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INDIE GAME CHALLENGE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Two \$100,000 grand prize champions and separate category winners unveiled in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, NEV. – (Feb 19, 2010, 9 p.m. PT) – The winners of the inaugural Indie Game ChallengeSM sponsored by the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS), GameStop Corp. (NYSE: GME), and The Guildhall at Southern Methodist University were announced tonight in Las Vegas following the conclusion of the D.I.C.E.TM (Design, Innovate, Communicate, Entertain) Summit at the Red Rock Resort & Casino.

The awards ceremony was hosted by Adam Sessler, host of G4's "X-Play" (weeknights at 6:30 p.m. ET/PT), and editor-in-chief of games content for G4tv.com. Sessler was assisted in the presentations by AIAS President Joseph Olin, The Guildhall at SMU Executive Director Dr. Peter E. Raad and GameStop Executive Vice President Merchandising and Marketing Tony Bartel. Attending the ceremony were representatives from each of the 12 finalist teams along with game publishers, developers and associated enterprises.

The list of winners includes:

Non-professional \$100,000 Grand Prize Winner: *Gear*

- Gear was submitted by: Joshua Maiche, team lead; Mike Halbrooke, level designer; Ben Frazier, level designer; Brian Lee, designer, graphics, art and music; and Andrew Hill, level designer. The team members are students at the Digipen Institute of Technology in Redmond, Wash. Gear is a 2D puzzle platformer in which the player controls a robot with the ability to change its hand into a gear. The player has to swing around sockets, ride on rails, swim and even rotate the world in order to get through 10 unique levels and beat the “boss.”

Professional \$100,000 Grand Prize Winner: *Cogs*

- Cogs was submitted by San Francisco-based Lazy 8 Studios and the three-person team consisting of: Rob Jagnow, team leader; Brendan Mauro, artist; and Luke Gilbert, sound and music. Cogs is a puzzle game in which players build machines from sliding tiles. Players can choose from 50 levels and three gameplay modes. New puzzles are unlocked by building contraptions quickly and efficiently.

Category winners include:

- Technical Achievement (\$2,500): *Altitude*, submitted by professional team Nimble Games headed by life-long friends and Las Cruces, N.M., neighbors Erik Measure and Karl Sabo
- Achievement in Art Direction (\$2,500): *Cogs*
- Achievement in Gameplay (\$2,500): *Cogs*
- Gamer’s Choice Award (\$10,000): *Altitude*

The recipient of the Indie Game Challenge SMU scholarship will be announced later this spring. The winner of the Gamer’s Choice Award sweepstakes will be selected from all eligible entries and announced March 19. Details about the grand prize and category winners as well as all 12 finalist teams can be found at www.indiegamechallenge.com.

“On behalf of the three sponsors, we couldn’t be happier with the quality and quantity of entries into the first-ever Indie Game Challenge,” said Olin. “No doubt, the partnership between AIAS, GameStop and SMU helped drive wide-spread awareness for the Challenge as evidenced by the more than 250 entries we received. The Challenge went a long way toward unlocking, cultivating and supporting the potential of independent game developers, which are essential for the future success of our industry.”

Entries for the inaugural Indie Game Challenge were accepted between July 14 and Oct. 31, 2009. Judging was done by members of AIAS starting Nov. 1, 2009, and 12 finalists – six professional teams and six non-professional teams – were announced Feb. 1, 2010.

Following tonight's awards ceremony, officials with AIAS, GameStop and The Guildhall at SMU announced plans to host the Second Annual Indie Game Challenge. The entry period is expected to kick-off May 1, 2010, and close Sept. 15, 2010, with finalists to be named in November and winners to be announced at D.I.C.E. 2011. Exact dates and details will be announced later this year.

Professional and non-professional game developers interesting in entering the Indie Game Challenge should check www.indiegamechallenge.com for future updates.

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