



Competition Manual

2019-2020

13th Annual Oregon Game Project Challenge

www.ogpc.info

Theme

Overview

There are billions of people around the world - none of them with the same fingerprint. There are approximately 8.7 million species of plants and animals on this world - each thriving in their own habitat in an interconnected system. When a software engineer is building a system they may turn to assembly, C++, Java, JavaScript, Perl, Python, Rust, Erlang, Haskell or one of the countless other programming languages each designed to solve problems a different way.

If every part in your car was the same, the engine wouldn't run. When everybody in a team has the same background and thinks the same way, issues go unnoticed and creative solutions to problems are harder to find. A system in which individual elements have variations will allow for more interesting interactions and powerful combinations than one in which every element is the same.

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



Teams will build a game with diverse elements. Teams should be creative in their interpretation. The theme should be apparent in all aspects of a submission - gameplay, story, art and sound.

Details

Games could explore the theme **diverse** on many different levels. The game could have diverse mechanics, character control, solutions, art, sound, or explore a diverse real life system.

Imagine a set of minigames with diverse mechanics, each using a different one of the five senses (sight, hearing, maybe even taste). Perhaps your game could feature a set of characters with different strengths that come together to solve a problem they couldn't solve individually. In the board game Drop It, planning to make a diverse stack of blocks is critical - you only score if the piece doesn't touch the same color or shape.

Think about what makes a system diverse. Research and understand the benefits of a diverse system. How would a system work if all pieces were the same? How could you take a system that isn't diverse and introduce variation to improve it? What kinds of elements make up a system, and what can be diverse about them?

We are looking for games that are diverse with a purpose. Completely unrelated challenges or minigames may technically be diverse, but don't really put that variety to use in a meaningful way. Your team should strive to make the player experience "diverse" in an interesting way. Consider how the diverse elements of your game affect the goals and challenges for the player. Consider how the game might teach the player about the diverse elements of some system.

There are countless ways to use diverse elements to make an interesting game. As a team, make sure to explore a variety of ideas about how to explore the theme "diverse" as you begin your project.

The Game

The Game & Theme

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.

Games must 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.

Technology & Hardware

Teams can use any programming language, game engine, and hardware that they wish. **However, all hardware must fit on a 3x6 table. Teams are not allowed to set up any hardware off the provided table (including VR sensors).** You can use VR, but it must be playable by someone standing/sitting in front of your table without moving around - no room scale VR.

Networking at the main event is likely to be flaky. See Main Event below.

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.

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 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.... Recruiting students with a variety of interests and backgrounds is key to filling all the needs of the team.

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 enable event logistics.

Schools or organizations bringing 3 or more teams to the event have a minimum team size of 3. We want to allow a pair of students from a small school to compete. But a large number of small teams from the same school means students are robbed of the experience of working in a team and needlessly 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. Teams found to be in violation of this *will not be eligible for awards.*

Affiliation and Divisions

The competition is split into Middle School and High School divisions. If a team has one or more HS aged students, they must register in the HS division.

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).

Coach

Every team must have an adult coach. The coach will be the primary point of contact between OGPC and the team. The coach will be responsible for their team on the day of the main event.

A person can coach multiple teams. We will try to place each coach's teams close to one another, but cannot guarantee that they will be, especially if some of the teams are in the MS division and others in the HS division. Coaches with a large number of teams are encouraged to recruit some chaperones for the main event.

TMS & Registration

Team Management System

The OGPC Team Management System (<https://tms.ogpc.info>) is the portal that teams use to register and advertise their team and game to the OGPC community, as well as the system used to judge teams at the main event. Every team must have an entry on the site and all team members must be registered on their team's entry.

Here is an outline of what needs to happen:

- The coach registers on TMS and creates an entry 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 log in and accept the invitation
- The coach uses the system to pay the main event registration fee - teams are not guaranteed a spot at the main event until they pay the registration fee
- The team maintains their TMS profile throughout the season - completion of the profile is part of the judging

Main Event

Overview

The Main Event is where teams show off their creations to other students, parents, judges, and industry professionals. Judging will take place throughout the day as will breakout sessions with presentations from industry professionals and educators. The event generally lasts from about 8:30 (setup starts) until about 4:30 (award ceremony is completed).

Each team will have a judging timeslot and needs to be at their table ready to present to judges during it. During the rest of the day, team members should take turns presenting their game to others, walking around to see other games, and checking out the presentations. There are no makeup times available for missed judging time slots. A missed judging slot will *result in a team being ineligible for awards*.

Family members and friends are encouraged to attend. Admission is free.



Food

A concessions stand is usually open right outside the gym with some basic snacks, but not enough for a full meal. Teams should make sure to bring their own food or make plans for a parent to make a food run to a local restaurant.

Space & Equipment Restrictions

Each team will be provided with a table (approximately 3'-6'), a few chairs, and a power cord with a single outlet. Everything being presented and all required equipment must fit on the provided table. **Teams may not set up VR sensors or any other equipment in front of or beside their table.**

Presenting

Teams are responsible for bringing everything required to present their project including one or more computers, and if needed, a power strip. Teams are encouraged to bring multiple computers so they can be demonstrating multiple things at one time while being judged.

Teams may also want to bring:

- A poster describing key features
- Written documentation / project documents
- Tablecloth and decorations
- Marketing swag for their game (buttons, stickers, etc...)



Networking

There will be wifi, but it is likely to be congested. Teams should not count on low latency connections to any networked services. Teams that are interested in network based games are encouraged to design for local area network play and bring their own ethernet hub.

No one is allowed to set up their own wifi hotspot as that interferes with the general wifi.

Judging: Scoring Summary

Overview

Games will be evaluated at the main event by a panel of judges consisting of community volunteers. Judges will score 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.

Earning achievements helps the judges determine the winners in each category. Achievements are not the final determiner for any award - they are a way for judges to do an initial ranking of teams and for teams to understand what judges are looking for. In each category, the judges will select a winner in both HS and MS divisions.

In addition to the category awards, there are also several overall 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.

Overall Awards

The overall awards are given to recognize teams that excel across all five areas of judging or produce an otherwise remarkable game. These awards are awarded

separately in each division - there will be both a MS and HS Best in Show, Judges' Choice, and Rookie winner.

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.

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

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 - 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

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 mechanics and gameplay rather than only intro, cut-scenes, or static images with text.

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.

Player's Choice

During the main event, the participants get a ballot to vote for their favorite games. These votes are tallied up to see which game in each division is the most popular among the participants. This award is the one award that can be won in addition to an overall or category award.

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