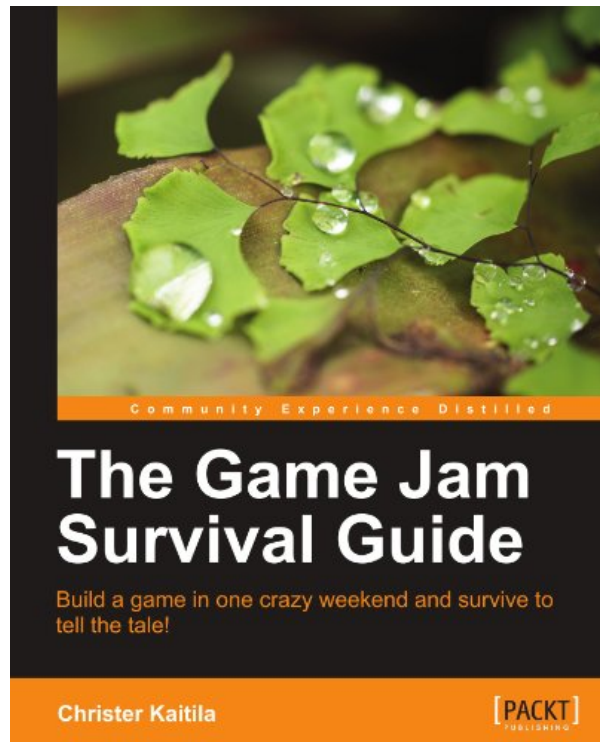
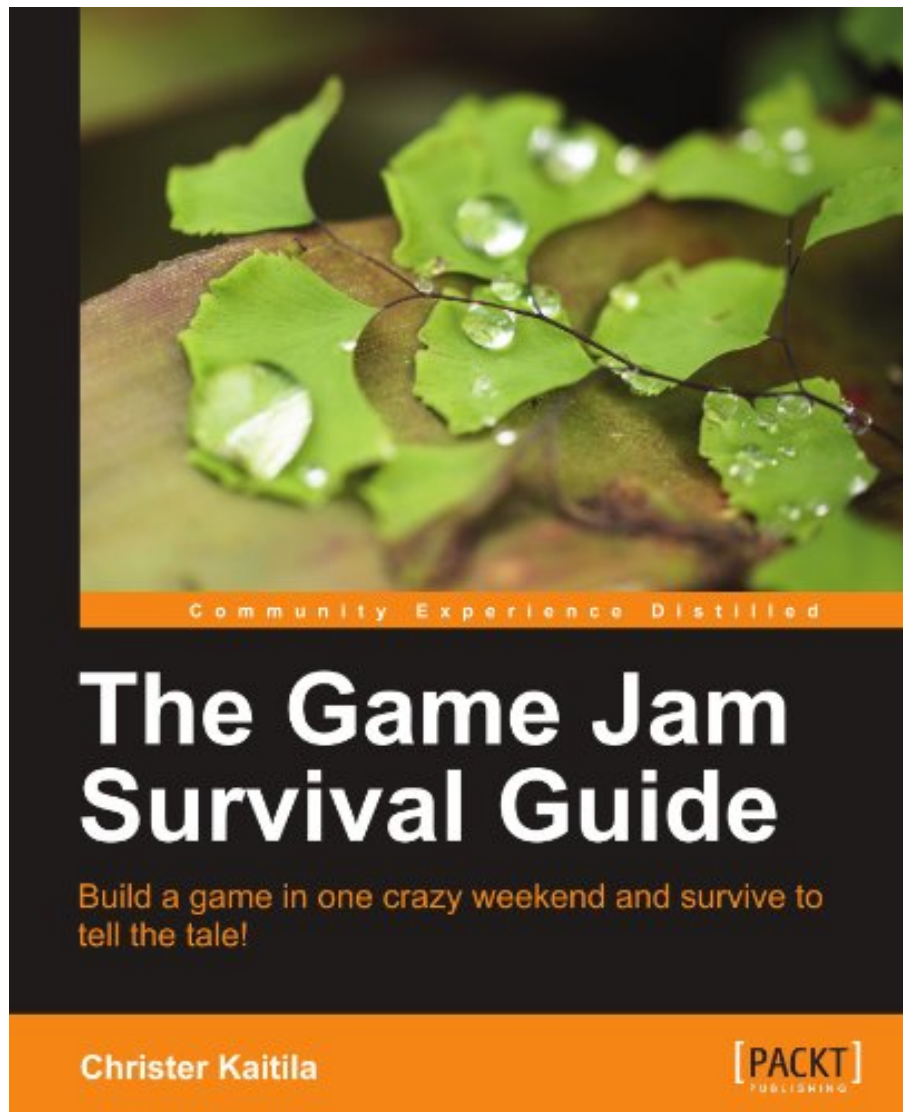


# THE GAME JAM SURVIVAL GUIDE BY CHRISTER KAITILA



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## About the Author

### Christer Kaitila

The author of this book, Christer Kaitila, B.Sc. is a veteran video game developer with 17 years of professional experience. A hardcore gamer, dad, dungeon master, artist and musician, he never takes himself too seriously and loves what he does for a living: making games! A child of the arcade scene, he programmed his first videogame in the eighties, long before the internet or hard drives existed. The first programming language he ever learned was 6809 assembly language, followed by BASIC, Turbo Pascal, VB, C++, Lingo, PHP, Javascript, and finally ActionScript. He grew up as an elite BBS sysop in the MS-DOS era and was an active member of the demoscene in his teens. He put himself through university by providing freelance software programming services for clients. Since then, he has been an active member of the indie game development community and is known by his fellow indies as Breakdance McFunkypanants.

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# THE GAME JAM SURVIVAL GUIDE BY CHRISTER KAITILA PDF

Build a game in one crazy weekend and survive to tell the tale!

- Enthusiastic and light-hearted, glimpse the excitement and frantic creativity of game jams.
- Motivating, encouraging and infectious, it is sure to help you reach the finish line.
- Follow this handbook from brainstorming an idea, over bitter obstacles and on to the sweet finish line: a complete, playable, fun game.
- Each stage of game jams is described with task lists and anecdotes relating common experiences, the trials and the tribulations of past game jam champions and losers.
- Packed with interviews, tips, tricks and wise words from Ludum Dare and Global Game Jam organisers among other well-known game jammers.

## In Detail

Game jams are fun. They are a creative, exciting, social experience. The goal of a game jam is to design a video game, either alone or in teams, as fast as is humanly possible; usually in a single weekend.

The Game Jam Survival Guide, written to help you have more fun and achieve greater results at your next game jam by building a successful game without burning out, leads readers through each 12-hour phase of a 48-hour weekend game jam.

Weekend warriors: dominate your next game jam! If you follow the system shared in this book, you will be able to build an amazing game that you're proud of and will entertain players, all in just one crazy 48-hour game jam weekend ... and survive to tell the tale!.

Embrace the best practices and techniques of past game jam winners and avoid common pitfalls along the way to the finish line. You too can survive a 48-hour game development marathon with your mind intact and an amazing game to show off to friends and family!

With The Game Jam Survival Guide you will learn the secret techniques that master game jammers use to create winning entries. It starts by showing you great ways to brainstorm and design a game based on a theme. It then moves on to highlight the best tools and techniques to finish a game in a weekend of coding. Anecdotes and advice from past winners and losers combined with humorous words of encouragement are sure to help you on your way. The author presents a list of game jams around the world, online communities worth checking out, fantastic game engines, and art resources. Finally, learn how to monetize your game by gaining sponsorship from big gaming websites. It's the fun way to make your own video game in one weekend!

## What you will learn from this book

- Preparing for the jam: conquer the theme, pick design aids, prototype quickly, choose the right tools for the

job, and cut the right corners.

- Bombastic brainstorming: power up your idea generator and run with a theme, gain more votes and please the masses.
- Building a game jam entry: pick your weapons, follow your plan, cut the bells-n-whistles, scramble over "the wall", submit a game on time, and with a little luck, attain fame and fortune.
- Why Mike "PoV" Kasprzak (Ludum Dare administrator) thinks game jams are a good introduction to the realities of the game industry.
- The reasons why Dr. Mike Reddy (organizer of the Global Game Jam) thinks designing on paper is essential.
- The best ways to find creative inspiration and develop an idea to fit a theme according to Eric McQuiggan (founding member of The Dirty Rectangles) and Chevy Ray Johnston (author of the FlashPunk engine).
- What Foad Khosmood (director of the Global Game Jam) suggests you do to ensure you finish before the deadline.
- The worst way to prepare according to Pekka "pekuja" Kujansuu and the best way according to Phil Hassey (Ludum Dare administrators)
- What one piece of advice Jason P. Kaplan (founder of the Game Prototype Challenge) would give to newcomers.

## Approach

The Game Jam Survival Guide is an insider view of game jams packed full of expert advice; leading with tips and tricks on how to build a great game with just 48 hours; but clearly defining what should be avoided at all costs during Game Jam mayhem. The reader is led through each half-day phase; from the beginning of your quest in hours 1-12 to breaking through "the wall" on day two and finally reaching the finishing line in hours 37-48.

## Who this book is written for

Although the book is intended for beginners and experts alike, the reader will already know how to program (in any language). He or she will love games and want to learn how to best make their own game in a wild and crazy 48-hour period.

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put the Jam on your resume

By W Boudville

I had not heard of the expression Game Jam, not being closely associated with the amateur game programming scene, at least in California. The closest thing we have to it is the Hackathon, where the task is to code up some problem not necessarily confined to a game scenario. In the Hackathon the prize could be seed funding for a company. Having said this, the similarities with what Kaitila describes are manifold. So treat the book as also germane to a Hackathon preparation, especially if you and a team are revving up for one and no one has participated before.

The book is a grab bag of hints contributed by game programmers who have been thru the experience. Several times for several of them, I suspect. There is not a line of code in the text. It is not about any specific language, but about general useful tips for getting your team through a deliberately gruelling weekend. Read the book if you will as a sociological commentary on a coding subculture. Oh, and speaking about programming languages, you are cautioned not to use the occasion to start writing in a newly learnt one. Pragmatically you don't have to ride that learning curve while competing against other teams well versed in their choices.

One contributor (Chevy Ray Johnston) suggests that the best aspect of a Jam is the intense time pressure to come up with a crazy shortcut that works. But he also opines that you should always pay attention to the visual polish of your solution. It is not just about the back end algorithmic ingenuity. The technical brilliance of the latter still needs the GUI shine to garner those crucial votes by the judges.

In a broader perspective, there are echoes of a weekend chess tournament. The steady time pressure. The short allegro games (1 hour at most) compared to a leisurely pace of 5 hour games during a full tournament. Of course, the greatest difference is the always solitary nature of chess. You play alone, never in a team. Indeed one distinguishing feature of a Jam is the need and ability to form a team. The sociological makeup of that team, and your hopeful ability to persevere in it can be a priceless professional networking experience.

Not just with the team members, but with others at the Jam. Try to keep in continual touch with as many of them as you can afterwards. In looking for work, seriously consider asking them to act as references. And ask if they know of openings. This is the one problem I have with the last chapter, which is about the post mortem. It has good advice, but does not talk much about maintaining the networking. Rather, it focuses on lower level aspects like posting your game on the Web. All to the good; don't get me wrong. But those personal ties you can garner may be the most professionally useful.

Put the Jam on your resume.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Very good book for preparing for almost any game project

By C. Moeller

While although this book specializes on giving advice from different experienced game jam developers, anyone looking for advice on creating games, how to manage everything that needs to be done, and how to prioritize and maximize their time on their project would find this extremely helpful.

It covers pitfalls that any game developer will run into, such as having to cut mechanics due to time, focusing on doing a few things very well vs. lots of things not as well, counting in time for things you might not have planned on, such as adding sound, packaging your game to distribute before the deadline, and planning on things usually going wrong.

Aside from avoiding pitfalls, he also introduced you to resources to improve the speed at which you can create games, such as free sound sites, resources for finding game frameworks/engines, and the best ways to prepare for a game jam (which contrary to what it sound like, does not mean starting from scratch after the game topic has been announced).

I would recommend it for anyone interested in participating in a game jam, building their own game, or interested in what goes into creating a game, and the types of things you'll have to plan on, and ways of avoiding pitfalls which may keep your game from being completed.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Great book on game jams

By Pekuja

I'm a big fan of game jams, and I believe this is the first book written on the subject. The book is a great introduction to game jams, and contains lots of tips on how to make the most of a game jam. I think most of the advice is also very applicable to rapid prototyping. It covers preparation, brainstorming, getting started, polishing, and even what to do with your game once the jam is done. Be aware though, that this book does not go into any technical details of programming or art creation beyond broad strokes. There's not a single line of code in the book. It does have a list of game engines and tools you might want to try though. I recommend this book for anyone interested in game jams, although even more than that, I recommend you join and do a game jam yourself. :)

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