

NBCC grads creating game for competition

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CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I. - Five graduates of the New Brunswick Community College video game art and design program are putting what they've learned to the test. The grads are taking part in the 2010 edition of Game Garage, a three-month program held by the IMA - Interactive Media Alliance - for recent graduates to create a game or game prototype in pursuit of a government grant of \$6,000.

IMA is a P.E.I.-based interactive media industry association, and Game Garage is also supported by Telefilm Canada and Innovation PEI.

John Landry, 21, originally of Quispamsis, got involved in Game Garage through friends who also recently graduated from NBCC and formed a group for the competition.

"They were looking for an animator so they found me," Landry said. Landry's specialties consist of concept art and animation, making the NBCC 2010 grad a prime candidate for the competition. He and his four teammates - Bryan Viau, John Sollows, Kyle Leet and Sam Bowdridge - will be competing against Prince Edward Islanders Matt King, Greg King, John Hughes, Kent Giddings and Marshall Harrington.

"This is only its third year going but the first year students that went to the program were also from NBCC," Landry said, explaining each last year's participants found success in the field. "It's sort of a toss up. I'm loving what I'm doing here and I never thought that I'd be getting into the gaming industry, but I'm definitely digging it."

Game Garage sees mentors from P.E.I.'s video game industry help graduates build games.

Participants were chosen from a national competition that invited graduating new media students and recent grads to submit game concepts or their résumés for a chance to work on someone else's concept. Landry said he knew two of his teammates before entering the contest, and he said having familiar faces to work beside has made the endeavour easier.

Competition started June 1 and goes until the end of August, with a gala taking place on Sept. 2.

As for the game in store, Landry said it's an "exploration game." "The more you explore the more points you get and by exploring you open doors into other levels," he said. He continued that the main character is a robot, with the concept being the more you explore with the points the more you can spend on parts.

"It actually took us a few tries. We had sent a few concept ideas back in April or May ... and they weren't so big on the idea but they were big on the group." That basis came from the team's work ethic and their use of art and their idea write-up. Game ideas are required to be shown before proceeding, but Landry said the approvals aren't specific. "You don't go in and tell them how it is exactly. As long as it has a relatively good idea to the game they'll approve it. The rest is up to you." Landry said the game is being set up with the idea to put it on iPhones, although he's unsure if that will be a possibility. But it will be for PC and possibly be available for Facebook and www.addictinggames.com. "The way we have it set up is low quality, which is good for iPhone because it means that it can run faster," he said.

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