

The Post Production Process of Game Audio

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The U.S computer and videogame industry's annual growth rate from 2003 to 2006 exceeded 17 percent according to a study released by the entertainment software Association. The growth in both of these industries outpaces the U.S economy as a whole, which grew at only 4 percent during the same period. In 2006 the computer and videogame industry's value added to U.S. Gross Domestic Products \$3.8 billion. While the entertainment software industry directly and indirectly employs more than 80,000 people in 31 states. The statistics stated above prove that the gaming industry is rapidly growing and the budgets to create these games are also becoming dramatically larger. In the past video game budgets have been focused primarily on the graphics of the game and not as much attention or money has been given to the creation of the sound track. In recent years with the growth of the gaming industry that has changed and the audio aspect of video game production has become extremely important.

As interactive audio soundtracks mature, they become more and more complex. Many video games currently being released today will include tens of thousands of lines of dialog, hundreds of music cues including hours of live recorded orchestral background scores, dozens of ambiences and thousands of individual sound effects. (Paper 5857) However the creation of audio for video games creates a difficult challenge. Unlike creating sound effects or a music score for a linear media like a film or video, game audio

happens as the game is being played and not ahead of time. In game audio very little is predictable in the sound design. The best video games give users complete control, allowing them to go where they want when they want. This means that nothing, including sound, can play back linearly. This can make the traditional post production process different or even non applicable. When a sound track is being created for a video game or any interactive media the sound designer has to develop a sound track that will never play back the same way twice. The audio must react to the input of the person playing the game. In a conventional Production, the user is unable to explore a location at will. In an interactive design, the sounds can change dramatically as a user moves through the environment. Instead of merely seeing the space, the user can actually experience it.

The project *The Post Production Process of Game Audio* will explore the different tools and techniques that go into the production of an audio soundtrack for game audio/interactive media. We will in detail document the post production audio process of a video game from the spotting of each sound effect to final delivery of the video game.

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