

Alex Sharpe

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Personal Statement

One unique hardship I've had to overcome was the realization of economic disparity in America. My mother is somewhat poor, while my father is somewhat rich, and when I was 13 they went their separate ways. I went back and forth between them quite frequently during my middle school and high school years. Doing so made me realize the differences between motivation and pride, privilege and struggle, and necessity and desire. Ultimately, I'm glad I had to overcome that obstacle because it's given me a more significant window into the society I now participate in.

This has helped me see game design similarly. When I make games, I understand what both kinds of people would want. I can also provide unique perspectives to market research containing pricing, since I understand that \$5 is a lot to some people.

Innovation Statement

Philosophers have hotly contested the meaning of life for hundreds of years. A person's reason for living is either held dear to them or questioned often. I've figured out both. Humans exist to do what they want, and my reason for living is to give people as many options to do that as I can. My end goal as an innovator is to create as much fun for others as possible.

At the time of writing, I am studying for my bachelor's degree in Game Design and Development. There are many other ways I could spread enjoyment and fun besides this, but I chose this path for my own personal biases. Since I was very young, video games provided an escape from life's toughness. Beyond that, they allowed me to do things I could hardly imagine outside of them. Coming home to my favorite video game and forgetting the day's struggles is why I chose this path.

Once I graduate, I plan to leave my mark on the industry. The fact that it is even called an industry is an atrocity, and the prioritization of profit over enjoyment is poisonous. My vision of game development is without predatory business practices like microtransactions, pay-to-play games, or disproportionate pricing. Mine is a vision of fun first. Games should be about offering experiences that immerse players in a new reality, not squeezing them for every dollar. I aim to make games accessible to people of all backgrounds without those hurdles.

Several other game developers have already made strides in that direction. They have acted as figureheads of the gaming industry, people who made a game because it was fun and showed it to the world. No tricks, gimmicks, or difficult pricing stood in the way of their artistic vision, and

that world is one I want to see. Some examples include indie developers like Undertale or Celeste, who have revolutionized the market by focusing on game quality rather than profit. These games were designed with the player experience in mind and serve as a model for my future work.

As an innovator, I value creativity and authenticity. Fun is central to my values, and I believe in preserving the joy of discovery that games can provide. Beyond simple entertainment, games are intersections between art, psychology, and technology, which create opportunities to solve more significant societal problems. For example, games can address issues like social isolation or mental health. I see potential in using video games as platforms for people to connect and find solace, just as I did when I was younger. My vision is not just to make games that are fun to play but also to offer experiences that are meaningful and emotionally impactful.

My long-term goal is to create a studio or join one that aligns with my philosophy of fun-first development. This studio would not just focus on releasing games but also on creating an environment where developers feel free to innovate without corporate pressure. I want to encourage experimentation and foster creativity among my team, offering an alternative to the highly commercialized mainstream game studios. Instead of focusing on what's profitable, I want to focus on what's memorable and enjoyable. I want to create iconic games that inspire future developers to take a stand for fun, creativity, and ethics in game development.

My games will focus on diverse gameplay experiences and storytelling that resonate emotionally with players. In an era of excessive monetization and shallow experiences, I want to design games that engage players on a deeper level through rich narratives and complex characters. My vision is broader than that of small-scale projects, too. I aim to lead the development of AAA titles that compete with major publishers while staying true to the values of authenticity and accessibility.

To truly innovate, I need to gather the tools, resources, and knowledge to realize this vision. I understand that the road to meaningful change is challenging, especially in an industry so driven by market trends. However, as an innovator, I believe that breaking away from tradition and thinking differently about things is what gaming is all about. I want to contribute to a gaming world where the focus returns to making games fun for everyone, regardless of financial standing or corporate agendas. My work will strive to ensure that games are once again seen as a medium of joy, creativity, and connection rather than a means of exploitation.

Education

Bachelor of Innovation in Game Design and Development

University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) – Expected May 2025

- **Relevant Coursework:**

- GDD 3400: AI for Games
 - Studied and practiced various artificial intelligence algorithms for use in games.
- ENTP 1000: Introduction to Entrepreneurship
 - Collaborated in small teams to create innovative business ideas and pitched them to a panel of experts, simulating real life entrepreneurship experience.
- GDD 2250: Data Structures
 - Learned the basics of C++ and its data structures, helping to optimize games and organize proper code structure.
- GDD 3350: Team-Based Game Production
 - Worked in a large team to release a full, marketable video game from pre-alpha to gold release.
- INOV 2010, 3010, 4010: Team Analyze and Report
 - Worked with clients from diverse backgrounds in multidisciplinary teams to deliver a product or service over the course of a semester.
- GDD 2100: Game Design for Diverse Pops
 - Learned the proper techniques and design practices to make inclusive video games that are playable by many kinds of people
- GDD 4500: Multiplayer Game Development
 - Worked in a small team to deliver a fully functional alpha release of a multiplayer game in Unity.
- GDD 4830: 3D animation
 - Worked in Maya to learn the basics of modeling and 3D animation, then using those skills to deliver loopable, game ready animations.
- GDD 3000: Video Game Music Development
 - Studied and then created unique sound effects, musical sound tracks, and voice lines for video games.
- BLAW 2010: Business/Intellectual Property Law
 - Learned the basics of corporate and intellectual property law, then applied them by researching, designing, and submitting patents in small teams.

Experience

Rabid Troll Studios

Marketing/Design Lead for Byte Hack – Colorado Springs, CO
August 2023 – May 2024

- Developed a 2D puzzle platformer from pre-alpha to gold release with a team of 11.
- Coordinated with cross-functional teams to produce marketing videos for the game.
- Led a 4-person team in designing and implementing game features, levels, and dialogue, ensuring project completion on time.

Mercurial Security Solutions LLC.

Asset Protection Officer – Colorado Springs, CO

June 2022 – September 2023

- Conducted patrols to secure property and people across 4 different sites.
- Utilized trained techniques to defuse complex and tense situations.

Southpark Dental

Front Desk Attendant – Austin, TX

June 2020 – August 2020

- Scheduled patient appointments, including checkups and oral surgeries.
- Achieved the highest number of In-House Dental Plan sales in Texas for two consecutive months.

Skills

- **Technical Skills:** C#, Unity, DaVinci Resolve, GameMaker/GML, GitHub, C++, Python, FL Studio
- **Design Skills:** Level Design, Sound Design, Game Mechanics, Agile Development
- **Other Skills:** Leadership, Creative problem solving, Public speaking, Client/patient communication, Creative writing, Technical writing.

Honors, Awards, and Certifications

- Pikes Peak Scholarship
- Private Security Officer Licence

References

Available upon request.