

Yadu Rajiv

Game & UX Designer, Developer and Educator

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I design interactions and experiences for entertainment and education. My practice is driven by my need to experiment and push the boundaries of my medium, and to create new and interesting experiences. I am an instinct driven designer who applies artistry and skill to solve problems and use data to measure, correct and iterate. I love to tell stories through play and games are my medium of choice. I have about 20 years of experience in Game Development, Teaching and User Experience Design.

Proficient in: Game Design & Development, User Experience Design, User Interface Design, Interaction design, UX Research, Visual Storytelling, Programming, Graphic design and Web Design.

And Tools/libs such as: Unity, GameMaker Studio, Construct, Figma, Photoshop, Illustrator, SFML, SDL, Cocos2Dx, Flixel

And Languages such as: C#, JavaScript, C++, ActionScript

Summary of Work Experience

- Chief Creative Officer, Second Quest
- Lead Game Designer, PlaySimple Games Pvt Ltd, September 2021 - Present
- Lead Game Designer, BYJU'S - Think and Learn Pvt Ltd
- Faculty, Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Senior User Experience Designer, redBus.in
- UX & Technology Lead, Hashstash Studios
- Creative Engineer - UX & UI Designer, OSSCube
- Faculty, Arena Animation Academy
- Faculty, Aptech Global Learning Solutions

Work Experience in Detail

Chief Creative Officer, Second Quest Pvt Ltd, September 2024 - Present

As Chief Creative Officer at Second Quest, I lead the vision, direction, and execution of creative strategies for our game development projects. Responsible for shaping the overall narrative, design, and aesthetic goals of the studio, I collaborate closely with various teams to ensure the creative integrity and innovation of all studio endeavors. I oversee concept development, brand identity, and creative processes to bring our unique ideas to life, guiding the studio's journey from inception to eventual game releases.

Co-Founder, Gamedev India, 2009 - Present

GameDev India stands as the nation's largest and oldest game developer community. Our mission is to empower Indian game creators by providing a platform for showcasing their work and fostering a sustainable industry ecosystem.

Lead Game Designer, PlaySimple Games Pvt Ltd, September 2021 - 2024

At PlaySimple Games, I work as a lead game designer responsible for all the designers in the New Games Group (NGG). The new games group is a small group of artists, designers, developers, product managers, producers and QA which build, test the waters and validate, and scale new games and initiatives for the company.

In short, my focus with games at NGG is primarily around building ideas, prototyping, rallying the team around them and getting them excited, testing them, validating product-market fit and getting them to scale.

I am currently leading design for TileMatch and previously the lead on Jigsaw and Destination Solitaire. Besides these, I also help in refining the economy, progression systems, meta, quests, events, UX and UI of the games at large.

I am also responsible for team management; providing feedback and mentorship to other members of the larger design organisation as well as help out with other active projects when needed.

- Games with PSG
 - **Tile Match - Triple puzzle game** - Tile Match is a mix of match 3 and Mahjong. The objective for the player is to clear the board by matching 3 tiles with matching symbols to clear the board without filling up your rack which can only hold 7 tiles at a time. My initial duties were to write the MVP specs, mechanics and flows. Prototype core and possible future mechanics. Level generation, tuning and balancing. Coming up with new and interesting features that fit the light meta as well as constantly figuring out the content pipeline and level editor functionality.
 - MVP

- 0 to 1
- Comp Deconstructs
- Flows, UI/UX
- Level Creation/Edits/Tuning
- Boosters and Powerups - design and prototyping
- Obstacle/Hazard - design and prototyping
- Seed based Level generation and prototyping
- Daily Challenge
- New Features
- Scaling
- Play here - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=in.playsimple.triple.tile.matchgame.pair.three.puzzle.object.royale>
- **Jigsaw** - Jigsaw is the digital version of the traditional jigsaw puzzle game, where player's piece together an image puzzle. The twist here is that you have video puzzles too. My primary focus has been designing new features, quality of life improvements, UI and UX design ideas and changes, content analysis, curation and delivery to name a few. Some of my work was focused around:
 - Comp Deconstructs
 - Content Analysis, Curation and Delivery
 - Flows, UI/UX
 - New Features
 - Scaling
 - Play here - https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=in.playsimple.jigsaw_puzzle
- **Destination Solitaire** - Destination Solitaire is a tripeaks game where player's need to match cards one higher or lower in value with a house card to clear the board. My work on DS primarily revolved around, creating an algorithm and prototyping the content and level generation for the game. After the core work was done, my focus turned to tuning, economy and new features. Some of my work was focused around:
 - Comp Deconstructs
 - Level Creation/Edits/Tuning
 - Obstacle/Hazard - design and prototyping
 - Boosters and Powerups - design and prototyping
 - Events
 - Quest Center - Daily and Lifetime quests design and management
 - Economy tuning - store, sale, watch to earn etc
 - Flows, UI/UX
 - Challenge Train - a feature where the player gets a large set of cards and have to play through 5 consecutive levels without losing
 - Revamped Energy system
 - Seed based Level generation and prototyping
 - Rule based content delivery system
 - Play here - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=in.tripeaks.solitaire>

Lead Game Designer, BYJU'S - Think and Learn Pvt Ltd, February 2020 - September 2021

At my role at Byju's, I build phygital learning games for Osmo, a specialised box product offering from Byju's for the US market. My role focuses on creating engaging and entertaining game concepts around the Osmo platform for young children under 10. The games are a mix of education, skill building and fun. One of the design constraints is to work around the common core standards and curriculum.

I have designed child-friendly puzzle and mini games, dynamic learning systems, stores, reward systems and more. I have designed and built digital prototypes for game ideas, iteratively tested with multiple stakeholders to see it through to production. I have also designed intuitive hardware solutions to be implemented as phygital games.

I am also responsible for team management; providing feedback and mentorship to other senior and junior members of the design team as well as help out with other active projects.

- Creating rich, deep and meaningful educational experiences on the Osmo - playosmo.com platform for children under 10yo.
- Designing Phygital (Physical+Digital) games for the Osmo platform - playosmo.com
- Defining the game's core loop that engages the player through meaningful mechanics and at the same time facilitate learning objectives.
- Create and provide game concepts that incorporate both fun and the learning vision established by the curriculum and standards.
- Create, test and lead prototype projects evaluating game concepts quickly in collaboration with developers, artists and learning designers.
- Create documents and facilitate communication and cross-department interactions between game design, engineering, art, user experience, QA, audio, 3rd party vendors and others.
- Contribute to hardware cost-optimization and key product objectives discussions.
- Analyse and act on key results from playtests, analytics and customer feedback
- Support, nurture and mentor designers so that they can grow into leadership roles
- Games with Osmo/Byjus
 - **Math Wizard (Wyverndell Express)** - I was the primary designer on Wyverndell Express responsible for the core gameplay mechanics, interaction and user interface elements (like the wheel input etc), store and economy design, lore, character design and more. I also prototyped a system that dynamically generated questions which were converted to synthesised speech, that was later implemented in the final game.
 - **Zeta's Lab (unreleased)** - The game used a special hardware as its input. I was brought on as a Lead Designer to oversee the design aspects of Zeta's lab working with designers who were already on the project. My responsibilities included getting the game ready for play testing, planning for a stable post alpha release.

Visiting Faculty, National Institute of Design, February 2016 - November 2023

- Teaching Game Design and Development modules for Digital Game Design at NID Bangalore R&D Campus
- Mentorship in projects
- Jury Member

Faculty, Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology, February 2015 - February 2020

- Game Design and Development
- User Experience and Information Design
- Apart from teaching, I help mentor students, create courses, develop syllabi, interface with clients, organise and manage exhibitions, webinars and conferences.
- Organised India's first Independent games festival - Indie Game Shindig - indiegameshindig.com, Dec 2015

Senior User Experience Designer, redBus.in, April 2014 - February 2015

During my time at redBus, I worked as a Senior UX Designer there working with a small team under a design head. My work primarily focused on the redBus.in website. I worked closely with product and marketing to work on improving existing features and adding new features as well as the day to day upkeep of the website; also collaborating with the marketing team to push create collaterals for the website as well as mailers and other promotions.

I also worked with the product team on a B2B solution focusing on analytics for Travel/Bus operators. I worked with the product team to design new features, flows and led a team of two designers to implement these features.

- Designing the UX for redBus.in web experience
 - Ticketing flows
 - Search results flows
 - Wallet flows
 - Transaction flows
 - Review flows
 - Mobile landing page
- Designing the UX and developing the frontend for B-2-B analytics platform - redBus Plus
 - Visual design and branding
 - Work with product to design and implement features
 - Designed a visual language and a component system for developers
 - Data flows
 - Communication and Messaging flows
- Working closely with the marketing team to create and deploy a seamless experience through all marketing campaigns.
 - Designed over 100 marketing collaterals for the marketing team
 - Designed many marketing mailers and collaterals

UX & Technology Lead, Hashstash Studios (Now MyHashstash) 2011 - 2014

- Co-Founded Hashstash in 2011
- Designed and developed the Award winning game, Circulets (Most Innovative Game at Casual Connect Asia 2013, Best Casual Game - 3rd Place & Most Innovative Game & App categories, 6th BestAppEver Awards 2013).
- Re-designed, developed and created art for Zap the Knight.
- Worked as a designer and developer on various third party projects.
- Tenure at Hashstash was broken in July as I joined to study in NID R&D campus, Bangalore.

- Games with Hashstash
 - Circulets (2013)
 - Zap the Knight (2011)

Creative Engineer - UX & UI Designer, OSSCube, April 2009 - July 2010

- Led a team of designers and worked closely with the development team and clients on web UI & UX.
- Dug deep and got hands-on experience with Drupal theme design and development.
- Played a key role in creating designs for the web and for print.
- Took a key role in open source related community building activities.
- OSSCamp with OSSCube
- Helped organise many open source related meetups and events

Faculty, Arena Animation Academy, October 2007 - March 2009

- Trained students on advanced graphic design, web design and animation techniques.
- Created my own teaching material - both literature and code/work samples where necessary to help my classroom work.
- Taught Photoshop, Illustrator, CorelDraw, Dreamweaver, Flash, ActionScript, HTML, CSS & JavaScript
- Groups of students ranged from complete novices to 'tech-gurus', providing challenges at every turn

Faculty, Aptech Global Learning Solutions, July 2006 - February 2007

- Trained Students on web design, animation & advertising.
- Groups of students were foreign nationals aged between 20 to 45
- Taught Photoshop, Illustrator, CorelDraw, Dreamweaver, Flash, ActionScript, HTML, CSS
- The program was called the ITEC/SCAAP Program, sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs

Education

- Master of Design (M.Des) in Design for Digital Experience, National Institute of Design (NID)
- BA in English Language and Literature, St Alberts College, Kochi, Kerala

Skills, Applications & Programming Languages

- Game Design & Development, User Experience Design, User Interface Design, Interaction design, UX Research, Visual Storytelling, Graphic design and Web Design.
- Familiar with: C++, C#, Javascript, AS3 and more
- Game Development: Unity, Gamemaker Studio, Cocos2Dx, SFML, Starling, HaxeFlixel
- Design & Print: Adobe Creative Cloud/Creative Suite, Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign

Publications by

- Developing Turn-Based Multiplayer Games with GameMaker Studio 2 and NodeJS - Apress, 2018
- How to Learn Flixel - tutspplus.com, Mar 2013

- 5 Tools to Develop AAA Games - Linux For You, Feb 2010.
- Getting Started with Game Development - Linux For You, Dec 2009.

Publications/Interviews with

- Online Gaming Is Pretend – But the Harassment In-Game Isn't, The Swaddle, Nov 2023
- Gamescapes: Art in The World of Video Game Design - STIR delves into the elements that make video games a form of art, a medium that engages the audience in immersive experiences through visually exceptional storytelling. Gamescapes: Are video games contemporary art, too? - The first in the series of eight stories examines video games as a formal media in the purview of contemporary art. Interview/Conversations, STIR, 2020

Conferences and Awards

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - Where does the Indian games industry stand on DEI when compared to global standards?, Moderator, IGDC, 2024
- WTF Community Masterclasses – On Game Jams, Speaker, WTFxIGDC Jam, 2024
- WTF Community Masterclasses – Code to make a Game, Host, WTFxIGDC Jam, 2024
- The Garden of Forking Paths - Tales from alternate realities, Speaker, IGDC Dev Days, 2024
- Brewing in Kerala for the World, Moderator, IGDC Dev Days, 2024
- Learn by Doing - Empowering yourself to be Independent, Design Track, Speaker, IGDC 2022
- Featured in POC in Play #SAHMGames100 list as part of South Asian Heritage Month, 2021
- Putting India On The Global Map - IGX Creators Summit, Moderator, 2021
- Hand-made Game Scenes – The GAIA symposium, Speaker, 2021
- Games Industry Biz Top 100 Game Changers, 2020
- IGDA Next Gen Leaders 2020, GDC 2020
- Jam Jam Festival, Keynote Speaker, Helsinki 2019
- Game Design Education, Panel, NGDC 2017
- Tales from Game Designers: Things we learned the hard way, Panel Moderator, NGDC 2017
- Evil Game Design Challenge, Speaker, NGDC 2016
- Caveman Game Design Challenge, Workshop, NGDC 2016
- Entanglement, a play of Art and Science for Science Gallery Bengaluru, at ITBIZ and Serendipity Art Festival (2016)
- Reality Check: Ground Realities of Being Indie, Panel, NGDC 2013
- Using Open Source for Game Development, Speaker, India Game Developer Summit 2010

Other Independent Work

Gamedev.in - Gamedev.in is a community forum, chat and a place for meaningful conversations on game design, art, development and more.

More about the project here - <https://gamedev.in>

Mini Loops - is a small pack of 5 seconds long music loops ready to be used anywhere, mostly though in games. It is under development. The pack will eventually contain 100 high quality wav and ogg files that can be looped.

More about the project here - <https://yadu.itch.io/mini-loops>

Developing Turn-Based Multiplayer Games with GameMaker Studio 2 and NodeJS - is a book I wrote and was published by Apress in 2018. The book is an introduction to GameMaker Studio 2 as well as NodeJS and building turn-based games using these technologies.

More about the project here - <https://yadurajiv.com>

Rhizome - was one of the installations as part of the Entanglement: A Dance between Art & Science - at the Serendipity Arts Festival in Goa 2016. The Entanglement was curated by the Centre for Experimental Media and Arts - CEMA which is part of Srishti Institute of Art Design and Technology and in collaboration with Science Gallery International.

More about Rhizome here - bit.ly/yadu_rhizome

Peasy - is a simple and free tool that generates polygonal hulls from transparent png images.

More about Peasy - yadu.itch.io/peasy

Trivial Engine - is a simple 2D game engine for desktop written in c++ and SFML

More about Trivial Engine - <https://yadurajiv.com/2011/11/07/trivial-engine/>

More of my work and projects can be found on my website/blog - yadurajiv.com

Professional Associations (Current)

- Global Game Jam, Board, 2025 - Present
- GGJ Next Advisory Committee Member, 2025 - Present
- IndiaGDC, Council Member, 2022 – Present
- NID R & D Campus Bangalore, Visiting faculty, Mentor and Jury Member, 2016 - Present
- Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Visiting faculty, Jury Member, 2020 - Present

Past Professional Associations (Past)

- WAVES Game Jam Jury and Mentor, 2025
- Global Game Jam, Executive Committee Member, 2021 - 2025
- Gamedev.in, Founder, Volunteer, 2009 - 2025
 - Runs the BYOG, Discord, Podcast, Blog, Steam Curator, People's page, Directory and more
- Build Your Own Game, Game jam with Gamedev.in/NGDC/IGDC - BYOG - Founder, Organiser, 2010 - 2025
- WTFxIGDC Game Jam, Host, July 2024
- Coordinator for the Media Game Jam - Goethe-Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan Kolkata, Dec 2023
- Global Game Jam Bangalore, Organiser, 2013 - 2022
- NASSCOM/IGDC, Volunteer, 2011 - 2022
- IGDC - Student Game of the Year, Jury Member, 2022
- Indie Game Shindig - <https://indiegameshindig.com/> - India's first Independent games festival with Srishti Institute of Art Design and Technology, Organiser, 2015

- IGDA Bangalore Chapter, Founder, Volunteer, 2011 - 2018
- Game Jams with Swissnex India
- OSSCamp with OSSCube

More work

Projects and Blog - yadurajiv.com

Dribbble - dribbble.com/yadu

GitHub - github.com/yadurajiv

Games on Itch.io - yadu.itch.io

Games portfolio video 2011-2018 - <http://bit.ly/yadu-2011-2018>