

Indie Business

Recap &
Tips from the Trenches



Recap

- Why be an indie developer?
- Indie business is at least 50% actual business
- Keys to success
 - Networking
 - Time/Money
 - Marketing
 - Distribution
 - Great game!



Tip 1 – Market ALL the time

- Presentations
- Merchandise
- Business cards
- Friends/Family
- School/Business



Tip 2 – Enter Competitions

- Indie Games Festival
- IndieCade
- Indie Game Challenge
- PAX10
- FreePlay
- GCAP



Tip 3 – Create business links NOW!

- LinkedIn
 - For business
 - www.linkedin.com
 - Creates resume
- Facebook
 - Is for friends/family
- Twitter
 - Mostly marketing

Andrew Goulding 

Freelance Game Developer at Browsome
Melbourne Area, Australia | Information Technology and Services



Andrew Goulding Best Australian Game - Jolly Rover! <http://lnkd.in/7MizUJ>

Freeplay Freeplay » Blog Archive » The Freeplay Awards – Winners freeplay.net.au

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Current	• Director at Browsome 
Past	• Assistant Producer at Krome Studios  • News Editor at Sumea • Game Programmer at Tantalus 
Education	• RMIT University • RMIT University
Recommendations	4 people have recommended Andrew
Connections	164 connections
Websites	• Sumea • My Website
Twitter	• browsome
Public Profile	http://au.linkedin.com/pub/andrew-goulding/5/a0/763

Tip 4 – Decide when you might start

- After your course?
- Right now?
- After working for 3 companies?
- After 4 years experience?
- After finding the right people?
- After completing your design
- After travelling?
- After your first child?
- Long before you have kids?
- When you have your house paid off?
- When your engine is done?
- When there's nothing good on TV?

Tip 5 - Pick a name

- Do the Google test
- Don't pick common words
- Make up a word

Tip 6 – Own the name

- Buy the url (.com best)
 - <http://www.hostess.com.au/>
- Gmail address
 - <http://mail.google.com>
- Twitter
 - <http://www.twitter.com>
- Wordpress (blog)
 - <http://www.wordpress.com>

Tip 7 – Build your web presence

- Webpage
 - <http://sites.google.com/>
 - <http://www.free-css.com/>
- Twitter
 - <http://www.twitter.com>
- Facebook
 - www.facebook.com



Tip 8 – Get some business cards

- Sites
 - <http://www.zazzle.com.au/> (\$24.95 for 100)
 - <http://www.vistaprint.com.au> (\$9.49 for 100)
- Info
 - Business name/logo
 - Web info (site, twitter)
 - Contact info (email)
- Go for matt over gloss



Tip 9 – Broken time is better for design

- An hour here or there
- Anywhere, keep a notepad
- Inspiration comes in short bursts
- Write everything down
- Best ideas come when you stop trying



Tip 10 – Contiguous time is better for development

- Blocks of 3-4 hours
- At least half hour break
- Sleep is important!

Tip 11 – Schedule empty time

- Time where you don't work on the game
- Don't plan a specific thing to do
- Try to do something away from the screen



Tip 12 – Value time

- Indie developers mistakenly think their time is not worth anything
- Your time is a tangible contribution
- Develop an understanding of what your game costs
- Scenario
 - Say your time is worth \$20ph ~ \$40k per year
 - You work 20 hours a week on your game
 - You're 'investing' $\$30 \times 20 = \$600$ pw on your game

Tip 13 – Get result commitment over time commitment

No

- Can you artist-person dedicate x hours a week to my project?
- Can you coder-person dedicate x hours a week to my project?
- Can you audio-person dedicate x hours a week to my project?

Yes

- Can you give me 10 2400x3600 2D colour backgrounds in 4 weeks?
- Can you write me a 2D top down grid-puzzle engine in a month? For iPhone/iPad.
- Can you make me 10 2 minute looping tracks in mp3 format for my steam-punk game



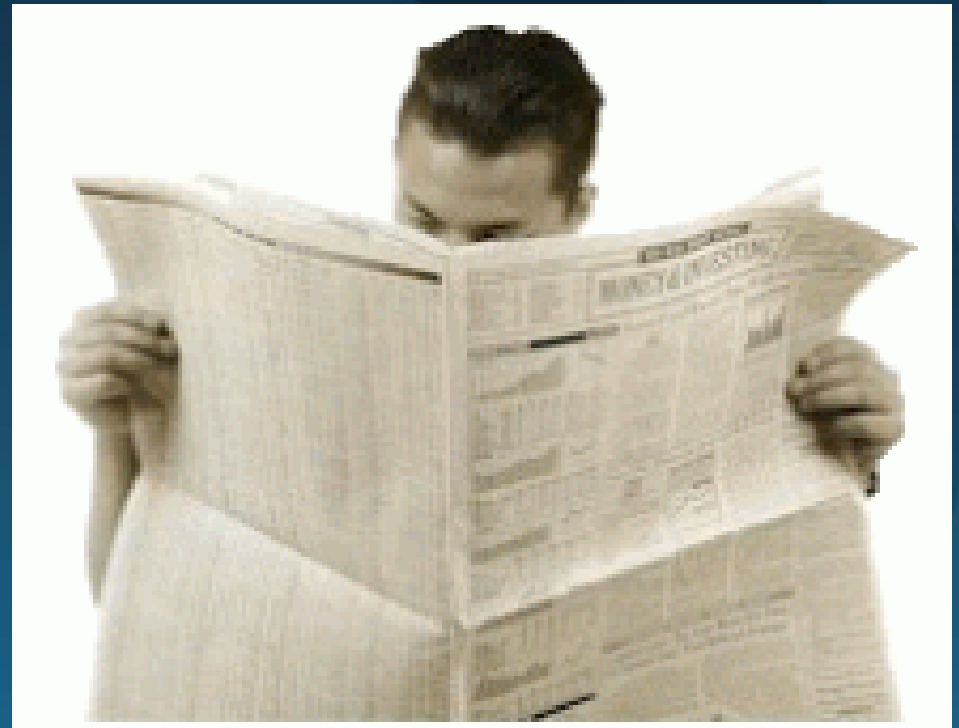
Tip 14 – You get what you pay for

- If you use cheap labor, expect cheap results
- More experienced developers charge more BUT
 - They do things quicker
 - They do things better (mostly)
 - They are reliable



Tip 15 – Stay informed

- RSS Feeds
 - Gamasutra
 - Tsume
 - Kotaku AU
 - Gamesindustry.biz
- Forums
 - www.indiegamer.com
- Twitter (again!)



Tip 16 – Version Control!!

- You game MUST use version control
 - Subversion
 - <http://subversion.tigris.org/>
 - Perforce
 - <http://www.perforce.com/>
- Preferably online
 - Codesion (formerly CVS Dude)
 - <http://codesion.com/>
- Website can also use version control
- All business info too!



Tip 17 – Create a press Kit

- Company brief
- Game brief
- Screenshots
- Hi-res images
- Video
- Prior good press
- Banner ads



Tip 18 – Pin up your goals

- Where will you be in 5 years?
- What kind of sales do you want?
- Where will your game be distributed?
- What review score do you want?
- What competitions do you want to win?
- How many facebook followers do you want?
- When will your game be done?
- Going to conferences?



Tip 19 – Celebrate small victories

- Media wall
 - Good comments
 - Good reviews
 - Mentions
- Competitions
 - Wins
 - Nominations



Tip 20 – Follow your mentors

- Who?
 - Mentors
 - Studios
- How
 - Twitter (yawn)
 - Website
 - Blog
 - Press



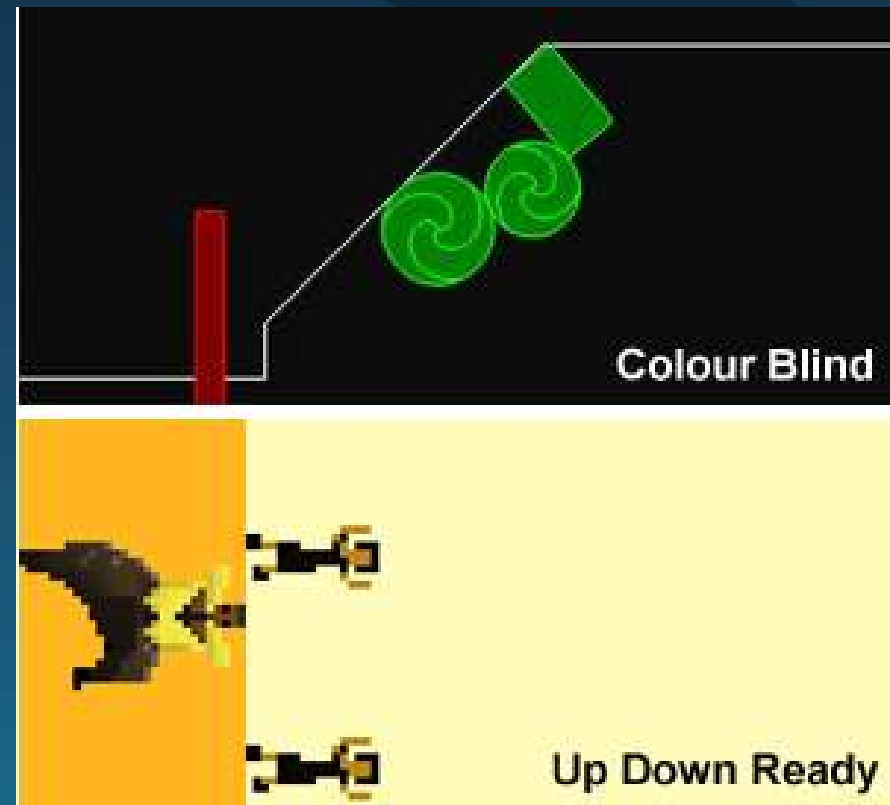
Tip 21 – Attend meetings/festivals

- Local
 - FreePlay
 - IGDA
 - GCAP
- O/S
 - GDC
 - E3
 - PAX
 - Casual Connect



Tip 22 – Keep it simple

- If it takes longer than 3 months, it's probably too big for your first project
- Can you prototype it in a week?
- Do one thing well



It's over!

- Questions!?

