Students Launch Audiball, an Xbox Community Game

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Most students like to play video games, but Georgia Tech students Holden Link, Cory Johnson and Ian Guthridge have built and are selling their own. Their game, Audiball, was launched during the first week of Xbox Community Games in November.

The game uses either the Guitar Hero or Rock Band guitar controllers to create tunes and move balls from one target to another and eventually to a goal. The player uses the colored fret buttons to pick which target to shoot the balls from. The more goals scored, the more the tune changes. The player shoots multiple balls at once to score combo points, which changes the tune even more. As the player progresses, the levels get trickier with some levels using gravity to pull down the balls and others having multiple ball launchers and moving obstacles.

The three students came up with the idea when they were freshmen while attending the Game Developer's Conference, courtesy of the Georgia Tech Honors Program Student Challenge Fund, last February. They decided that they really wanted to make something that used the guitar controller in a different way.

"There are more than four million people who have an Xbox 360 and a guitar controller and there's only one type of game you can play using that. So, what we did was require the guitar controller to be used in a completely different scheme, so if people try to play it like Guitar Hero they don't do very well," said Link.

They began working on their idea and by March they had an initial build of the game. As they were continuing to make progress on it, Microsoft announced the launch of a community games section to allow game designers to create games for the New Xbox Experience. The new service would launch in November. The students immediately began planning to offer their game on the new service.

Link came up with the concept of the game and created the music and art. Guthridge designed the levels and did some programming, while Johnson was the lead programmer.

"We knew the theory of creating the game. We knew the algorithms, we knew how to code, we knew about object-oriented design. We knew all these things from books and projects we'd done before, but it's very different when you implement a project to this scale," said Johnson.

While creating the game, they decided to create a company that they call Indiecisive Games, thanks to the difficulty they had in selecting a name as well as their love of the indie spirit.

Now they're in the very early stages of developing their next game, which will be bigger in scope than Audiball - details to come.

Audiball can be purchased in the Xbox Community Games site on Xbox Live for 200 Microsoft points, or $2.50. Link and Johnson are studying computational media, a joint degree program between Georgia Tech's Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts and the College of Computing. Guthridge is studying computer science in the College of Computing.

On the web: Indiecisive Games: www.indiecisivegames.com/

Provided by Georgia Institute of Technology