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Oregon Game Project Challenge 2:  
Oregon's Second Annual Youth Game Programming Competition

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## Instructions for the 2009 Season 2/18/2009

### Submission Requirements

#### Concept Document

Based on their research, teams should brainstorm different ways to incorporate what they learned about water resources and related issues into the design of a game that is challenging and fun. After discussion among the team members, the team should identify a specific concept that they plan to use as the basis for their game. This concept should be written up using the Design Concept Template available at [www.techstart.org/docs/GameConceptTemplate.rtf](http://www.techstart.org/docs/GameConceptTemplate.rtf)

Your Design Concept Document should be used as a reference as your game design proceeds forward. You will find guidelines on how to create a Game Concept Document at [http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan\\_02.htm](http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan_02.htm)

The team's concept document should be updated as the design of the game evolves during the season. On or before April 24, 2009, the team should email the current copy of their design document to [ogpc@techstart.org](mailto:ogpc@techstart.org). If the concept changes after the document is submitted it should be updated. In any case, the latest version of the document should be brought to the tournament on May 16, 2009.

#### Development Platform

The software platform used for the challenge, Game Maker, is a freely available<sup>1</sup>, PC-based game development tool. Game Maker's drag-and-drop interface allows novice designers to create interesting games almost immediately. For more advanced users, Game Maker's built-in programming language provides flexibility and customization. Development on Game Maker is supported by online documentation, tutorials, and lots of game examples. Teams can use the Lite Edition (free) or the Pro Edition (\$20), which provides more functionality. Teams cannot use third-party upgrades to Game Maker like Ultimate 3D.

#### Submission at the Tournament

On the morning of the tournament, the team should check in at the registration table and turn in three things:

1. A printed final version of the Concept Document.
2. A copy of your completed OGPC Resources Journal (see the OGPC Code of Ethics).
3. A USB memory stick (thumb drive) containing an EXE version<sup>2</sup> of the team's game, your final Concept Document and your OGPC Resources Journal. We recommend you bring a second USB memory stick containing the same files as the first to cover the possibility that the first might fail.
4. A laptop computer with your game pre-loaded that you can use in your meetings with judging panels.

*Please note: You retain any rights to ownership in any materials submitted to OGPC by you; OGPC will not gain ownership rights to this material.*

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker> or the CD-ROM included with *The Game Maker's Apprentice* by Jacob Habgood and Mark Overmars or *Basic Game Design & Creation for Fun & Learning* by Nanu Swamy.

<sup>2</sup> Use the Create Executable option in the File menu of Game Maker.

## Meeting with Judging Panel

During the tournament on May 16, 2009, the team will be given a time slot for a private meeting with a judging panel. This panel will include professional game designers, industry professionals and university professors. Obviously they won't expect the games submitted at the tournament to be up to professional or commercial standards. Instead they will be there to assess what each team learned and accomplished, and assign awards in several different categories. To help them accomplish this, each team will be asked to make a short presentation that covers the following:

- What aspect of water resources and related issues the team researched.
- What the team learned about water resources and related issues during the research.
- How the team worked together on the project (research and game development)
- What went into the design of the game including how the water resources theme was used.
- A demonstration of the actual game.
- A behind-the-scenes tour of the Game Maker objects used in the game.

During and after the team's presentation the judges will ask questions to better understand what the team learned and accomplished.

## Awards

To honor the variety of accomplishments made by teams during the spring season, the judging panel will assign awards in several award categories. No team will win more than one award. We expect to award trophies in most of the categories listed below. If enough teams register, we may award second or third in some of the categories.

Here is our tentative list of trophy categories:

- Best Research
- Best Game Design
- Best Programming
- Best Presentation
- Best Teamwork
- Best Game Experience
- Best Overall
- Best Rookie Project

We expect about half the teams to go home with a trophy and all teams to go home with

- a strong sense of accomplishment;
- ideas for how their game could be improved; and
- ideas about possible improvements for the next OGPC season.

## Game Requirements

During the day of the competition, your game will be played and reviewed by other teams and judges. Thus, your game needs to have a least a minimum set of identification and help information to allow others to play your game without having direct instruction on how to do so. Additionally, the games will need to be able to be explored and demonstrated quickly without having to successfully play through each part of the game. To help facilitate this, each game that is submitted to the OGPC competition must have at least the following: (1) A "Splash" screen that is displayed at the start of the game; (2) Game documentation embedded into the GameMaker "Game Info Screen"; and (3) appropriate short-cut and "cheat" keys.

### 1) Splash screen requirement

Each submitted game must have a splash screen that appears at the initial start of the game. At minimum, the splash screen should prominently show 1) the Game Title, and 2) the Team Name. The splash screen should not be timed; it should be dismissed only with a keystroke or mouse/button press. No other game rooms/windows should open until the splash screen is dismissed by the player (this will give judges/players whatever time they need to make notes on this). A splash screen is a Gamemaker room with an appropriate controller object to take care of the keystroke or mouse event and responds generally with a simple "nextRoom" action. Teams are free to embellish the splash screen with artwork, music, team members' names, etc., as long as the game title and team name are the most prominent items on the screen.

### 2) Game information page requirement

Each submitted game must provide basic information about the game in the "Game Info" screen that is part of all GameMaker games. You can fill out and access this screen by clicking on the "Game Information" icon on the GameMaker left navigation panel. Include at LEAST the following:

- Game Title
- Team Name
- Team Members – a simple list of names or done as credits, with the contribution of each member detailed
- Goal(s) of Game
- Storyline or Game Flow description
- Primary game play and game controls help
- Scoring / Strategy
- Other helpful information as seems appropriate

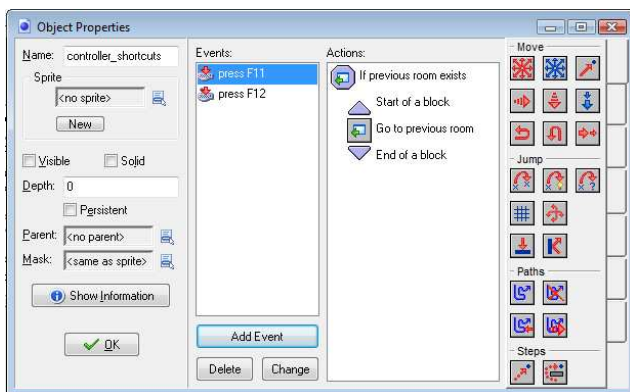
Most of this information should have been written up in your “Concept Document” so you can copy that information and format into the game info screen and then add in the additional parts. Note that the “Game Info” screen is displayed whenever the user of the game presses “F1”. See the online GameMaker help and look in the “Finishing your game” for more information on the use of the “Game Info” screen.

### 3) Short-cut and “cheat” key requirement

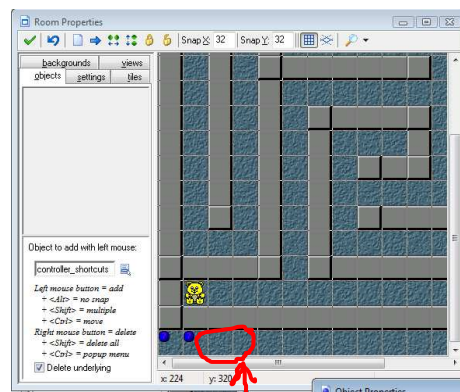
At the tournament on May 16th, the judges will need a way of exploring any part of your game without having to spend the time a normal player would need to learn your game and proceed through its challenges. To give the judges quick access to all levels of your game, you should add **short-cut (cheat) keys**. You should add enough cheat keys to your game so that any part of your game reached with just a few, quick of key strokes.

Depending upon the structure of your game (levels, rooms, virtual environments or challenges that you might be creating) adding short cuts might be as simple as adding key events for next room and previous room changes (see the example below) or adding more complex cheat key triggered actions to allow challenge/boss bypasses. Adding these cheat keys will help you with your own quality testing and allow judging to be done in the limited, scheduled time slots. When deciding where and how to add cheat keys, always remember that there is limited time for judging. If your team does not add short-cuts, the judges may not even see major parts of your game in the time available for judging each team, reducing the chances that the judges will appreciate your best work!

One easy way of adding and managing short-cut keys is to create what is commonly known as a “controller object”. This is usually an object with no sprite or visualization. We suggest that you create a separate controller for your “cheat keys” so that they can be easily managed independently of other controller type objects. Un-check the “Visible” and “Solid” properties for this controller. Next, add events for each particular cheat key that you need, and set its action to go to a particular part of your game. Specifically, to add a short-cut-key event, use **Add-Event**, choose **Key-Press** and select the desired key. Then choose an action like **Go-to-next-room** from the main1 tab (if the room exists). Finally, add this controller to each of your rooms and TEST IT!



Controller object with next and previous “cheat keys”



Room with multiple controller objects

You should provide a list of your short-cut keys to the judges so they can reach particular parts of your game when you are not available.