It’s

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R·I·T

magic.rit.edu
Overview

• What is MAGIC?
• Who is MAGIC?
• Why is MAGIC?
• ... and so can you!
MAGIC Lab
R & D Lab
Non-Profit
Multi-Disciplinary
Cross-Disciplinary

MAGIC Spell Studios
Production Studio
3rd-Party Publisher
Commercial Business
Work for Hire

University-Wide
Reports to VP Research
What does MAGIC do?
Make stuff!
Learn to make
Make to learn
Project-Centered
Experiential
Learning Outcomes
The Big Round Room
View from Above
Things to Come

Up and running:

- Academic programs in:
  - New Media (BS & BFA)
  - Game Design & Development (BS & MS)
  - Film, Video & Animation (BS & MFA)
  - 3D Graphics, Design, others...
  - MAGIC Lab on Campus

In Development:

- Studio on campus
  - Easy student access
  - Studio downtown
  - Easy client access

On RIT Campus:

- Film, Video & Animation (Academic Program)
- Game Design & Development (Academic Program)
- MAGIC Production Studio Facility (NEW FACILITY)
- RIT MAGIC Center (Research & Development)

Rochester Downtown Area:

- MAGIC Studio Incubator (NEW RENNOVATION)
- New Studios and regional businesses
40 Franklin Street

Former Rochester Savings Bank (1927)
Donated to RIT
Center for Urban Entrepreneurship
Currently rehabbing
Who is MAGIC?
Faculty
Faculty Affiliates

• Academic Units
  – Interactive Games & Media (Computing)
  – Design (Imaging Arts & Sciences)
  – Performing Arts & Visual Culture (Liberal Arts)
  – Communications (Liberal Arts)
  – English (Liberal Arts)
  – Information Sciences & Technology (Computing)
  – Computer Science (Computing)
  – Philosophy (Liberal Arts)
  – Economics (Business)
  – Art (Imaging Arts and Sciences)
Faculty Affiliates

- Faculty can formally affiliate with MAGIC
  - Give scholarly activity
  - Get administrative support
  - Get opportunities

- Affiliation agreement (on magic.rit.edu)
  - Spells out how activities fit into plan of work
  - Spells out the money: course buyouts, overhead split
  - Signed by MAGIC Director, unit head, Dean
Students

• Affiliate through a project
  – Play a role on a team
  – From all over campus

• Compensation options
  – Paid coop
  – Paid part-time work
  – Course credit
  – Grad capstones
  – Portfolio material
External Partners

- Red Hat
- NMC
- Adobe
- GLS
- Second Avenue
- Research Connections
- Microsoft
- Values@Play
- Stormfrog
- Darkwind Media
- Tiltfactor
- 1P
- The Strong
- Metadata Games
- Workinman
Initiatives

Mobile Zone
AT THE RIT MAGIC CENTER

Access & Collaboration Technology @ MAGIC

MAGIC ACT

Lab for Social Computing
AT THE RIT MAGIC CENTER

Museum Games and Tech Initiative
AT THE RIT MAGIC CENTER

Games & Learning
AT THE RIT MAGIC CENTER

Media Arts Games
Interaction
Creativity
Some Projects

- Dash Engine
- qlt
- Chain Gang Chase
- Blocky Talky
- R-Point
- Memento
- Just Press Play
- Magic
Bosch Project
Bosch Project

• Play in *The Garden of Earthly Delights*
  – Hieronymus Bosch, circa 1500
  – “Serious game in a strange garden”
• Prototype focuses on the Hell panel
  – Narrative: Quests, puzzles, NPC interaction
  – Mechanics: Explore, loot, consume, gamble
  – Implementation: Unity 3D, Oculus Rift support
• Big team in spring semester
  – Faculty from 5 academic units
  – Students from 3 classes + individuals
• Seeking funding for whole game
So why did we create MAGIC?

- Latest step in a series of moves to realize our vision and preserve our culture
- Facilitate/support/promote multi- and cross-disciplinary media projects/activities
- Break down silos
- Address scholarship issues
- Address promotion and tenure issues
- Bend academia to fit digital media
Chronology

1992  -  IT Program starts (multimedia is a core area)
1999  -  New Media programs start (BFA, 2 BSs)
2006  -  MS Game Design & Development starts
2007  -  BS Game Design & Development starts
2008  -  Reflection & discovery (NMID + GDD -> IGM)
2009  -  IGM splits from IT within Informatics School
2011  -  IGM becomes independent School
2013  -  MAGIC established at university level
Media Projects

• Unite broad spectrum of skills, ideas, approaches
• Mash up disparate disciplinary cultures
  – Inherently multi- & cross-disciplinary
  – Inherently collaborative
• Usually target a non-academic audience
• Innovation in a context, not stand-alone
• Don’t fit neatly into “semester X 25 students”
Silo-fication

- Everybody complains about silos: “Break down the silos!”
- But the silos persist. Why?
- University structures (colleges, departments, programs)
- Another reason: Tenure!
- Tenure isn’t bad; process defeats innovation & creativity
  - “I have to play it safe for tenure.”
  - “I have to establish a solid, traditional funding stream.”
  - “I have to publish in highly weighted journals.”
  - “I can’t take a chance that my research won't count.”
  - “Basically, I can't afford to innovate.”
  - “Maybe after I get tenure ...”
Traditional Scholarship

• Emphasis on the paper over the thing
  – Peer review
  – Prestige of publication (journal rank, weight)

• Emphasis on depth instead of breadth
  – Focused, sustained research effort in existing domain
  – Closed, self-serving communities: narrow world view

• Myth of the lone creator
  – Emphasis on single-author publications
  – Emphasis on lead author
Traditional Scholarship

• Collaboration is punished
  – Collaborative papers are seen as weaker
  – Your contribution must stand on its own

• Leads to
  – Competition Between instead of
  – Collaboration With

• Joint appointments: Kiss of death
  – Become two full-time jobs
  – Instead of both, you’re neither
Digital Media Scholarship
At odds with traditional academic model

• We can provide the thing itself
  – Not just a description (papers about it).
  – The work stands on its own, regardless of papers.

• The bottom line:
  – Did it connect and engage?
  – Did it move the needle anywhere?
  – Does it matter to anyone?

• What was its impact?
Dissemination Issues

• Instead of providing “enough information on the project to allow the reader to replicate it”, I can just provide the thing itself as a digital artifact.
• In fact, I can provide my whole lab for you,
• but I won’t,
• because actually, I don't want you to replicate it.
• Just provide enough details to get it published, not enough to give it away
• Academic IP vs. open-source
Peer Review

• Who are the peers?
  – Do they get what you do?
  – Qualifications vs. Credentials
  – Live in traditional academic pigeon holes?

• Broaden peers to include non-academics
  – Users/players/audiences/customers/clients/partners
  – Reviews in all venues, not just academic
  – Blogs, social networking, buzz, ...
  – Downloads, plays, views, adoptions
IGM Promotion & Tenure

• IGM P & T document
  – Mandated by RIT President
  – Negotiated by Provost, Dean, IGM Director & IGM senior faculty
  – Hammered out January-June 2013

• **ABSTRACT:** This document provides concrete guidance for evaluating faculty in the Rochester Institute of Technology’s School of Interactive Games & Media (IGM). Because of the rapid pace of innovation in electronic formats and digital media, this list must remain partial, since it is impossible to predict what new recognition mechanisms may be relevant a few years from now. Rather, the forms and descriptions listed below are intended to inform reviewers about both current modes and forms of production, as well as to provide a general tenor that guides reviewers in considering new and emerging practices.

  - *magic.rit.edu* -> Documentation
President on Board
Getting Buy-in

• Administrators can set an innovative tone at the top
• ... but all administrators in the chain need to buy in
• ... and tenure committees need to buy in
• ... and faculty mentors need to buy in
• ... and colleagues need to buy in
• ... and you need to buy in
• ... and that’s not easy!
Administrator Life

• Administrators put in untenable positions
  – Have to follow arcane policies and procedures
  – Have to please the lawyers
  – Have to justify decisions with data

• Leads to “objective” assessments
  – h-index, page rank, impact factor, cited half-life, etc.
  – Usually fail to accurately characterize work
  – Especially with media types
What’s Next?

• Where does IGM belong?
  – Not in College of Computing (where it is)
  – Not in College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
  – Not in College of Liberal Arts
  – Not in any other college
  – Not on its own (yet?)

• Able to spin off MAGIC because it isn’t an “academic unit”
... and so can you!?

• Does any of this resonate with anybody?
• What’s your life like at your institution?
• What’s good?
• What’s not so good?
• What have you tried?
• What are you planning?
• What keeps you from what you want to do?
• What keeps you awake at night?