

Press release: Graduate game developers win Government grants

Mochi Mode from Cardiff (University of South Wales) and Shuttershade Studios from Huddersfield (University of Huddersfield) are the winners of Tranzfuser, a graduate talent competition funded by the Government's UK Games Fund, that saw startup video game studios from across the country battling it out for grants.

The two winning teams, both receiving £25,000, have joined the prestigious portfolio of professional games development studios working with the UK Games Fund community.

Matt Hancock, Creative Industries Minister, said:

The UK games industry is a fantastic success story and we want to see it continue to grow from strength to strength. The Tranzfuser programme is aimed at identifying and supporting the talented young games developers and the original and innovative games they are producing right here in the UK.

Last year's Tranzfuser alumni went on to publish their own game and I wish this year's winners the same success in turning their creativity into a reality for us all to enjoy.

Over the summer, Tranzfuser tasked 23 teams with just ten weeks to take their idea for a great game from concept to playable demo to be showcased in front of 80,000 games fans and a panel of expert judges at the UK's most popular video games festival, EGX. The teams developed all manner of fun and innovative games, from single-player puzzles to multiplayer room-scale Virtual Reality experiences.

Awarded a grant of £5,000 from UKGF, the teams developed their games with invaluable support provided by a nationwide network of Tranzfuser Local Hubs based at some of the best universities for video game design and development.

Mochi Mode wowed the judges and public alike with their game of bright visuals and simple one touch gameplay that sees players controlling a herd of cows. The setting changes to different locations across the Wild West but the goal is the same: players must guide the herd to safety through a host of colourful obstacles in this fun arcade game.

Laura Wells, Team Leader at Mochi Mode said:

After graduating, it's tough to know what steps will help you 'breakthrough' into the games industry. That was especially true for us with the aspiration to start up our own studio. Tranzfuser

has given us guidance at a crucial point of our development. Most importantly, it has allowed us to make a little magic!

Shuttershade Studios is a team of graduates from the University of Huddersfield. The small group of four individuals created a virtual reality game, VR Party Ware, primarily consisting of a collection of various minigames. Players can compete globally through an online leader board system or locally with their own friends in a casual competitive environment.

Marcus Nichols from Shuttershade Studios said:

Winning Tranzfuser has had a life changing effect on both me and the entire Shuttershade Studios team. We're now able to do our dream jobs which is to have very little sleep but to have a tonne of fun developing our own video games. It's the most varied job that we've all had and we wouldn't change it for the world.

New for 2017 is the Tranzfuser Accelerator, a unique programme where the runner-up teams from the competition receive tailor-made consultancy packages to give them the best chance of successfully applying to the UK Games Fund.

The UK Games Fund and Tranzfuser are both funded as part of the £4m UK Government programme of games development and talent funding announced in 2016, run by UK Games Talent and Finance Community Interest Company (UKGTF).

Paul Durrant, UKGTF's founder, said:

All of the teams worked hard after securing their place on Tranzfuser 2017. Each of the 23 teams has put in a huge effort and each has benefitted significantly from real-world learning throughout. The winning teams are the ones that best managed the scope of their projects, had a shared creative objective across the team and better understood the target audience for their particular games.

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Notes to Editors:

1. Many startup studios lack the capital to help develop their ideas and attract private investment. Now in its second year, Tranzfuser was created to help bridge that gap and allow developers to take their ideas from the drawing board to production.
2. The Mochi Mode studio is comprised of four members – team leader and designer Laura Wells, programmer Liam Jones, artist Thomas Woodward, animator Amy Baldwin and level designer Kevin Ho. They aim to develop small, engaging games for app markets.
3. Also at the ceremony was an exclusive screening of the first ever

Tranzfuser documentary; a broadcast-quality 30 minute long film charting the summer-long competition and the competitor's journey from applicant to professional games developer.

4. The Tranzfuser competition is unique in being a UK-wide talent programme linked directly to a prototype fund allowing new teams to benefit from grants and peer to peer interaction with a host of other early stage games development companies. 85% of the UK Games Fund and Tranzfuser's spend to date has been outside London.
5. Teams that secured support from UKGF in the first Tranzfuser in 2016 are now successful studios. Cold Sun Studios and Miracle Tea Studios are both working towards release of their funded projects.
6. Outside of Tranzfuser, the UK Games Fund supports young start-ups who can apply for funding. Companies such as White Paper Games (based in Manchester) and Coatsink (based in Sunderland) are both excelling as established indie games developers.

Additional quotes

Since first being selected for funding, Coatsink has grown significantly with nearly 50 employees in the business and further growth plans to take that number up in the next couple of quarters. Their latest VR title, the critically-acclaimed Augmented Empire, was released in July.

Eddie Beardsmore, Chief Operations Officer at Coatsink said:

Coatsink expanded rapidly over the last year. Due to our current project roster of over a dozen titles – all in various stages of development – we're looking to employ a further 15 to 20 developers by April next year.

We continue to develop for multiple platforms and recently announced a partnership with Nintendo to bring our much-loved platformer Shu to the Nintendo Switch later this year. The UK Games Fund has provided a huge amount of support for the studio and we wouldn't be in this amazing position without them.

White Paper Games, a team of graduate colleagues who were supported by YEAR (the predecessor to the UK Games Fund) is doing incredibly well with the imminent release of a much-anticipated game The Occupation.

Pete Bottomley, Co-Founder of White Paper Games said: > Working with the UKGF has been a great experience. The fund afforded us the additional time to push the quality and design of the game which ultimately allowed us to announce it in a strong position. This was instrumental to The Occupation's early success and interest and without this, I don't believe we would be in the position we are now. I can't recommend and praise the fund enough.

The 23 participating teams and hubs this year were:

Teesside Launchpad, Teesside University (North East England)

Fox Byte Games

Futureworks Media School (North West England)

Broken Pixel Studios, Foxtrot 203

University of Bradford* (West Yorkshire)

Gebba Games

University of Huddersfield, Enterprise Team (West Yorkshire)

Giant Games, Nocturnals, Shuttershade Studios

Sheffield Hallam University (South Yorkshire)

Final Forge, Inside Out Games, Grim Inc

Brunel University (London)

A Loaded Teaspoon, Drift, Slime Time Studios

Slime Time Studios Eastern Enterprise Hub (South East England)

IndieByte

Wrexham Glyndwr University (North Wales)

Ethereal, Round Square Studios, Static Shell Studios

University of South Wales (South Wales)

Mochi Software, Dark Planet Studios

Filthy Fresh Northern Ireland Screen (Northern Ireland)

No Piknik

Abertay University (East Scotland)

Pocket Sized Hands

Glasgow Caledonian University (West Scotland)

Pioneer Games