Minutes of the Game Development Program
Advisory Committee Meeting: Spring 2025

Ethan Wilde, Game Program Coordinator
ewilde@santarosa.edu

Date: May 12, 2025
Time: 6:00pm (Pacific time)
Place: Online conference via Zoom; Zoom Meeting ID is: 698 266 936

Members in Attendance:

- Kris Davis (proxy for Tim Lynch)
- Shawn Nelson
- Eric B. Vogel
- Morgan Wren

Members Absent:

- Tim Lynch

Faculty, Staff, and Administrators in Attendance:

- Ethan Wilde

Was there a quorum?

- Yes

Transcript:

Ethan Wilde:

Well, welcome everybody. It's our annual game development program Industry advisory committee meeting. And I'm very pleased to have some folks in attendance today. There's a standard kind of meeting agenda outline that our career education programs at SJRC follows. And so I'll use that. I'm a sucker for slides. I apologize if it is distracting, but I like to keep myself on track, and there's some formalities in these meetings that I always have to check the boxes on the slides. Help me do that. but I'll go ahead, and I'll call our meeting to order and welcome a select group of invitees who are here now live with us at 5 min after 6 we've got Kris Davis, Eric Vogel, and Morgan Wren all joining us from our advisory group, which is the right number to have a quorum. I'm going to designate Kris as a proxy for Tim Lynch today. Just so we have that formality out of the way, and Tim said I could do that. It's really great to have you all here. I'm very pleased to welcome Kris Davis to our group. Kris has a really amazing background in mobile games, and we're super lucky to have Kris with us today. If you want to give your

own little introduction, you're welcome to as well, Kris, and if everybody else wants to say Hello, we could do that as well.

Kris Davis:

Thanks. Ethan. Yeah, I'm Kris, and I've been in mobile games, probably about as long as has anybody. I was part of the original sprint team that launched games and even micro transactions. I posted something the other day that 20 years ago we launched micro transactions which became a net purchase. Anyways, I spent a bunch of time at sprint, and then I went to Capcom, and I was operating off service studio there, and VP of business development did a bunch of bunch of deals, and we launched a very infamous game called the Smurs Village, which was, really one of the most successful early branded free to play games on the app store, and then went to Kabam and worked on a big game called Marvel Contest of Champions, and then we were acquired by Netmarble in 2017, and I was there for 7 years, and then went on to Playstation, and I was there for 2 and a half years, and was head of the Mobile games team. That we were starting up there. And now I'm at a company called Azure Games. Which is a a16z venture-backed game developer. Based out of Sacramento. And we're Our founder. And CEO is the creator of a game called Star Wars galaxy of heroes which did really well on Mobile.

Ethan Wilde:

Wonderful. We're glad to have you with us, Kris. Thank you for being here. Eric. You want to say hello next. Do you have your own illustrious background.

Eric Vogel:

I'm Eric Vogel. I don't have a very big background in digital things. I'm a board game designer who is published with various board game publishers. I'm also a psychology professor at California, North State University teaching in their doctoral program.

Ethan Wilde:

Have Eric with us. We need a non-digital perspective in the mix as well. I also want to welcome Morgan. Do you want to say hello for a second, Morgan? How are you doing?

Morgan Wren:

I am Morgan Wren. I currently working at Nvidia for the past 4 years before that worked at at 2K, Area Code in New York, which was bought out, purchased by Zynga, worked at Zynga, worked at Supergiant games for about 6 years. Then I moved out of the game industry to 3D software working at Nvidia.

Ethan Wilde:

You timed it well, Nvidia is some amazing stuff going on.

Morgan Wren:

For sure.

Ethan Wilde:

Really wild. The big theme today for me is to hear from all of you your thoughts on artificial intelligence in just a little bit. And so it's great to have somebody from Nvidia here to.

Morgan Wren:

Nice.

Ethan Wilde:

I share that perspective. I've just got a handful of announcements I wanted to share with folks here today to let you know what's going on in our program a serendipitous outreach from the UK. The program coordinator at Falmouth University, which is in England. William Huber got in touch with me as he was coming to GDC. This year in San Francisco, and we struck up kind of a professional dialogue, and he came and presented to our students in our lecture series. He was one of our speakers for our Game Views series this year. And promoted an opportunity for the SJRC Game Development Program students to complete a bachelors degree at his school, Fallmouth, with the opportunity for transfer credit, so it would be akin to them going on to their final 2 years at a public school here in California. Interestingly enough, he shared some financial perspective on it, too, with the students, and it turns out to be a little cheaper than going to a public school in the Us. Now, which was a surprise, I imagine, that might vary with currency, exchange rates, and so on and so forth. But they are well-reviewed as the top in England for game design. So we're really lucky to have that outreach from England, promoting an opportunity for students to transfer abroad if they want to. I feel like we were lucky to have Professor Huber reach out to us, and like I said, too, he was one of our speakers. Kris was one of our speakers, too, for the Game Views series this year, and we had a pretty good response from the students. A lot of students watch these after the live session is over. And so I got some positive feedback from them.

I also wanted to share that all with you that our program continues to be a part of the six-campus Regional Virtual Production Academy, which I think we're now in our second full year of participating in. This is an another pathway that has, of course, a big overlap, because game engines are so critical in this digital film and video field of virtual production, particularly unreal engine. The program now is offering three different certificates and a degree to students in all six participating community colleges in the Bay Area, which is Santa Rosa, Berkeley, Diablo Valley, Ohlone, Mission, and Laney colleges. It's a great opportunity. There's also a paid internship now as part of the RVPA. Some Santa Rosa students are applying for next year's paid internship which places them at some cool studios in the Bay Area to do work.

The student run Game Development Club is still kicking, which is not always easy. It had a life back in the early 2000s, and then it kind of died out, and it came back in 2023. And I've witnessed a successful handoff of the club leadership in the last semester. Since we're a two-year school, sometimes it's hard to keep momentum going in those student-run clubs, but they're still kicking! They are busy in the land of Discord. I'd like to give everybody a chance who's here to to share anything you'd like to share in the format of public comments.

I wanted to turn to new business in our agenda outline on the same front that I was sharing announcements around the 3rd certificate for the virtual production program is coming online, which is a non-credit certificate. I've learned a lot myself about noncredit opportunities at community colleges

just recently, and it's an interesting opportunity for people who are already in a profession, particularly. who don't need college credits to come back and get training. We're trying to make that an opportunity for more and more of our classes. And so that is where the RVPA is at with that. But I'm especially interested in in the time we have today to focus myself in a listening mode – because I've already talked enough for this whole meeting – around the topic of artificial intelligence.

Eric Vogel:

I'm not very familiar with non-credit pathways. What sort of advantage or logic of doing something is a no credit certificate?

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, thank you for asking. I can share with you what I've learned. The state legislature set aside special monies that basically pay for noncredit students to take community college classes without any costs. All the community college classes in the State that offer college credit have a unit fee associated with them.

Eric Vogel:

I see.

Ethan Wilde:

It's a chance to get student enrollment without those students incurring any expense. which is great. And so that's I think that's the biggest thing. It also allows students to drop into individual classes because they might have specific career backgrounds already and kind of learning through experience right learning through doing in their jobs and to bypass some of the prerequisites for some classes. So the non-credit variations don't have the same prerequisite requirements typically.

Eric Vogel:

Got it.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, thanks for asking about that. It's been a big learning experience for me. And the folks here who run admissions are really excited about noncredit options, because we're every community college in the State, I think, is desperately looking for new student audiences to try and keep programs afloat and to keep things running, because the body of college age students in many of the regions, like our region included, is is dropping just demographically. There's fewer students. SJRC's enrollment has dropped pretty much almost every year of the 1st 4 or 5 years that I was there, in part because we had the fires, and then we had Covid. And now we're just starting to see a tick back up. Welcome! I think I see. Another one of our colleagues joining Shawn, is that you? I think I see your face there. but it looks like Zoom is telling me that you're still connecting to audio. Welcome, Shawn Nelson is joining us, too. I think that's I think that's Shawn's face peeking in the corner there. Welcome Shawn!

So on my slide here, I don't know if anybody's tried out Cursor before. It is basically a version of Microsoft's Visual Studio Code. Somebody has forked it to make Cursor, specifically one of the AI coding platforms, and they're now giving away a free year of the professional level license, known as Cursor Pro, to all college students.

AI is a fraught topic that is roiling the higher education space. I think all educators are trying to figure out how to make sure that we address it properly, and also the challenge of making sure students are still learning the skills and gaining the knowledge they need. The screenshot I have in my slide is me interacting with Cursor, asking it to write a game. After it failed a couple times, I continued to have a dialogue with it via prompts, and it eventually got a working game in kind of an older coding pattern. I asked it to rewrite the whole thing as a class-based application, and it did it, and it worked. So that was a little terrifying and very exciting at the same time for me. That's kind of where we're at in higher ed, right now, how do we make sure our students know how to do what they need to do while also teaching them these tools? The floor is open for anybody's perspective on AI. Personal thoughts, industry, thoughts. We need help. Yes, Eric?

Eric Vogel:

Most of my well, well, so from the board game world in general, the attitude within the Board game world, at least from everybody but publishers is very negative right now, and it's not so much relevant to writing board games which I haven't seen AI's do yet, successfully right, you know a set of board game rules and material and a prototype that made sense and board game designers aren't that expensive as entities, so I don't know that you know the incentive would be there to train up an AI to really do that. Well, but for board game artists to it's a big problem. And so you know, the artist community around board games is very vocal about the problems with AI, not just in the sense of taking their work, but also in the fact that essentially you know, they've gotten to do what they do by plagiarizing the work of these artists? So that which is kind of my core problem with AI is that AI is at its core. Plagiarism. But not just. That is plagiarism in addition to cheating. So there's that And I think within France there's, you know, moves, or within, Europe generally moves to kind of try to legislate kind of prevent. You know, people's jobs are being taken in this way. In the academic world. It's also the non-game academic world, the psychology, academic world. you know, I'm having to deal with detecting AI written papers. And well, it was not the only issue in the person's case. It was a case of this was a subsequent crime to previous crimes. caught a student using AI to write his paper. just last semester, and he was removed from the university. So these are things that weactually have to deal with there. There's various attitudes. In fact, I've also caught faculty members using AI to write lectures which to be honest, I think, is kind of pathetic. It's the same. It's essentially always the same things. Your professors are perfectly capable of writing their own lectures. It's a matter of saving time that they want to do it. I can't say that all the students are capable of that. But that's the basic problem I'm up against with it is that AI is an alternative to learning is really the problem. They can't both use it and they can't learn how to do it themselves from the experience of using AI to do it. Again, it's not necessarily relevant to your discussions here, although it might be, if it comes to some kind of academic work that the students are doing, separate from the process of coding. But I would assume that is also the case if they're using it to do their coding. So I suppose it's one thing if you have a class on how to use AI to write code. Quite another thing, if you have a coding class where you're supposed to be learning how to code, and you use AI to do your homework assignments.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, in our program, we're facing kind of all three of those areas. We've got a history of games class that requires historical research paper development. We've got a game design class that has all the aspects of game design from developing gameplay definitions, level design, and character design, and so on, and so forth.

Shawn, you might have a perspective on this, too. Then we have a coding class where we're struggling with how to integrate AI and still have them learn coding. How's your world with AI working, Shawn? Both in in and out of school.

Shawn Nelson:

That's a good question. Well, I have very mixed feelings about everything. Of course. I think, for the most part for entry level stuff like the game design course at SJRC. And for the courses. I teach other places. They don't have time to learn some of the stuff. And so if the class calls for them to make an entire game, right? That's a long that's like three years to be able to do any of the aspects involved in making a game, including animation, modeling, rigging, and then just working in Unity or Unreal. So as a introduction to it, I've integrated AI. I've kind of jumped in bed with a company called Meshy AI! They make wonderful and wonderfully horrible models. But really fast, and anything you want. So instead of using Norman or any of the other notorious, horrible game, school game models for animation and stuff. I've been teaching them this semester how to go to Meshy, create whatever character they want, and then take that over to Mixamo and have them auto rig it, and then bring that back into Maya, and then have them put controller objects on it, and then do their own animation. And but I also give them the option of using the Mixamo or Meshy animations. The class is not about animating, rigging or modeling. Their introductions to that which I do very sort of traditionally right? We make a box and we do an idle animation. But this is just a chance for them to take the game design that they created. You know their narrative, or whatever it is, and then create a more appropriate character for that game narrative. It's not without a lot of problems doing it. And they but you learn I feel like they learn the process a little better by just going through them. It's not like AI goes here. Here's a wonderful thing for you. They give you a pretty horrible thing that it kind of looks nice. and there's so they learn to fix it and then to implement it into the game. Meanwhile they can go into Unity and build whatever game they want, but they're still, you know, they're not using AI to do things, but they're still going to the Asset store and getting a castle, or they're creating grass from the tree programs. So there's like so many little bits of shortcuts there. But I always think the saving grace to being to using AI is teaching them what they're doing when they're doing when you're calling up AI. This is how you model. Now I realize you don't know how to model that. Well, but someday you might, and this is what one looks like. This is how you make it look like you want? So as long as you back up the usage of AI with traditional knowledge of what you're doing or use it as a learning experience. It can get you a little further down the road than it would if they were, you know. Just bring up Unity and then use Ethan, not you, Ethan, but the other Ethan in in Unity and run them around. I like that aspect of it a lot. And I think the students, really as a point of entry when they can just create whatever character they want, are having a much better time than using a pre-made character that they didn't design. Like the creative freedom it allows them to have out the gate is way up there, even if they have to fix it. In fact, they're more incentive. They're more apt to use it then to go in and fix the rigging and fix the animation than if they're just using an off the shelf character. As far as writing code, I do have them use it to write a simple trigger code in Unity, but honestly, that should be a preset in Unity, and it should have been there for years. Nobody should have to write that code anymore ever again. So I'm all for that. And we've been using Unity 6. And ChatGPT writes Code for Unity 2023. So you still have to go in and say, “Hey, that's not the right code. Can you write it for Unity 6?” So they're learning to debug code a little bit, too. I don't know that I would like it to be used in advanced classes. But when you're just giving people a taste of everything. it's a

good way for them to personalize that taste rather than grabbing things off the shelf. So yeah, that's my two cents on it.

Ethan Wilde:

Great insights. Thank you, Shawn. I am really grateful for you taking the time to be here. Thank you so much. Maybe I'll ask Kris next for your perspective. And I'm going to save our Nvidia colleague Morgan for last, because he's going to have all sorts of things to share with us about AI.

Kris Davis:

I can't really speak from a development perspective, because I'm a business guy. For Shawn, who hasn't met me. I'm the chief business officer over azure games, and I've just done all kinds of business stuff in games for 20 years. It's interesting. I've gotten a wide experience in the last 12 months. So I was at Playstation until November, and they were adopting it. And the teams were sort of dabbling with it, but there was a lot of concern from the game teams about mixing their own creations, even in terms of training the model, because then there could potentially be questions about you know the output, the merged art, and like making sure that Playstation still owned all of the art assets. So that was a really big deal there. But they were dabbling in it. They had OpenAI come and offer classes. So it was interesting. I learned a little bit about prompting from that, and then I was laid off for a few months, and I used Cursor to create a game. It was no good, but it was fun for me. It was a little vibe coding thing. Once I got it working, now, I have something that's working. But changing UI, tweaking it is nearly impossible. Because I don't have that skill. So I'm just telling it, “move this over to the center. No, the center. No, the center, no, the center, no, the center.” But I still had a good time doing it. And it got me thinking about some creative stuff that I would work with somebody else to potentially make. Then I joined Azra, which is an a16z Pantera backed startup, and they fully embrace every form of AI like that you can conceive of it, if it makes us work faster. Do it if you take your notes with it, and then you post it, do it. The only thing is, I think Shawn mentioned, you just have to watch out for issues. If you have it interpreting your notes and it looks polished, sure. But then it misinterprets something and I'm held accountable for that ultimately. So it's interesting because it helps me move a lot faster. But then I have a lot more data and information to sort through, because every call that we're on has multiple people's notes being taken.

In the last couple of weeks, I have been really trying to figure out how to just sort through all of the information, because I have endless calls all day, let's say 6 hours of calls. I get very clear action items. But like I've told people, normally, I just take my own notes, and I forget things. There's just stuff I miss, but it doesn't matter, because I get the big things. But when you have a computer taking the notes and literally capturing every single thing and action item, you end up with like an infinite list that you can never catch up on, because you're not ignoring things. That has been my experience so far.

Ethan Wilde:

Wow, I appreciate that. You have more information now to manage and edit and verify. thanks to all the tools generation. That is a lot. Morgan?

Morgan Wren:

Hello! Hello!

Ethan Wilde:

How we should be using this stuff?

Morgan Wren:

Coming from an AI company, my official line should be similar to Kris's: “use it for everything.” But I use it for many things practically. So I've a bit more nuanced. I definitely recognize your screenshot. We use Cursor AI at Nvidia internally. It's been rolled out. We're in a very similar place where we are trying to figure out how to accelerate everything we can. I've found that there's this concept of “a human in the loop” that right now is necessary. Always there. There always just needs to be human in the loop, validating reading through meeting notes, making sure they're accurate, prioritizing notes, etc. the the most accelerating things I found are like are very simple coding exercises and not necessarily like. Here's a Prd write this program for me, or or here's my game design document. Write this game for me. But you know, in in the corporate world and in large game companies there are many tasks that just take time and are annoying, and I think we all are used to like writing a script to list every audio asset, because now I have to pass this off to a producer on the audio team who's going to give me events that I need to hook them up to, or whatever. And 10 years ago we would do that by hand. I would do it by hand. Someone would do it by hand, and would make a spreadsheet, would start copying and pasting and adding information to every column. Things like that can be done in minutes now. So to me the largest time savings and advantages we're seeing are automating the boring stuff with python, it's that. But now you have a code coding assistant who automates it for you. And kind of like writing glue code doing things like that. That's been really useful. As long as you again have a human in the loop to validate output and whatnot. We don't use AI for art. I have some friends who are concept artists, and you know, when, Midjourney hit the scene, their companies were asking them, become a prompt engineer. Let's see how far we can get. Make concept art. Let's see how good it is and they spent months doing just that. And studios were like “Awesome, but your illustrations are better, let's go back to you illustrating concept art.” Even then, when they got good results, it was with the human in the loop. It was getting AI output and then modifying it. You know, because of the human. At the end of the day it was still a large percentage of human work. It gave you a sketch and you took the sketch and you make it good. That's kind of where I see things are at now. I think you guys have in academia have a tough challenge of identifying what is a useful skill for a student to leave this class with. Is it prompt engineering? Really, it is not that. It is understanding the fundamentals of code and design, and how these things should work, because at this point it's probably a bit of both. Unfortunately, especially if people, want to get an internship at a company. You can probably set yourself apart if you are a good prompt engineer, if you can quickly identify that this or that task can be accelerated with the use of AI in a clever way. I can probably just write a script that does this and have Cursor write that script, and this thing that people thought would take me a week took me a day or whatever, but it's tough to teach that while simultaneously attempting to teach fundamentals, so I do not envy you that challenge.

Ethan Wilde:

I appreciate that perspective. I like your framing of it, and Kris's framing of it as accelerants. I think Shawn kind of had that framing, too, where it can help students get further into building a game, because then they can get models generated. I personally, I feel like I'm at a I'm at a turning point, whereas most of my colleagues, up till very recently had prescribed not using AI for certain assignments. I'm starting to realize that maybe my strategy will be to require using AI, and then to evolve what the AI

generates, and show me the before and after, or something like that, so I can verify that they haven't just spent a moment writing an initial, prompt and turning it in, but rather.

Kris Davis:

They're using it for various aspects to accelerate their process.

Ethan Wilde:

And I need to get them to admit they're using it.

Morgan Wren:

That's the other problem. If they're taking output and synthesizing it and explaining why it was good or bad. You know. I think that's a useful, a good use case. Some of it may also just be changing modalities, right? Like, I know, a lot of courses are online. But if it's copy and paste into a text box. It's too easy if it's stand up in front of a class and give a presentation with an explanation in your own words. That's a learning modality where students kind of are forced to be to show their knowledge, showcase their knowledge be the human in the loop. But yeah.

Shawn Nelson:

You have a history class. Right?

Ethan Wilde:

That's right.

Shawn Nelson:

AI is great for doing research, so you may want to have them research, interesting aspects of something in particular, like “Hey, who was the modeler on the first Gears of War game, or whatever?” Then do a deep dive into that person. AI is great for doing that kind of stuff, and then they can just show their AI prompts and their responses and then have them distill it into a report or presentation, like a video presentation or something. I think that's one of the best things about AI is getting information from it is really super fast.

Morgan Wren:

Yeah, we were also building tools at Nvidia that think people don't maybe see right off the bat as generative AI, but are like these accelerating things like we have an audio to face engine emotion to face, which you can map onto a model. If you have a well rigged model, get speech output, you get rendered frames of speech. It's real time, too, so you can have it running and speak, watch a face, say your words change its facial expressions based on emotion and whatnot. and like, certainly that is an artist's job somewhere today. And so, unfortunately, it is maybe taking work out of the workforce. But that's the kind of thing where, if you don't have a large team, or you are just a student, and you just

want to add polish onto something. finding these little tools that exist, that utilize AI like you don't have to build a model. You don't have to find the model. It's just there. You can get a container running on your machine. And suddenly you go from like this static face in your, in, your, in your project, that you're turning in to a fully animated face that's speaking whatever lines you've written for your cut scenes. And so these like little shortcut things, I think, can just add polish and showing students that they're out there. Get them thinking about this stuff like, how do I polish a project? How do I go from like a pretty good portfolio project when I'm leaving SJRC to a like really good portfolio project. And how do I do that quickly? So yeah, things like that may be useful for students to think about.

Ethan Wilde:

Great examples. Appreciate that, Morgan. What do we do about the problem? Kris posed, which is the human editorial, the Human in the loop. Anybody have any thoughts on ways that I can introduce AI. That in I think, Morgan, you already shared the idea of of oral presentations as a way to engage students to demonstrate that modal mode of learning where you know they haven't just copied it. I am searching. I'm grasping for ways to make sure, I push them beyond entering a single prompt and copy paste, and so definitely paste into the text box. Not a productive model of evaluating students anymore. For sure.

Eric Vogel:

So are these in person or online classes that you're talking about.

Ethan Wilde:

They are online classes. They do have a live meeting component in zoom. But it's not in a classroom that's physical. It's all virtual.

Eric Vogel:

Well, so if you have presentations in your class, how many of your students are? Really, I I assume most of your students are giving those with notes.

Ethan Wilde:

Right. Absolutely. I would expect that they are, and that would be easy for them to do.

Eric Vogel:

And so I'm not sure doing it. Live would make much of a difference. Ultimately, it's just a matter of you know, unless you're asking them to generate it in real time, somehow. And even that with AI is not so. That's a problematic.

Morgan Wren:

Right? Let me look at my phone real quick for these notes.

Eric Vogel:

For good reason, those a cell phone blocker technologies are illegal now. I totally want one, just so that I can force students to do typing exercises when they're not connected to the Internet at all, just to try to get them to in some fashion prove what their actual writing abilities are.

Ethan Wilde:

Yes.

Eric Vogel:

And while I'm not sure how much this is something you really want to put on the table with them. The kind of the human in the loop thing. At some point I think you have to consider the economics of the human in the loop model that it doesn't take as many humans to be the human in the loop as it does to be the Creator. And I know from my presentation that your students are very concerned about. You know, what's the job market like for them in this profession? Do they really have jobs in front of them? And it? And also how emotionally rewarding is it being the human in the loop? And, you know, checking the work of a bunch of ais, it seems like to go to the trouble of acquiring, because you essentially need as much competence as you would need to actually program all the stuff yourself to be the human who checks the work. Oh, the AI! And yet you know you kind of are left with none of the real creativity. None of it, you know in your work. So you know, a smaller job market of less rewarding work doesn't sound like a great future for the profession. I have to say.

Ethan Wilde:

I appreciate that perspective, Eric. I I think the flip side is, I think there's the experience some students have related to me when I've had candid conversation with them in office hours about using AI. And it reflects, I think, a little bit of what Shawn and Morgan were saying, where there's kind of you feel a little superhuman when you are orchestrating output from AI because it magnifies your apparent capability. Like the meshy AI product that Shawn is working with and helping students understand? That's a prompt based tool, right, Shawn. And it'll generate a model based on prompting.

Shawn Nelson:

Yeah, it's text or video. But the video aspect of it doesn't work very good. Or I mean the image or text. The text works way better than the image does.

Ethan Wilde:

And I know from my limited and very deficient skills, 3D Modeling is a lot of work.

Shawn Nelson:

Yeah.

Ethan Wilde:

Traditionally. And so it's like a superpower to be able to write up a prompt and have some reasonable looking models suddenly appear compared to poking around in Maya and learning the control set.

Shawn Nelson:

Right? It's a incredible step forward for the students, but unusable in a real sense at the moment, like just horrific UVs, horrific geometry it just looks pretty on the outside. So it's it's good for students. And but I wouldn't, you know. And maybe if you're doing a crowd scene, you needed a whole bunch of people fast for the background, it'd be okay. but certainly doesn't replace your main character like that's still.

Ethan Wilde:

Right.

Shawn Nelson:

Those kind of models wouldn't fly in a commercial professional setting, they would have to be rebuilt. Yeah. But you know, like, Hey, I need 15 different tiki idols. I need 25 different cups, I need, you know, stuff that sits on the wall like I need. hey for the for the cell room or skulls or something. It doesn't. Okay. Profit stuff. Yeah. Stuff you don't get too close to, or but from a student point of view, it really generates a lot of excitement with them which is hard to do these days. So the fact that they can be superheroes for like 5 seconds. make characters that they're interested in, I think buys a little bit. And I explained straight up to them like these are not usable. In a real sense, but go ahead and make them. They'll look good for what you guys are doing, and then in time you'll learn to either create your own, or fix these ones up to be a usable state it still it still takes me. If I generate one, it takes me about 3 or 4 h to fix it in order to be usable as a game character. The hands are messed up, the geometry is all over the place. But if you don't look too close, it's okay. So and I actually think the excitement level outweighs the other part of it of skipping being able to do it, and maybe it'll get people excited about it so that they can learn how to model correctly or rig correctly. Yeah.

Morgan Wren:

Yeah, we've used gray boxes for decades. This is like a slightly better looking gray box.

Shawn Nelson:

Right.

Morgan Wren:

It still has to be swapped out some. Yeah. You still need a real creative team to come in and make the real finished product.

Shawn Nelson:

Yeah, it'll be quite a while before I think they get to that point where it's generating decent models. But even meshy in the year and a half or 2 years that I've been using it. Has doubled their quality about like it's at least 50% better than it was. if not, if not another bit. Beyond that they went from Rando. Weird tries to being decent. Polygon pods.

Ethan Wilde:

Hmm.

Shawn Nelson:

But it's still not symmetrical, and the UVs are still horrific. So yeah, changing the shirt color or something is a nightmare.

Morgan Wren:

Yeah, I mean, I agree with a lot of Eric's taken that, you know. Don't want to make the industry a soulless place where creatives have no jobs. But if we if you can leverage AI to take away the things that aren't super enjoyable it's like program management stuff project management things like strategy docs. Whatever I I see that stuff as a win.

Kris Davis:

I find it interesting on my side, on the business side around, like the strategy, Docs is a great example. Maureen. These are things like, I literally could have spent a typical, like a high quality piece of strategy, Doc. Work that I've done in the past like a full deck, would take me a good 40 40 h for sure. I remember. Like it would be a I couldn't do it in a week, because I can't work 8 HA day just doing that one thing. So it would take some variation of 40 h. And now it's something you just sort of feed in and to the prompt, and then it will spit something out and then end up tweaking half the time. Tweaking is just a a formatting which that obviously get rectified soon. And then the other half is like tweaking the content. But it would take. It'll take me an hour or 2 now, something would take me 40 h before. So the point that I'm making, though, is like, okay. Now, I've got the strategy put together, and I've sent it over to the product team, and it's just it. The cycle is moving so fast on this kind of stuff. There, you know that my my company is like. Hey, for our investors? They like to read this kind of stuff. Can you put a strategy, Doc, together? For, like. you know 10 projects which I can. It just takes a couple of days as I'm as I'm moving on. But like at some point, it's sort of like the problem that I described earlier, where I have now for all my email for my meetings that I have, I have full transcripts, action items, TLDRs, you know for every meeting that I have. and it's just like an avalanche of information. It's hard to. It's hard to know how to sort through all of that. The other point I wanted to make was that when I was laid off it just felt like a gold rush. It was like an interesting. It's not like I thought I was going to make any money at it. But like the intellectual exercise of trying to figure out which new tools were emerging. You could combine like this with that with some other existing thing, and like come up with like some way to create a business out of it. I found it very exciting. It didn't seem like it didn't seem to me I didn't feel like. Oh, I'll never find a job again. I was like man. If I can figure this shit out like I could, we could do anything. It's a

very. but I needed but it was interesting, because at my age. I know how some of that stuff works. but I really needed a lot of time to figure it out, watch, videos, educate myself, etc. And I'm sure that's where a lot of the students, you know, they do have time. But you know they have a lot of classes, too.

Morgan Wren:

Yeah.

Kris Davis:

Lot of stuff to figure out.

Morgan Wren:

One last thought in the realm of Academia. There we experiment with and with, with like self, hosted models with, you know you take like a base model like Llama 3 or one of ChatGPT's models, and you can give it a rag so you can give it a database of knowledge that it's focused on but you can also set like pretty hardcore guardrails. So I don't know if that's something that's being explored in academia, but saying, Hey, students are going to use AI models each department should have its model like, here's a model.

Ethan Wilde:

Nice.

Morgan Wren:

What it's trained on. Here's what it's focused on here, hardcore guardrails so that it won't answer these questions. It won't go into this part of its knowledge base. You're giving intentional blind spots. and then I mean, then it's tough because you're policing kids again, like, are you using ChatGPT, or are you using? SJRCgpt, you could only use SJRCgpt, but I mean, that is something to explore potentially like this is this is the model for our department. It has the information we know you will need or think you will need for your coursework, and we've intentionally kind of nerfed it in certain areas so that it can't, can't just do the work for you.

Ethan Wilde:

All right. That's a fascinating scenario. I like that a lot in some regards. especially the idea, yeah, of a local model that you do some training on There's there is an equity issue, too, like our friends at Cursor are going to get everybody addicted one year.

Morgan Wren:

Very much.

Ethan Wilde:

Cursor pro. But then, how much does the student, the second year student, have to pay them to keep using the crack pipe that they've been given.

Morgan Wren:

Very fair.

Ethan Wilde:

That's a concern amongst a lot of colleagues is, how do we level the playing field? If somebody's paying for premium access to OpenAI's platform or somebody else's platform. Does that disadvantage? People who don't have the money to pay for that license?

Kris Davis:

This is like, what's the book ready, player? One right.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, it's hot. It is.

Kris Davis:

Interesting. I. So even though I was laid off, I was like, I'm going to spend the 200 bucks. So I'll do one month of the super premium, just because I wanted to see.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah.

Kris Davis:

And anywhere that was usable. But definitely, I think to your point, like, Yeah. money is power for sure, even though these, you know, these tools are somewhat available to everybody.

Ethan Wilde:

Yeah, it's another. It's another facet that's confounding people. We thought we had it sorted out with textbooks because there was a open education initiative that brought around a lot of free textbooks. Or, for example, our library has purchased a license to the O'Reilly publishers. Online learning platform which basically gives students free electronic textbooks.

Morgan Wren:

Nice.

Ethan Wilde:

But we don't have the same setup with the generative AI companies yet. and so there is an uneven playing field there, for sure I really appreciate everything everybody shared. I know I've already taken us past what I promised would be a relatively short meeting. And I think maybe over-ambitiously. I had thought that we would vote on incorporating AI into the curriculum, and I don't think I can articulate a votable statement right now, because my mind is racing with all the interesting perspectives every but he shared. And so maybe I will take the vote on AI incorporation out of this cycle of the meeting. But I will use my AI generated transcript from this to try and fashion some suggestions that you've all shared into some kind of outline that I could reflect back to everybody. And maybe in our next convening in the new Academic year, sometime August or later. I could ask everybody's input, maybe we could take a vote. Our department. The context for this, by the way, is my department computer studies, computer science is about to tomorrow, in fact, vote on a department policy to incorporate AI into all of our course materials as something that students need instruction on. And I already am doing just like Shawn with different tools, introducing students to it, because I don't want to make it a blind spot for them. And I know that they're using it, anyway. In some regards I do have to ask, though, as a formality for one vote to meet the requirements for these meetings, I did share the last meeting minutes a while ago, and I know not everybody here was there. But I'll do a vote in reverse here, and just ask if anybody objects to approving the fall. 2023 meeting minutes, and if I don't hear any objections I will deem them approved. I'm allowed to do that. I've understood finally. I'm extremely grateful to the brain. Trust that the 4 of you represent, and I feel very lucky to have such a diverse group of folks with different backgrounds, helping to guide what in the end is just an opportunity to try and help some students who love games become game makers. I don't have any more updates to share. happy. If anybody else wants to say anything before we wrap up.

Kris Davis:

I just, I'll say briefly, Ethan, this reminds me of when I was starting college and 1995 and people were just starting to what do you call it? Telnet into email and stuff.

Ethan Wilde:

Oh, yeah.

Kris Davis:

There was so much concern at the college at that point that people would just be like using the Internet to like, you know, whatever, and plagiarize, and whatever not learn anything. And somehow we figured it all out.

Ethan Wilde:

Agreed. Yeah, it's an interesting path to plot forward. I like that historical analogy. I was a art history major as an undergraduate, and all my professors would bemoan the fact that we had Xerox machines. They were like, we didn't have Xerox machines. We had to write all our hand notes. You guys are making Xeroxes of the books. And now, yeah.

Eric Vogel:

Well, okay.

Ethan Wilde:

And now AI! Oh, dear.

Eric Vogel:

Sorry can I throw in?

Ethan Wilde:

Oh, please!

Eric Vogel:

We? We didn't figure it all out. We just decided to tolerate its effects. Mean, I average IQ has been going down since the 1970s. They were going up years and years and years. They're going down.

Let me tell you, between when I started and now abstract thought, capacities sre going down. Maybe that's microplastics in their brain. I can't really say.

Morgan Wren:

I thought the most recent study I read said it started in 20 18 has been the consistent downward trend. I think, in graduate students. I believe it. If you have 20 years of observation.

Eric Vogel:

Evidence. and one and one of the hypotheses is you know well a few things. The direct and indirect effects of some of those technological crutches on things. And we haven't contained plagiarized Internet plagiarism is a problem. It's been a problem. We've been detecting it. We got better at detecting it, but it's been something I've had to check and catch people at over those 20 years. Considerably so now it's much harder to catch this, and tell you what some one of the one of the other economic issues is now contractors are being, you know, people are doing piecework. and their employers are coming back at them, saying, Hey, you used AI to make this. and yet you're still trying to charge us the rate you said you were going to charge us for original work. That's not necessarily just artists or writers. That's also lawyers. We're doing that. I, for a fact, know lawyers who are using AI to write contracts right briefs, write things, and if you use AI to write a contract, maybe the problem with that contract won't emerge

for 10 years. It's not necessarily going to blow back on the person. So yeah, these Sorry to keep sounding the negative note. But, please. these things are serious and we're letting them go and let the chips fall where they may, which is essentially what we did with the Internet back in the day, and it has not all been great.

Ethan Wilde:

Appreciate getting again. That's why it's so wonderful to have so many people with diverse skills and knowledge in this group important to hear from the world of psych psychology on this. For sure. Thank you, Eric. I am. I am of mixed mind about all of it, for sure. Well invite any closing thoughts. I'll convene another meeting sometime after the beginning of the fall semester potentially, not until spring of 26. But I do appreciate. Everybody's input a lot. And I'd probably like to try and schedule something before the end of the calendar year so that we could have a further discussion, and maybe have a vote on how to approach AI with some of the curriculum. In the meantime it's Wild West and Shawn and I and our other colleagues will make do and do our best to sort things out.

Shawn Nelson:

Yeah. But it well, you know, even in the olden days, right? It was. Only you had to change things 20% before. It wasn't original material. right? Like, what about.

Ethan Wilde:

Thank you, everybody. We're going to do this again, probably in the fall.