

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Thomas Sampson

CONTACT INFORMATION

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KEY SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Contractor for Sumo Digital

I am currently working on a contract basis for Sumo Digital's core technology team. My main responsibilities involve maintaining and developing a cross platform C++ game engine, targeting all current-gen games consoles. I am often required to work under pressure, diagnosing problems and developing new features and tools under strict time constraints. I am also required to communicate frequently with the art and game teams to ensure their needs are met. Most recently I have been working independently on a custom tool which provides artists with in-engine procedural texture and material support using a node-based graph designer. Working on a contract basis I am often required to juggle multiple issues and projects simultaneously and am fully responsible for managing my time and workload to ensure deadlines are achieved.

Steel Minions (Student Game Studio)

I am currently involved in developing a 2D platform/puzzle PSP Minis title named BounceBack. After coming up with the original concept for the game and pitching this to Sony Computer Entertainment, along with the rest of the team, we were encouraged to commence development of the project on the PlayStation portable platform. Within the team I was assigned the role of producer and engine programmer, working alongside two other programmers and two artists. When the game entered development we had no existing technology/tools other than the PSP SDK and documentation. I began work on a simple game engine library to support 2D/3D rendering, simple physics and collision detection, SFX/BGM, custom containers and algorithms, input handling, multi-threading, GUI elements and particle effects. This engine ultimately became a standalone piece of technology used to drive other games within the studio. The other two programmers used my library to program BounceBack as I worked to meet any requests and fixes they required. To supplement the engine I also wrote a number of tools and asset compilers and set up a fully automated asset build pipeline for the game. As producer I was also responsible for ensuring all deadlines were met, resolving any conflicts within the team and ensuring that the team communicated efficiently in order to maximise productivity. At the time of writing the game is complete and currently undergoing the Sony QA process.

Work placement at SN Systems

After studying game development and C++ academically for two years, I was lucky enough to carry out my work placement at SN Systems (Sony Computer Entertainment Europe). Towards the end of this placement I was offered a position working for SN Systems which I declined in order to return to my studies.

Debugger - I began work on the Debugger team developing a generic branching test suite in C# to thoroughly test the branching capabilities of the SN Systems Debugger. The system I designed allowed members of the Debugger team to write hardware agnostic branching tests using a custom XML Schema which were read by my application and translated into branching instructions for the target hardware (PPC/MIPS/Other) at runtime. Once generated, the instructions for each test were then injected into target memory, executed, and the results verified.

Compiler - On the compiler team I worked directly on the SNC source code, rewriting the internal trace/logging system. This involved writing my own lightweight XML library in C (as the compiler was written entirely in C and XML generation needed to be fast with a low memory footprint). This next involved replacing all "printf" dumps throughout the compiler; with a structured logging entry. I then wrote a GUI tool in C# to read in the XML trace data which allowed searching, tree traversal, node highlighting, name demangling and produced visual graphs which could be exported to Jpeg/PNG. I also ported Motorstorm for PSP from GCC to SNC.

Tuner - The first project undertaken on the tuner team was to redesign a small section of the frame capture GUI to make syscalls and thread switches more visible, which involved a lot of prototyping and discussion. I then moved on to write a bottleneck detection module in C++ which analysed PS3 target capture data and integrated warning icons and tooltips into the frame capture data to suggest where common bottlenecks may be present. The work I carried out went on to be tested and was recently integrated into the latest version of the PS3 ProDG Tuner, currently available on DevNet.

Self Employed Projects

For the last 5 years I have worked self employed for a variety of companies on a number of projects varying from web-based / CMS start-up ventures to more corporate large scale C++ software applications. This has involved a high level of versatility, adapting my skills to many different projects, languages, hardware platforms and work environments. During my time working self-employed I have engaged directly with a number of large clients such as HBOS, Kineo, First Caribbean, Sheffield Hallam University, The Buzz and Sumo Digital. I have also become very familiar with VCS/DVCS systems such as Perforce, Mercurial and SVN and have been required to branch, merge, integrate codebases on a regular basis.

EDUCATION

Sept 2007 – July 2012	1 st Class MComp Games Software Development - Sheffield Hallam University
Sept 2005 – June 2007	Eckington 6 th Form
Sept 2000 – June 2005	Eckington Secondary School

QUALIFICATIONS

A Level Grades

B	Mathematics
A	Information Technology
A	Business & Economics

Additional Awards/Qualifications

- 1st Prize for Best Game Technology – Game Republic (2012)
- 1st Prize for Best Team – Game Republic (2012)
- 1st Prize for Best Design – Game Republic (2012)
- SN Systems Prize for Best Software Development Tool (2011)
- Bristol Games Jam award for 'Most Innovative' game (2010)
- Cisco / HP Computer Networking BTEC
- 'A' Level prize for Information Technology
- Prize for overall high achievement Eckington School
- Grade 8 Drums & Percussion Certification (2000)

EMPLOYMENT

<i>June 2011 – Present</i>	Working on a contract basis for Sumo Digital (after carrying out a summer placement) on their core technology team. This work involves maintaining and developing a cross platform game engine and suite of tools written in C++, targeting all current-gen games consoles.
<i>September 2010 – May 2011</i>	Working as self-employed software developer for a number of organisations, on projects managed by Sheffield Hallam University.
<i>August 2009 – August 2010</i>	Placement year at SN Systems (Sony Computer Entertainment) working on PSP / PS3 development tools (compiler, linker and profiling technology).
<i>March 2008 – August 2009</i>	Working self employed on a contract basis for Kineo UK. My roles included working on e-learning products and web based systems to support the creation of flash and other multimedia assets.
<i>September 06 - March 08</i> <i>August – September 2005</i>	Working part time as a customer Advisor for Argos. Netsurity Sheffield. Worked as developer on web based risk management solution, this involved working closely with team members on Databases and server side scripting.
<i>May 2004</i>	Reason for leaving: To return to 6 th form. Vantage Technologies as IT Technician diagnosing problems, with some Web Development.

INTERESTS

I have had a passion for games and game development since a very early age. I began programming and developing games around the age of twelve using Game Maker and quickly moved on to programming in other simple scripting languages before discovering C# and C++. In my spare time I play the drums, and in 2007 achieved my Grade 8 certification in drums and percussion. In the past I have been part of many bands ranging from jazz to metal and enjoy both the music and social aspects of being part of a musical group. I also occasionally enjoy playing squash and swimming.

REFERENCES

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