Why I make Games

I make video games for very few reasons, but incredibly impactful ones. When I was younger, I always loved playing video games, they were my main connection with my brothers, and my main connection with my friends. They gave us things to do, to talk about, and to experience together. I even enjoyed just watching my brothers play single player games when I didn't really want to. And at this young age the creation of video games began to interest me as well. I was introduced to scratch by my elementary school, a simple game creation website made to get kids or beginners interested in coding, and immediately started to make projects. I had a couple scratch accounts throughout the years and would make many games and animations, most of them rough or unfinished but still very fun for me to make. My friends, who also loved video games, would make games with me and it would be so fun to play each other's games and projects. I would make multiplayer games that I could play with my family. Even though the games weren't good, it sparked a strong interest in coding and desire to make games in the future. At this point in my life, I had already decided on the idea that if everything went right, I would be a video game developer.

As my life progressed, moving into middle school, I wanted to take all the coding electives I could. It was there that I would further develop this interest into the creation of video games. The computer science class I took became my favorite, because I had it during the first period, I would be excited to go to school. I would meet and bond with my current closest friends in those classes. And in these classes are where I began to enjoy the process of coding and actually making the games. Prior to taking these classes, I had only really used scratch, which isn't actual coding, so I didn't really understand how coding really worked. But as I learned more I found it to be really enjoyable. I enjoyed the problem solving and sequencing that were required in coding. While getting bugs was annoying, figuring them out and solving them felt even more satisfying. And after doing all the work to make the project, just sitting down and playing it became all the more fun. All in all, my time coding and making games in middle school would lead me to want to make them out of sheer enjoyment of the process.

In high school, I would probably have the most significant and least significant experience in my coding journey. This is because they probably had the most impact on my future in game development but overall I did not do very much coding or game making throughout them.In my four years I had been pretty unsure about what I wanted to do in the future. Making video games had always been the ideal but it definitely wasn't set in stone. I kept my options open and explored other things I was interested in. However this wasn’t because I didn't want to make games, quite the opposite. I was scared. I felt like I was not a very good coder, I was not a very good artist, and I would not be able to be successful with a career in game development. But I still wanted to have some experience with coding in high school, so I took AP Computer Science. And unsurprisingly, I really enjoyed the class. It was the most complex coding I had done before but it was still fairly basic and gave me the room to create projects and games that I had a lot of fun with. Additionally, I’ve found the most inspiration for making games in high school. There have been so many video games I’ve played that have inspired me deeply. Whether it be indie games like Rain World, Astlibra, and Deltarune, or massive multiplayer games like League of Legends, Deadlock, and Roblox, I’ve gotten so much inspiration from the games I’ve played. Additionally, There have been many gamedev creators

like JuniperDev and Brainless who have shown me what it's like to make games and made it look fun and interesting. All of this inspiration culminated in my decision near the end of the year that I wanted to be a game developer in the future.

This came with the looming tidal wave that is college applications in which I wanted to decide on what major I would be applying for. After I made this decision I wanted to do more things with coding and the first one that occurred to me was the Game Makers ToolKit gamejam, a gamejam hosted by a youtube creator of the same name coming up in the summer. For those who don't know, a game jam is a game-making “competition” in which participants are given a time limit and a theme for the game they must make. For this competition, we were given 4 days and a theme of “Count Down”. I had procrastinated learning the godot engine that I would use to make my game, so I ended up spending much of the challenge watching tutorials and figuring out how to even do anything. But still, this was an incredibly fun experience, and gave me the chance to have creative control over an entire game, all the coding, art, and even one soundtrack. My final game was called "Don't Let the Count Down!!!” and involved you playing as a knight for a useless count who was losing all his money to invaders. You as the knight needed to catch the invaders to recover some of the stolen money with the amount of invaders and money lost increasing over time. I consider video games to be a form of art, and in this game I was able to express some of my opinions towards the ultra-wealthy by displaying the count as lazy and unappealing. After the project, while I was upset with the quality of my game, I was very proud of the work I put into making it. This was the most direct game-making experience I have ever had and further confirmed my desire to make games. Throughout my high school years, I developed an interest in expression through videogames and the many art forms that are present within it.

Nowadays, with AI becoming so intertwined with coding and vibecoding, or coding entirely or mostly using prompts to a generative AI chatbot, shooting up in popularity, I have to ask myself why I even want to code or make games when the barrier to entry is so low. I think I’ve come to 3 reasons why I still want to make games in the current time we live in. They are because I simply enjoy making and playing them, I want to be able to express an idea or myself in my own unique way, and I want to connect and share connections through my games. And although I believe vibecoding removes lots of creative control when it comes to making games, it is likely that I will end up using AI frequently within my coding work. While using AI, I think it's important to note that even within code, using it strips some creativity from the process and thus the final product. With this in mind, I hope to maintain my taste and know when and when not to use AI in the process of my coding. With my taste, passion, coding ability, and creativity, I hope to be able to create or work on incredible games in the future.