

SCARCITY



2018-2019

Competition Manual

12th Annual Oregon Game Project Challenge

www.ogpc.info



**OREGON GAME
PROJECT CHALLENGE**

THEME

Overview

There are millions of people around the world that lack things many of us take for granted. In some countries, the lack of clean water is a daily threat to health. In other places a shortage of jobs means no money for food and other essentials. A lack of affordable living space leads to long commutes and homelessness. Absence of a social network can impact mental health. Every natural resource that people and societies depend on – from oil to lumber to rare elements is available in limited quantities and in limited areas. What things are in short supply in your own life and of people you know? What stories have you heard in the news about conflicts or suffering due to a lack of something? Everything we do in life potentially impacts others, because everyone is lacking something.

The 2018-2019 OGPC theme is: **Scarcity**

Teams will make a game exploring Scarcity. Teams can be creative in their interpretation of the theme, but the theme should be apparent in all aspects of a submission - gameplay, story, art, and sound.

Details

Scarcity affects different people all over the world in different ways. Games can explore scarcity on many different levels, from global needs to more personal issues. Games could explore scarcity in terms of big global needs such as food, water, oil, phosphorus and disease/medication. Games can take the theme literally and restrict input controls, or very abstractly and consider the side-effects of being without something.

Imagine a game in space where resource management is required to get everyone home safe, how do you ration out resources so that everyone has enough? What about a game where rainforests are being cut down and you have to defend them from big bad corporations trying to clear-cut everything. Consider a game where a lack of healthcare workers leads to outbreaks of a disease. Finally, consider a puzzle game where you can only turn left and go forward forcing a scarcity in controls. All of these are great examples of some ways that games could be made using the theme.

Think about what leads up to scarcity, what happens to cause a local, national, or global shortage? How do people react in the middle of a crisis when a necessity is suddenly rare, whether living space, friends, or fish. What do people do after a shortage has been resolved? How do people react after living through scarcity to help it not happen again?

There are countless options for things to be scarce that lend themselves to great games. Teams should think about their game's player count, visual perspective, controls, strategy, open-endedness, and everything else that makes an idea come to life.

Using the Theme

It is easy to create a game, but what makes a great (high scoring) game? Teams should consider the theme from the very beginning. Think about things related to the theme and how a player might interact with them. What might the player be trying to achieve? A game world should not be thought of solely in terms of story, images, or sound effects (although they are also critical!). Instead, teams should consider how gameplay is different and how goals, tools, and enemies/obstacles can be tied in to ensure that everything reflects the game world. A great game will involve the theme in every step of the creation process, don't just take an existing game and try to make it fit.

One example could be to create a game in which the player packs supplies into a ship "Tetris" style. This might look very cool but does not necessarily integrate the theme in the gameplay. However, if the player had to think about weight/fuel consumption of adding each item and the usefulness to astronauts to make the best shipment possible, this would be an interesting gameplay element inspired by the theme.

The game rules, story, environment, and player choices all need to support the theme! A high scoring game will require lots of brainstorming and research but can also be very creative.

Goals

1. To build a game that creatively explores the theme in all aspects of gameplay.
2. To create a game the whole team is proud of and feels accomplished about
3. To make a fun game! Even if finishing all graphics and sound ends up being out of reach, it is more important to make a fun game that keeps players engaged.

Specifications

1. Students are encouraged to make a game for whatever platform they have access to, whether it be Windows, iOS, Android, NES, or TI-84.
2. The term "game" is not strictly defined. Teams need not worry about what other people think is or is not a game. Teams will explain their game to the judges and share their vision.
3. Games must be school-appropriate. Graphic violence is not acceptable in anything made for an OGPC event*.
4. Games should incorporate the theme. Creative interpretations of the theme are encouraged.
5. Teams must respect copyright law and only use resources that they have legal permission to use. All game assets (such as graphics and sound) that were not created during the season by the OGPC team must be listed with the source and the license under which they are available in the game's credits. Check our

website for a list of resources from which free assets are available. Be advised that “Google image search” is not a source.

6. Games do not have to be finished. Most OGPC achievements require at least a basic, functioning, digital prototype, but a finished and polished product is not necessary to do well.

**Violence is an important mechanic in many AAA games on the market today. At OGPC, we need to keep in mind who our audience is and ensure that everything we allow to be shown is school appropriate. The definition of school appropriateness is a challenging subject. We want teams to be able to explore mature themes, but we can't allow games such as Call of Duty or Skyrim – even Breath of the Wild is pushing it. Since we want to include as many games as possible, games must qualify for an ESRB rating of no more than [E10+](#). This does not mean that a game exploring PTSD cannot involve an occasional violent cut scene or in-game level, but a game that uses violence or other mature themes as central mechanics cannot be allowed. Franchises such as Just Cause, Far Cry, or GTA could be argued to be about exploration, liberation, and personal growth, but the means to achieve all of these is through violence and other mature content and would therefore be inappropriate for OGPC. We understand that this limits the types of games teams can make, but we at OGPC feel strongly that it's important for this competition to be creative and innovative. Simply copying a game on the market is both plagiarizing and not in the spirit of OGPC. We encourage everyone to think outside the box and push themselves, even if that means throwing out an idea or two to have the strongest submission for OGPC possible.*

JUDGING: SCORING SUMMARY

Overview

Games will be evaluated at the main event by a panel of judges consisting of community volunteers from university gamers to experienced industry professionals. Judges will look at 5 aspects of the game to determine a score: Programming, Game Design, Art and Assets, Theme and Style, and Management. All of these aspects are important to any game, and we encourage teams to work to meet as many achievements as possible. Earning achievements grants points, which will help the judges determine the winners in each category. In addition to the category awards, there are also several main awards given to teams that display outstanding work in all categories.

Each team can only win one award with the exception of Player's Choice. In the event that a team is the top contender for multiple awards, it will receive the first award in the order listed below, and other teams will be considered for the remaining awards.

A presentation of the winners is created from the Team Management System (TMS) entry so teams should make sure their page is completely filled out.

Main Awards

The main awards are given to teams that create truly outstanding games. Winning one of these awards implies outstanding work in all categories. Each award winner is carefully selected, and judges will revisit teams to ensure that awards are given to the most deserving teams. Middle School and High School teams compete in separate divisions. Thus, each award will be granted to a middle school team and a high school team.

Best in Show

This award goes to the team that created the best game, considering all categories equally. Games that receive Best in Show excel in all categories, usually holding the top score in at least one.

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.

Rookie

This award goes to the highest-ranking new team (coach and all team members have not 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 following five categories are intended to cover all the important parts of a game. Within these categories, teams will find a wide variety of achievements to ensure a well-rounded game. Teams are awarded a Category Award to recognize hard work in one realm of game design and creation. The following is a basic overview of each category:

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, since all major game-making tools support common programming standards such as the use of functions, 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. Judges are aware that students have not necessarily gone through this process before and achievements are also worded with this in mind.

Art and Assets

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. Judges award more points to teams that create their own assets; however, teams are allowed to use outside assets that are free and publicly licensed (for instance, under Creative Commons). Teams may not commission assets for their game. Teams must provide a list that identifies where 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.

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 score teams higher for having a consistent story, character development, and for communicating the theme through mechanics and gameplay rather than only intro, cut-scenes, or static images with text. Students are encouraged to think outside the box and find creative ways of expressing the theme.

Management

This category focuses on students' interactions with each other and with other teams. Teams must demonstrate how all members contributed to the development process, have a consistent brand, and an active social media presence. Students must be respectful of others at the OGPC Main Event as judges will be mixed in the crowd along with other students, members of the press, and the public. Reaching out to other teams (through social media or networking platforms) to offer help is a good example of the kind of professional behavior judges look for. Teams should use TMS to upload images of the game and team members and provide a description of the game. As stated above, information from TMS is used to make the award slideshow and other official OGPC materials, so teams should make sure all entries are complete. Teams are all provided a table at the main event and should strive to have a professional presentation but are encouraged to be creative. The visual aspect of a team's table is very important for first impressions when judging.

Player's Choice

This award is not handled by the same processes as the other awards. During the main event, the participants themselves will vote on their favorite games. At the end, judges tally up the votes to see who the most popular team in each division is and the award is given to those teams. It is important to note that this award is separate from all the others and teams may win any other award in addition to this one.

Achievements

Games are scored at the main event via achievements. Each achievement has a point value which contributes to a single scoring category. Some achievements have multiple tiers, teams will only get points for the highest tier they qualify for.

For more information and a detailed description of each and every achievement, see the Achievement Explanation document.

TEAMS: MAKEUP AND SIZING

Overview

Teams are an important part of OGPC. Teams allow students to split work up and produce a better game. Many achievements focus on having a well-balanced team. Students are encouraged to work together to create something awesome!

Team Sizes

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 enable event logistics. If eight or more students want to participate in OGPC, multiple teams will need to be formed.

Although there is no lower limit, teams of at least 3 members tend to work better - solo teams and pairs will have difficulty with many achievements, particularly in Management. No one should feel discouraged from participating in OGPC, but it will be more fun and fulfilling to work with a partner than solo.

Finally, students may only be a member of **one** team. Teams sharing members both gives an unfair advantage to students on multiple teams and makes judging teams a logistical problem. Playtesting, providing feedback, mentoring, debugging, or otherwise assisting other teams is welcome and encouraged, but each student can only be assigned to one team. Teams found to be in violation of this *will not be eligible for awards*.

Team Composition

Successful teams usually have an artist, sound person (music and sound effects), programmer, and a writer, although there are many other roles that help in creating a game. Students trying to form a team who cannot find a writer or artist or some other role are still eligible to compete – they will just have to focus on the roles they can fill and try to get the associated category awards. If teams do not have a programmer, there are many visual tools and online tutorials to help someone step up to fill that role. The ideal team uses their strengths to create something amazing and supplements their weaknesses with resources from other sources.

School Affiliation

Teams are **not** required to be affiliated with a school. School affiliation can make it easier for teams to find a coach, volunteers, or meeting space but it is not necessary. All interested students are encouraged to form a team. Some teams form through local

organizations such as 4H, Boys/Girls Clubs, or local libraries. Others are independently organized teams. Need help finding a team? Let us know at info@ogpc.info.

MAIN EVENT: WHAT TO EXPECT

Overview

The Main Event is where teams show off their creations to other students, parents, judges, politicians, and industry professionals from all over the state. Students are encouraged to walk around the event to see other games, although they should take turns staying to present their game. When being judged, all team members should present what they contributed as well as guide the judges through the most interesting parts of their creation.

Judging and Demoing

Students are required to bring whatever hardware and software is required to play their game. Teams should not count on anything being available other than power and a table. Keep in mind that even the network may not be available at the moment of judging, so be sure that everything is available offline. It is very beneficial to have several devices present to show off various aspects of the game as well as the game itself. If it is not possible to bring a computer or other device to the main event, teams should document everything as well as possible and bring that instead.

Students are not required to move their setup during the event, but teams need to be ready to present their game to the judges and to other teams that drop by. Teams should always be ready to help someone play a level or talk about the game. Everyone has worked hard – now show off!

Age Levels and Fair Judging

Teams compete in separate Middle School and High School divisions at the Main Event. All awards are awarded independently in each division. First-year teams (including the coach) at either level are eligible for a special “Rookie” award in addition to the other categories. Teams are encouraged to focus on whatever judging categories they are best equipped to deal with. The different category awards allow for teams with outstanding work in only one or two categories to still win an award.

CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS

The Oregon Game Project Challenge reserves the right to change, amend, modify, suspend, continue, or terminate any or all rules and regulations of the main event either in an individual case or in general, at any time without notice.

Change Log:

November 2018 – First release

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