



Competition Manual

2020-2021

14th Annual Oregon Game Project Challenge

www.ogpc.info

Theme

Overview

“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.” – Nelson Mandela

Before being published, Dr Suess’s *And to Think that I saw it on Mulberry Street* was rejected 27 times. Even Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell and other best seller authors were rejected multiple times. When babies start to walk they toddle, fall over, and then get up again countless times before they string together even their first few steps. Thomas Edison tried hundreds of designs without giving up until he figured out the light bulb. Walt Disney was fired as a cartoonist at a newspaper, then his first animation company went out of business before starting the company we know today.

Adversity does not have to mark the end of the road -- it can often be the start of a path to greater success and personal growth. But only if we are able to acknowledge it while not accepting it, to be shaped by it but not defined by it, and to keep walking even when the path forward is not clear.

The 2020-2021 OGPC theme is:



RESILIENCE

We invite teams to build a game exploring the idea of **Resilience**. Teams should be creative in their interpretation and attempt to represent the theme in all aspects of a submission - gameplay, story, art and sound.

Theme Details

"No one escapes pain, fear, and suffering. Yet from pain can come wisdom, from fear can come courage, from suffering can come strength - if we have the virtue of resilience."

– Eric Greitens, *Resilience*

We are all constantly challenged with setbacks both small and large. Resilience is overcoming these challenges and staying focused on our goals. It is bouncing back from failure and recovering when things go wrong. Resilience and the need to be resilient can be found in all aspects of life. Scientists, athletes, authors, business people, and political & military leaders all have been quoted as extolling the virtues of resiliency.

Research and understand what makes a system or person resilient. Can resilience be found without failure or adversity? How can a person learn to be resilient? Then decide how to express that in your game.

We are looking for games that use the theme of resilience with a purpose. Many games genres demand resilience from the player. But how can your game teach something about resilience and help a player develop resilience in a meaningful way.

How can resilience be identified? Resilience is more than leveling up. Resilience is more than respawning or resetting to the start of the level after failing a task. While the game should allow for resilience, it should not have a steep learning curve or cause the player to be frustrated or overwhelmed. As the narrator of "Little Big Planet" informs the players, "It's nothing to get upset about."

Think of situations where the player will fail, but instead of losing the game, it leads to them to try different approaches until they move to the next level. Try to design a game where the player can improve themselves by repeating or even refining an action in order to achieve their goal. And attempt to connect the resilience of the player to the story that the player is experiencing.

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

Every game this season must be web playable - teams will be responsible for providing a URL (web address) to a playable version of their game by the start of judging.

Games should not require any special hardware. They should be optimized for either:

- Play on a mobile device with touch interface.
 - *The game must still be playable via a web link. Apps that require installation are not allowed.*
- Play on a computer with keyboard/mouse interface.
 - *You are welcome to support gamepads as an alternate input device, but must support keyboard and mouse.*

Teams may use any tools to develop their project. If a team is not sure what tools they should use to make a web playable game, we recommend checking out [Construct 3](#). With generous support from Scirra, **we are able to provide free license keys for teams to make use of to develop their projects with**. For details, please check out the [Construct Offer page](#) on our website.

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 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.... 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. This year, with the coordination challenges most teams will face, we strongly recommend teams of five or fewer students.

Teams should have at least 2 members. Schools or organizations bringing 3 or more teams to the event have a minimum team size of 3. OGPC is not strictly a game development competition. We are focused on encouraging students to develop not just technical skills but how 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 a large number of small 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. 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. 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.

Coach

Every team must have an adult coach. The coach will be the primary point of contact between OGPC and the team. A person can coach multiple teams.

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 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 registration fee
- The team maintains their TMS profile throughout the season - completion of the profile is part of the judging

Main Event???

In a normal year, the Main Event is where teams show off their creations to other teams and where judging takes place.

This year, we have no idea if a physical event will be possible. But, if the status of COVID infections in Oregon allows for a safe physical gathering and enough teams are interested, we will host an event at Western Oregon University on May 22nd (the weekend after judging). At this half-day event, teams would have a few hours to show off their projects and we would have an awards ceremony where we announce the winners and hand out hardware.

Regardless of whether there is a physical event, teams will not have to be present to either compete or win.

Virtual Competition

Judging will happen online on May 15th. Teams will need to join a video chat that day to interact with the judges and answer questions. Teams will be notified of their time slot two weeks in advance.

At least one team member must be present for a team to be judged. The absence of one or more of the team members will not prevent a team from competing, but may impact a team's ability to best present all aspects of their project and demonstrate their teamwork.

Requirements

In addition to producing their game, teams are expected to complete their TMS profile in advance of the competition. This is even more important this year as teams will not have physical booths. The TMS page will be a team's chance to make a good first impression on judges. As part of the TMS page, each team is asked to produce two videos - a Trailer and a Making Of.

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. Your judging session will start with the judges watching this video and then talking to you about it, asking follow up questions, and then asking about achievements not covered by the video. (See Judging below for information on achievements). 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.

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.

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.

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