

Saving the Game: Preserving a Museum Collection of Independent Video Games

Fred Garrett, Dylan Holmes, Chris Pierce

Background

- In November 2014, Seattle's EMP Museum launched "Indie Game Revolution," an exhibit on independent video games.
- The EMP Museum wanted to learn how to best house digital-native games in their permanent collection.
- In Summer 2015, project member Dylan Holmes interviewed game developers, academics, and museologists to determine what elements of the games most needed preservation. For Capstone, we shifted from research to implementation: actually archiving the games!



Final Product

30 Games Archived
15 Developers Interviewed
35 hours of footage recorded (so far!)



Process

1. Recorded a playthrough of each game
2. Created a **catalog record**, using a custom metadata schema based on the UW GAMER Group's Video Game Metadata Schema.
3. Conducted 1+ **oral history interviews** with the game's developer(s) (when possible)
4. **Archived** DRM-free versions of the game files along with associated ephemera.
5. Put all of the above in a single archival package!



Future Hopes and Goals

Possible future of the collection includes:

- Reuse in future EMP Museum exhibits
- Resource for game scholars (and UW students!)
- Archiving indie video game history for future generations

Workflow Process

1. Metadata design

2. Interview rubric

3. Logistical contacts and planning

4. Determining recording constraints

5. Recording

6. Interviewing

7. Cataloging the game

8. Collecting ephemera

Archiving game files and the associated items for game package