Shreyas Nisal

Game Programmer: Cover Letter

I've been captivated by video games since a young age, and my love for playing games soon turned into a love for developing them. During high school, I learnt programming and started playing with Unity to develop my own games. Coding came intuitively to me, and I later learnt several languages on my own. I was also eager to see my games on a distribution platform and used Unity to develop hypercasual games for mobile devices, later launching them to Google Play.

To level up from hypercasual games, I realized that I needed the ability to work on large codebases and in teams instead of by myself. The best way to do this was through internships, and I took up my first internship at Mednet Labs right after my freshman year pursuing an undergraduate degree in computer science. While I didn't have any of the skills in terms of programming languages, they were willing to take a chance on me and I was determined to give it my best. Seeing my growth, zeal and eagerness during the month of my internship, they offered me to keep working with them part-time during my sophomore year. Since then, I've worked with several teams across three different continents- I've interned as a software engineer at BitHyve and Twilio in India, with the latter offering me a job after my graduation, and as a research intern at the Exertion Games Lab at Monash University in Australia, MIT Media Lab in Massachusetts and the Hearty Adventures in Food and Play lab at RMIT University in Australia. These experiences have not only allowed me to step up my technical skills but also given me the opportunity to work with teams filled with diverse sets of people.

Learning this wide variety of skills involved using resources from the internet, and I wanted to give back to the community by producing content rather than just consuming it. I started writing technical blogs on Medium and soon began creating educational content on YouTube. Currently, my YouTube channel stands at over 1500 subscribers and almost 200,000 views.

My master's in digital game development with a specialization in programming at Guildhall has further expanded my skills in developing games and working in teams. Our first team experience was a small team of five people that consisted of two level designers, one artist and two programmers, tasked with developing a side-scrolling platformer for mobile devices. My prior experience with Unity proved to be helpful during this time, allowing our team to convince stakeholders to use tilt-based input for our game after seeing the first

prototype we developed where I implemented the tilt mechanic. We were also praised for being one of the best teams in terms of team culture and how well we got along together.

Our second experience turned things upside down when all 50 of the game developers at Guildhall were put together and tasked with developing an arcade racing game. During the development of this game, I was the sole programmer on a support team for a large duration, where I was tasked with helping wherever I was needed the most, whether it be version control issues, bugs in Unreal blueprint code, or simply the need for more programmers on some tasks. I was often approached by programmers, level designers and artists alike whenever they needed any kind of technical help. If the programming lead was unavailable, producers often relied on me to take charge of ensuring that programming requirements were met. A few days before our launch deadline, our QA testing revealed that we had framerate dependency issues in our game, and I offered to come in to try and fix these. Working closely with the game designer and the lead producers throughout the day on a Saturday, we were finally able to fix the issues and our game was greenlit for publication on Steam.

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