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30 UNDER 30



It's not just the old guard that are stirring up the games development industry – these 30 young movers and shakers are doing their fair bit too. **Ed Fear** shines Develop's talent spotlight on the new wave of development superstars...

**GEORG BACKER****Audio Producer, Lionhead**

"We love you, Georg!" cooed the girls when Mr. Backer, 29, went up to collect the Audio gong at the 2009 Develop Awards. Georg has been at Lionhead for over nine years in a variety of roles – including programmer on *Black and White*, cutscene designer for *Fable*, drama work on *Fable II* and is currently focused on audio for *Fable III* and *Milo and Kate*.

**ERIC HOPE****User Experience Evangelist, Apple**

27-year old Eric performs user interface and product design consultations for companies who are creating their software for Apple platforms. Whether helping new developers polish and ship their first products or assisting experienced game studios in moving their blockbuster franchises to the iPhone, he's worked with over 600 game teams – no small feat.

**GILLIAN CONNOLE****Music Licensing Manager, SCE London**

Gillian, 29, runs the music licensing department at SCE London Studio, which means that she wrangles those labels to get all that content for *SingStar* plus everything else published by SCE. She previously honed her music industry knowledge at V2, and also does a stellar job representing *SingStar* at the South by South West festival in the US.

**JOACHIM ANTE****Chief Technology Officer, Unity**

You might have noticed Joachim's face on the cover of this issue, but what's amazing is that he's only 27. After failing his programming course in high school – some say on purpose – he laid much of the foundations of Unity's core while still a teenager. He's now responsible for overseeing the 35-strong technical team and steering the direction of Unity platform itself.

**ANDREW SCHEIDECKER****Senior Graphics Architect, Epic Games**

Nominated by none other than Tim Sweeney himself, 27 year-old Andrew is described by the father of Unreal Engine 3 as a 'genius-level programmer'. After working as the primary developer on UE3's rendering system, he's now busy on new geometry techniques for next-gen hardware. In his spare time, he writes – get this – genetic analysis software. Amazing.

**ERIC BOLTJES****Lead Multiplayer Designer, Guerilla**

Despite only being 26, Eric has been creating multiplayer experiences for half of his life, initially as part of the modding community. His efforts caught the attention of Guerilla development director Arjan Brussee, who hired Eric as a junior level designer on *Killzone*. He's quickly risen through the ranks since then, and his personal motto is 'playtest, playtest, playtest'.

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NAT MARCO

Art and design, Honeyslug

Nat started doing work experience at Morpheme inbetween classes at University, at first just testing and then progressively moving into game balancing, level design, and even creating design documents. Now Nat, 25, works at Honeyslug, creating levels and managing a small team of artists – although in true indie style she does a little bit of everything, and is described as a ‘huge asset’ to the team.



JEFF LYNDON

VP of Greater China, Interzone

If there was an award for most-nominated person, it would go to Jeff Lyndon: a whopping six times. By the age of 22 he'd founded his first company, starting RMT farms in China. Don't worry, he realised the error of his ways, and has since founded three companies including iPhone dev Humble Gaming, altogether working on over 18 titles. He's also a prominent media go-to guy in the local market.



MARTIN FIELD

Artist, nDreams

Martin joined the games industry just two years ago after working in TV, and found himself straight in the deep end creating top-quality PS3 environments single-handedly alongside some of the most experienced artists in the industry. We're told that the 28 year-old has ‘matured into a superb and versatile artist, with a superb work ethic, and he's a real team player with a wicked sense of humour.’



DAVE POLLARD

Director and Lead Programmer, Eiconic

29 year-old Dave first came to the attention of his peers when he joined LT Studios after completing a post grad degree at Oxford. He's described by his current co-workers as having a phenomenal talent for programming, in particular ‘his speed at generating code and establishing gameplay mechanics.’ He co-founded Eiconic in 2006 and is now the core gameplay architect and central in establishing design.



DAN MARSHALL

Founder and all-round hero, Zombie Cow Studios

The lovely Dan Marshall, 29, first started out his working life toiling away in the TV industry, but atoned for his many sins by creating indie games in his spare time. Dan founded Zombie Cow in 2008 and went full-time in 2009 after the success of *Time Gentlemen, Please!*. He's now working out how to peddle filth to kids together with Channel 4 in a wonderful sex-education game.



PETER LOVELL

Senior Recruitment Coordinator, Jagex

When you're a company as massive as Jagex, recruitment is a big deal. Although 26 years-young Lovell has only been there for two years, he's already made himself indispensable to the company, recruiting roles across the board from executive producers to IT managers. He's also contributed to other efforts such as creating the company prospectus, improving processes and raising the studio's profile.



RICHARD HAMER

Junior Designer, SingStar SCE London Studio

Hamer joined the *SingStar* team mid-2007 as a tester, but quickly found his responsibilities widening to the point where he's now the primary designer working on *My SingStar Online*. Spies tell us that the 24 year-old is a thorough chap entirely adept at creating deep yet simple designs, and that his ‘attitude and demeanour make him one of the stars of the *SingStar* team.’ Awwwww.



STEPHEN GAFFNEY

Studio Director, Splash Damage

At only 29, Steve's certainly had an eventful few years. He joined Splash Damage from Bizarre as IT manager before becoming business development manager, helping set up the studio's partnership with Bethesda. He became development manager once pre-production on *BRINK* started, and is now studio director, overseeing the day-to-day operations of Splash Damage and the development of its titles.

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**HANS ANDERSSON****Chief Development Officer,
Hansoft**

Hans was part of the original team at fellow Swedish super-team Starbreeze, but co-founded Hansoft in 2002 with Erik Olofsson and Patric Palm (both of whom are just over 30, bless 'em). They committed to Hansoft development in 2005, and Hans – now just scraping into the list at 29 years old – has served as chief development officer of the much-loved project management software ever since.

**CAT BURTON****Front-End Engineer,
Mind Candy**

Cat, 24, graduated in 2007 but didn't jump straight into the games industry – in fact, she entered the world of finance at Lehman Brothers, working on shell scripting plus stuff in Java, Perl and SQL. She joined Mind Candy in October 2008 and now spends most of her time working in Flash. When she's not coding up a storm in the office, you'll probably find her deep in *World of Warcraft*.

**JIM GRIFFITHS****Writer and Producer,
Mediatonic**

Previously a journalist before he joined Mediatonic, 29 year-old Jim started off by writing the story and characters for the wildly successful *Alan Probe: Amateur Surgeon* game on Adultswim.com, and has since been producer on over 40 different projects of 'wildly-varying sizes'. He's also created the story and characters for Mediatonic's own upcoming IP, including *Monsters (Probably) Stole My Princess!* on PSP.

**JOEL BEARDSHAW****Junior Level Designer,
Codemasters Birmingham**

A graduate of a games design course – see, they can work! – 23 year-old Joel joined Swordfish in 2007, and has already been actively involved in *50 Cent: Blood on the Sand* and *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising*. We're told that he'll take on any job that needs doing – probably handy for when the toilet's blocked – and has a "positive attitude that leaves an impression on everyone who works with him."

**PETER ROE****Digital Artist,
RealtimeUK**

Roe, 29, joined Realtime UK at the start of 2009 in order to 'fulfull his dream' of working on pre-rendered marketing trailers in the games industry. He's since taken a detailed role in the production of some of its biggest projects. What's most lauded is not his positive attitude and sense of humour, but his cooking skills – largely because he's always bringing in cakes. Sounds like the ideal co-worker to us.

**ADAM CAPONE****Freelance artist**

A Teesside University graduate in 2005, Capone managed to secure a short-term contract with Streamline Studios and relocated to Amsterdam. He impressed them so much, however, that he remained there for years, working on titles like *Saints Row*, *Unreal Tournament 3* and *Gears of War*. His nominee 'seriously believes that he will grow to be a Western equivalent of Fumito Ueda' – high praise indeed.

**RAY KHALASTCHI****Associate Producer,
XDev Studio, SCEE**

Ray, 24, learnt the industry ropes during a 13-month internship at Disney Interactive Studios' growing London office. After graduating with First Class honours from Brunel University he quickly found himself moving to Liverpool to join SCEE. He is currently working on the super-anticipated PS3 exclusive *Heavy Rain*, as well as a launch title for the PlayStation 3 Motion Controller.

**SIMON BERRY****Assistant Producer,
Exient**

Joining Exient as a tester straight from University 18 months ago, Berry initially worked on *Need for Speed: Undercover* and impressed management so much that he was made assistant producer on the PS2 and Wii ports of *DJ Hero*. Now at the age of 24, his 'enthusiasm and drive to succeed' has seen him managing his first solo project, supervising eight programmers on a new IP. A speedy ascent indeed.

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JULIO PEREZ

Co-founder and CTO, Gbanga.com

One of the founders of new Zurich-based 'ubiquitous game studio' Gbanga, 29 year-old Perez – who has a whopping two Masters degrees – created an MMO game server with geographical info services, a location-sensitive client app for Symbian and J2ME devices, and a RESTless Puppetmaster API in just two years.



ANDREW SMITH

Lead Designer, Proper Games

Picking one of the three leads from Proper was impossible, so we flipped a coin; each is 27 and kicking up a storm at Proper. Smith joined soon after the company was set up, and was lead designer on the BAFTA award-winning *Flock*. He's also heavily involved in events like Dare to be Digital and Next Level, so he's got a caring side too.



BEN CURTIS

Vehicle Artist, Evolution Studios

We weren't given many career details about Ben, but we were given a pretty convincing personal testimony – describing the 26 year-old as 'one of those people you can depend on, someone who constantly goes above and beyond but never asks for anything in return.' Well, with an argument like that, we couldn't say no...



MATTHEW BROWN

Environment Artist, bigBIG Studios

Again one of the many submissions from bigBIG, all equally qualified, we were swayed when we found out that 25 year-old Matthew was originally one of the youngest members of bigBIG. He began his career there working on *Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice* and also created two of the environments in *MotorStorm: Arctic Edge*.



CLAIRE BATEMAN

Game Designer, Six to Start

Claire, 27, has had quite the career journey: she's worked in theatre with Punchdrunk as a scenographer and Mask Mistress; created fibre optic light installations for Sharon Marsden, and designed origami plates for Warm Rain. She's been at Six to Start for two years now, and also moonlights under the name Minkette. We are confused.



MAGNUS ALM

CEO, Muskedunder Interactive

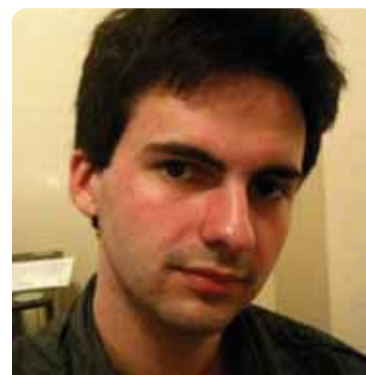
Alm has, in his 29 years, founded Swedish developer Muskedunder and steered its growth from three people to seven. During those three years the studio has released over 50 casual and Flash games for clients like Disney, Pepsi and McDonalds. He's also become a board member of the Association of Swedish Game Developers.



TANYA JESSEN

Producer, Epic Games

Now this is the kind of story we like. Originally a recruiter at Volt, she was herself recruited as a tester by Microsoft. Her successes led to her becoming Microsoft's in-house test lead on *Gears of War*, and was then tapped up by Epic themselves as an associate producer on *Gears of War 2*. She's now working on a secret title. Wonder what it could be...?



ADAM GREEN

Managing Director, Assyria Game Studios

A hobbyist developer in his teens, Adam brought together a team at University and made them an official company last year. Since then they've developed four iPhone games plus a proof-of-concept for PSN/XBLA. You'll often find him at conferences networking his socks off or at events dedicated to pitching and business best practice.

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



No less worthy of mention, but victims of our ruthless one-person-per-company policy, were the following bright young things:

Matthias Sala, co-founder and CEO, Gbanga; **Simon Berry**, associate producer, Exient; **Chris Bradwell**, senior artist, Proper Games; **Daniel Parker**, senior coder, Proper Games; **Ben Robins**, digital artist, RealtimeUK; **Ben Calderwood**, environment artist, bigBIG; **Kinwai Lee**, animator, bigBIG Studios; **Laurel Austin**, senior concept artist, Splash Damage; **Jared Hefty**, lead tools programmer, Splash Damage; **Steve Hessel**, community relations manager, Splash Damage; **David Johnston**, senior level designer; the other 35 people under 30 at Splash Damage. We love you all.



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