

J.J. Abrams, 'Infinity Blade' maker join forces for new game

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In this Sept. 10, 2013 file photo, Donald Mustard, CEO of Epic Games, speaks on stage during the introduction of the new iPhone 5s in Cupertino, Calif. The developers of the hit "Infinity Blade" mobile game series are joining forces with J.J. Abrams and his Bad Robot production company for their next game. Chair Entertainment is working with the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" filmmaker on the colorful new espionage game "Spyjinx." (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez, File)

Two years ago, when the creator of the hit mobile game series "Infinity Blade" joked at the latest iPhone unveiling that the device would boast "lens flares that would make J.J. Abrams proud," Chair Entertainment co-founder Donald Mustard was actually making an inside reference to his top-secret collaboration with the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" filmmaker.

Abrams' Bad Robot production company and Chair have been clandestinely working in tandem since 2013 on a colorful espionage game for PC and mobile devices titled "Spyjinx."

The partnership came about because Abrams and his children were fans of Chair's games like the side-scroller "Shadow Complex" and sword fighting simulator "Infinity Blade," while the developers at Chair were admirers of Abrams' film and TV projects. With a release set for 2016, Mustard said they're now ready to start talking about the partnership out in the open.

"When we build our games, we work very closely together as a team," said Mustard. "J.J. and all the other awesome people at Bad Robot quickly folded into that process. We all sat down with a blank slate and basically said, 'We can build anything. What do we want to build?' It went from there."

For the team at Bad Robot, the opportunity meant diving deeper into interactive entertainment after releasing the quirky special effects app "Action Movie FX" and working with Valve on a new mode for the multiplayer shooter game "Team Fortress 2."

"We really wanted to expand into this area of entertainment," Abrams said in a video posted Wednesday by Chair. "Typically, Hollywood and games have not gone together well. There are some notable exceptions but not too many, and so we met these amazing people at Chair—not

just as fans but as potential collaborators."



This 2014 photo provided by Epic Games shows, director J.J. Abrams, Bad Robot's David Baronoff, and ChAIR co-Founders Donald Mustard and Geremy Mustard discussing ideas for the "Spyjinx" video game, expected to debut in 2016. The developers of the hit "Infinity Blade" mobile game series are joining forces with J.J. Abrams and his Bad Robot production company for their next game. Chair Entertainment is working with the "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" filmmaker on the colorful new espionage game "Spyjinx." (Epic Games via AP)

Instead of leaning on pre-established Hollywood franchises like "Star Trek" or "Mission Impossible," Bad Robot and Chair, a subsidiary of Epic Games, opted to start from scratch with an all-new title combining several different game types.

"It's all about you creating an elite team of agents that can covertly reach

or retrieve anything, anywhere, anytime while also building your secret, glamorous lair," said Mustard. "It's a blend of action real-time strategy wrapped up in dynamic world building but with a deep role-playing character development system set in this really bright, colorful world that's full of thieves, assassins and con-artists."

Mustard said the teams have mostly been collaborating electronically by video conferencing and sharing files. When they need face time, the Santa Monica, Calif., offices of Bad Robot are just a short flight from Chair's Salt Lake City, Utah, headquarters. Mustard noted that despite his commitment to "Force Awakens," Abrams has been actively involved in the game's development.

"J.J. is very much a gamer," said Mustard. "It's not just lip service. When he was still in the middle of filming 'Star Wars' last year, he would call me up with suggestions for 'Spyjinx.' He understands the core tenants of game design. I think he sees there's a very viable form of entertainment that is interactive. J.J. loves telling stories, and this is another avenue for him to tell awesome stories."

Despite his willingness to discuss "Spyjinx," Mustard isn't prepared to show off the game just yet or confirm if it will indeed feature Abrams' signature lighting embellishment: the lens flare.

More information: www.spyjinx.com

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