The Hero's PAX East Booth

An Interactive Qualifying Project

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By

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Abstract

Our objective for this IQP was to represent WPI's Interactive Media and Games Development Program at multiple conventions dedicated to showing video games in various stages of development. We attended two conventions over the course of the IQP. The first was the Boston Festival of Indie Games in September of 2018, and the second was PAX East in March of 2019. Our preparations consisted of several tasks throughout the year, including but not limited to, sending out requests for student work to showcase, designing t-shirts, working with WPI's marketing department to acquire brochures and other marketing materials, and designing a booth space. This marks the first year where the objective of the IQP transitioned from solely representing WPI at PAX East to representing WPI at multiple conventions. Our team successfully fulfilled the objectives of the IQP at each event we attended.

Executive Summary

PAX East is an annual convention held in Boston, Massachusetts. It is dedicated to showcasing digital and analog games of all kinds in various stages of development. PAX East is the largest gaming convention on the east coast. Exhibited in its expo hall are triple A studios, independent studios, and universities alike. Since 2013, WPI has joined these ranks, showcasing the work of the Interactive Media and Game Development program at PAX East. This year marks the seventh year that WPI has had a PAX East Booth dedicated to the Interactive Media and Game Development program. The IQP team worked hard to collaborate extensively with WPI's marketing department. With their help, the team worked on strategies to most effectively sell the WPI brand at the convention.

The Ordinary World

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1. **About WPI IMGD**

WPI's IMGD (Interactive Media and Game Development) program was established in 2005, and offered students the opportunity to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in the previously mentioned subject. It is the second school in the country to offer a degree in this field. In the first year of the IMGD program, roughly 14 students were enrolled in the major, with 4 dedicated faculty. The program has expanded since then, with 24 associated faculty and about 140 students enrolled. Additionally, the major has expanded to offer degrees in multiple areas of the game development field. As of 2017, students can pursue a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree in multiple concentrations, including Visual Art, Technical Art, Design, and Writing, according to the WPI IMGD Resources web page.

2. **About PAX East**

PAX East began as an offshoot of the original Penny Arcade Expo held in Seattle, Washington, in 2004. The original convention was attended by approximately thirty-three hundred people. After the success of the first convention in Washington, other PAX conventions were established across the country and world. PAX East was the first of these offshoots, and was first held in 2010 in Boston. Attendance numbers for PAX East have risen every year, with 2017 boasting over eighty thousand attendees and almost four hundred exhibitors.

3. **Previous PAX IQPs**

As part of our preparation for the convention throughout the year, our team researched the methods of previous IQP teams through the paper they wrote at the conclusion of their projects. We looked through the papers for advice, examples of work, and explanations for why things went right or wrong.

3a. PAX IQP 2017

In reading the paper from the 2017 PAX IQP, we gathered a substantial amount of information that would wind up guiding our process. 2017's group was the first team to work closely with WPI's marketing department, and their paper detailed how much success their booth had because of it. The team was able to receive instruction on how to properly create and set up the backdrop and monitor stand, and also received input on various other ways to promote the school while at PAX East. While many avenues of promoting WPI were explored, not all of them were very successful. The 2017 team created a website for their booth that was meant to act as a landing page for WPI at PAX East. However, the team wrote that they didn't promote the website as much as they should have. As a result, the website received very little traffic. Marketing also proposed creating trading cards with designs of various professors and projects and using them as promotional materials. Unfortunately, the team missed the deadline to submit the designs, and the cards were not prepared in time for the convention. Ultimately, our research into the 2017 IQP established the importance of working closely with the Marketing Department, as well as the importance of meeting all deadlines in time for PAX.

3b. PAX IQP 2018

We continued our research into the work of previous years by reading the IQP paper of the 2018 PAX team. In contrast to the previous year, this team did not work as closely with WPI Marketing. The team wrote that their communication with the department was far more infrequent, which led to difficulties in properly using the materials given to the team. For example, the team had a higher degree of difficulty in setting up the backdrop used by the previous group. The backdrop ended up being damaged in the takedown, and a new one had to be purchased. This team's paper also impressed upon us the importance of keeping track of our budget. Some of the funds for the convention had to come out of pocket from the team, as expenses for the hotel and parking exceeded expectations.

Meeting with the Mentor

Throughout the project, our team met with several individuals and groups who were able to provide us with a substantial amount of guidance on how to best proceed with our preparations. Due to the help from these people, we were better prepared throughout the year, and completed our objectives with far greater ease and competence than we would have if we did not have their assistance and instruction.

1. IMGD Program

Although we received help from many faculty member within WPI's IMGD department, there are two who deserve special recognition as people who made a substantial impact on our project. The first was our advisor, Dean O'Donnell, who worked with us from the very beginning of the project. Professor O'Donnell has advised the PAX East IQP since 2015, and was able to give a considerable amount of guidance and support throughout the project. Every week, he gave us action items for the following week that helped structure our work and gave us a more consistent workload. Additionally, he kept us aware of important deadlines, so we could avoid high stress situations down the road. He also laid out the groundwork of what we could expect from the project--what running the booth was like, what to expect from PAX, and what was usually done each year. With his experience advising the IQP in previous years, we were never surprised or caught off guard by the work required of us, and his advice steered us away from many pitfalls. We started working with Professor O'Donnell in A-term of 2018 before the project officially began. He guided us through the process of running a booth at the Boston Festival of Indie Games, which served as an introduction to the rest of the project. We met with Professor O'Donnell once a week for the entirety of B, C, and D-term to check our progress and see what needed to be done in the following weeks.

Another member of the IMGD faculty who made a serious difference in our project was the IMGD secretary, Allison Darling. Ms. Darling took care of a significant portion of the administrative tasks our project presented, such as securing the booth space, ordering extra exhibitor passes for the volunteers, and placing various orders for equipment and supplies used

by the team throughout the year. Thanks to Ms. Darling, we were able to focus on design aspects of the project and be secure in the knowledge that orders and emails would go out on time. We first began working with Ms. Darling in A-term of 2018, and our contact continued semi-frequently throughout the remainder of the year. Any time we needed an order placed or an email sent, we would ask Ms. Darling to send off the final version.

2. Marketing

Previous years of this IQP have collaborated closely with marketing throughout the project, and we wanted to continue that effort. We first reached out to the Marketing department in B-term of 2018 to discuss the booth backdrop used in previous years. We wanted plenty of instruction and practice in assembling and dismantling the backdrop so we would be able to set it up ourselves upon arriving to set up for PAX. We also wanted to make sure we handled the backdrop properly so that it could stay in the best condition possible--as previously mentioned, the backdrop had brand new frame that had been purchased after it was damaged in transport the previous year. After spending a day working on the backdrop with the marketing team, we continued to communicate with them about materials to hand out during the convention, specifically pamphlets and brochures. The materials we were given provided information about WPI's youth summer programs, as well as pre-collegiate programs such as Frontiers. One shortcoming was that we accidentally forgot to request materials for the undergraduate and graduate IMGD programs. We advise future teams to make sure that these materials are requested and given out at PAX. Back on the topic of marketing--later, in C-term, we collaborated with the Marketing department to receive instruction in assembling the monitor stands that were paired with the backdrop. Throughout the project, we maintained a strong relationship with the marketing team, and any questions we had were usually answered within a few days. Without the efforts of the marketing department, we would have faced much greater difficulty throughout the project, particularly in the days leading up to and during the convention.

3. PAX Chest

A significant source of useful supplies came to us in the form of the "PAX Chest," a trunk containing leftover materials from several years of previous PAX IQPs. One of our first tasks after the IQP began was to sort through the chest and see what supplies could be reused. It was a fruitful task, as it showed us what supplies we would be expected to have for the booth (some of which came as a surprise to us), as well as what supplies previous groups found successful. We found an abundance of buttons from previous years within the chest, meaning that we would have more varieties to give away during the convention. We also found several power strips and extension cords, many of which we utilized while setting up power for our booth. Even certain supplies within the chest that we could no longer use (for example, a palette of water bottles that was so old the water was no longer potable) still told us what we would need to buy, and provided us information on how to prepare for the convention. There are a few consumables that need to be replenished, such as paper towels and tissues. There is an abundance of certain supplies in the chest, such as hand sanitizer and garbage bags. These tend to be used very slowly, and do not need to be replenished on a yearly basis. A list of all of the items we found in the chest can be found in Appendix F.

3. Boston Festival of Indie Games

Before PAX, there was another event that we used for practice running the PAX booth. For the first time, WPI purchased a table at the Boston Festival of Indie Games, also known as BFIG. The Boston Festival of Indie Games is a much smaller scale event than PAX, meant for independent developers to showcase their work. BFIG has fewer attendees, exhibitors, and is hosted in the athletic center of MIT, as opposed to an actual convention center. As a result, it was the perfect way to test our booth running capabilities. However, BFIG that year took place in September, and we only just started back at school in August. As a result, we had much less time to prepare. We began by making a call for games to show at the festival. We limited our selection to just two games, as we only had a single table available for our use. We wound up choosing "Crab the Flag," a multiplayer game made by a team of freshman, and "Pilot Unknown," one of the games that we took to PAX later. We left WPI at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday,

September 28th, 2018, and arrived at the convention hall by 8:30. We set up the WPI table with the games, WPI T-Shirts, and a WPI tablecloth that we borrowed from the marketing team. The event was an important tool in teaching us what to expect from conventions in the future. We gained invaluable experience in the process of setting up a booth, and what running a table for an entire day would be like. We also learned a lot about the selection process for games, and how difficult it would be to pick from a number of highly attractive titles. We learned what kind of titles drew crowds at a convention, and the information helped us when we later picked titles for PAX East. Ultimately, running a booth at BFIG proved to be an excellent teaching experience for our team.

Figure 1

The WPI Booth at the Boston Festival of Indie Games

Crossing the Threshold

After meeting with our various mentors, we began to start official PAX prep. Despite the fact that several months remained before the the convention, there was much that needed to be done this far in advance.

1. **Shirts & Buttons**

One key part of any PAX East booth is "swag"--items that can be given to attendees and serve as extra PR for the booth. Traditional giveaways from past WPI booths included shirts and buttons, so we set our sights on designing appealing logos for both. We focused on the shirt design first, as the shirt design might end up working as or inspiring a good button design. We knew that the cheapest shirts had designs that were one color, so we kept that in mind as we created our logos.

Another challenge we faced while creating shirt designs was the fact that goats have demonic associations, and often look pretty scary. This issue is one that past years have faced, and dealt with in different ways. Two years ago, the team contracted an artist who managed to make a cute, non-threatening goat. The previous year, the team decided on a design that didn't use goats at all. Despite the struggle we knew it may cause, we decided that we wanted to incorporate a goat into our design. We wanted the design to be specific to WPI--the previous year's shirt (and many school shirts given out at events like these) have designs that could be interchangeable with any game-related program if the text were changed. Additionally, we had an artist on our team, and were confident she would be able to overcome the "demon goat" problem. Now that we had decided we wanted a goat to be front and center with our design, we drew up a couple of ideas.

Fig. 2.1

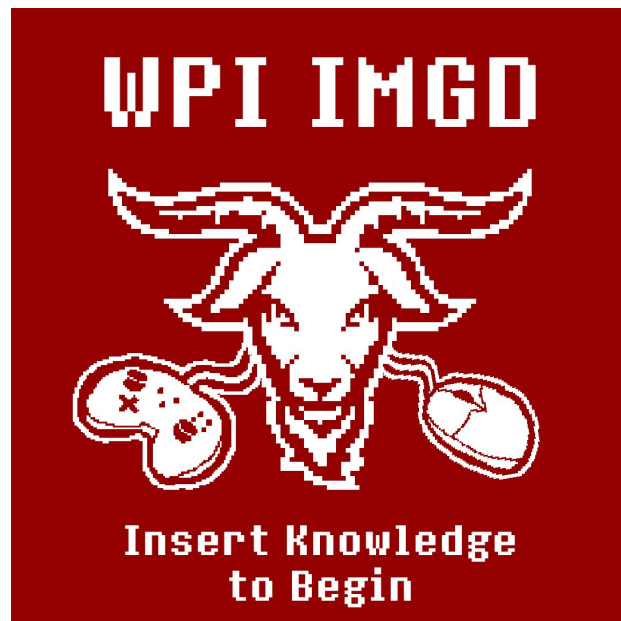One of the first 3 designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 2.2

One of the first 3 designs created for the PAX Shirts.
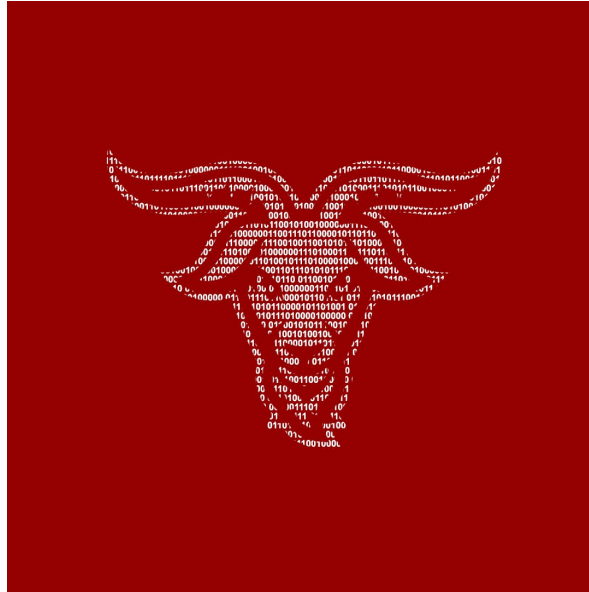
Fig. 2.3

One of the first 3 designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Above (figures 2.1 - 2.3) are the first 3 designs we came up with. 2.1 was the most personalized for the IMGD program, but had some issues. The individual character cells were a bit small, making it difficult to do personalized designs. The 2.2 and 2.3 featured the goat design utilized prominently on most WPI merchandise and marketing, but edited slightly to look a bit less angry. However, the goat wasn't friendly looking enough, and was still received as demonic. Additionally, the mouse and game controller coming out of the 2.2 were a bit reminiscent of the tentacles of an eldritch demon. Essentially, none of the 3 designs were a hit, so we decided to go back to the drawing board.
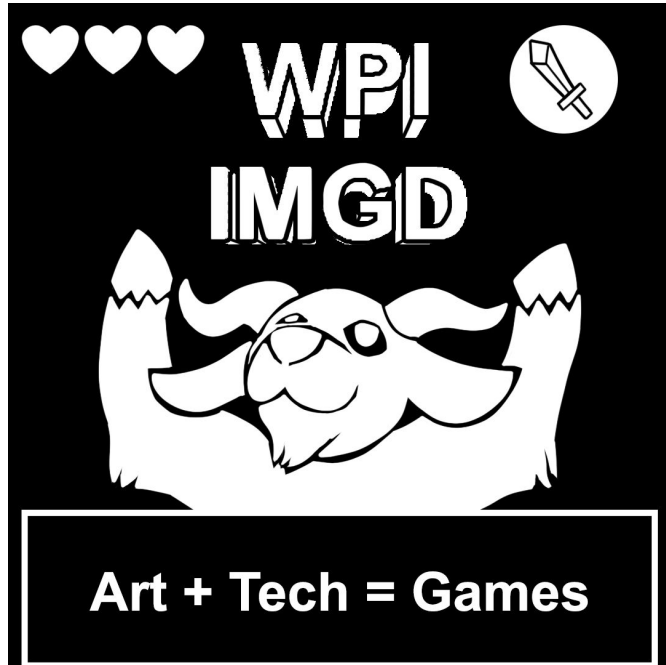
Fig. 3.1

One of the second wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 3.2

One of the second wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 3.3

One of the second wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

The next 3 designs (figures 3.1 - 3.3) were much better received overall, though they weren't quite up to snuff yet. 3.1 was intended to be a Legend of Zelda homage, with the goat holding up the WPI IMGD letters the same way Link brandishes an item upon opening a chest. However, the reference wasn't immediately obvious, and thus the sword and hearts seemed out of place. Additionally, the official IMGD slogan (Art + Tech = Games) also seemed out of place in the context of the design. 3.2 was somewhat better, but the goat still looked too scary, a problem that 3.1 had managed to avoid. The same problem arose with 3.3--the goat was not friendly enough.. We used this feedback to tackle our next set of designs.

Fig. 4.1

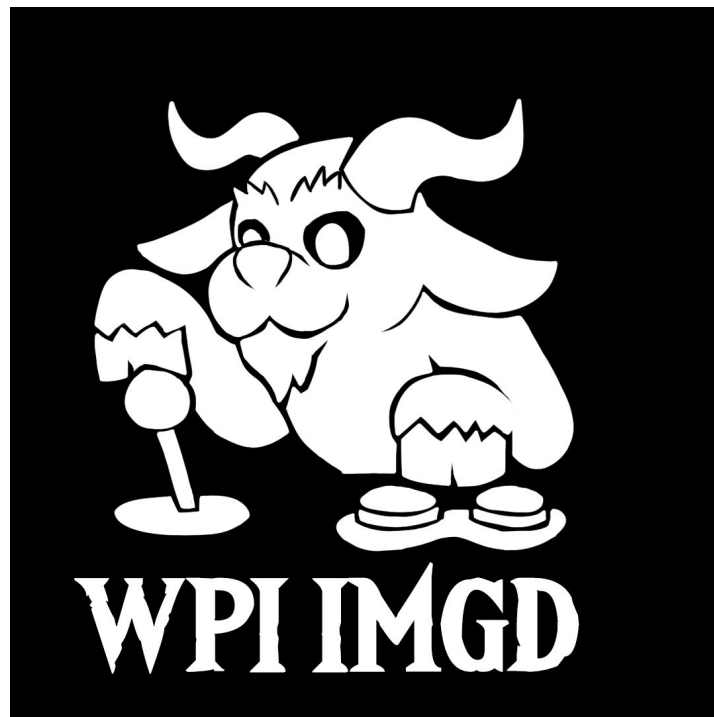One of the third (and final) wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 4.2

One of the third (and final) wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 4.3

One of the third (and final) wave of designs created for the PAX Shirts.

A wide variety of small tweaks were made to designs 3.1-3.3, and 4.1-4.3 were the best combinations of all the changes. 4.1 had a circular text box with a different font, no hearts, and no sword, making the design more unified than it had been previously. 4.2 fixed the goat's nose, gave him a bigger smile and friendlier eyes, and added eyebrows, making him look friendlier and less frightening. The eyebrows, eyes, and smile were also fixed with 4.3, along with the removal of the rays around the head. We narrowed our choices down to 4.1 and 4.2. There were concerns that the fact that the goat was playing a game in 4.2--it might imply the wrong message about the IMGD program, since there is a pervasive and false belief that majoring in game development means going to school and playing games the whole time. The concern lay in the idea that the goat playing games implied that this belief was true. However, we ended up going with 4.2 anyways, because it actually related to video games and because that shirt design translated better to a button, since it had less defined edges.

After selecting a design, we moved on to the second part of the process: colors. While we generally liked the red and white of most WPI merchandise, Enforcers (PAX

volunteers/employees) always have red and white shirts, and people in the past mistook booth volunteers for enforcers. Two years ago, the team used gray shirts, but we wanted something a bit brighter. Our advisor told us we didn't necessarily have to stick with traditional WPI colors, so we spent a day going through a wide variety of color palettes and narrowing it down to our top three choices.

Fig. 5.1

One of the color variations for the final design of the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 5.2

One of the color variations for the final design of the PAX Shirts.

Fig. 5.3

One of the color variations for the final design of the PAX Shirts.

There were some concerns with 5.1 that black and red was too "metal". 5.2, however, didn't contrast very much, and 5.3 didn't have any WPI related colors in it at all. So, we ended up picking the 5.1 as our final shirt design. We also needed the URL for the WPI IMGD site on the back, and instead of just adding the text, we added another small design. Little to no revision was needed for the back.

Fig. 6

The back design for the PAX Shirts.

We needed to get enough shirts for volunteers, and extras for giveaways. After comparing the prices between several shirt retailers, we ended up going with Ooshirts.com. The previous year had utilized this seller, and while they ended up with an error in their design, we were somewhat confident that ours would turn out fine, since our design had less fine details than theirs. Additionally, Ooshirts' shirts were the cheapest, required no minimum order amount, and would let us add a back without much extra charge. We ordered a total of 52 shirts to the tune of $331.19. We purchased 5 Smalls, 20 Mediums, 18 Larges, 6 Extra Larges, 2 Extra Extra Larges, and 1 Triple XL. This distribution of shirt sizes seemed to work out well for us, and we

didn't have any volunteers lacking for shirts, or one size that we had a vast amount of. The next team may potentially need to order more (if they budget for it), since we ended up running out of shirts mid-Saturday. Although the goal is to give away all the shirts, the ideal scenario would involve having shirts to give away every day of the convention. We felt that the difficulty of our giveaway contests was appropriate, and simply having up to five more shirts would constitute an acceptable supply. We made sure to order enough Larges and Extra Larges, since the previous year's team didn't have enough larger shirt sizes. Additionally, those who are a size below Large and Medium shirts can still wear them, though the opposite is not true. Our experience with Ooshirts was positive. Our order arrived with plenty of time to spare, and the shirt designs were all correct. Part of the reason our order arrived with plenty of time to spare was because we ordered the shirts at the beginning of December. We recommend future teams do the same--it gives you one less deadline to worry about as PAX draws near.

After shirts came buttons. We used the same shirt design for buttons, but removed the WPI IMGD letters and just kept the goat. Additionally, we went with traditional WPI red and white for the buttons.

Fig. 7

The design for the PAX buttons.

We didn't feel the need to order a huge amount of buttons, since there were about 1,000 WPI IMGD Space Invader buttons and 1,000 WPI logo buttons left over from last year. We purchased 700 1-inch round buttons featuring this goat design from Speedybuttons. All the buttons looked good, and the service worked well. However, an important thing to note: 1 inch diameter buttons generally aren't big enough. 1½ inch diameter buttons are easier to see without being huge, and should be purchased for next year. Make sure to purchase larger buttons next year so people can see them better. Additionally, over the course of the weekend, we gave out every single variant of button, save about 15 of the WPI logo ones. We recommend the next team order a substantial amount of buttons, lest they run out before the convention ends.

2. Budget Analysis

We had a total of $8,000 for this year allotted to us by the IMGD program. We created a spreadsheet to document all of our spendings, and to keep track of how much we had left over. We asked Allison Darling (the lovely IMGD secretary) to send us the prices of all the transactions she completed for us--many transactions, such as the initial purchase of the booth and the extra exhibitor passes, she handles for us. The cost of purchasing the booth (as well as 500 extra watts of electricity) was $3,800, so we immediately added that to the budget sheet and began estimating from there. We estimated it'd be about $800 total between shirts and buttons. While a bit of a high estimate, we wanted to make sure that we didn't underestimate anything. Then we came to the decision of housing. The previous year's team had used part of the budget to pay for lodgings in the hotel adjacent to the convention center. They had found it to be a bit pricey, but we still wanted to stay in Boston for the duration of the convention, so we decided to go with a different route. Lodgings got booked up fast, but we found an Airbnb right next to Boston Commons, about a 25 minute walk away from the convention center. These lodgings were invaluable to us. Staying close by meant that we got much needed extra sleep, we had a safe place to store our belongings during the day, and anything we forgot would only be a 25 minute walk away instead of an hour drive. The Airbnb was a total of $900 for 5 nights, so we put $450 in the budget for it, and planned to pay for the rest ourselves in case there wasn't

enough money left for the rest. Assessing the budget was key to making better informed financial decisions later, so this was an important part of the preparation process.

Tests & Allies

1. **Booth Design**

   After crossing the threshold and solidifying shirts and buttons, we moved on to the next stage of preparation: designing the layout of the booth itself. Having a good booth design can make all the difference in terms of attendee outreach and overall success. We looked at some past booth ideas, and drew up some layouts. However, it was difficult to come up with ideas on paper, without any visual feedback or scale to go off of. We decided to take a trip to Alden Hall to plan out the layouts. The hall had some tables left over from a previous event, which were invaluable to us for testing out booth layouts. We taped out the size of our booth, a 20' x 10' rectangle, accounting for the foot of space the banner took up along the back side. We set up several different layouts, leaving room for chairs and taking videos of us walking around the area. While the videos weren't entirely helpful after the fact, getting a real idea of what the space would look like was extremely useful. We knew that we wanted 2 or 3 PC games, and possibly 1 VR game. We kept a few important booth design principles in mind while making layouts, and learned a few new ones upon bringing them to our advisor for review.

   - Budget a whole lot of space for VR.
     - Depending on the type of game, VR requires a large amount of room to make sure the player isn't in danger of harming themselves or others. It's important to plan with a designated VR space in mind.
   - Sideways tables are the way to go.
     - To clarify, by sideways we mean perpendicular to the banner. Layouts with perpendicular tables mean that attendees walking by can see the games without their view being blocked by volunteers or other players.
   - Make your swag easily accessible.

- ○ Past years have sometimes struggled to give away all of their merchandise because their swag table was far away from the convention hall aisle, meaning that attendees would have to walk through a gauntlet of volunteers in order to grab a button or two. Having merchandise easily available means people will be much more likely to take it.
- Conserve space as much as possible.
  - ○ Diagonal tables, while cool, don't make a whole lot of sense space-wise. It's key to make sure as much of the area is being used as possible. The booth isn't super big, and volunteers, games, chairs, players, and swag have all got to fit in there somewhere.
- Make the space as open as you can.
  - ○ Volunteers are most useful when they're not behind tables It makes the whole booth seem much more friendly, and it makes it easier for volunteers to grab attendees' attention.

We laid out all of the booth designs from Alden in powerpoint--that program ended up being the easiest, because we could create rectangles and boxes to the correct scale and rotate and duplicate them as we pleased.
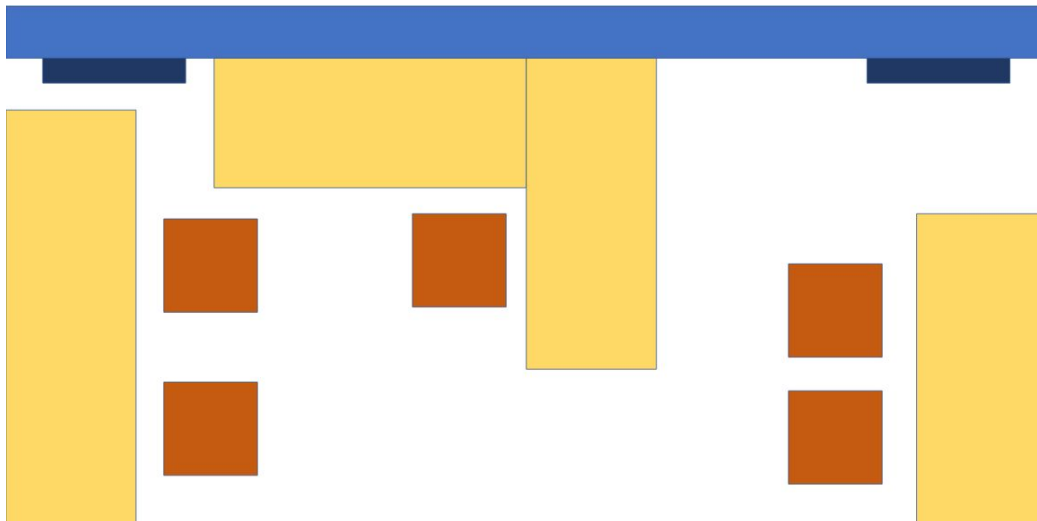

Fig. 8

The final layout for the PAX booth.

Fig. 9

The final layout for the PAX Booth as laid out by chairs, with Jordan and Grant for scale.

Fig. 8 was the booth layout we all liked the most. The tables are represented in yellow, the chairs as orange, the banner as blue, and the monitors as the darker blue. The area to the back right was our VR area, albeit a little small. This setup allowed for potentially five games to be shown at the booth, meaning we could admit a wider range of projects and more volunteers.

2. Selecting Games

We opened submissions to all types of games created by IMGD students--game jam games, personal projects, and MQPs alike. We sent out multiple emails to everyone on the IMGD-Majors alias, announced the submissions at clubs like the Game Development Club Developers, urged project advisors to make their MQPs submit, and more. Despite all this pushing, we only received ten submissions, three of which were from the same person. It was rather frustrating, and we're still somewhat unsure of how we would have gotten more submissions, aside from perhaps asking professors to announce submissions in class. We know that more games existed, but they did not get submitted, for one reason or another. Another notable fact is that no grad students submitted any games, meaning that we did not have a chance

to showcase WPI grad program talent. Despite the low number of submissions, we had a good selection to pick from.

A good game for demoing should meet at least three of the following criteria.

- Easy-to-explain high concept
- Engaging gameplay
- Unique and/or fun tagline
- Visually appealing
- Technologically impressive

The ideal game would meet all of these, but that's arguably not very realistic. Also, ideally there would be a selection of games that cover all of these criteria to some degree. Another important factor is that all games shown at the booth have to have short playtimes. A fifty hour RPG with one hour of opening tutorial wouldn't show very well, since most attendees sit down for about 5-10 minutes.

"Serious" games--games made about social issues or serious topics--sometimes require somewhat different consideration. While serious games are undoubtedly an important part of what WPI has to offer and an important part of games as an art medium, games like this can be difficult to show at conventions like PAX. Their serious nature often means it is difficult to draw players in, and due to the wide range of attendee ages and backgrounds, it may be difficult to pull in a wide range of people to play. Last year's booth had this issue, where two of the games were "serious" games, and thus were difficult to showcase to the general public. Serious games should by no means be ignored, but it is important to keep in mind the difficulties that may come with them. It is also important to get a wide variety of games to draw in as big of an audience as possible. A mixture of casual and action based games is always good.

It's also important to consider the background behind each of game. Game Jams are interesting because they show that WPI students are skilled enough to make fully-fledged games in short amounts of time. MQPs are important because they show what seniors are capable of, and what students can create as part of the WPI curriculum. Independent projects show the passion and drive of WPI students. It's generally good to have at least one MQP as part of the

game lineup to show what is accomplished as part of coursework, but a mixture of all of these types of games is ideal.

Despite the fact that we only had seven games to pick from, we had a nice selection. While we were comfortable with the number of games submitted, teams for the future should consider the option of having a submission deadline later in the year. This may bring in more submissions to choose from, but it will also mean less time to practice with each game, as well as less time for developers to work on their games before PAX. We chose an independent puzzle game about moles making guacamole (that was originally created in a student's own engine), an asymmetric multiplayer VR MQP where the player in VR builds a level and other players play through it, an independent roguelike set in space that was released on Steam the first day of the convention, and a game jam game that was fun and brutally difficult. We weren't initially certain about the VR game--its multiplayer nature meant that we'd have to net several players at once to get it to demo well, and we weren't sure if we'd be able to do so. However, we ended up taking a gamble and going for it anyways.

3. Selecting Volunteers

Now that we had our games, we were left with another issue. Each student whose game was accepted was required to do some shifts at the booth, but that only gave us nine volunteers. Additionally, while we initially made each accepted student promise to be available during all the days of PAX, we didn't want to actually make them work every day. After all, they would have to get to and from Boston every day, and all of them had classes and work to do. After playing around with schedules for a while, we decided that we only needed three people at the booth at a time--two volunteers, and one IQP team member. Operating on two-hour shifts, this meant that, if we brought on three extra volunteers, we would only need them to do two or three 2-hour shifts over the course of all four days. This seemed reasonable to all of us, so we then needed to pick out three extra volunteers. We decided to ask a senior who had submitted a game that we liked, but that didn't quite make the cut. We also knew him personally, and were confident that he would do well showcasing WPI's talent. For the last two volunteers, we wanted to find graduate students, so we would have some chance to show off graduate talent. It was difficult with us to come up with graduate students on our own (the undergraduate and graduate

programs don't often intermix), so we went with the recommendations of two people from our advisor. Once we had those people nailed down, we had a total of twelve volunteers, plenty for our booth.

On top of student volunteers, we had to reach out to professors to ask if they would lend their time to the booth. We approached all of the professors who volunteered last year, and those who might potentially be interested. It's important to make sure professors are part of the volunteer crew, since many who are serious about attending or sending someone to WPI like to see them at the booth and ask questions. Out of the five professors we emailed, two volunteered to do shifts at the booth.

Approach

PAX East was rapidly approaching, and we still had much to do. To add to our struggles, one of our team members would be away for the week preceding PAX. It was time to get in gear and get everything ready.

1. Volunteer Scheduling

We began by sending out a form to all of the volunteers asking that they mark off all the times during the convention that they would be available to do shifts. As we previously mentioned, we had already required them to be available for all days of the convention. However, we believed that it would foster goodwill (and just be nice anyways) to accommodate for their classes and prior commitments if we could. We decided that if we absolutely needed to schedule someone for a time when they weren't available, we would, but that issue never arose. We managed to make a schedule that worked for everyone, and nobody had any complaints. The majority of volunteers ended up doing three 2-hour shifts, two of which were on the same day. No volunteer had to come in for more than two separate days. We also scheduled so that people wouldn't be scheduled for four hours in a row (unless they specifically requested it), because we wanted to make sure people had time for breaks and wouldn't get dehydrated or hungry. We also wanted to make sure that we had a good spread of game representation. We organized the schedule so that two people on the same game team wouldn't be volunteering together, so we

had volunteers from different games at any given time and all of the attention wouldn't be focused on the one game they both knew about. We made the schedule and sent it out, so the volunteers could have access to it the schedule whenever they wanted. As for scheduling professors, we just worked with whatever times they gave us, and put them down as extra volunteers, on top of the student ones we already had

2. Volunteer Orientation

Now came the part where we had to tell volunteers what exactly was expected of them. When we sent out the acceptance email, we picked a date for volunteer orientation (two Saturdays before PAX) and made sure everyone was available for it. The date ended up working well for us, since it meant that the information was still fresh in everyone's minds when PAX rolled around, but it wasn't so late that it was a mad dash. We only had one person who couldn't make it, so we had a separate meeting with him, which went fine. Before the volunteer orientation, we made an FAQ document that had some key questions that we thought the volunteers would have. The questions addressed were as follows:

- What do I wear?
- What do I say?
- What do I do with business cards?
- Where is PAX?
- How do I get there?
- When should I show up for/leave my shift?
- What do I do before/after my shift?
- When will I get my pass?
- Where can I get food?

We printed out physical copies of the FAQ for everyone, and also emailed out a link to the Google Doc of it so that we could update it if necessary. We went over the FAQ during orientation, and volunteers asked questions as they came up. After orientation, we added pertinent clarifications to the Google Doc. During orientation, we also gave each volunteer a shirt, and got everyone's phone numbers. The phone numbers were extremely important, and were invaluable to us during PAX if we needed to get ahold of someone quickly. Additionally,

we put our own phone numbers on the FAQ, so if anyone needed to get ahold of us quickly, they could.

During orientation, we also went over a fact sheet of all the games--their general background, what they looked like, notable information, et cetera. We also emailed out a copy of this fact sheet to all of the volunteers after orientation. Orientation went smoothly, and we recommend to everyone to make a FAQ sheet and have an orientation like this for everyone. We did not have professors at the orientation, because it was on a weekend and we assumed they were too busy. However, they were knowledgeable enough about the program and PAX that we assumed they would have no problems talking about it.

3. **Getting & Testing Game Builds**

All of the games needed to run offline, since we didn't have dependable WiFi at the convention center. However, we also needed computers that ran offline as well, since WPI computers are unable to be logged in unless on WPI WiFi. We gave the lab admin several weeks of advanced notice asking him to get the lab computers working without WiFi, and thankfully he was able to do it without too much of a problem. Once we received the computers from him, it was time to test the game builds.

We had requested each game build be delivered to us by volunteer orientation, and also that each build have a key that resets the game. All of the teams were able to provide, however we do wish we had given them more advanced notice. One team still had debug messages showing up in their game, which they weren't able to take care of until a few days after orientation. However, everything ended up fine upon testing.

4. **The Week Before**

As previously mentioned, the week before, one of our teammates was not present, which was something of a concern. However, everything ended up turning out fine. We had made a list of everything we needed to do before PAX came before their departure, and were able to complete everything without issue. We didn't have any frantic dashes to make, though there were plenty of calm errands. We had to pick up plenty of equipment for the booth, such as granola bars and water--we wanted to make sure everyone stayed hydrated and didn't starve. We needed wet wipes for the VR headset, and a large garbage can for the booth. Additionally, some

nuts and bolts for part of the banner were missing, and as a result, we needed to pick up some new ones from Home Depot. Finally, we decided to use some of the budget on two TVs. Mounted monitors were an important part of the booth, as they were important to making sure people could see our games over the crowd. Previous years had rented monitors, but we decided to outright buy some, since it would overall be cheaper than renting them every year, and they weren't too pricey. So, we picked up the TVs, and then it was time to roll.

The Ordeal

1. Heading off to PAX

We set off to PAX with a van full of tables, boxes, a chest and a slew of other necessary technology. We arrived at the convention hall around 11 AM, and thus began the arduous process of finally unloading and constructing the booth at its final destination. Upon arriving, we found staff members that bestowed upon us a pass that allowed us to use the loading dock behind the convention hall. This pass made unpacking much easier and allowed us to use our setup time more efficiently and effectively, and we recommend that future teams obtain this pass if it is available.

Setting up the booth was a technical and logistical challenge that we hadn't previously considered, as we assumed that there would be enough space to simultaneously set up all of the parts of the booth. Unfortunately, we were mistaken. The most difficult aspect of setup was the banner, as when it is laid down, it takes up the entire space of the booth. The banner's size made maneuvering it difficult, and also made stretching the cloth over the frame a challenge. After setting up the banner in its proper position at the back of the booth, we ensured that our power line looped under the banner so we could hook up our extension cords and equipment. Subsequently, we began setting up the tables, arranging them in the proper layout. At this point, we discovered that we didn't have the proper 3-prong extension cords needed to reach all of the computers and monitors from the main power source at the center of the booth. This would be the start of the "Things We Had to Get From Target" list, the full contents of which are available

in Appendix E, and will be added to frequently in this section. The next step of setup was assembling the monitor stands that would hold the televisions needed display the VR game as well as Pilot Unknown. Setting up the monitor stands was a two-person job, so one of us also began unpacking the PAX chest that we had brought with us. It was during this phase that we

Figure 10

The PAX booth mid setup

discovered second needed addition to Appendix E, a toolkit. The monitors had screws in their backs that required a screwdriver, an implement we lacked. This issue was later remedied by Professor O'Donnell, who brought us a toolkit from his house when he arrived. After the monitor stands were assembled, we began putting the computers and monitors for the games in the correct configuration according to our booth design. Upon completion of that task, we put the tablecloths on the table so that we could judge where to put the keyboards and other peripherals

for the computers. Putting on the tablecloths once again to our infamous Appendix E, as we discovered we required more tablecloths. Additionally, we needed candy, on a recommendation from our advisor to entice people towards our table. The final item for the Appendix came when we realized that showing the VR game required an extra DVI port. As a result, we needed to purchase a converter.

At this point, we decided to take our first trip out of the convention hall to get our first round of supplies from Appendix E. When we returned we were able to successfully mount both of the larger monitors, and as cover all of the tables. After checking off all of the items on our list, we got all of the computers up and running with the new extension cords that we purchased from Target, and tested the functionality all of the computers and cables. After successfully loading up the proper games on each computer, we were then able to set up the pamphlets, candy, and buttons. This marked the end of the set-up day. We ended up finishing at around

10:00 pm.

Figure 11

The PAX both fully setup

2. Running the Booth During PAX

Running the actual booth itself was much more straightforward than many other parts of the IQP by a large factor. The relative ease of running the booth can in part be attributed to our planning beforehand, as well as the schedules we had set up before we arrived at the convention. To distribute passes with maximum efficiency, before each day one of the IQP group members stood outside of the convention hall and handed out exhibitor passes to the volunteers who were arriving for the day. The hour before the exhibit hall was slated to open was the designated pass pickup time, and all volunteers who had a shift on that day (and hadn't picked up their passes) were required to pick up their passes during that time.. This pass pickup system worked well for us, and we had no issues with getting volunteers their passes. As described earlier, our schedule was organized so volunteers and IQP member had 2 hour shifts, and we scheduled around volunteers' prior time commitments. We had no problems with volunteers not showing up for shifts, or being late.

Another aspect of running the booth that was worth noting was understanding of the exhibitor guidelines and general information about the convention. An enforcer was appointed to us and served as a point of communication between the convention and our booth. He was very helpful to us, explaining general setup and takedown rules, and also communicated to us when the convention hall would open and close each day, the general tasks we were expected to do throughout the week (as exhibitors), and more. Our enforcer was great at communicating with us and was a valuable resource that helped make managing the booth go smoothly.

After the first day, setup for all of the following days was extremely simple. We left the computers running overnight to avoid any issues and make setting up in the morning easier. We did shut off all of the monitors before leaving, so in the morning we only had to turn them on and then we were ready to demo. Additionally, we had to make sure that the candy and buttons were topped off and ready to be distributed to anyone who wanted to take some. It's important to note that by the end of the convention, we had given away almost every single button (over 2,000) an paper material (information about frontiers, etc). We can attribute to the ease of access for the buttons as well as the fact that everyone who was working the booth was instructed to give out

the buttons, and to mention that the buttons were free to take for anyone. The take down for each of the days was also very straightforward, as all we had to do was wipe down all of the computers, keyboards, and mice, as well as put the vive away and charge the controllers. This meant that were were out of the convention hall on most days by about 7:30 at the latest, with the convention ending at 6 PM. The take down was also accompanied by the convention hosting all of the exhibitors on the first day to a small treat of drinks and food. This was a trend of the convention doing a lot of things to help the exhibitors, which was mentioned briefly in the previous section with the enforcer as well as other perks that came with the exhibitor passes.

Figure 12

The booth during the convention

As a whole the booth was a fairly popular spot for passerby at the convention to stop by, either to just talk with the workers at the booth about the school, or for a lot of people, simply to

play the awesome games we had at the booth. There was a somewhat large amount of foot traffic through the booth for most of the days, from the aforementioned passerby to alumni, other indie developers, potential employers, as well as prospective students. There were a fair amount of people who stopped by who had heard about the school and wanted to start either a connection with the school, such as a professional esports player who wanted to help with a potential streamers club, plus another who was looking for people to join a company that wanted students to work in while the company was young. Overall the booth did very well and was visited and enjoyed by many people at PAX East.

Figure 13

The booth Saturday Morning, before the hall opened

3. Managing Volunteers

Managing volunteers was much less like herding cats than we were anticipating, and functioned much more like a well oiled-machine. We attribute this to the fact that we had outlined the requirements and expectations well in advance and reiterated them very often throughout the process. Another key aspect was having the schedule be decided by each of the volunteers, meaning that we gave them a google form to fill out for when they wanted their shifts to be. We felt that this was a good way to make sure that the volunteers wouldn't go to their shifts begrudgingly, rather they would feel better about going to something they chose. We also gave the volunteers each a shirt for a few reasons. First it was to give a coherent look for the people who were a part of the booth, and we feel that that came across very well for the image of the booth. The second reason was to make sure that when the volunteers had their shirts on, they would have a "work mode" which we hoped would keep them in a focused mind set during their shifts.

	IQP Person	Volunteer	Volunteer	Professor		IQP Person	Volunteer	Volunteer	Professor
Thursday - March 28					**Saturday - March 30**				
8:30-10	All Booth Crew for initial setup				9-10	Kate			
10-12	Jordan	Henry Stadolnik	Josiah Boucher		10-12	Jordan	Bailey Sostek	Vincent Miller	Ralph Sutter
12-2	Grant	Leo Bunyea	Ed Shaddock	Chery???	12-2	Grant	Josiah Boucher	Aaron Graham	Dean O'Donnell
2-4	Kate	Henry Stadolnik	Josiah Boucher		2-4	Kate	Leo Bunyea	Vincent Miller	
4-6	Jordan	Leo Bunyea	Ed Shaddock		4-6	Jordan	Hannah Jauris	Aaron Graham	
Friday - March 29					**Sunday - March 31**				
9-10	Grant				9-10	Grant			
10-12	Kate	Hannah Jauris	Bailey Sostek		10-12	Kate	Cas Cox	Nate Carter	Dean O'Donnell
12-2	Jordan	Ed Shaddock	John Zhou	Chery???	12-2	Jordan	Vincent Miller	Henry Stadolnik	
2-4	Grant	Hannah Jauris	John Zhou		2-4	Grant	Cas Cox	Nate Carter	
4-6	Kate	Bailey Sostek	Nate Carter		4-6	All Booth Crew for takedown			

Figure 14

Final Draft of Volunteer Schedule

4. Giveaways

We also had a giveaway during the course of the convention, that was primarily focused on the game "I Just Wanna Land". The task that we set the visitors to was to complete the game in a certain amount of time, which changed throughout the convention, based on both the difficulty of the game as well as the amount of shirts we had left. At the beginning of the

convention, the task was to beat the developer time of 72 Seconds. This yielded approximately zero shirts being given away during the first day. We realized that having that as the time limit for people playing the game for the first time was next to impossible, and so decided to change it for the next day. For the second day, we made the challenge to beat the game in under 10 minutes, as we felt that that would be a reasonable time limit for first time players to beat the whole game in. That day we gave out substantially more shirts, and so that remained as the time limit until later in the convention. The last change was down to 5 minutes, as toward the end of the convention we realized that we had a decent amount of shirts left, and decided to not try and keep all of our shirts till the end of the convention.

The success of the giveaway we feel was substantial, as not only did everyone working the booth notice the amount of people that stopped at the booth specifically for the contest, but the amount of people that spent a lot of time trying to complete the challenge. The first day, we had a player spend a half and hour on the game. We also noticed the success of the contest in the amount of shirts that we gave away during the convention. By the beginning of the fourth day, we had about 8 left of the initial about 40 shirts. We would highly recommend doing another giveaway, or even multiple giveaways in any future booths at any conventions.

The Road Back

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1. **Breaking Down the Booth**

   At the end of the 4 days of PAX East, unfortunately it was time to not only take down the booth, but to then get all of the materials back to where they belonged, whether that be the various departments around campus, or the rental hub for the tables. Taking down the booth was much less of a challenge than setting it up for a lot of reasons, the key one being that instead of expansion of materials, we were compressing them. This meant that as the process went on, we had more and more space to work with. The first tasks in the process of taking down all of the materials of the booth was to start unplugging everything that we could, which was a very cathartic experience, as there were more than a few plugs that had given us trouble in the past. After that was then putting away the Vive materials, as they were the least connected part of the booth as a whole. That involved putting away the controllers, the headset, as well as the stands that the mounted boxes go on.

   Next came the more mechanical take down section, which involved both unplugging the televisions and taking the mounts off of the back, but also unplugging all of the monitors and computers and stacking them all of a singular table. This was to facilitate the take down of our rented tables as well as the start of the backing banner and monitor stands for the booth. Taking down the monitor stands and the banner were much easier than setting them up, as we now had gravity on our side as well as both of them reducing in size as we take them down rather than increasing in size. Finally packing up the chest itself was much simpler, since a lot of the materials we took with us we had given out, such the buttons and reading materials. We also had used an entire pallet of water bottles and had much more room to store things in the chest because of the space the water bottles took up. Finally we wrapped up the packing up process and begun taking all of the various materials out to the car, which we had managed to park close to the nearest entrance.

   Taking the materials back to the places that we originally acquired them was a multi-day process. First was bringing the individual suitcases for all of the IQP team members and then

storing the other materials in the car overnight. The next day we first stopped off at the WPI marketing and returned the banner and the 2 monitor stand boxes. Then we stopped by the IMGD department offices to return the PAX chest and other materials that we had borrowed from various professors. For the second to last stop we stopped at the IMGD offices in Fueller labs to drop off both the PAX chest as well as the computers and monitors. Our last stop on the grand returning trip was a stop at the rental company for the tables, and with that the car was cleared out and the PAX East was complete.

2. Remaining Tasks

The only tasks that remained after returning all the materials are a few select tasks that have more to do with the administrative and academic side of the project rather than the actual physical task of running a booth. First off is the paper that you, dear reader are currently enjoying. Second is to present the project at various functions that the administration wants the project to have visibility in. We have already presented at an accepted students day for prospective IMGD students coming to visit the school. We were able to talk in depth about our experience throughout the year and how it fulfilled our IQP requirement. We first explained what an IQP was, before diving into the months of preparation leading up to the convention. In our presentation, we summarized that the key things we took away from the project were preparation, communication, and good team work. We feel that the presentation went very well, and that we established that the IMGD experience at WPI is not limited to just making games.

Return with the Elixir

Post Mortem

Metrics for Success

   We had a few metrics for success that we decided would best convey the success of our booth, which are as follows;

1. Amount of paper materials given out
2. The amount of positive conversations and remarks about the booth and the school
3. Amount of buttons given out
4. Amount of alumni who stopped by the booth

  On all of the above criteria, we believe that the booth this year exceeded in all of the metrics that we had, as throughout the four days of PAX, we observed all of these metrics in great amounts. In reference to the first and third metrics listed above, we can use hard evidence to say exactly how many of each of those we handed out throughout the 4 days of PAX. For the buttons we had about 2,500 in total of the three types of buttons combined, and by the end of the 4 days we had about a half dozen of the buttons left. In terms of the paper materials we had about 10 of the fliers left after giving out the rest. From those two metrics we already have a picture of how much of a net we casted on visitors to PAX this year, as well as had many people sporting the pins and t-shirts. In regards to the other two metrics, we had a lot of qualitative and anecdotal evidence that supports those two metrics, from not only the fact that we had many alumni stop by, but also in regards to the other metrics. When we look at the amount of exposure and materials we gave out, we can also infer that there was an overall positive view of the booth and the games we presented.

Things We Did Right

  There were many things that we did right, not only from advice that we got from prior years, but also in the amount of thought and planning that we put into the project. There are a

few key aspects that as a group we did correct, and they fall into 3 main categories; volunteer planning, physical preparation, and communications.

In terms of volunteer planning, we not only had a large amount of communication between our team and the volunteers, but we were also extremely clear on what was expected of them before, during, and after PAX. Another aspect of volunteer communication that we did well was to have a physical meeting before PAX during which we answered questions, explained what the goals for the booth were, as well as gave them their shirts. This not only made sure that there was no plausible deniability for volunteers not knowing the information, but also helped to create more of a team atmosphere so that the volunteers felt more invested in making sure the booth went well. This resulted in the only problems with volunteers being people who either got ill or had another unforeseen situation unfold. This helped with the project immensely overall, as having a dedicated and awesome group of volunteers to assist with the booth is a massive help in the long run.

The second category was physical preparation, another area that we excelled at. Physical preparation in this case refers to acquiring all of the physical materials for the booth itself. Not only were most of the materials ready at least a week before the convention, but we had practiced setting up the banner and stands for the televisions beforehand as well. The computers that the games were run on were also setup in that time frame and ready to be taken to the convention. All of this side of the preparation for convention had a huge impact on the setup when we arrived at the convention, as we had already known how everything was set-up and how to do so efficiently, which saved a lot of time and energy on that day.

The final category that we excelled at was communication. Throughout this paper there have been many examples of the communications that we had with various groups and people that allowed us to execute the booth as successfully as we did. Not only did we communicate with the volunteers and faculty of WPI, but we also had communications with the table rental places and the PAX staff to make sure we were ready for the convention. During the convention we also had an active group text message so that if people needed extra hands at the booth they were available. Using all of these communication methods helped us not only to plan properly, but also to be able to adapt to problems whenever they arose.

Interviews with Indie Developers

While at PAX East, each team member conducted two interviews with different developers who were showcasing their games at PAX. We were looking to hear from these developers what made them decide to come to PAX. What were their goals in coming to PAX? Is this their first time bringing this game or any game to a convention? What were things they wish they had known about conventions before coming? We ultimately wanted to gauge how valuable convention experience was to developers, and if it was something they would view as a benefit in a hiring process.

Interview 1: Mowin and Throwin

This interview was with Marc Mixon from House Pixel Games. The studio brought their game Mowin and Throwin, which had been in development for almost two years. Marc and the studio had a lot of experience at other conventions. This was the fifth time that they had come to PAX East. In his experience, Marc considered it crucial for developers to have some kind of concrete goal when coming to PAX, whether that be getting convention-goers to sign up for a mailing list or to generate media coverage for their game.

Interview 2: Boyfriend Dungeon

Boyfriend Dungeon by Kitfox Games has been in development for about a year and a half, and the devs traveled to PAX from Montreal, Canada. It was not their first time bringing the game to a convention, and was in fact the third time they had done so. In terms of things that people should know for going to a convention, comfortable shoes, pacing yourself, having enough business cards, as well as having an auto resetting demos were all important. The devs also said that having convention experience was a plus when hiring new people for the studio. Finally, the best part of PAX According to the dev was the amount of people that attend PAX.

Interview 3: Everspace

Everspace by Rockfish Games is a game that has been in development for about 4 years, and has been fully released. The team had traveled all the way

from Germany to be at PAX, and it was their first time at PAX East. Having been in the same studio for a while they had gone to many conventions before and were well prepared for PAX East, with having a plan, being well informed about the schedule, as well as having very good walking shoes. The member of the team that was interviewed said that having convention experience was a plus for the hiring process as it showed a skillset that is very important. The most important valuable aspect of PAX for the team was the amount of people that attend, which is a huge market for the game to be shown to and hopefully sold to.

Interview 4: Miasma Caves

This interview was with Adam Michaan of Windy Games. Adam and his team had been working on Miasma Caves for the past three years. Each of those years they had brought the game to PAX East. Some of the most valuable experience they gained from conventions in the past was the idea of rotating shifts of volunteers so no one had to stay at a booth for too long. To Adam, the biggest benefit of bringing their game to PAX was being able to directly interact with players and see reactions to gameply, especially before there was any sort of public release or alpha for the game. Adam would definitely consider convention experience as a valuable skill in a potential hire, especially as a tiebreaker between two qualified candidates.

Interview 5: Evergate

Evergate is a game developed by the indie company Stone Lantern Games. The game has been in production for about 2 ½ - 3 years. Stone Lantern Games is a company local to Boston, so local that they were able to carry their booth materials to the convention center via public transit. This was their second year at PAX, as they were part of the Indie Megabooth last year.. Cynthia Lu was kind enough to offer some insight on what made a PAX booth valuable to them. She said that PAX was a good way to be present and part of the game development community. Additionally, it's great to get a game "out there" and have fresh sets of eyes on it for good playtesting feedback. She said that overall, all of the conventions they've shown at were valuable experiences.

Interview 6: Tiny Metal Full Metal Rumble

Tiny Metal: Full Metal Rumble has been in production for a year and a half. The dev team is based in Japan, and the marketing team is based in LA. The marketing team was the group in charge of the booth, with a total of about 20 people. Their first convention experience was at PAX West. Eric Chi said that PAX East is an important convention to attend so that they can get the name of the game out there. Eric also said that running a booth is a helpful skill to know, especially for those who want to go into game marketing. Additionally, Eric told us not to underestimate the impact that promotional items can have on the success of a PAX booth, and to make sure that volunteers have ample time to rest.
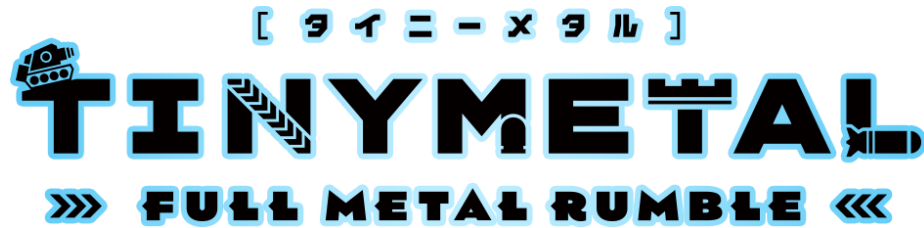
The Resurrection

Advice For Future IQPS

There are a few things that future PAX East IQPs should know and those things are:

- Plan very far in advance, to the point it becomes obscene how early the planning is happening.
- Practice everything that you can practice beforehand. Talking about the games, setting up the booth, doesn't matter, just practice it.
- Double check everything at least four times, so a total of 8 checks.
- Power cords that match all of the equipment are always important to check, as are the input cords for all of the computers.
- A tool kit is a must, as well as a checklist well before the convention so nothing is forgotten.
- Consolidate everything that the group is bringing to the convention, and to make sure that it fits in whatever transportation the project group is taking to the convention.
- Set the expectations for the volunteers and disseminate the volunteer information very early in the process so no one is surprised when the convention arrives and so that everyone is prepared well ahead of time.
- Finally, a key thing to remember as a general guide to running any convention booth is that preparing beforehand is best, but having backup plans can save a lot of time and energy instead of scrambling for a new idea to get something working.

Conclusion

When we reflect on this project as whole, there are a few key areas that are vital to understanding the importance and relevance of the project. Chiefly is the importance for students to gain an understanding on part of what helps smaller game studios and games get off the ground, which is face to face marketing through conventions and meeting with potential customers and connections. When a smaller studio or school goes to PAX East or a similar convention, the amount of attention that is achieved is unrivaled through most other forms of marketing and networking, simply because having faces behind the product is more valuable than any type of marketing without them. Not only did we have many people take materials as accepted students or potential student, but they also expressed genuine interest in both the school and games themselves from a more personal standpoint. The second main benefit of PAX East is actually for the groups of students that run the booth, as having experience showing games and attending the convention as exhibitors is a huge benefit to anyone trying to get into the game industry. It's important not only because of the exposure to the industry itself but because having people who are well versed in running a booth and interacting with people is a skill that companies will want for anyone joining the industry. This is because no matter what type of games or part of the industry the company is in, marketing directly to people and connecting with them on a personal level will always be a huge goal. Through this project we not only gained the skills necessary to run the booth and interact with everyone who came by the booth, we also gained organizational skills to be able to plan and execute a project of this size.

Appendix A - PAX Chest Contents (as of November 2018)

- 2 bags of buttons, one WPI one with the old IQP emblem, each labeled 1000
- Pax 2018 showbook
- 5 austom full sized headphones, 3 with extension cables, 3.5 mm, black
- 1 phaint headphones black 3.5mm
- 3 small table clothes black, 2 big one smaller
- Larger ones are 7x5
- Smaller one is 5.10x4.5
- 6 blue tipped hdmi cables, 6ft
- 2 Ethernet cords, 1 blue 1 gray
- Blue is ~10 ft
- Gray is ~15fti
- ¾ a roll of paper towels
- 5 white power strips
-     2 of which are surge protectors
- 4 small hand sanitizer bottles
- 2 large hand sanitizer bottles
- 2 tent stake looking things
- 1 bottle of suave moisturizer
- 1 large roll of trash bags
- 2 smaller box of trash bags
- 2 hex wrench multi tool things
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 bag of napkins
- 1 cup thing
- 1 cylinder of disinfecting wipes
- 1 6ft VGA cable
- 1 6ft cable that we don't know
- 1 crate of water bottles
- 6 extension cords
- ~ 6ft each
- 1 power cord for a monitor
- 1 larger tissue box
- 2 2016 PAX show books
- 2 picture frames, freestanding, black

- 5 of those clear plastic paper holder things
- 2017 PAX east show book

The inventory of the PAX chest laid out as of November 2018.

Appendix B - Past Shirt Designs

The 2017 WPI PAX East Booth Shirt Design

The 2018 WPI PAX East Booth Shirt Design

Appendix C - Important Emails & Final Budget Spreadsheet

Hey IMGD Majors!

We're the WPI PAX East Booth team, and we're on the lookout for some fun and funky games to bring to PAX East this year! That's right, your game could be on the showfloor of the biggest gaming convention on the eastern seaboard, and you get a FREE pass to PAX East!

Nice! When is the deadline?
The deadline for submitting games is approaching--submissions close on January 25th, 2019, the third week of C term.

Sounds neat! How do I submit?
We need to see a two minute gameplay video from you. To be clear, we're NOT asking for a trailer. We want to see how your game plays on a minute-to-minute basis, so raw footage. We also want a short paragraph detailing the genre and basic gameplay elements of your game. All games are welcome, from game jam games to passion projects to MQPs. The game does not need to be finished, and you do not need to give us an executable--but if it's a work in progress, we do need it to be finished by the time PAX East rolls around. Also, you need to list the names of all the team members involved in making the game. Send all of this to gr-wpi-booth-team@wpi.edu!

What happens if I get accepted?
You and your teammates need to be available during PAX East (March 28th - 31st) to help out at the booth and show off your game. You won't have to be there for every single day, but we do need AT LEAST ONE team member available each day. And did we mention that you get a FREE PASS to PAX East?

You also need to be available on Saturday, March 16th to practice showcasing your game with the rest of the exhibitors.

We'll send out a final email calling for any last minute submissions before the deadline. Make sure you submit by the end of the day Friday!

If you've got any questions, email gr-wpi-booth-team@wpi.edu.

Cheers,
The WPI PAX East Booth Team 2018

The 2019 Call for Games (we accidentally signed as the 2018 booth team).

Good Afternoon!

Please find the link to the PAX East Exhibitor Manual below. You can refer to the exhibitor manual for any logistical questions -- move in, move out, shipping, etc. Also, this is where you will be able to order furnishings and utilities to your booth. Please note that 10x30's and smaller include a table, 2 chairs, and 500 watts of electricity. **You must fill out the free booth package form and send it to Freeman if this pertains to you. If you don't, the booth package will not be free, and the line items listed will not be delivered.**

Link: **https://www.freemanco.com/store/show/landing.jsp?nav=02&review=true&showID=480778**

Please let me know if you have any questions!

Cheers,

Zach Schaefer
ReedPOP
PAX Account Executive
O: 203-840-5399
C: 203-945-9755
zschaefer@reedexpo.com

The email containing the list of PAX East Equipment that came with the table.

Hello everyone!

We hope you're excited for PAX East! It's in two days! Heck yeah!

You were all at volunteer orientation (or an equivalent of that) so you should all have your shirts, and a copy of the FAQ. We've got some important other documents for you to peruse.

GAME INFO (Including controls and reset keys): http://bit.ly/pax2019gameinfo

VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE: http://bit.ly/pax2019volunteerschedule

FAQ: http://bit.ly/pax2019volunteerfaq

We will have the control sheets at the booth, so you don't need to have them memorized.

Some reminders of the most important stuff on the FAQ:
- Wear your WPI IMGD shirts we gave you to your shift.
- We will be outside the convention center 9-10am every day. On or before the day that you have your first shift, come to pick up your badges from there.
- Our numbers are on the FAQ. Text us if you need anything.
- Show up 10 minutes early to your shift without bags or jackets.
- Stay hydrated and be sure to eat well and get some sleep!

If there are any problems with the schedule, email us a gr-wpi-booth-team@wpi.edu ASAP! It is very close to the event so we can't guarantee any last minute changes, but there might be something we can do. Thanks again so much for helping us out! If you have any questions for us, please be sure to let us know.

Cheers & Thanks,
The WPI PAX East Booth Team

An email sent to the booth volunteers close to PAX.

Total Left	$550.8
Housing	$450.2
Shirts	$331.2
Buttons	$157.3
Booth	$3,925.0
Transportation	$25.0
Exhibitor Badges	$1,625.0
Tablecloths	$25.5
Parking	$120.0
Housing 2	$450.0
TVs	$210.0
Target	$77.0
Price Chopper	$28.0

The budget spreadsheet once PAX was over.

Appendix D - Volunteer Information

PAX East 2019 Volunteer Availability

Form description

What's your name? *

Short answer text

On the following questions, check the boxes of all of your available times to volunteer for the booth on that day. You will have to be on time for all of your shifts, so keep travel time in mind. We won't require you to be present for every single time you check off, we just want to try and accommodate for your schedule if possible. Thanks!

Description (optional)

Availability on Thursday, March 28th

- [ ] 10:00am - 12:00pm
- [ ] 12:00pm - 2:00pm
- [ ] 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- [ ] 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Availability on Friday, March 29th

- [ ] 10:00am - 12:00pm
- [ ] 12:00pm - 2:00pm
- [ ] 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- [ ] 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Availability on Saturday, March 30th

- [ ] 10:00am - 12:00pm
- [ ] 12:00pm - 2:00pm
- [ ] 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- [ ] 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Availability on Sunday, March 31st

- [ ] 10:00am - 12:00pm
- [ ] 12:00pm - 2:00pm
- [ ] 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- [ ] 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Is there anything important you need us to know?

Long answer text

Volunteer availability form.

PAX East 2019 Volunteer FAQ

What do I wear?

Your volunteer shirt! If you have shifts on multiple days and your shirt starts to smell/look not so great, wear a different WPI shirt. Specifically WPI stuff--not any shirts that promote an organization at WPI. Superfans are good though. Once your shift is over, you're free to change out of your WPI shirt and into something else. While you're working the booth, though, it's WPI apparel. We will be giving you the shirts in advance of PAX, please do not wear them until the actual PAX days to keep them clean. While wearing the shirt during your shift, the shirt should be visible both front and back. If you're planning to wear another shirt in addition, wear the booth shirt above it.

What do I say?

Talk about WPI! How much you like it, how awesome our game program is! Talk about how cool the games are! Note: As much as you yourself may be cool, your primary goal is not to promote yourself or your game alone while you're at the booth. You're here to show how cool WPI is as a whole and make us look good to the world at large!

What's the deal with business cards?

You can put them next to your game, if you want. But please don't hand them out to people stopping by the booth unless they specifically ask for one. Once you're not working the booth, you can hand out business cards to whoever you want.

Where is PAX?

415 Summer Street in Boston. That's the Boston Convention and Exhibit Center.

How do I get there?

If you have a car, you can drive there! If you don't, you can head on down to Union Station and take the train in to South Station. South station is only a 10-15 minute walk away from the convention center.

For more information on the train station and the train schedule, check here.

When should I show up for/leave my shift?

Please arrive for your shift 10 minutes before it officially begins. This guarantees that nobody will be left high and dry waiting for you on the off chance that you're late. Don't leave your shift until the next person is there to relieve you or until one of the Booth Lords (Grant Ferguson, Jordan Cattelona, and Kate Olguin) says it's okay.

What do I do before/after my shift?

Whatever you want! So long as you show up on time, you can go to whatever panels, booths, and events your heart desires. Don't go back to Worcester until after your last shift of the day is over, though.

What if I have a problem during my shift?

One of us booth people (Grant Ferguson, Jordan Cattelona, and Kate Olguin) should be at the booth at all times, so any questions or issues can be given to us! In the impossible chance that none of us will be at the booth, we'll be sure that you're able to contact us.

Where do I put my bag/coat?

We won't have room for it at the booth, so please go to coat check and drop it off there. Or, find some other way to store your stuff. Again: please don't bring it to the booth. Loose bags and coats look unprofessional, and we want to look nice!

When will I get my pass?

The PAX IQP Team will be standing outside of the convention center before each day, from 9-10, and you will find us and receive the badges there every day either you work or are planning on attending.

Where can I acquire sustenance (food)?

While the convention hall does have a food court, it's pretty pricey. Outside of PAX are several food trucks, so if you're not afraid of getting experimental, that stuff is nice and tasty. If you're looking to eat as cheaply as possible, there's fast food in South Station, though that is a bit of a walk away.

Do not expect to be able to download things during PAX, so please download the PAX app beforehand, as well as any other apps or tech you might need.

I have a question that's not addressed on here!

Alright! Email gr-wpi-booth-team@wpi.edu and we'll get back to you as soon as possible!

Help!!!! I have something super urgent I need to tell you!!!!
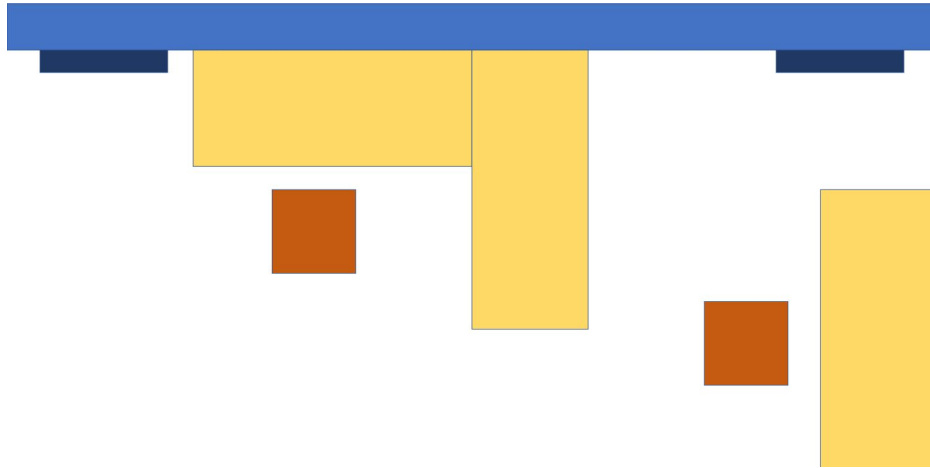
Here are our phone numbers. Text or call us if you need us!

Kate Olguin: 860-916-2958
Grant Ferguson: 908-616-5977
Jordan Cattelona: 201-819-7988

Thank you very much for helping us!
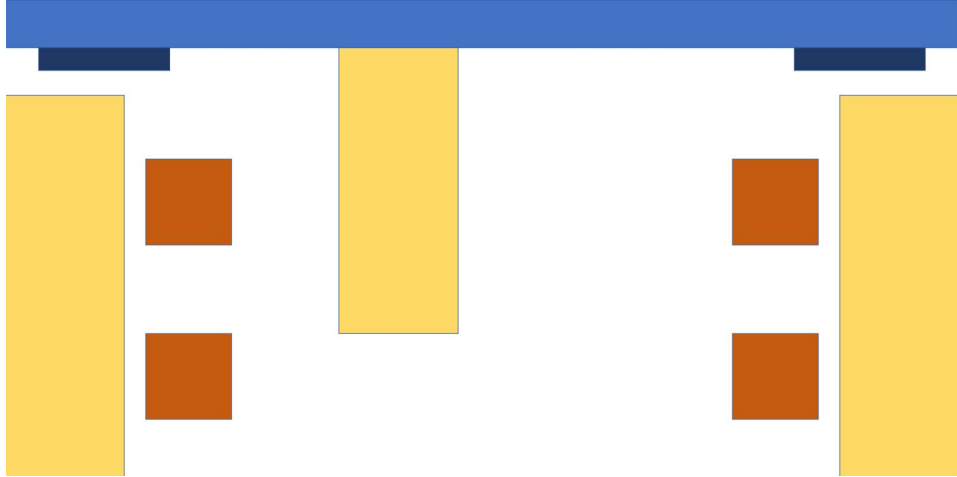
The PAX East Volunteer FAQ.

Appendix E - Booth Designs

Design 1 overhead Powerpoint layout. We ended up using a modified version of this layout.
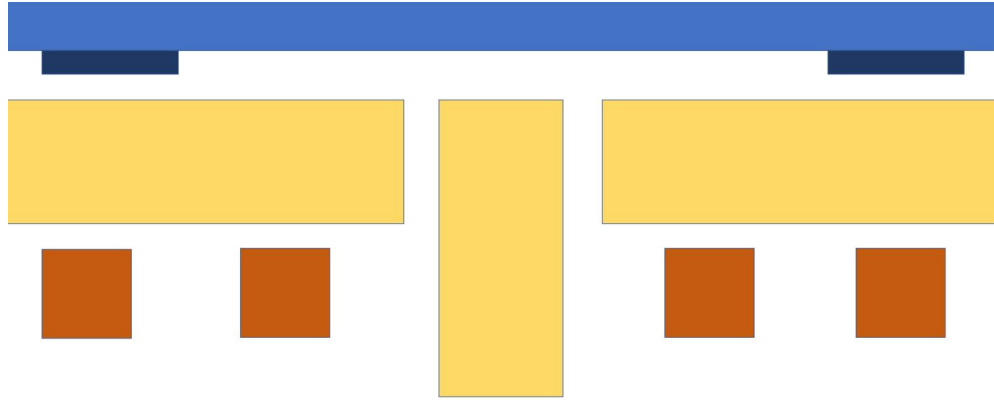

Design 1 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.
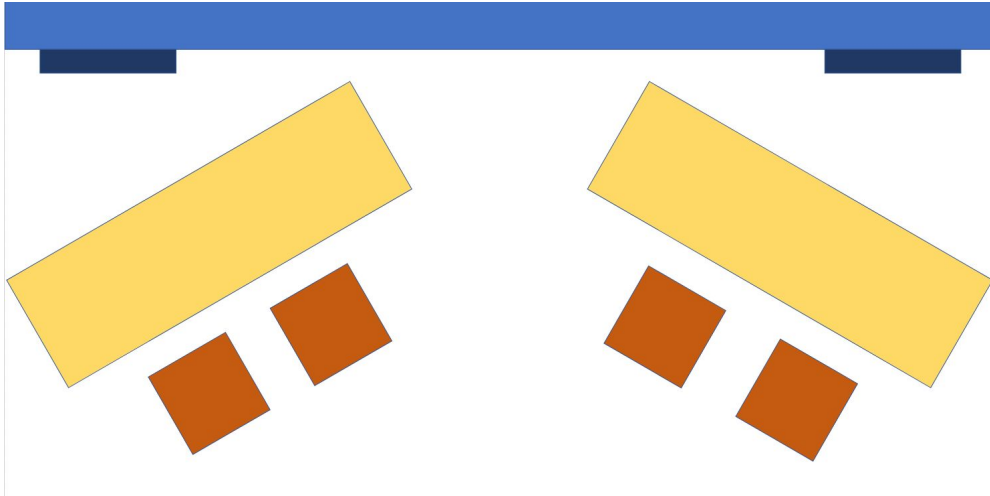
Design 2 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 2 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.
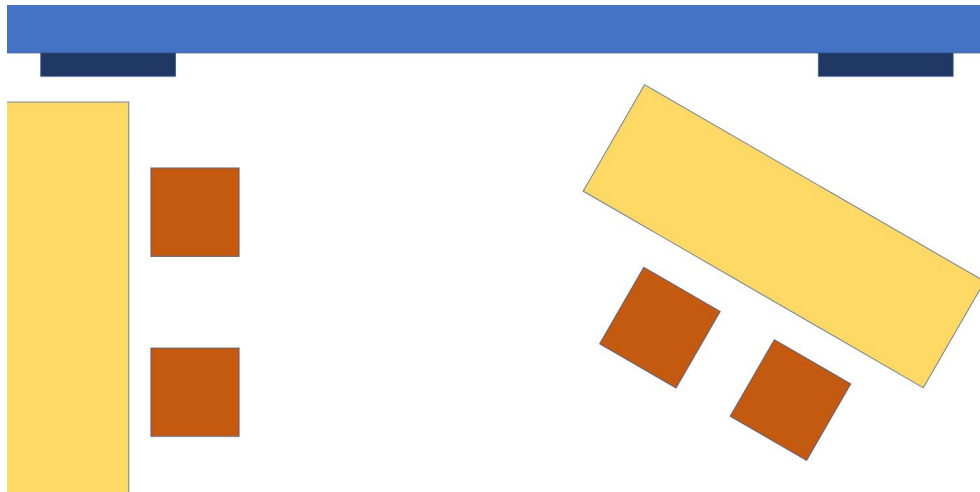
Design 3 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 3 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.
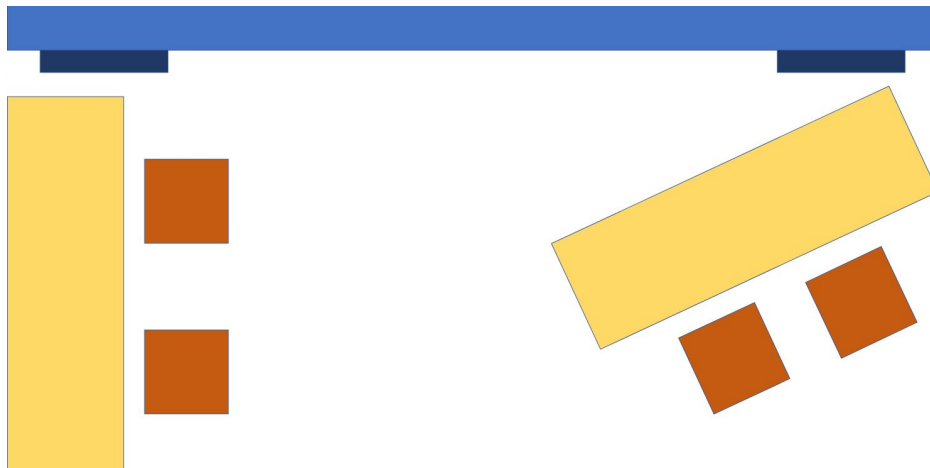
Design 4 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 4 reconstructed to scale in Alden.

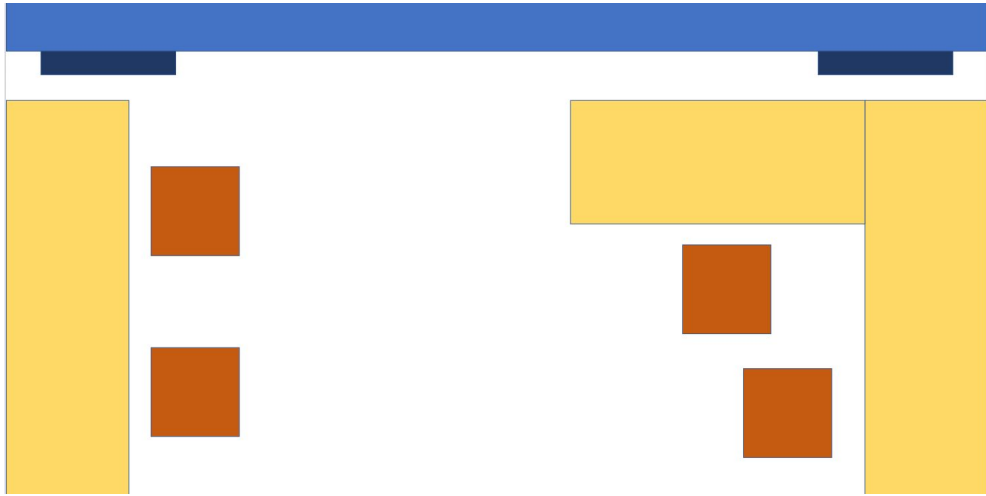
Design 5 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 5 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.

Design 6 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 6 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.

Design 7 overhead Powerpoint layout.

Design 7 layout reconstructed to scale in Alden.

Appendix F - Things That We Had To Get From Target

1. 3 - Prong Extension cords.
2. ~~Toolbox~~
3. Tablecloths
4. Candy + Bowls
5. DVI converter

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