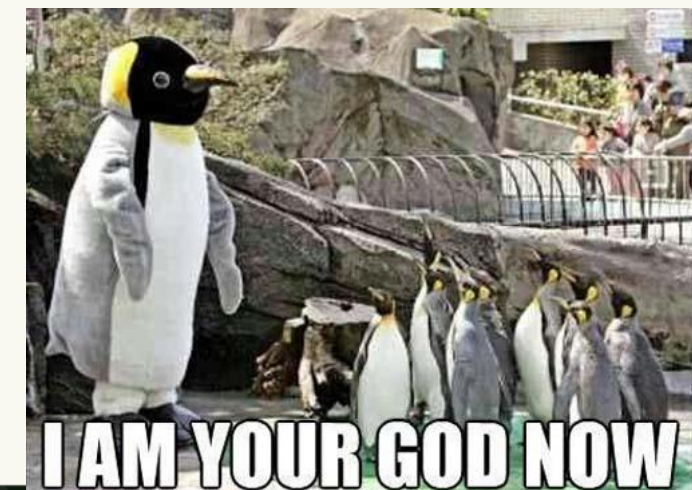
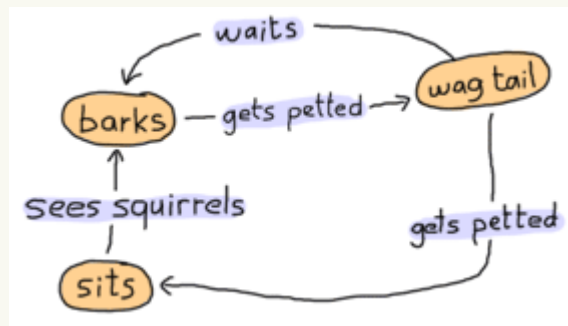Video of Continental NA HQ in AltspaceVR
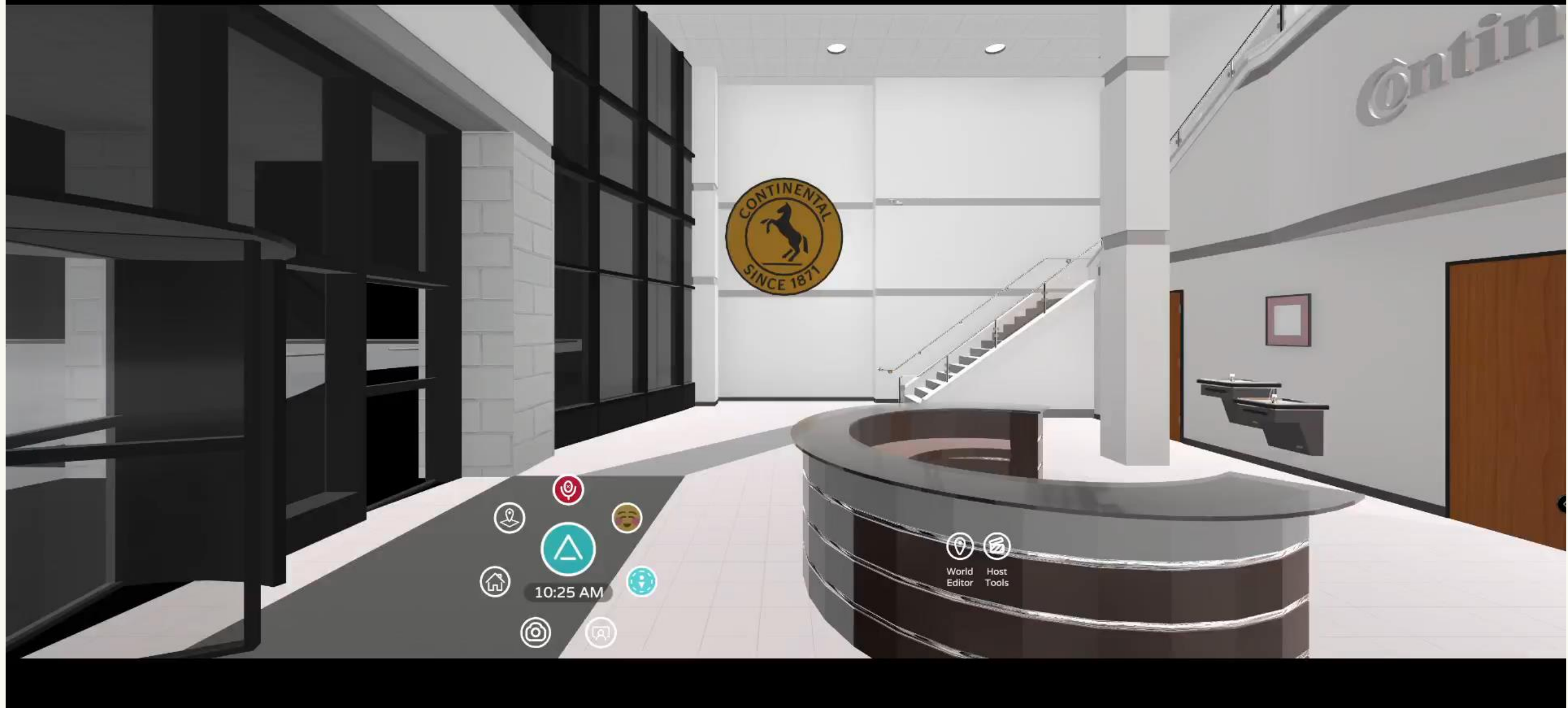
Video of Continental NA HQ in ASVR updated
to showcase COVID-19 protocols
for return to office – distributed to team to know what to expect for return
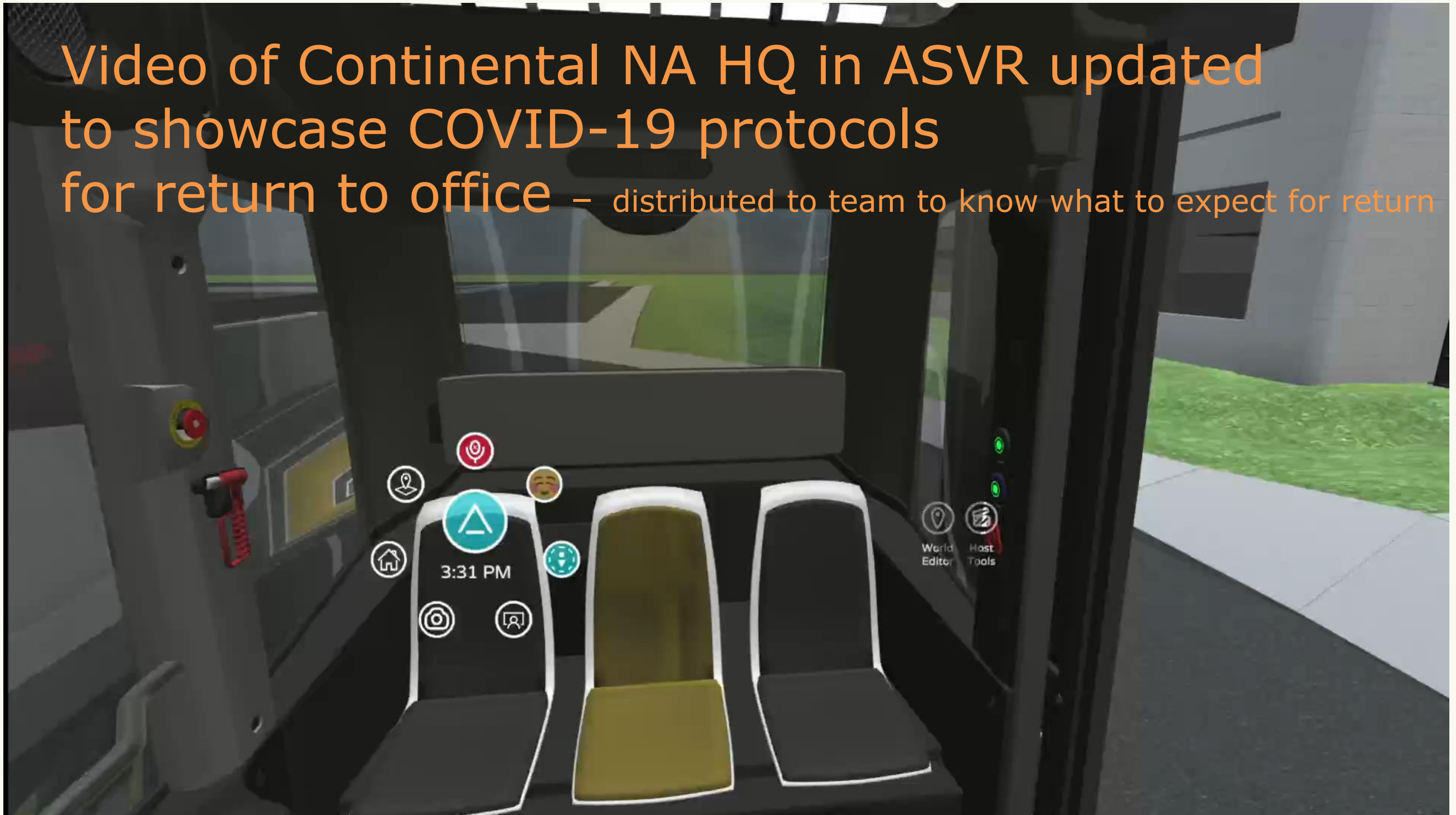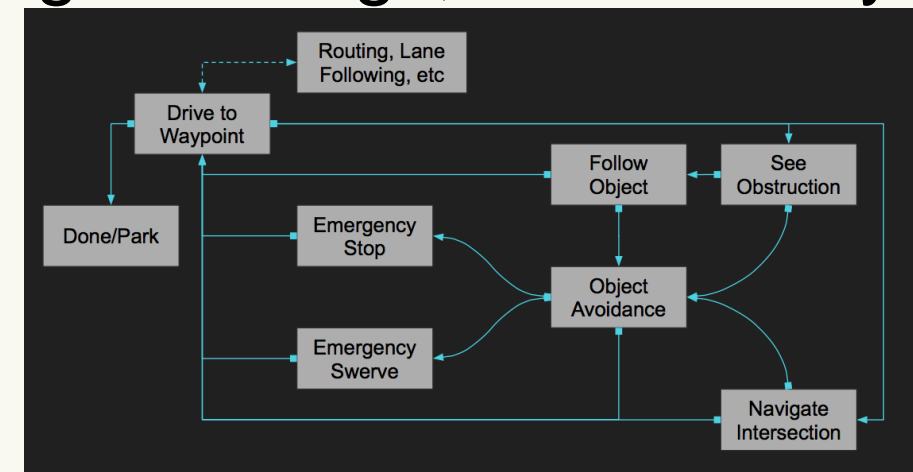
So... Why Serious Games

- You're at GDC because you have skills in game dev and passion to back it up

- There is always an opportunity to use these skills to do amazing things wherever you wind up
  - It is not easy – You *will* have to prove that it's worth it
  - Game dev skills are often on the bleeding edge of things, use that to your advantage

- Keep using and developing your skills, and get paid to do it
  - Be a better candidate for the next opportunity
  - Find something you love to do that people will pay you to do
  - Build your networks and maybe you jump into the game industry later in your career, but serious games is **always** a viable "next level"

Hopefully, you're interested

- Now let's talk about cool stuff

- I got paid to do this stuff

- These are all things I would bring up in an interview if I wanted to look for a new job (I don't)

GDC

Some Cool Examples

- This is a snapshot of data inside a car:
  - Updates roughly 3x/second
  - Very hard to understand unless you really know what you're looking at

GenericObjectListPb (proto:pb.ObjectLists.GenericEnvObjectList) - eCA

GenericObjectListPb (proto:pb.ObjectLists.GenericEnv

⏸ Pause

Protobuf Reflection	Raw Data

⤢ Expand	⤡ Collapse

Field	Type	Value
header	pb.Header	
∨ data	message[19]	
∨ data[0]	pb.ObjectLists.G...	
id	uint64	1037
is_va...	bool	True
relia...	enum	REL_VERY_HIGH(5)
x	float	-203.038
y	float	-45.2963
lat	double	42.6333835
lon	double	-83.2229822
vx_rel	float	-0.905883
vy_rel	float	-8.23091
hea...	float	-1.68041
width	float	2.5
length	float	7
dyn_...	enum	DYN_MOVING(3)
reco...	enum	SHAPE_CAR(1)
com...	enum	SHAPE_CAR(1)
age	float	66.6885
› data[1]	pb.ObjectLists.G...	
› data[2]	pb.ObjectLists.G...	

- This is a basic Unity program using it to move objects in real time:

- This was the general reaction of a lot of my colleagues when they saw that for the first time:

● I wanted to play with some AR tech after being inspired at a GDC. so I did this with it:
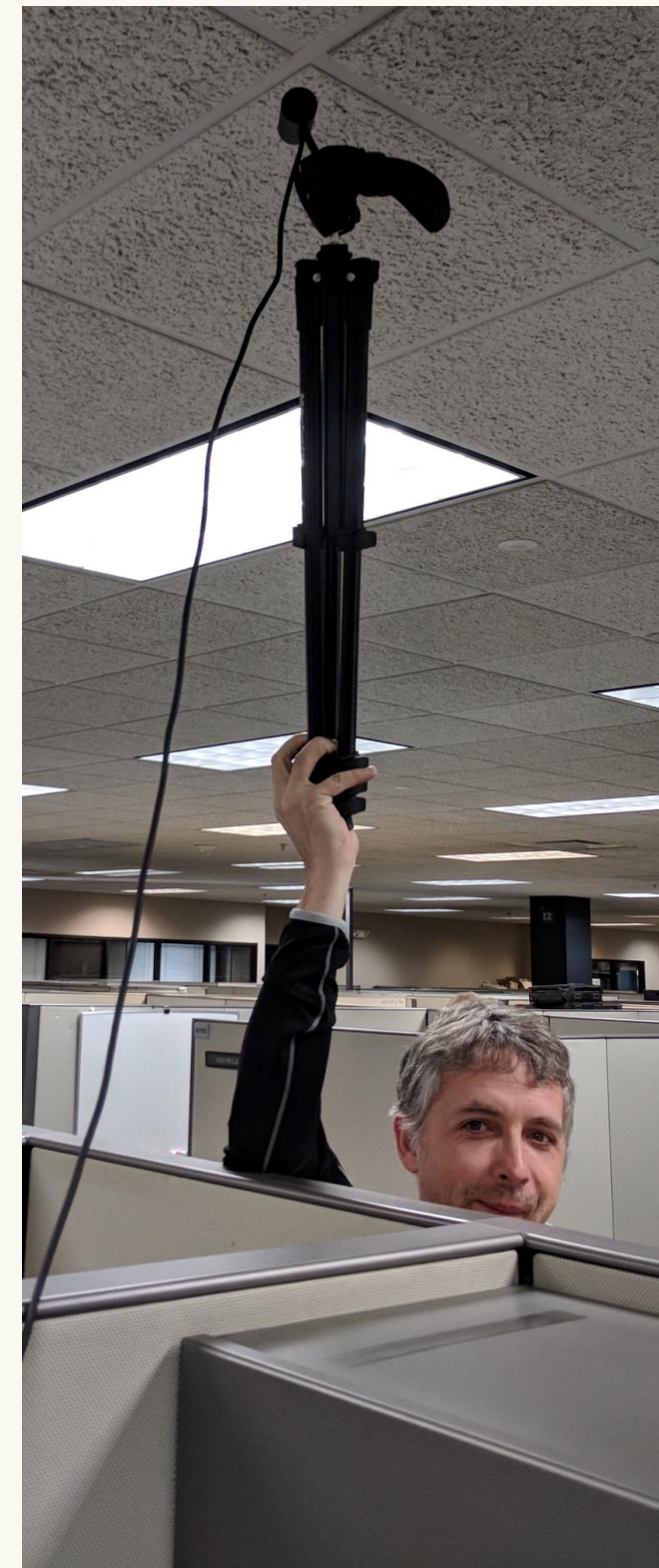

● At some point I'm pretty sure that was shown to Angela Merkel among other VIPs

The process can be fun

- Here is "testing" a VR demo:

- You'll likely be the "weird guy/girl" at work, but it also means you do the cool things

Research is often well funded

- Impress people and you get more room to ~~work~~ play
- Over last year I got to play with an awesome simulator

Video of driving simulator used to showcase use cases of Wrong-Way Driver Detect and Alert system being developed by Continental Automotive

- This is absolutely fun as hell, but it's also helping convince local governments to install technology that will save lives

- We are not the only company using serious games in research
  - SpaceX *for sure* has something like Kerbal Space Program
  - The auto industry uses something like GTA with all the crime parts taken out to train self driving cars

The Next Level for Me

- I've interviewed for Google, Oculus, Unity, Insomniac, Havoc and many others earlier in my career.
  - I was always one of a crowd.
  - Now I explore collaborations with companies like them on my projects.

- I found something that worked for me and never shut up about how I could use my game background to do something better, easier to understand, cooler…
  - That's how I leveled up.

The Next Level for You

- You can do this with any skill and some imagination

- Artists
  - 2D and 3D art is key for marketing
  - Websites
  - Digital signage
- Writing
  - Technical writer
  - Ghostwriter
  - Many large companies need an in-house writer
- Design/Production
  - Systems engineer – Requirements and interfaces
  - SCRUM master
  - Project lead

Questions?

- My Contact Info – Jesse.Hacker@Continental.com
  - Find me on Facebook and LinkedIn
  - My team *is* hiring!
    - https://www.continental-jobs.com/
    - Job ID – 215665BR

- Useful other things:
  - IGDA has a serious games Discord – https://discord.gg/Nj4sGqUHB
  - Some REALLY good talks on positive applications of games on the GDC Vault