The Ultimate IMGD Booth
at PAX East 2013

An Interactive Qualifying Project
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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Submitted to Professor Mark Claypool, Advisor

Submitted by

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Abstract

Promoting WPI's Interactive Media and Game Development (IMGD) program at a major industry trade show has the potential to attract new prospective students and broaden industry awareness of the IMGD program and students. This project designed a booth for PAX East, a popular gaming exposition in New England. We conducted interviews of students, guidance counselors, and booth experts, and selected appropriate projects to showcase and students to showcase them. We then designed an advertisement, handouts, and an inviting layout for the booth, arranging for the necessary equipment and furniture within the budget constraints. The IMGD PAX East booth promises to increase the awareness of the IMGD program, exposing more people to the game development students and program at WPI.

1 Introduction

PAX East is a major gaming convention held in Boston, Massachusetts each spring. This year WPI's Interactive Media and Game Development program is represented for the first time at the show with a booth on the Exhibit Hall floor. PAX – the Penny Arcade Expo – was started in 2004 on the west coast and became so popular that in 2010 it created an east coast version. Each year since then has had its own phenomenal growth in visitor attendance and gaming and computer representation.

WPI was one of the first institutions in the US to offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs in interactive media and game development and has been recognized by a number of sources for the quality of its program. WPI has a long history of project-based learning and the IMGD program is focused on project work. PAX East provides an opportunity to highlight WPI's IMGD program in the midst of a popular gaming convention.

It is likely that thousands of people over the course of three convention days will see WPI's IMGD booth. It is located at the end of an aisle giving us good visibility with attendees. The booth, staffed by IMGD students, showcases the games that students have created for their Major Qualifying Projects. Visitors have an opportunity to play those games and learn more about WPI and the IMGD program by the students in the booth. Those visitors might be prospective students or prospective employers who see the quality of the work done at WPI.

There are four primary objectives an IMGD booth at PAX East.

1) **Create awareness of WPI's IMGD program** – As noted above, with an attendance that numbers in the thousands, PAX provides an opportunity to introduce our program to a large audience and gives a marketing "reach" that exceeds other methods of advertising.

2) **Generate student interest in WPI's IMGD program** – Many of the attendees at PAX are young people interested in gaming and likely wanting to know about possible related careers. WPI's IMGD program offers educational possibilities that can lead to a career in game development.

3) **Attract students to WPI and the IMGD program** – By showcasing completed IMGD student games and having WPI students present at the booth, WPI can emphasize the quality of the IMGD program and WPI and encourage applications to the school.

4) **Generate game development company contacts** – PAX East has a significant representation of game development companies, providing an opportunity to foster relationships with their representatives. These relationships can lead to additional employment opportunities as well as possible MQP sponsorships.

Our goal is to create the "Ultimate IMGD Booth at PAX East." That means designing a booth that reflects the quality and reputation of WPI's IMGD program and that is aesthetically appealing in order to draw a large audience. The booth design is a 10x20 foot structure with an open floor plan to encourage people to come inside and engage with the games and staff. There are two tables on each side of with each holding two computers. We researched public relations, marketing, demographics, branding, and common swag. We also interviewed individuals in the gaming industry, guidance counselors, and current students at WPI. We created an advertisement for the PAX East booklet and designed booth banners, t-shirts, buttons, and booth layouts. We

selected four MQPs that to showcase and identified and prepared the students who will staff the booth.

This paper documents our process for creating our PAX East 2013 booth including background information (Section 2), our methodology (Section 3), all elements of booth design including final details and budget (Section 4), advertising (Section 5), swag (Section 6), determining interest in IMGD as it applies to future recruiting (Section 7), staffing the booth (Section 8), selecting IMGD student games to be showcased at PAX (Section 9), measuring the effectiveness of the booth (Section 10), and our summary and conclusion (Section 11).

2 Background

In order to create a high quality booth for PAX East, it is important to understand the background of WPI, the IMGD program, and PAX itself. It is also important to understand why PAX is relevant to the interests of the school, and the benefits that having a booth at the show provides.

2.1 About WPI

Founded in 1865, Worcester Polytechnic Institute was one of the nation's first technology and engineering schools. Founders John Boynton and Ichabod Washburn combined their divergent individual thoughts about education and created a curriculum that blended both theory and practice ("WPI History").

Today, that vision has created a project-based curriculum where students have an opportunity to solve real world interdisciplinary problems locally and in projects in over 30 sites world-wide. Currently over half of WPI's students travel off campus each year to complete their projects ("Global Perspective").

WPI has 14 academic departments offering more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs ("Best Colleges"). WPI has often been recognized for its quality. It was the only technological university out of 16 national leadership institutions selected by the Association of American Colleges and Universities to serve as models of outstanding practices in liberal education. WPI ranks 65th in the 2013 edition of *Best Colleges and National Universities* ("Princeton Review").

2.2 About IMGD

While there are dozens of schools offering degrees in game development, WPI has the distinction of offering one of the first game degree programs in the US by having established its program in 2005 ("WPI 2008-2009"). WPI's IMGD program has received high marks from a number of sources including PC Gamer, OnlineColleges.com and the Princeton Review ("WPI 2012-2013"). In the past, the Princeton Review has ranked WPI 7th among the top 100 animation and game development schools, recognizing WPI's "ability to teach non-technical elements of the industry extremely well" (Wilding).

IMGD students at WPI can follow one of two tracks – either artistic or technical. Students in the artistic track are required to learn some programming and programmers need to study some art. Having knowledge from both tracks allows the artists and programmers to work effectively with one another. This gives WPI students an advantage when it comes to entering the gaming industry where the success of any project is dependent upon communication and collaboration.

WPI's project-based and collaborative curriculum is also an advantage for its IMGD students, giving them hands-on experience in creating products through various stages of development. WPI has attracted faculty to the IMGD program with extensive industry experience including Brian Moriarty, Britton Snyder, and Keith Zizza. Through their expertise and mentorship, IMGD students have the benefit of working with and learning from those who know how to develop commercially viable games.

2.3 About PAX East and Its Relevance to IMGD

PAX stands for the Penny Arcade Expo. It began in 2004 in Bellevue, Washington as a convention founded by popular gaming webcomic Penny Arcade to celebrate gaming culture ("PAX East"). With each successive year, PAX has grown, starting with approximately 4500 people in its inaugural year to about 70,000 attendees in 2011 (Callaham). In 2008, the organizers of the event decided to hold a convention on the east coast, dubbed PAX East. The inaugural PAX East was held in the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, Massachusetts in March 2010. In its first year the PAX East convention drew in 52,290 people. In subsequent years the convention has been held in the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, a larger venue chosen because of increased attendance (Brown). In 2012, a deal was signed to keep PAX East in Boston through 2023 with a goal of eventually growing attendance to 100,000 people (Sliwinski). In 2013, PAX will expand even more with its first international event – PAX Australia in Melbourne.

Many components come together to create the PAX conventions. There are panels which range in topic from live television recordings to how to break into the gaming industry. There are also gaming tournaments, handheld gaming lounges, concerts, and the exhibit hall. The exhibit hall is where developers, publishers, and other companies related to the gaming industry show off their upcoming games, their latest releases, or new technology that enhance gaming experiences for players.

An academic institute such as WPI is interested in PAX because of the exhibit hall where there are not only gaming industry booths, but also many academic institutions. In past PAX East conventions, institutions such as Champlain College, Digipen Institute, New England Institute of Art and Becker College have all had booths on the show floor. Having a booth at an

event such as PAX East allows WPI's IMGD program to attract prospective students, showcase

IMGD student work to prospective employers, and build relationships with other institutions

where referrals may be made to WPI's degree and advanced degree programs.

3 Methodology

For designing a booth, understanding the steps for managing a project was essential in order to create and map a timeline to have the final product ready in time for the deadline. Although the steps described in the project management literature have various names, there are essentially five components: creating a vision, designing the product, managing the resources, delivering the product and evaluating the result ("Five Essential Elements").

Although it is not always mentioned in project management literature, development of a collaborative and cooperative team is a key element to success. For this reason we spent some time getting to know each other and our individual strengths and interests before we began our project. This allowed us later to assign tasks to those who would most effectively deliver on those tasks and improve upon our organizational efficiency.

For the "Ultimate IMGD Booth at PAX East," the vision was defined by the title of the project. Those of us who have attended PAX East in the past had a clear picture of the range of size and scope of the exhibit hall booths. Recognizing that this is WPI's IMGD program's first presence at PAX, our vision was to create a high quality booth while keeping within the scope of the project and budget. The booth needed to reflect the reputation of WPI's IMGD program, proudly represent the institute, and be aesthetically appealing so that it would draw to it as large an audience as possible. We clarified our targets for marketing and established our project objectives.

The design of IMGD's booth initially involved literature research, interviews with individuals with gaming industry experience, and experimenting with various physical layout tools for the booth. These booth layouts were then vetted by the team and Professor Claypool. After design, the booth and contents were ordered as well as the hard needed for the booth. The

design of the advertising elements included the creation of the PAX East packet advertisement, booth banner, t-shirts, swag, and postcards.

The management of resources included working within the $10,000 budget and managing the time before our March 22 launch. We have been successful coming in under budget and within the time constraint.

Delivery of our product occurs March 21, the day before the PAX East event as we set up our booth and continues throughout the weekend. We prepared ourselves and volunteers with information that will allow all of us to initiate conversations with booth visitors, engage them with the four MQP games, answer questions and encourage students to consider applying to WPI's IMGD program.

Evaluation of this project is an ongoing process. It includes assessing and choosing the best booth size, advertisements, MQP's and volunteers. In addition there is an opportunity post-convention to evaluate how effectively the objectives of WPI's presence at PAX were met.

4 Elements of Booth Design

In order for WPI to have a presence at PAX East, the institution should have a booth on the exhibit hall show floor. To design an effective booth, it is important to understand the many different aspects of advertising and marketing, what makes a booth effective, and the demographics of those at PAX East. We researched the topics of public relations (PR), marketing, advertising, branding, gamer demographics, and tracking booth effectiveness. Additionally, we conducted interviews with subject matter experts in order to understand how booths at trade shows typically function and for more insight into tracking their effectiveness. With this information, we created potential layouts for the booth and an advertisement to help attract people to the booth.

4.1 Information Gathering

4.1.1 Demographics

Our primary target is people between the ages of 15 and 25, based upon a rough estimate of the age of potential students looking to get into or transfer to a new college. Another potential group to target is the press – a newspaper journalist, a TV news crew, an online gaming press website, or a YouTube celebrity. While not the main priority for WPI's booth, targeting the press could be useful to expand the outreach of WPI and IMGD to people unable to attend PAX East. Many game companies have booths at PAX East, and PAX East gives us a prime opportunity to target potential employers by showcasing student work. Targeting potential professors of practice was briefly considered as well but was outside the scope of the project.

We needed to gather information on how many people attend PAX East and learn about their backgrounds, age ranges, and interests. With limited information available on PAX

participants, we researched general electronic gamer demographics. According to an Entertainment Software Association's 2012 study, 47% of gamers are female, and women 18 or older make up a greater percentage of the gaming population than boys 17 and younger with 30% of the population being women and 18% being boys ("Essential Facts").WPI's female population is significantly smaller than the male population, with women only making up about one third of the class of 2014. Few of these students chose to pursue a degree in IMGD.

Another article describes Becker College and its presence at PAX ("PAX East Career Fair"). It suggests that press will be on the exhibit show floor visiting booths and schools such as Becker and now WPI, will be noticed.

4.1.2 Public Relations & Marketing

Since the booth is marketing both IMGD and WPI to prospective students and employers, it is important to understand marketing, PR, and advertising to design and place an advertisement in the PAX East booklet handed out to attendees.

PR is defined as "the actions of a corporation, store, government, individual, etc., in promoting goodwill between itself and the public, the community, employees, customers, etc." (HarperCollins). A case study conducted by AT&T shows the correlation between consumer perception and attitude towards a brand based upon coverage of positive and negative events (Jeffries-Fox). This case study helps to understand that the institution could increase awareness and gain a positive perception for the IMGD major if it were to be covered in a positive light at a show such as PAX East. This perception and increased awareness could then, in turn, lead to more prospective students looking at both WPI and IMGD for a college education. In addition,

potential employers could see this coverage and have a better insight into the quality of work graduates from IMGD can produce, thus being more likely to want to hire them.

A *Gamasutra* article provides more game specific insight stating it is important to have a unified vision and message for the booth and program (Wera). The article also stresses that a unified message becomes more important when media coverage comes into play. Also, it is important to choose outlets that are a good fit for promoting the school. This could mean choosing game journalism sites and blogs such as Polygon (http://www.polygon.com) or Kotaku (http://www.kotaku.com) because of their target audience across the world. Additionally, it could mean targeting local news outlets such as the Boston Phoenix, a newspaper, because their audience may already have some knowledge about schools in the area, but may not know that WPI offers a game development major. Further marketing of the major can bring attention to WPI and the IMGD program.

Marketing is defined as "the total of activities involved in the transfer of goods from the producer or seller to the consumer or buyer, including advertising, shipping, storing, and selling" (HarperCollins). For the purposes of the booth, research was targeted primarily toward the advertising and branding aspects of marketing. The booth is essentially an advertisement with two target demographics – prospective students and prospective employers. In addition WPI could be considered a brand, with IMGD being a product.

Advertising is defined as "… the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media" (Harper). The general idea with advertising is to target a demographic as opposed to a specific individual, using some form of communication that can pass on the necessary information about the product or service. For a booth at a tradeshow this would probably differ slightly. While still aiming for a demographic, the information could

potentially be passed on in a personal manner. For example, a booth staff member can talk to an attendee about the school or the games on display. In addition, WPI has an advertisement in the PAX East booklet given to attendees. Understanding effective advertising is important to entice people to visit WPI's booth. To make sure an advertisement is effective we need to consider the target audience and what appeals to them ("Top 10 Tips"). Additionally, it is important to pinpoint and highlight what strengths the program has over competitors.

4.1.3 Branding

Branding is defined as "The extent to which the general public (or an organization's target market) is able to identify a brand by its attributes" ("Investopedia"). Branding can also be thought of as customers' feelings and thoughts towards a company and or product. Or more simply, a brand can be thought of as reputation (Merriam Associates). A successful brand needs to have some sort of lore or a story. Examples include having some history backing it, anecdotes of the struggles the brand has met and how it overcame them, and what kind of innovations the brand has managed to bring to the table. All of this can combine to create a stronger connection between customers (in our case students and employers) and the brand. Not all of this may be applicable to promoting IMGD as a brand, however. For example, while WPI may not have interesting anecdotes of its origin that can help bolster the appeal of the brand, it could be very easy to discuss early struggles the program faced and how it overcame them. Furthermore, innovations could be shown in the form of what students have done with MQPs.

Brands also need strategies, or reasons for why they exist and their purpose. It is important for a brand to have an identity that makes it distinguishable from others. In WPI's case this is selling points such as seven week terms, the IQP and MQP. It is important for a brand to be "implemented" in such a way that there is always a consistent message for each

possible way that a customer may interact with the brand (Merriam Associates). When it comes

to WPI's booth at PAX East this essentially means that both the advertisement and people

staffing the booth must effectively and consistently communicate a message about the school.

This message must include key selling points of the school, including the few mentioned

previously, and must make sense in the context of the target demographics.

4.1.4 Evaluating Booth Effectiveness

An article on measuring results gave us a good idea of what kind of goals to set (Creative

Training Solutions). First we need to set goals that could be measured quantitatively. This

means setting specific goals such as wanting 25% of PAX East attendees to sign up for the

mailing list or goals that are time-bound such as seeing a 145% percent growth of the IMGD

population within two years. In addition, the booth could send out post-show surveys to people

whose contact information was recorded to see what they thought of the booth, the major, the

school, and how likely they would be to attend WPI. These types of goals are more

appropriately applied to subsequent years' efforts, where quantitative improvements might be

targeted. However, the first year can provide a baseline for year over year changes.

4.2 Interviews with Industry Experts

4.2.1 Ichiro Lambe, President, Dejobaan Games

We asked WPI alumnus Ichiro Lambe of Dejobaan Games to consider ways of evaluating

the effectiveness of the booth. Lambe gave us ideas specific to PAX East and a game

development program that could help track how effective the booth is. His suggestion is to hold

a game jam after PAX East. WPI would invite students onto campus to create their own games

in the course of a few hours. The idea behind throwing a game jam would be to give students a reason to sign up for a mailing list, then measure how many people signed up. After that, send an email about the jam, and measure how many of those people on the list end up attending. For those who cannot attend, he suggests sending another email that shows how the game jam was a success to give them an idea of what kind of things they can do at WPI. Future iterations of the booth, given the results of the first booth, could potentially use this idea.

With respect to potential employers, Lambe's suggestion was for those who would be running the booth at the show to make a concerted effort to visit all other booths on the show floor and ask them for suggestions and or help on how to make the school better known to companies. This will be a high priority for the booth staff before and during the exhibit hall hours. He added that the metric for success in this area would be the amount of business cards the school would receive.

4.2.2 Alice and Tom Kinahan, Associate Produercer, ABC and Product Manager, Hewlett Packard

Tom Kinahan pitches products for Hewlett Packard (HP). Due to his job he has traveled to trade shows in the past to showcase the latest HP products. His wife, Alice Kinahan, was a project manager for a small broadcasting company and has designed and taken a booth to a convention before. The duo provided a list of good practices and bad practices for a booth on the convention's show floor. They mentioned the issue of union workers bringing in equipment from a loading dock and the need to tip them for their services.

4.2.3 Kelly Wallick, Indie Megabooth Organizer

Kelly Wallick is one of the organizers behind the PAX Indie Megabooth. She has been helping to organize and setup booths for PAX East and Seattle for a few years and has a lot of experience working within the confines of a budget to make booths. Wallick was interviewed twice for this IQP. In both interviews she was informative and was extremely helpful in providing a better picture of what kind of budgetary costs for booth setup. For example, booths at PAX East are provided a five hundred electrical watt drop for free. However, she suggested upgrading if the booth plans to use multiple computers, a TV, etc. In addition, while there is free carpet provided, padding the carpet was also highly recommended as well as changing the color of the carpet, and the curtains that would be behind the booth. Booths are provided with one table and two chairs for free. A booth can order more furniture from the event supplier, or alternatively bring their own. In addition, she mentioned that items that can be carried by one or two people do not need to be accounted for when tipping Union people. Wallick also referred to a website that had a breakdown of costs for setting up a booth at PAX.

Once we had access to information for ordering items at PAX, we interviewed her for a second time with questions more specific to setting up booths at PAX East.   There had been internal discussions about whether attendees would prefer to stand and play games at the booth or sit down. Wallick said that sitting was almost always preferred, since attendees would be tired from walking around and standing and so any opportunity to sit would be welcomed.

4.2.4 Tim Loew, Executive Director, Mass DiGI

Tim Loew, Executive Director, is one of the founders of the Massachusetts Digital Games Institute (Mass DiGI) initiative and an employee of Becker College. He was interviewed for the purpose of getting a better expectation of PAX East from an academic institution's perspective.

When discussing booth direction Loew talked about how the goal of Becker College's booth has changed over the years. Originally, the goal was to attract new students. Students who visited the booth could get a discount upon applying to the school by entering a discount code in the application. Now, the goals of the Becker booth at PAX East are simply to promote the game design major as a brand, and to show off student's work and potential. This is an avenue WPI may want to consider if the booth is considered a success. At the same time, the booth plans to attract new students to the school by showing off student work. With this in mind, it may simply mean that in future iterations of the booth, again depending on success, that there could be an even higher emphasis on student work.

Loew indicated that our school, being an institution in Massachusetts, would automatically be entered into the "Made in Massachusetts" scavenger hunt that has become commonplace at PAX East. Attendees undertake this scavenger hunt to find and scan QR (Quick Response) codes at booths from companies and academic institutions based in Massachusetts. People who registered and completed the task successfully would win a free t-shirt. This could be another reason that people may end up visiting WPI's booth. Loew cautioned often many booths run out of swag, often as early as Friday. WPI now has information that could inform the direction of future booths. Instead of trying to cater towards prospective students **and** employers, it is possible that in future booths the sole focus could lie on promoting the major's students.

4.2.5 Andy Fish, freelance comic artist

Andy Fish is a freelance comic artist who has attended a few conventions such as Comic Con (http://www.comic-con.org/) to showcase his work. He advised having duct tape handy in case anything were to go wrong. Additionally, he suggested making the booth colorful in order for it to stand out from the crowd, and to have interactive games that people could play (aside from student work) that would draw people in. His examples included a wheel of fortune style game or a pin-the-tail on the donkey scenario. To that end we have created several concepts for games to run at the booth. These booth games include a game design trivia contest, a riddle contest, a collaborative piece of artwork, and a game entitled Needs More Explosions where attendees are given a core game idea and asked to add on to the idea.

4.2.6 Elliot Borenstein, Technical Lead, Dejobaan Games

Elliot Borenstein is a WPI alumnus who is currently employed at Dejobaan Games and who has contributed to the Indie Megabooth as well as a booth for Dejobaan at PAX East. Similar to Wallick, he advised moving in early on Thursday just before the show starts. He suggested we bringing screwdrivers and food such as power bars. He also noted that it was important to bring water and hand sanitizer. Borenstein also warned that there will be attendees who will look at the booth but not actively engage. He said that whoever is manning the booth will have to try to actively draw these people with a catchy elevator pitch.

4.3 Booth Design Results

The booth experts interviewed all recommended keeping our layout as open as possible in order to entice people to go into our space rather than walk past or walk over, grab a pamphlet, and keep walking. Alice Kinahan even recommended not leaving literature on the tables and instead handing pamphlets and flyers to people who stop by.

Designing the booth was an iterative process. For the first iteration of booth designs, the program Trimble Sketchup (http://www.sketchup.com/) was used. Formerly known as Google Sketchup, the program is meant for creating quick 3D representations of objects such as buildings, tables, or in our case – booths. Ultimately this was an unfruitful endeavor; the program was difficult to use and provided a poor sense of scale despite using feet and inches as units of measurement. Figure 1 depicts three different booth layouts done in Sketchup.

The next iteration of booth designs was done on graph paper. Figure 2 shows six different layouts drawn on grid paper. This still posed problems as it gave no visualization of 3D space and even with a scale of one grid box equaling one square foot, the sense of vertical scale was not easy to imagine.

Figure 1:

The first attempts at booth mockups using Trimble Sketchup.
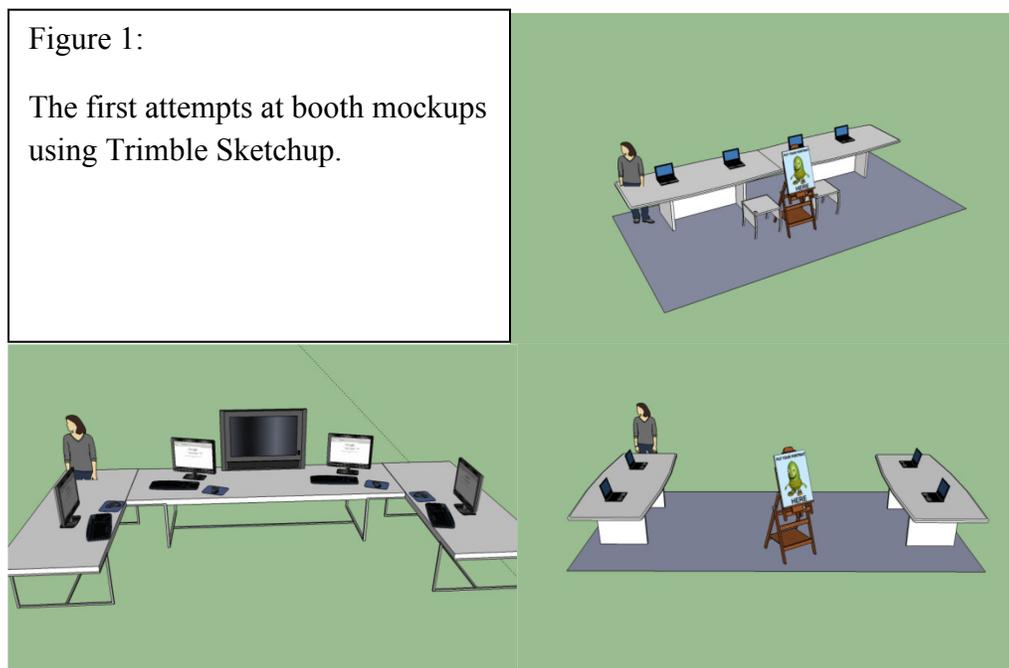
Figure 2:

Hand-drawn booth mockups on graph paper
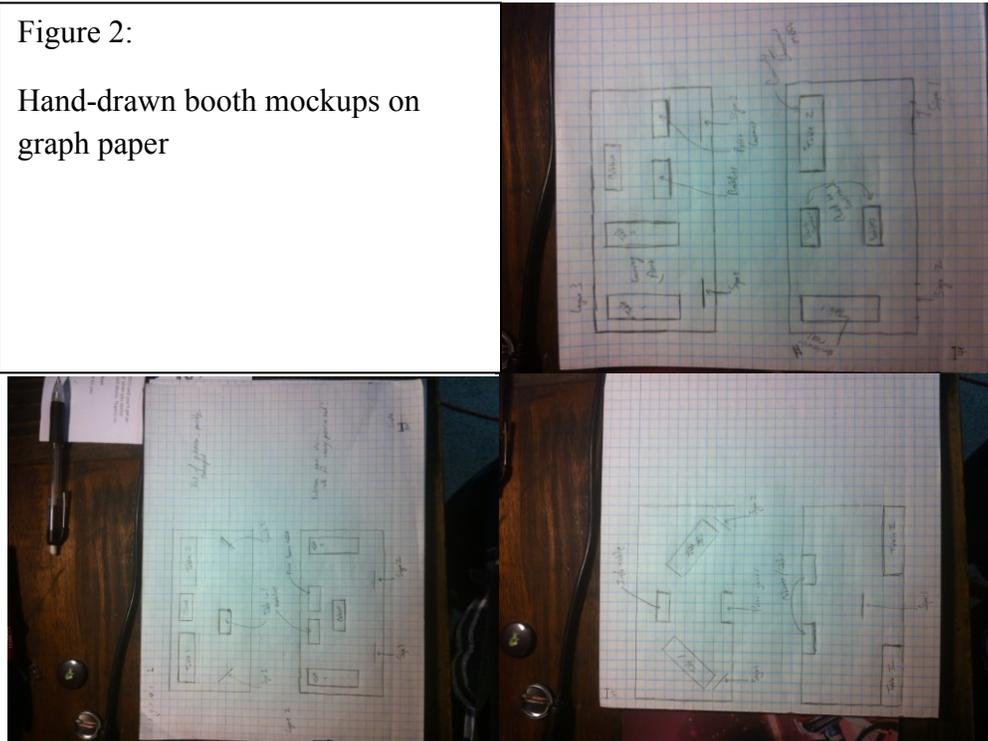
The popular videogame *Minecraft* was the final solution to visualizing and designing the booth. Figures 3 and 4 depict booth mockups made in the game. The game is voxel based so all of the terrain generates in a uniform grid and worlds can be generated to be entirely flat. The game's core mechanics allow for building using different blocks of different materials which allowed creation of analogues to real life objects while maintaining a scale. We were also able to walk freely through the layouts and look at them from any angle.

Figure 3: Reference setups for scale in *Minecraft*.

Figure 4: Mockups made in *Minecraft*.
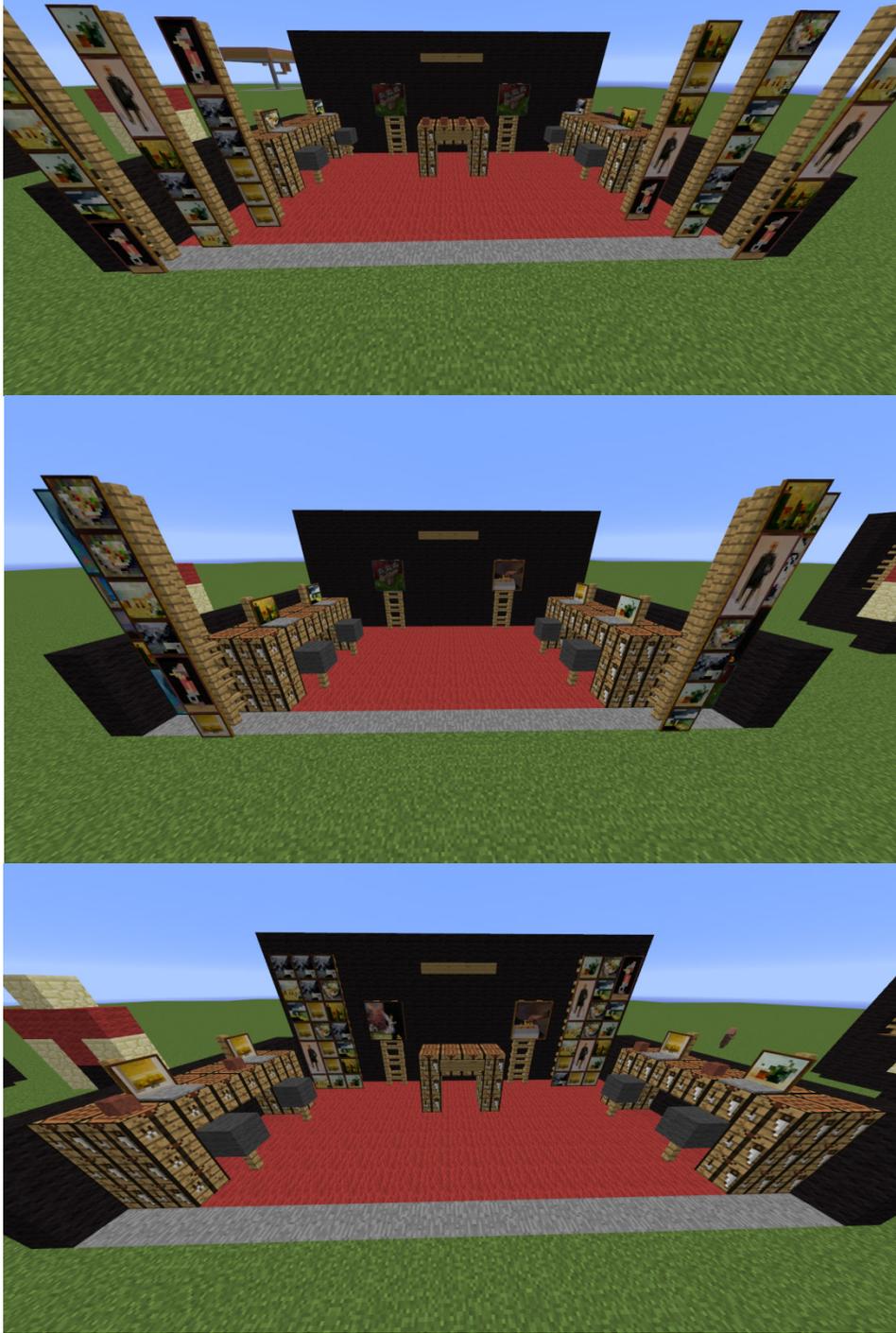
The IMGD booth is located within the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center at the

end of an aisle between booths, making it easy to see as people move about the convention

center. The booth is also located very close to a booth for the popular game development company Double Fine which should increase foot traffic near us. The booth is 10'x20' and is number 998. Our booth has an open floor plan with two tables to each side each supporting two computers and chairs. We have one central table set back from the front of the booth where we store literature about WPI and where volunteers can sit when they are not engaging a visitor. Each of the four computers hosts one playable MQP with a volunteer from each available to explain their work and walk people through the game. We also have the TV, which is approximately 54", from the Digital Art Studio to show gameplay footage from each MQP. Two large banners help connect the booth to the advertisement.

5 Advertising the Booth

Several elements are used to advertise at PAX East. The first is the advertisement that appears in the PAX East booklet. In addition the booth volunteers and WPI students are wearing advertisements - customized WPI/ IMGD t-shirts. Eight foot banners at our booth also serve as ways to attract attention and create awareness of our presence.

5.1 The Advertisement

We crafted several mockup advertisements for the PAX East giving people information about the booth's specific location. Figure 5 features six of these mockups. To create them we used Adobe Photoshop and Microsoft Publisher. Generally, the advertisements focused on showcasing student work. Some included screenshots from past MQPs while others featured digital paintings or 3D sculpts created by students. We showed these advertisements to Professor Claypool, who offered feedback. By the end of this process there were about seven advertisements designed.

The final advertisement featured a robotic chameleon created by Jill Sauer, class of 2013. This final ad is depicted in Figure 6. It was important to get basic information across including the name of the major, the name of the school, convention location, and brief details on the program's offerings. We included a QR code for quick access to the program's website, and mentioned the ability to win a Nintendo Wii U by visiting the booth.

Figure 5: A collage of six different advertisement layout ideas.

Figure 6: The final design used for the advertisement.

5.2 T-Shirt Design

T-shirts were designed for people staffing the booth and IMGD students attending PAX East. Concepts for these designs included video-game controllers, art imagery such as paintbrushes or pens, tech imagery such as computer mice or monitors, or logos with a unique flair to them. The logo chosen was based upon a video game controller's four "face" buttons – the colored buttons on a controller that players of a game typically use to interact with objects in the game's environment. The design was simple and easy to understand for those familiar with gaming which made it the most effective design for the t-shirt. However, we wanted the shirt to be in monochrome because it is more cost effective and a final t-shirt design featuring the chameleon was used instead for the sake of consistent branding as depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 7: The design chosen for the t-shirts

5.3 Banner

The booth has two standing banners. The banner started with the WPI logo, an IMGD logo, and a blank space underneath. The sparseness of this design was not likely to create the right aesthetic. We reworked the banner design several times and after four iterations as seen in Figure 8, we chose to feature the chameleon from the ad, the name of the major, and the logos of the four games chosen. Figure 9 depicts the final banner design.

Figure 8: Iterations of the banner.
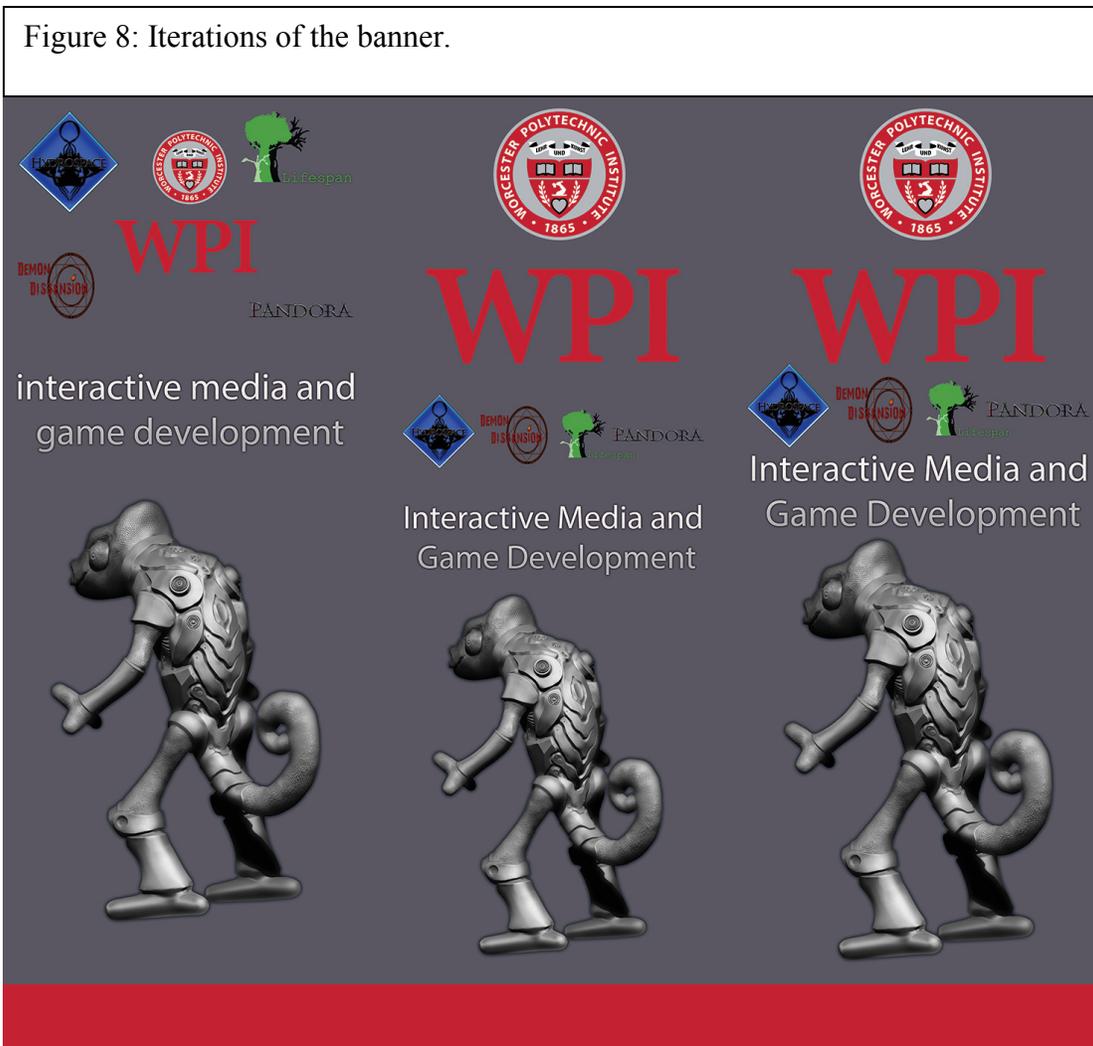
Figure 9: The design used for the banners.
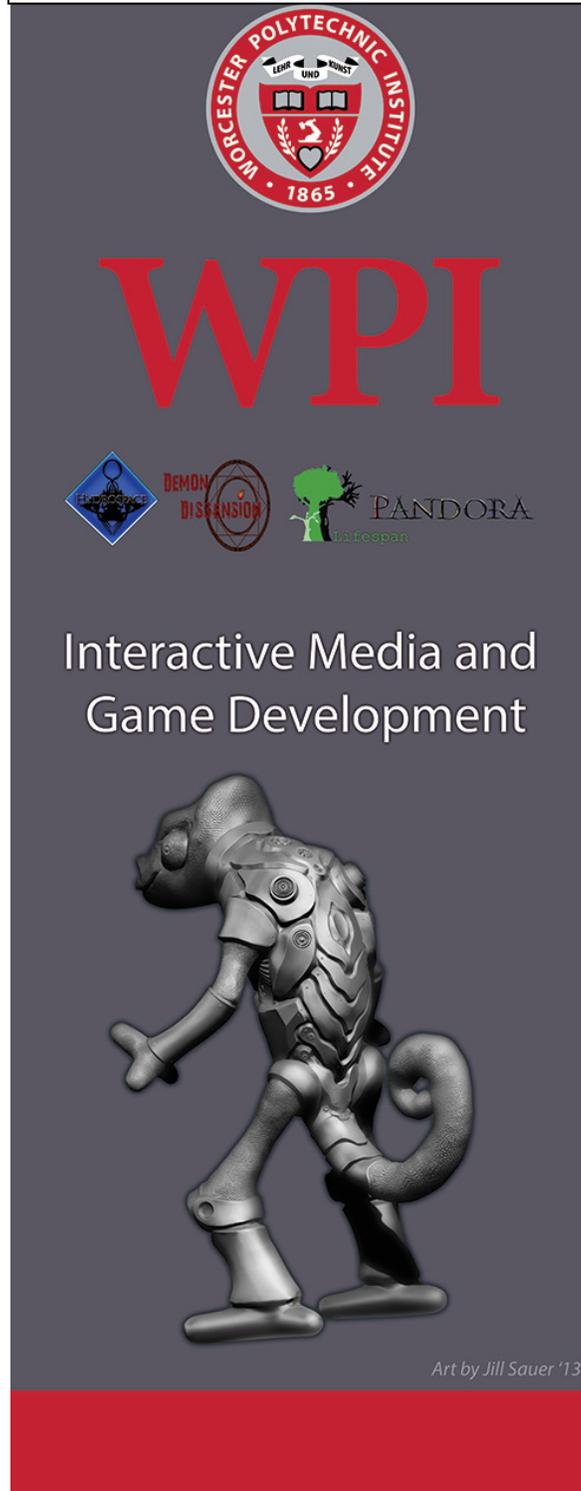
5.4 Budget

The budget for this project was $10,000. Table 1 shows the items purchased.

Table 1 – Budget

Item	Cost
10' x 20' Booth	$2600
Full Page Ad	1750
Buttons	1134
Postcards	475
Student T-Shirts	405
Wii U	371
10 $35 Volunteer Reimbursements	350
2 Retractable Signs (Banners)	330
4 three-day passes (Corinne, Andy, Ben, Cian)	280
Volunteer T-Shirts	245
2 Tables	233
4000 Watt Drop	180
Four PAX East 1-Day Passes	130
Duct Tape	8
4 8 Oz. Hand Sanitizer Bottles	12
10 Bags of Snickers Bite-Sized Candy Bars	35
3 Bowl Set	20
10 Boxes of Nutrigrain Bars	50
	$8608

Table 1 notes that we chose a 200 square foot booth over a 100 square foot size believing that it would give us a larger and more welcoming presence. It also allows us adequate space to accommodate 4 computers and room for people to experience the MQPs. We purchased an ad to help attract attention to the booth. The $35 PAX passes and reimbursements are for people staffing the booth, repayment for taking time to represent the school.

Computers are notably absent from the budget because WPI's Zoo Lab computers are brought in to host the games shown at PAX. Additionally, the only furniture ordered is a set of two tables, since PAX offers one table, one wastebasket, and two chairs per 100 square feet.

Similar in design to the ad, two 8-foot tall banners draw attention to and enhance the aesthetic of the booth. A 4000 watt drop box ensures that the electronics we are bringing are able to run properly.

6 Swag

When attending trade shows, it is traditional for booth representatives to hand out "swag", small objects, usually free or cheaply priced, used to promote a specific brand. Having swag helps attract people to the booth and give them a reason to stay at the booth long enough to hear about WPI and IMGD.

6.1 Research

We interviewed Kelly Wallick (Indie Megabooth) and WPI professor Brian Moriarty to get their opinions on convention swag. Wallick advised against t-shirts saying a lot of people do not really pay attention to the free t-shirts given away at PAX. Although t-shirts may be popular with some attendees, they may not be the most cost effective way of putting a representative item into the hands of the attendees. Instead, she recommended giving out small buttons related to the MQPs that would be on display at the booth. Professor Moriarty's suggested creating attractive postcards to hand out to prospective students. These postcards would be tied to winning the Wii U, which will be mailed to the winner.

Articles on PAX East Swag indicated:

1   T-shirts: Everybody had picked up at least one t-shirt at previous conventions. Hoodies have also proven to be popular but less so than t-shirts. According to the articles, clothing is the most popular kind of swag; however, these items tend to be for sale or are only given as a free item if the attendee waits in line to demo a game (Glasser; Greenwald; PAX East 2010 Swag; PAX East Swag/Schwag).

2   Small swag (buttons, stickers, pens, etc.) tend to be commonly used. These items are much less expensive than clothing but still have the opportunity to create awareness/recognition.

Because these items are common at conventions, any swag in this category needs to be well designed in order to stand out (Glasser; Greenwald; PAX East 2010 Swag; PAX East Swag/Schwag).

3   The more unique swag (such as figurines, toys, or puzzles) is given significantly more emphasis in the accounts we examined, indicating that people think of them as being more interesting, leaving a somewhat greater impression (Glasser; Greenwald; PAX East 2010 Swag; PAX East Swag/Schwag).

Since clothing is highly visible, having t-shirts at PAX East is important. Providing them as swag to any and all attendees who visit our booth is cost prohibitive. T-shirts are instead used as a way of identifying people working at the booth as well as giving a shirt to IMGD students attending PAX East. Given the budget constraints of our project, the swag we have chosen to distribute to booth visitors is a variety of one inch buttons as described below.

6.2 Button Design

When designing buttons it was important to hit upon several different types of promotional materials. There needed to be buttons representing the school in some form, the games, and potentially the major itself. To this end several buttons were created. One button, representing WPI as a whole, is the school's crest. For the MQPs on display, it was important to have something either symbolic of the game or a logo. To that end, creating the buttons was a collaborative process with the MQP groups, getting art assets from them, and then using those assets to make buttons. Some MQP groups even made their own button designs. Finally, to represent the major, the video game controller buttons concept logo was taken and split into four

separate pieces – each piece being a different button. Figure 10 depicts the four IMGD buttons alongside the four MQP buttons.

The buttons are inexpensive, easily customizable, and can be mass produced with a quick turnaround time at the WackyButtons website (http://wackybuttons.com/). Because buttons are easy and inexpensive to produce in large numbers, we can hand them out to everyone who visits the booth.

Figure 10: The buttons to be handed out at the booth with the IMGD buttons on the top and the MQP buttons along the bottom. (From left to right Demon Dissension, Hydrospace, Lifespan, and Pandora)

6.3 Postcard Design

We designed a postcard that followed the design of the advertisement. The postcard features the chameleon and general information on the IMGD bachelor and master degrees that are offered by WPI. The postcard is displayed in Figure 11. Because PAX East rules prohibit having any kind of raffle activity on site, people who are interested in WPI's IMGD program provide their name and email address and to return the card to the booth. They will then be entered in a drawing for the Wii U a week after the convention.

Figure 11: The final design for the postcard.

7 Determining Interest in IMGD

Understanding why students chose WPI and the IMGD major can further inform as to what will draw in one of the target demographics – prospective students. We interviewed high school guidance counselors and surveyed IMGD students to find out what students looking at colleges *should* be looking for, and what brought them to WPI.

7.1 Interviews with Guidance Counselors

7.1.1 Cheryl Elder, Guidance Counselor at Hopkinton High School

Cheryl Elder is a guidance counselor at Hopkinton High School in Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Her job is to help students prepare for college by guiding them towards potential career paths, and recommending colleges that align with them. She was interviewed in her office at Hopkinton High School's counseling department. When asked about her criteria for colleges her main concerns for students included whether or not the college is a good fit (a trait that she admits is hard to quantify), location, GPA, majors on offer, and size. To judge if a college is a good fit she often recommends students go visit, and then to base it off their gut reaction.

When asked about WPI, she spoke very highly of the school, but admitted to not being clear on what the IMGD major was. Once explained, she said that given the highly competitive nature of the games industry, another huge factor for schools offering game development majors is job placement. She finds it extremely important for students to realize what the process of creating a game entails. She also looks at the students' talents. If the student is not artistic or technically inclined, then he or she may want to research a different career option. For the class

of 2013, she believes only about 10 are specifically interested in pursuing a degree in game development, a small fraction of the 244 seniors.

7.1.2 Susan Ivas, Guidance Counselor at Holy Name Central

Susan Ivas is one of the guidance counselors at Holy Name Central Catholic Jr/Sr High School. Part of her job involves helping students choose the college that best fits them. She looks at the reputation of the school, the size of the college and its community, the location of the school, the skills/talents of the student, the financial situation of the student, the ideals of the parents, and the academic level of the student to help her find the best fit. If a student expresses an interest in the game development field she looks to the reputation of the school to determine if it is a good fit. She said she has little understanding of the gaming industry and so she relies on reputable schools to give her the information she needs to pass on to the students. When asked what she looked for in a good college booth, she answered immediately with the words "exciting people," and "personality," saying that the booth should make students feel welcome. She also mentioned that having some technology to show was an excellent idea.

7.2 Surveys

We devised and distributed a survey to the IMGD populace intending to gauge interest in various aspects of WPI's IMGD program. Those questions needing answers were:

- *How do students find out about WPI*?
- *Why do they choose IMGD*?
- *What do they like most about IMGD?*

We then used these three basic questions to create six specific questions, each question being asked about WPI as a whole and IMGD specifically in turn. In order to allow us to more

easily analyze the resulting data, we created multiple choice options for each question. After the

survey was created, we sent it to the email alias for IMGD students at WPI, and waited a week

for responses before closing the survey. The results of the survey (excluding the single free

answer question) are displayed in the following tables.

Student Survey Responses

Table 1 -- Aggregate data

Total responses	37
Number of students polled	170
Percentage of students who responded	22%

Table 2 -- How did you find out about WPI?

Family	14	38%
Guidance Counselor	5	14%
Friends	5	14%
Website	4	11%
Advertisements	3	8%
College Fair	2	5%
College planner	1	3%
Other: Field Trip in High School Princeton Top Game Design College list Letter in the mail (Also counted as advertisement)	1 1 1	3% 3% 3%

Table 3 - How did you find out about WPI's IMGD program?

Website:	12	32%
Family:	6	16%
Friends:	5	14%
College Fair:	3	8%
Advertisements:	1	3%
Guidance Counselor:	1	3%
Other: Princeton Top Game Design College list Student Orientation College Visit Taking classes Personal research WPI Frontiers	 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	 3% 3% 3% 3% 3% 3% 3%

Table 4 -- What made you choose WPI?

Major Offerings:	30	81%
Seven Week Terms:	20	54%
IQP/MQP:	17	46%
Reputation:	17	46%
Opportunities to travel abroad:	13	35%
Location:	12	32%
Student life:	7	19%
Clubs:	6	16%
Legacy (alumnus in family):	1	3%
Project/Group focus:	1	3%

Other: Financial aid offers Network of grads Goats	1 1 1	3% 3% 3%

Table 5 -- What is your current favorite part of the IMGD program?

Hands-on Projects:	19	51%
Mixture of Art/Tech:	8	22%
Professors:	3	8%
Classroom Environment:	2	5%
Curriculum:	2	5%

Table 6 -- What do you like most about WPI?

Seven Week Terms:	10	27%
Majors:	10	27%
Student Life:	7	19%
Reputation:	2	5%
Clubs:	2	5%
IQP/MQP:	2	5%
Location:	1	3%

The final question, "What made you choose IMGD?" was open ended. While there were a variety of answers, most of the responses were clustered around having a pre-existing interest in the field or that becoming interested in IMGD after joining WPI as a CS major.

Based on the survey results, the two main points that attract students to WPI are the majors offered and the seven week terms. As we are attempting to advertise specifically for

IMGD, the subject of majors that are offered at WPI is probably less relevant as a selling point, unless a visitor to the booth is interested in double majoring. Of equal ranking (27%, as shown in Table 6) was seven week terms, which will be one of the main points that we mention at the booth. The IQP/MQP, WPI's reputation and student life are also high scoring topics and important items to emphasize.

The survey revealed that our IMGD program offers hands-on projects, an extremely high ranking selling point. This is a point we can emphasize when showcasing MQPs, given that many other schools do not offer students a chance to create complete games.

8 Volunteers

Volunteers need to staff the booth who are personable and knowledgeable about IMGD, WPI, and the games industry. MQP students are also at the booth to answer questions about their projects and the program in general.

8.1 Volunteer Decision Process

We developed a process to judge potential booth volunteers. Informal interviews were held with each applicant. Applicants were asked the following:

1 Please introduce yourself.
2 What days are you attending PAX?
3 How long of a shift would you be willing to work?
4 Why do you want to volunteer for us?
5 Tell us a bit about why you chose WPI.
6 Tell us a bit about why you are an IMGD major.
7 Why do you think we should we pick you?

By the end of B-Term eight people had applied and were subsequently interviewed – all of whom interviewed well. However, eight volunteers would not be enough – especially since there was a cross over between volunteers and MQP groups who wanted to show their games. We sent out another request at the beginning of C-Term. The difference this time was the offer of a free one-day pass for either Sunday or Friday in exchange for volunteering at the booth. There were only four passes available – two for Friday and two for Sunday. Despite this, there were only three new applicants and each of them was only available on Sunday. The three candidates were interviewed, but only two of them could be accepted.

8.2 Schedule

We created a schedule detailing who would staff the booth for specific time slots. Originally the schedule allotted for five volunteers in the booth at all times, but this was decided to be too many due to the size of the booth. Two to three volunteers were scheduled to be at the booth at a time, with one or two members of the IQP team working alongside them. The days the volunteers were going to be at PAX was taken into consideration as was the fair distribution of time slot assignments. The final schedule is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 -- Booth Schedule

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10:00am - 11:00am	Alex Gray	Jill Sauer	Logan Harrington
	Nick Konstantino	Andrew Aveyard	Nick Konstantino
			Mike Grossfeld
11:00am - 12:00pm	Alex Gray	Jill Sauer	Logan Harrington
	Nick Konstantino	Andrew Aveyard	Nick Konstantino
		Ryan Baker	Mike Grossfeld
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Alex Gray	Jill Sauer	Logan Harrington
	Jill Sauer	Andrew Aveyard	Ryan Casey
		Ryan Baker	Mike Grossfeld
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Alex Gray	Jill Sauer	Logan Harrington
	Jill Sauer	Andrew Aveyard	Ryan Casey
		Ryan Baker	Mike Grossfeld
2:00pm - 3:00pm	Alex Gray	Ryan Casey	Alex Gray
	Jill Sauer	Ryan Baker	Catherine Waple
	Owen West		Ryan Casey
3:00pm - 4:00pm	Sonya Chen	Ryan Casey	Catherine Waple
	Owen West	Nick Konstantino	Alex Gray
		Ryan Baker	Ryan Casey
4:00pm - 5:00pm	Sonya Chen	Ryan Casey	Catherine Waple
	Owen West	Nick Konstantino	Alex Gray
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Sonya Chen	Ryan Casey	Catherine Waple
	Owen West	Nick Konstantino	Alex Gray

8.3 Volunteer Information

We will meet with the volunteers in D Term prior to the show. At this meeting we will be giving volunteers information sheets, as shown in Table 7, with key points they should know when talking to people who visit the booth. This sheet contains information with statistics on the school, the major, questions volunteers may be asked and brief descriptions of the MQPs on display.

Table 7 – Volunteer Information Sheet

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

PAX East Quick Reference

General WPI Facts (as of Fall 2012):

Statistics courtesy of: http://www.wpi.edu/About/facts.html

- ❖ Current Population Information:
  - ➢ 3,746 undergrads
  - ➢ 31% f, 69% m
  - ➢ 45 states / 70 countries
- ❖ 7 Week Terms
  - ➢ 3 Courses Per Term
- ❖ Required Projects:
  - ➢ HUA Capstone
  - ➢ IQP
  - ➢ MQP
- ❖ Student to Faculty Ratio: 14:1

IMGD Facts:

- ❖ IMGD – What does it stand for?
  - ➢ Interactive Media and Game Development
    - ▪ Note: **NOT** "Design"
- ❖ What sort of different concentrations for IMGD are there?
  - ➢ Undergrad: Art & Tech
  - ➢ Grad: Production / Management, Serious Games, Tech
- ❖ When was the first graduating class of IMGD?
  - ➢ 2009

Questions You May Be Asked:

- ❖ What do you enjoy most about WPI?
- ❖ What's your favorite thing about IMGD?
- ❖ Why would you recommend WPI over other schools?
- ❖ What's your personal opinion of the program (and/or) school as a whole?

Quick MQP Facts:

All games shown are made in Unity

- ❖ Demon Dissension
  - ➢ Fighting Game akin to Street Fighter
  - ➢ Made by: Nick Konstantino, Mike Metzler, Brian Seney, Anthony Sessa
- ❖ Pandora
  - ➢ First person puzzle game, use "abstractions" of the seven deadly sins to solve puzzles!
  - ➢ Made by: Ryan Casey, Mike Frankfort, Jill Sauer, Alex Thornton-Clark
- ❖ Lifespan
  - ➢ First person puzzle game, use time powers to manipulate objects in environment.
  - ➢ Made by: Mike Grossfeld, Colin Ogren, Mike Pelissari, Nick Silvia, Will Stockinger, and Matt Tomson
- ❖ Hydrospace
  - ➢ Fight off incoming alien ships to defend earth using the zSpace "tablet" interface

</div>

- Made by: Michael Brigham, Gabriel Sterns-Robbins, and Catherine Waple

9 Major Qualifying Projects

Student made games can attract prospective students and show prospective employers the quality of work that the IMGD program can produce. We considered showing games from different classes however this idea was discarded because the games produced in different classes tend to be unfinished and unpolished. The games at the booth would instead come from MQPs.

9.1 MQP Decision Process

The process for deciding the selection process for this year's MQP's began in B-Term, when a meeting with the *Lifespan* MQP group was held at their request. This was used as a test determining how meetings with MQP groups should go, and to get an idea of where most of the MQPs would be at this point in time. A few weeks after that meeting, an email was sent out to IMGD Majors where we requested to meet with MQP groups about showing their games at PAX East. Five MQP groups responded to the email with requests to meet.

At the meetings we asked the following questions:

- What is your elevator pitch?
    - Going off of that, please give us a more detailed description.
- Is there a playable prototype at this point?
    - Yes? Can we see it?
    - No? When will it be ready?
- Do you have any concept art we can look at?
    - Yes? Can we see it?
    - If no, why not?
- When do you plan on having a final build?
- What platform is this game on?
- Anything you think makes this game stand out or that we should know about it?

Most of the games submitted for consideration were developed in the Unity 3D game engine – a tool for creating games – and the teams were able to show something playable. All of

the MQP teams intended to have a final game ready by PAX East. Not all groups had an

elevator pitch ready, but were all more than happy to give a detailed description. All games were

playable in B Term with two exceptions.

Meetings were set up in C Term to see how the games looked and played. Two metrics

measured whether or not the game should be shown at PAX. The first metric - the mean score -

was determined by averaging individual whole number scores in five different categories. Each

of these categories was scored on a scale of one to ten. The categories judged were:

- Graphics
    - Is the game visually attractive? Does it look good in motion?
- Sounds / Music
    - Does this game have sound effects where players would expect them? Is there
      background music? Are these two things easy on the ears?
- Gameplay
    - Arguably the most important metric, is the game fun to play, does it feel "right"?
- Polish
    - Does the game feel showable? Or is it rough around the edges?
- Appeal / First Glance
    - How likely is this game to catch the attention of a passerby on the PAX show
      floor?

In addition to a mean score, a "gut" score is also given to each game. This score is more

based upon our own gut feelings, as the name would imply. Perhaps the game scores a 4.2

because of a low appeal factor, but the game still feel fun and looks good – the "gut" looks at the

game as a whole. The games that would be shown would be decided by the team with one

stipulation: each game considered would have to have at least a gut and mean score over five.

This alone was not enough for a game to be chosen however, and a group discussion was held to

determine the final game candidates.

The games we viewed were of varying quality. All of them had potential to be something

great, but some were less polished than others. In determining what games to pick, this variation

made it extremely difficult to gauge whether these games could be ready in time. Whether or not

a game would be ready in time was not considered as official criteria for determining a game's eligibility, however, it was factored in with the gut score for each team member. The score breakdown for one game did not have any single category clocking in at under a score of five. Other games however had widely distributed scores. For example, there were two games that had low scores on the polish end of the spectrum but they also had really high appeal. In addition, while most games were single player or playable on a single screen other titles were network only games, or required special peripherals to play. These were important factors that we considered in deciding which games to show. It required us to balance several factors.

9.2 Chosen Games

The games the team chose were *Lifespan*, *Pandora*, *Demon Dissension*, and *Hydrospace*. *Lifespan* and *Pandora* are both first person perspective games where players must solve puzzles with interesting game mechanics. *Lifespan* is developed by Michael Grossfeld, Will Stockinger, Nick Silvia, Michael Pelissari, Colin Ogren, and Matt Tomson and has Professors Charles Rich, Keith Zizza, and Joseph Farbrook as advisors. The game features mechanics which allow the player to manipulate objects in the game world by altering time. *Lifespan's* evaluation scores were 7.5 and 8.3. Figure 15 features an in-game screenshot.

Pandora is developed by Ryan Casey, Jill Sauer, Michael Frankfort, and Alex Thornton-Clark. It is advised by Professors Britt Snyder and Robert Lindeman. The game features a story revolving around Pandora's Box and the seven deadly sins. *Pandora*'s evaluation scores were 7.8 and 8.1. Figure 13 shows an in-game screenshot.

Demon Dissension is a one-on-one fighting game.   It is developed by Nick Konstantino, Michael Metzler, Brian Seney, and Anthony Sessa. The advisors on the project are Professor

Mark Claypool and Dean O'Donnell. *Demon Dissension's* evaluation scores were 5.3 and 6.1. Figure 14 shows an in-game screenshot.

Hydrospace is a chance to show off a piece of novel technology that students have worked with to create a compelling game. This game is developed at a company in Silicon Valley called zSpace and is by Gabriel Stern-Robbins, Catherine Waple, and Michael Brigham. The project is being advised by Professor David Finkel. *Hydrospace's* evaluation scores were 6.1 and 7.5. Figure 12 shows an in-game screenshot.

Figure 12: A screenshot from Hydrospace	Figure 13: A screenshot from Pandora

Figure 14: A screenshot from Demon Dissention	Figure 15: A screenshot from Lifespan

10 Measuring Booth Effectiveness

The effectiveness of WPI's IMGD booth can be measured in several ways –

quantitatively as well as qualitatively - as there are several objectives for creating a presence at

PAX East. The objectives are:

1   To create awareness of WPI's IMGD program
2   To generate interest in WPI's IMGD program
3   To attract future students to WPI and the IMGD program
4   To generate company contacts

10.1 Tracking Techniques

Buttons: Count the number of buttons remaining at the end of the show can gauge how

many people have some awareness of WPI's IMGD program.

Postcards & Mailing List: Postcards remaining at the end of the show has ended and the

number of postcards returned to the booth can help us create a mailing list of interested students.

The people who return the postcards can be sent content such as evaluation surveys about the

booth, information about the school and major, and upcoming events for prospective students.

However, if PAX attendees choose not to subscribe to a WPI mailing list, then we can further

refine the data that indicates how many people are actually interested in the school.

QR Code: The "Made in Massachusetts" QR code activity will give us another

opportunity for creating awareness. This activity sends "scavenger hunters" to our booth without

any prompting or additional advertising from us. Statistics can later be obtained from the

organization responsible for the Made in Massachusetts scavenger hunt.

Twitter: A Twitter hash tag, #WPIimgd, will allow us to count the people tweeting about

the booth, determine awareness of our booth, feedback about experiences in our booth, and

general interest in WPI and IMGD.

Narrative log: Booth volunteers will have an opportunity to log comments in a book which will help us evaluate success and generate constructive ideas going forward.

Business cards: Representatives from game development companies who stop by our booth for their will be asked for their business cards. The number of cards collected will help us to get an idea of how many companies are aware of and interested in hiring WPI students.

10.2 Evaluation

The number of remaining buttons is used to measure the number of booth visitors as well as the interest in and appeal of the specific MQPs being shown in the booth. A log book is available in the booth for volunteers to record their experiences – comments and pertinent questions. Exit interviews of volunteers provide additional information as to their overall experience. The number of business cards collected gives us some information as to the number of company representatives who visited the booth. The number of post cards returned indicates the level of interest that potential students have in WPI's IMGD program.

11 Conclusion

Given the number of other game design/development schools that have been represented at PAX East in the past, it is important that WPI's IMGD program also participates. Presence at PAX East creates awareness of and interest in the IMGD program, attracting future students, and generating game development company contacts for both employment and MQP sponsorship opportunities.

Our process for creating a PAX East booth was to gather data, design the booth itself, order appropriate equipment, create advertising and swag, select MQP's for demonstration, and recruit volunteers to tend the booth.

The booth holds four computers from the Zoo Lab to run the MQP's that we selected. Advertising includes an ad placed in the PAX East packet, t-shirts worn by both the IMGD students and the booth volunteers, and two identical banners flanking the booth. All of these carry the chameleon image that creates consistency. The booth is staffed with IMGD student volunteers throughout the convention.

11.1 Post-Mortem

In any project of this magnitude, one would expect that there would be "bumps" along the way as well as clear successes. Our primary challenges were in the areas of communication, organization and time management. The areas that went well were vision and commitment, team work, and creativity.

Communication: There were several occasions where communication breakdowns created disappointment as well as extra work. One specific situation occurred with the delivery of the booklet advertisement to PAX. Our understanding was that it was to be delivered to our

advisor's office and forwarded from there. We might have averted that misunderstanding by being clear in the subject line of the memo that this required immediate attention as well as specifying in the message exactly what action needed to be taken.   This lesson is one that was difficult but will serve us well going forward. Another example of miscommunication occurred within our team where one person misunderstood the task he was assigned and wasted time and energy in producing research that was irrelevant.

Organization: While we were all very clear as to the product that we were to deliver, we would have been much more efficient had we started with a well-designed organizational plan. On several occasions we were led by our enthusiasm and wanting to develop pieces of the project in almost an ad hoc nature rather than having the benefit of a logical and orderly plan. Once we realized how much more effective we would be, we quickly developed an organizational plan to guide our efforts.

Time Management: The initial absence of a well-designed organizational plan also contributed to some difficulty we had with time management. In retrospect we could have produced more during A Term, had we a plan with a timeline.

Vision and Commitment: One of the aspects of this project that went well was our vision and commitment to that vision. We recognized at the outset the importance of WPI's presence at PAX East and wanted to ensure that our booth reflected the institute's reputation and as well as the quality of the IMGD program. For those of us who had attended PAX in the past, we knew that our booth would be among other high quality products and we wanted to make sure that ours measured up to those. Our commitment to achieving that vision never wavered and the time dedicated to the project reflected that.

Team work: Often during the execution of a project of this size, various disagreements and conflicts occur among team members.   One of the things that we can be most proud of is

that we worked well together, assigning a group leader and supporting him and one another throughout the project. While there might have been some differences of opinion on a particular component, there was never any power struggle. We respected one another's views, made sure we made ourselves available to one another, and worked to achieve the best outcome.

Creativity: By the very nature of the project assignment, there was a significant opportunity for creativity. From figuring out tools that would allow the best visual diagram of the booth to the design of all advertising elements, we were able to employ our creative talent.

This project was rich in learning experiences. We all benefited from the challenges we faced and will know in the future how to avert them.

11.2 Recommendations

We believe that WPI's IMGD program belongs at PAX East. It offers a marketing opportunity which is difficult to replicate in any other venue. Future booths should have a consistent marketing/advertising theme among all of its elements. In our case this was using the chameleon image across all advertising pieces. It is important that the aesthetics of the booth naturally draw people to it. MQPs should have a central role in the booth offering a hands-on experience to booth visitors. The booth should be staffed with students whose enthusiasm and knowledge about the IMGD program and WPI enhances the experience for booth visitors and draws prospective students to the institute.

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