



Competition Manual

2022-2023

16th Annual Oregon Game Project Challenge

www.ogpc.info

Updates

Mid-season updates/errata:

2/6/2023 - AI rule added to **Assets** on page 8:

Assets generated by a freely available (no subscription) AI tool may be used, but do NOT count as "team-created" assets.

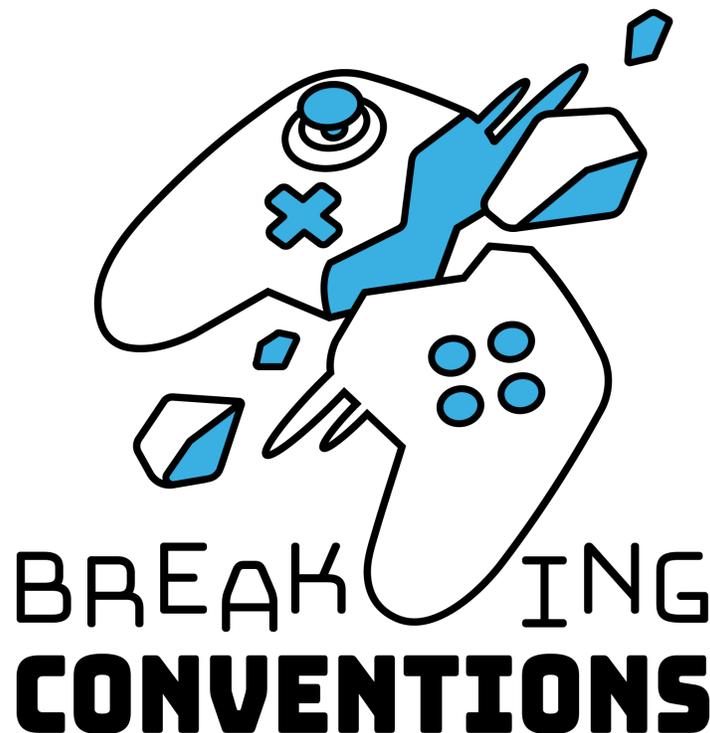
Theme

A “convention” is the way something is typically done. A conventional horror game, for example, may involve dim lighting and suspenseful music. A game set in a fantasy world often features elves and dwarves. In other words, convention describes what the player expects of your game based on its genre, title, or subject matter.

Conventions can be an important tool for helping players understand and play a game. When you start playing a new game and instinctively use the left controller stick to move around, you are relying on the game following the convention that the left controller stick controls your character’s movement. In this case, the convention is a positive thing, because it allows you to easily and quickly transfer your existing game-playing knowledge and experience to a new game.

However, when game design and storytelling overly rely on conventions, it can result in an experience that feels tired. Have you ever had to climb a tower in a game to unlock part of a map and a new save location? Or a game where your character starts with amnesia? These conventions have been used so often that they may make frequent gamers start thinking “oh, this again?” Even worse, some “conventions” are based on stereotypes that will turn off many players - not every princess needs to be helpless and in need of saving.

This season, we invite teams to try:



Theme Details

This year's theme asks you to think about conventions in video games – specifically, conventions that you want to break. What characters, settings, themes, game mechanics, or other elements can you develop that would surprise your players with the unexpected or challenge their assumptions?

Before you start breaking conventions, you should make sure you understand why the convention exists in the first place—and how you might need to balance your innovation with other tried-and-true elements. Breaking too many conventions can result in an overwhelming or disorienting experience for players.

Teams should be creative in their interpretation and attempt to represent the theme in all aspects of a submission - gameplay, story, art, and sound. Here are just a few ideas to help with brainstorming:

- Unexpected mechanics such as leveling up having negative consequences.
- Artwork or music that challenges genre expectations like “light” being evil or a “souls-like” game where the setting is colorful and bright
- Characters who defy conventional roles and expectations: aliens that are saving Earth rather than conquering it, or an intelligent and compassionate orc mentor.
- Unconventional storytelling, such as having an unreliable narrator or “breaking the fourth wall” in a genre that typically strives for realism.

Date and Location

The Main Event is where teams show off their creations to other teams and where judging takes place. It will take place at **Western Oregon University** on May 20th. Teams usually arrive at about 8:30 and are there until about 4-4:30.

Entries & Project Rules

Entries

An entry to OGPC consists of a game, a completed Team Management System (TMS) profile, and often, other supporting documents (work logs, concept sketches, storyboards, etc...). The term “game” is not strictly defined. However, the judging does look for certain elements: interaction with a player, use of art, etc.... So if a team chooses to make something like a digital story, or a text-based adventure, they may not be eligible for certain achievements or awards.

The game a team brings to the competition does **NOT** have to be a final product ready for publishing. It is quite common for games to be only partially done by the Main Event. Although a finely polished game will have an advantage in some scoring areas, partially complete projects can score well and even win awards.

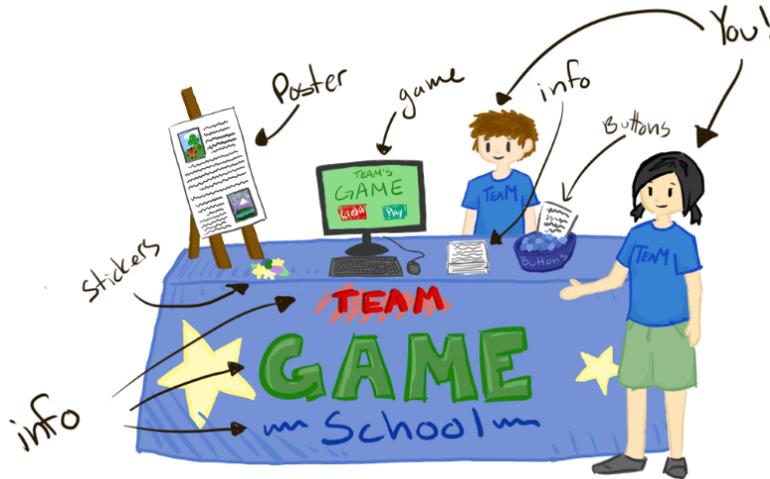
Games should incorporate the season’s theme. Creative interpretation of the theme is allowed, but teams that have made no attempt to incorporate the theme may be disqualified from awards.

Teams may use any tools to develop their project. We maintain a list of [Resources](#) that has links to popular game development tools.

Project Restrictions

Space

Teams will be presenting their projects on a table (~3’ x 6’). The entire project must fit on the table and the 2’-3’ feet directly in front of the table. No room-scale VR; no home- made cockpits; etc... These space restrictions are to allow us to accommodate as many teams as possible and guarantee each team the same space to display their work in.



Computers & Power

Teams must bring one or more computers to display their projects with. (Having two is nice as one can be the dedicated “play” machine, while the other is used to show off code, art, and other project artifacts.)

Western Oregon University will be setting up a special electrical system for the event. Each team will have an extension cord with a single outlet. You may bring a power strip to plug in multiple devices.

There is no specific watt limit, but there definitely are practical limits in how much power each of the 60 teams can use without tripping a circuit breaker. If there is an electrical problem in your area, and you have power-hungry hardware, you may be required to stop using some of it (stop using some monitors or turn off a power-hungry PC).

Setups that are likely not going to cause an issue:

- 1-2 laptops + an extra monitor or two.
- A low-mid power desktop + a couple of monitors and a laptop.

Setups that are likely to cause issues - **please avoid**:

- High power desktop gamer PCs. There is NOT going to be power to support a high-end gaming PC. The biggest power draw is usually the graphics card. If your graphics card is a xx80 or xx90 series from Nvidia, or a 6800/6900 XT from AMD, leave that system at home.
- Wall of large monitors. Each monitor - especially ones 27”+ draws a significant amount of power. Trying to set up 5 30” monitors is going to be a large cumulative power draw.
- Pushing the limits in multiple areas. A gaming PC with a 3060 RTX graphics card is probably OK. Bringing 2 large monitors is OK. But doing both could be a problem.

Network

There will be wifi available at the main event, but we can't promise great performance. There is no wired networking available. If you design a multiplayer game that depends on a fast network between multiple computers, we suggest you bring your own router and set up a local wired network. Personal hotspots will not be allowed.

Videos

Each team Entry in TMS has places to upload two videos. Although a team can compete without creating them, the videos are a part of the achievements.

These videos are an important part of selling your work to the judges and making your project accessible to those who can't attend the main event or who in the future want to look back at what you did.

Trailer Video

This video should be 2 minutes or less and "sell" the game to prospective players. Do your best to emphasize what makes the game fun and unique. You do not have to explain every feature, but try to "tease" all the important elements: the game play, the story, the use of the theme, the art and music, etc...

Making Of Video

This video should be 5 minutes or less and describe how your team made the project. Think of this as a chance to refine the story you will share with judges at the competition!

Please try to cover the following:

- Who you are. The team members and what they each did.
- How you made the game.
 - What tools did you use?
 - How did you organize and coordinate?
- What parts you are most proud of.
- What challenges you overcame or things you learned while making the game.

Assets

The Art & Assets judging category focuses on awarding achievements for work that *teams* do. A game with student created art and music is going to score higher than a game that looks sharper because it uses professionally created assets.

However, teams are allowed to use outside assets (art, music, sounds, etc...) that are free and publicly licensed (for instance, under Creative Commons). Teams must respect copyright law and only use resources that they have legal permission to use. **Teams may not commission assets for their game nor use purchased assets.** A good rule of thumb is if a team member did not make it, it must be something that is legally and publicly available so any team could make free use of it.

Assets generated by a freely available (no subscription) AI tool may be used, but do NOT count as "team-created" assets.

Teams must provide a list that identifies where any used assets were obtained and what license they are being used under. This list can be part of game design documents or a separate item as long as it is accessible when judging is taking place. "Google image search" is not a valid source.

Rating

Games must qualify for an E10+ rating on the ESRB scale. (<https://www.esrb.org/ratings-guide/>) Not only does the competition include 6th graders, there are always younger family members who attend the main event.

E10+ Allows:

- Cartoon, fantasy or mild violence
- Mild language
- Minimal suggestive themes

Not allowed are:

- Blood or realistic violence
- Gambling
- Strong language
- Sexual content

Teams that want to make a game that explores a mature theme in an appropriate way should email info@ogpc.info for prior approval. In no situation will Mature features be approved (realistic violence, sexual content, strong language).

Team Requirements

Successful teams usually have a blend of skills - art, programming, music, writing, marketing, project management, public speaking, etc... Recruiting students with a variety of interests and backgrounds is key to filling all the needs of the team.

Coach

Every team must have an adult coach. One person can coach multiple teams.

A coach does not have to be a teacher or be a game development expert. Their two main roles are: 1) to be the primary point of contact between OGPC and the team; 2) to help a team with logistics and supervise them at the Main Event.

Any updates we want to get to teams we will send to coaches and rely on them to inform their teams.

Coaches should NOT be actively involved in creating any part of a project. Providing feedback and mentoring to the team is great. Writing code, creating art, etc... is forbidden.

Team Size

A team may have a maximum of 7 members. This limit is in place to help guarantee every participant feels like an important part of their team, help provide competitive balance, and to make event logistics manageable.

Teams should have at least 2 members (other than the coach). Schools or organizations bringing multiple teams have a minimum size of 3. OGPC is designed to encourage students to develop not just technical skills - it also asks students to develop a project as part of a team. If a small school only has a few students interested in participating, we want them to be able to participate. But when a school sends multiple 2-person teams it both deprives students of the experience of working on a team and strains our capacity.

Students may only be a member of one team. Playtesting, providing feedback, mentoring, debugging, or otherwise assisting other teams is welcome and encouraged, but each student can be a member of only one team.

Affiliation and Divisions

The competition is split into Middle School and High School divisions. Despite the titles, teams are **not** required to be affiliated with a school or other group. Students who are not competing as part of a school need to register in the division appropriate to their academic grade level/age. **MS:** 8th grade and below (13 and under), **HS:** 9th grade and above (14 and above).

If a team has one or more HS aged students (either in grade 9 or above, or 14 or older), they must register in the HS division.

TMS & Registration

Team Management System

The OGPC Team Management System (<https://tms.ogpc.info>) is the portal that teams use to register and show off their work to the OGPC community and judges. Every team must have an entry on the site and all team members must be listed on their team's entry.

Here is an outline of what needs to happen:

- The coach makes an account on TMS and creates an Entry for each team for the season
- The coach invites team members to join (or invites a student to be the student lead, and that student invites the other members)
- Team members create accounts and accept the invitation
- The coach uses the system to pay the registration fee
- The team maintains their TMS profile throughout the season - completion of the profile is part of the judging

Registration

A team can make an Entry on TMS and set up individual accounts without registering for the actual competition.

Registration to participate in the Main Event costs \$50. (Coaches - if coming up with the registration fee is a problem for your team, please talk to us about a waiver.)

Registration will be limited - we anticipate being able to accommodate about 60 teams.

Judging: Scoring Summary

Overview

Games will be evaluated at the main event by a panel of judges consisting of volunteers. These volunteers are a mix of software and game industry professionals, university students and professors, and other community members.

Judges will evaluate each game in five categories: Programming, Game Design, Art and Assets, Theme and Style, and Management. These scores are determined by how many achievements the team accomplished - a list of the possible achievements is released at the start of the season.

Teams earn points based on the achievements completed. These serve to help judges identify the best projects in each of the judging areas and those that excelled across all areas. They are not the final determinate for any award. Awards are always given at the judges' discretion.

Separate awards and recognitions are given in the MS and HS divisions (i.e. there is both a MS Best in Show and a HS Best in Show). Generally, each team can only win one award with the exception of People's Choice.

Overall Awards

Awards are given to recognize teams that excel across all areas of judging or produce an otherwise remarkable game. Examples of awards typically given include:

Best in Show

This award goes to the team that created the best overall project, weighing all categories equally. Games that receive Best in Show excel in all categories, usually completing all achievements in at least one category.

Judges' Choice

This award is given entirely at the judges' discretion. It could be to break a tie or to recognize a noteworthy game that did not receive an award for whatever reason. This award could also go to a game that the judges thought was really fun or technically impressive regardless of performance in other areas.

People's Choice

This award is voted on by the participants of OGPC. As you check out other teams' projects, you will get a chance to vote for your favorites.

Rookie

This award goes to the highest-ranking new team (***neither the coach nor any team members have participated in OGPC before***). Returning teams often know what they are doing from the start, whereas new teams may need a few months to get a rhythm down. This award recognizes the hard work of a new team that still manages to shine.

Category Awards

The five judging categories also serve as the basis for recognition and awards.

Programming

This category focuses on the technical side of creating a game. Games winning the Programming Award display responsible development practices and significant technical knowledge. Choice of platform or programming language does not matter - what does matter are the team's demonstrated use of abstractions, development of algorithms, source control, and documentation.

Game Design

This category focuses on the process of designing a game. Judges look at game mechanics, design documents, and prototypes to see how a team's game evolved and grew over time.

Art and Assets (Sponsored by Liquid Development)

This category focuses on the visuals and audio of the game. Sound effects, music, animations, models, and sprites are examples of items being judged as part of this award.

Theme and Story

This category focuses on the execution of the season's theme and story writing. Judges will evaluate teams on their attempt to follow the theme as they interpret it through game mechanics, art, and story. Judges award more achievements for having a consistent story, character development, and for communicating the theme through not just the story, but also through mechanics, gameplay, and art.

Management

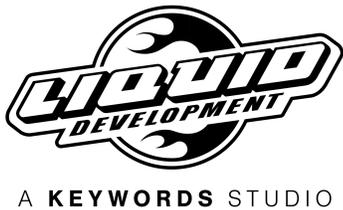
This category focuses on students' interactions with each other and with other teams. Teams must demonstrate how they have organized and planned and how all members contributed to the development process. Winning teams will have a consistent brand and put on a professional presentation at the main event.

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