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LSU to host Global Game Jam

Source: [DigBR](#)

By Tara Bennett

Envision a weekend when the imaginative minds of programmers and gaming enthusiasts from all over the world can connect and collaborate for 48 hours without distractions to develop new video and non-digital games. This opportunity — the annual Global Game Jam — will happen Jan. 23-25 at various sites around the world, including Baton Rouge.

The LSU Digital Media Center will participate as a host site for the Global Game Jam (GGJ). The event is open to anyone, 18 years and older, who can commit to a weekend of innovative gaming fun. Pre-event registration is required by visiting globalgamejam.org with a registration fee of \$25.00. The fee includes on-site mentors and access to the facility for the entirety of the event, as well as drinks and snacks for participants. The last day to register will be Friday, January 16.

"I really encourage people who've never made a game or think they can't make a game to sign up," said Marc Aubanel, event coordinator and Director of Digital Media Arts and Engineering at LSU Center for Computation & Technology. "I think people will be surprised at how someone with very little industry knowledge can make a game in 48 hours with limited tools."

As part of the event, NOVAC:BR will be sponsoring the event along with LSU and will be offering to NOVAC:BR members five complimentary spots to participate with the registration fee waived.

"A lot of people don't think of the digital side of things when we talk about film and television," said NOVAC Baton Rouge Program Coordinator Elizabeth Hutchinson. "So we were really excited to be able to offer an opportunity like this to that specific group of people who are interested in video games and that type of technology."

If interested, contact Hutchinson at elizabeth@novacvideo.org.

The goal of this annual event, which started in 2009, is for participants to work together to create a working prototype of a video game or non-digital game, such as a board or card game, within a 48-hour time frame. The short time span is meant to spur creative thinking that will result in innovative and experimental games. At the start of the event, a theme is announced, and throughout the process, participants work together with developers from around the world to create new games.

The center includes instructional space with cutting-edge audio/visual capabilities to assist with the development of the games.

"The services here are really second to none," said Aubanel.

Awards will be given for best polished, best theme, best art and best overall game. Winners of the competition will receive prizes donated from event sponsors such as free games from EA and access to tutorials from Digital Tutors. A raffle prize of a free iPad mini will also be awarded.

According to GGJ's website, in 2014 more than 23,000 participants logged in excess of 700,000 hours at 488 sites in 72 countries and created more than 4,000 games. This year, GGJ is anticipating more than 22,000 participants. Many games developed in previous Game Jams, according to GGJ's website, have become fully realized games, and all projects are protected under a Creative Commons license.

"I think it's a really exciting exercise for people to be part of because it's this global consciousness," said Aubanel. "We web stream all of these events so you can see people from Japan, Malaysia from all over the world working on the same challenges that you're working on. It's kind of a giant geek out."

"The video game world continues to grow, and this is an amazing opportunity for people that might be interested in a career or learning about a career," said Hutchinson. "It all builds into Baton Rouge continuing to be a creative corner of the state whether it's film, television, video games or digital aspects. It's another piece of the puzzle that just supports our growth in those terms."

Tentative Schedule:

Friday	
3:00-4:15 PM	Registration and software/computer setup
3:30-4:45 PM	Scheduled Talks — TBA
5:00-5:30 PM	Keynote Presentation: (unveiling of the "secret theme")
5:30-7:00 PM	Pitches/Brainstorming & Group Forming
7:00 PM	Development Begins
Saturday	
11:00 AM	Deadline to create user profile and game page
Sunday	
3:00 PM	Deadline for handing in game and source code
3:00-4:00 PM	Game Presentations (Open to the Public — free admission)
4:30 PM	Awards are presented

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