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News

Blitz supports a new ‘Chain gang

Ed Fear Aug 22 2008, 10:08am

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SPECIAL REPORT: UK studio entrusts new digital download IP to small-scale independent in the North East

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UK independent studio stalwart Blitz Games has snapped up the rights to develop a game based on one of the much-praised Dare to be Digital student projects and has signed young, new studio 3rd Dimension Creations to develop the idea into its next XBLA, PSN and PC game.

Headquartered in Middlesbrough, 3rd Dimension Creations has been in business for less than four years. It was one of the first studios to come out of the University of Teesside and Middlesbrough Council’s DigitalCity project, which aims to help graduates get media businesses off the ground through subsidised office spaces, tutelage from industry veterans and business support.

The game it is working on for Blitz has a similar youthful slant – ‘conga line’ action title CodaChain was a recent Dare to be Digital finalist.

“One of our strengths here at Blitz is that we hire individuals straight out of university because we can spot talent. These guys are enthusiastic, and they’re talented,” Blitz CEO Philip Oliver told Develop.

“They’re smaller, and therefore less experienced and have less infrastructure, but we bring that - they’re working on our technology.”

Indeed, Blitz’s in-house engine BlitzTech is being used to build the game for a simultaneous XBLA, PSN and PC launch. The unique partnership is feeding back into the development of BlitzTech as well – 3rd Dimension’s worry over memory footprint, for instance, has seen Blitz implement ambient occlusion into the engine for them.

Blitz has, however, otherwise kept its new partner at arms length, allowing the team to build and design the game in its own time. 3rd Dimension CCO Sean Crooks is full of praise for the way things have been run, describing the game as a “dream project”.

“The relationship we have with the people at Blitz is incredible,” he said. “They’ve put a huge amount of trust in us, and yet they’re not precious at all – there’s no rigid design doc, it’s a fluid two-way process. If we’ve got any trouble, even things not related to the project but about the studio, they’re there to give us advice and pointers.”

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Ed Linley, project manager at Blitz, explains things from their side: “We came to them with quite a defined game document, and a framework of what the levels were going to be, but we welcome any input they have, and they have this great system of all sitting down to play the game together, making copious amounts of notes. I’m in touch with them every single day, bouncing ideas back and forth the whole time, so it’s been a fantastic relationship from both sides.

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