

Conan Reis

Senior Mad Computer Scientist & Game Designer

Summary

I am an enthusiastic, easygoing and responsible practical-optimist with eighteen years of video-game industry experience. I have been described as a talented software engineer and team leader with an eye for detail, a fine sense of craft and an ability to "get it done." I am a driven, passionate designer who constantly challenges himself and leads by example. I work ceaselessly to improve my projects and my team – all the while never losing focus on the big picture and the company at large.

I build teams that are fun to be a part of, invent tools and code that quickly become indispensable, and create content that is imaginative and fun. I have shipped products for Microsoft Windows, Xbox 360, Sony PlayStation 2 & 3, Nintendo Wii & GameCube, and Sega Genesis.

Specialties

- AI and gameplay mechanics guru
 - Leader, team-builder, mentor and company-wide standards setter.
 - Expert at the rare art/masochistic ritual of creating game-scripting languages
 - Skilled high-level game designer and low-level software architecture designer
 - Experienced at all development areas: game engine, script languages, 3D game editors, networked communications, asset pipeline, graphics, sound, UI et cetera, and also leadership, management, production, marketing and business aspects
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Experience

President, Chief Mad Computer Scientist at Agog Labs

June 2004 - Present (6 years 10 months)

[Consulting and R&D] I divide time between short-term contracts and developing the tech, tricks and ideas I have accumulated – creating tools, libraries and game-building kits for future projects.

I created the SkookumScript programming language optimized for games, missions and AI – combining the best features of my earlier languages and the hard won experience gained over the years. [See more information at www.SkookumScript.com]

Scripting Technology Lead, Mad Computer Scientist at United Front Games

March 2008 - February 2011 (3 years)

Worked on True Crime: Hong Kong (www.truecrime.com) [cancelled] – a 3rd person, open world game for Xbox 360, PS3 and PC and tech for the whole company.

Licensed and enhanced my proprietary language – SkookumScript – and its associated IDE and

SDK to UFG. SkookumScript had become integral to the lives of the 20+ scripters / technical designers that used it as their main method of content creation for missions and living world scenarios. In this project SkookumScript had over 30 C++ based software engineer contributors to its more than 8000 engine related commands and it was used regularly by more than 60-80 people at all levels of technical ability on the project. [See more information at www.SkookumScript.com]

Created in-game editor for missions and living world content. Some of the editor's features include placing world objects, spawn points, trigger regions, interest points and much more. It was used extensively and daily by a 20+ person team and the rest of the 160 person project for all sorts of work from specialized content creation to debugging.

Also wrote many aspects of the core game engine, gameplay and general fundamental tech such as 3D geometry/intersection routines, debug rendering primitives, simulation time management and metrics and much more from simple building block code to large systems. This tech was used across disciplines and used across all projects (ModNation Racers, True Crime: HK and future projects) in the company.

5 recommendations available upon request

Software Engineer III at Electronic Arts Blackbox

June 2007 - February 2008 (9 months)

Worked on the Need For Speed franchise. I updated the vehicle AI, rewrote and improved the scripting tech and cleaned up and optimized the game editor.

The scripting tech was based on the Lua scripting language and I enhanced it drawing from my work on my own scripting languages so that it had better concurrency options, made it fully object-oriented and more modular for the large number of simultaneous scripters. I also created an easy to use console/debugger to execute script commands in the game real-time to dramatically improve development turn-around time.

AI Lead, Senior Software Engineer at LucasArts

March 2001 - May 2004 (3 years 3 months)

I garnered some of my best and most interesting experience at this venerable video-game institution. My first project was Star Wars: Bounty Hunter a third person action adventure for Sony PlayStation 2 and Nintendo GameCube. I was the AI lead with several direct reports and developed much of the core game engine, game mechanics and AI. I also created a modern game-oriented scripting language called ChewieScript (from "Chewbacca" of Star Wars).

My second project was Sam & Max 2: Freelance Police, a whimsical, episodic, story-based adventure for MS Windows about a detective dog and his "insane rabbit-y-thing" sidekick. I created a world-class game engine (including sophisticated AI pathfinding and animation systems) and a suite of 3D game editing tools (styled after the 3D modelling program Maya) that was tailored for

use by the whole team, from animators and programmers to audio engineers. This team went on to found the episodic games company Telltale Games.

LucasArts was impressed with my tech and C++ libraries from Sensible Toast Inc. and licensed it for use in their projects. This marked first time that I carried over my existing tech to a company where I was not a founder.

2 recommendations available upon request

President at Sensible Toast Inc.

October 1999 - February 2001 (1 year 5 months)

I designed a 3D massively-multiplayer space-based real-time strategy game, on a contract basis working with Telefilm Canada. During the process, I learned a tremendous amount about business, taxes, bylaws, payroll et cetera – all necessary evils in any start-up venture.

I also created a lot of tech including the Melba scripting language and an extensive and elegant set of C++ libraries for games, servers, tools and language development.

1 recommendation available upon request

Co-Founder, Chief Technology Officer, Director of Development at Helikon Technologies Inc.

January 1995 - September 1999 (4 years 9 months)

I was the lead engineer on many products and services (including our subsidiary HeliNet, a business-oriented ISP). I oversaw, created standards for and trained/mentored the other developers (and often the artists, musicians, sysops et cetera) – this included Computer Science co-op students from Simon Fraser University. I programmed much of the Dragon Magazine Archive PC-CD title for TSR (of Dungeons & Dragons fame) and Wizards of the Coast Inc., created a top-notch C++ library, and came to know the Win32 API and other technologies.

I received financial grants (from the B.C. Science Council and Scientific Research and Experimental Development tax credits) for the Ergo distributed programming language, which I designed and wrote. I was a key presence in all negotiations and business dealings from “dog and pony show” demos to conceiving strategies and drawing up contracts with the presidents of industry-leading corporations.

Software Engineer at Electronic Arts Canada

January 1993 - December 1994 (2 years)

I first wet my feet in the Video Game Industry at EA Canada (aka EA Sports) back when it was about 100-150 employees. My first project was the Dangerous Journeys™ PC-CD RPG (based on the game system by Gary Gygax – creator of Dungeons & Dragons™). I wrote AI code, built scenes, assembled animations, added to the story, oversaw animation art coming from the artists, and taught utilities to new people coming on to the project. Richard Garriot (“Lord British”), of Origin System’s Ultima™ fame – which had recently been acquired by EA, came to see the game and said that he was jealous of the game and that I could come and work for him anytime.

My second project was Triple Play '96 for the Sega Genesis™ (the first of a long-lasting and profitable baseball series). Chris Taylor - now CEO of Gas Powered Games - was my lead and it was a great learning experience. Using C, I programmed large sections of the front end, customizable players, and save games. This was my first experience with console development and working with the Apple Macintosh™ (our development environment).

Information Systems Analyst at Ministry of Energy, Mines, & Petroleum Resources

May 1992 - August 1992 (4 months)

My tasks on this job included: computer training (instruction in office software and general computer skills, both locally and travelling to other ministry branches), creating and updating database programs, support analysis (including the selection and purchasing of computer equipment), installing software and hardware, writing manuals, giving seminars and presentations, and monitoring ministry activities. I also learned a good deal about inter-office communication and how to discuss "delicate" subjects.

Education

Simon Fraser University

Bachelor of Arts, Cognitive Science, 1991 - 1995

Honors and Awards

- Top student in Computer Science 12 Advanced Placement
- First place in 1989 and 1990 Alberni Senior Science Fair (both AI projects)
- Top 5% of Canada in the Caley Math Contest
- Simon Fraser University Entrance Scholarship
- MacMillan Bloedel & Carolyn Lee Memorial Scholarships

Interests

challenging people's conception of the world, software development, AI, scripting, game design & game mechanics, good conversation, music, dancing, reading, movies, humour and things that retain their "child at heart", camping, hiking, leadership, video games, cartoons, knowledge, cooking, good food, board games, trying to change the world, crazy trivia, travelling, sailing/canoeing/kyaking, bike riding, smoothies, science & nature, swimming, amusement parks, being easily amused, travelling, laughing, passionate people and eccentrics of all types, oh and everything else too

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8 people have recommended Conan

"Conan is an incredibly passionate, talented, and driven individual, and his vast range of skill and experience were an invaluable asset while working on True Crime. Conan's tech (world editor, scripting language, etc) was used daily by 20+ designers, and its flexibility and power allowed the scripting team to do some great stuff. In addition to constantly updating and improving upon the tools, Conan actively engaged with the entire team as to what he could do to make our lives easier, and happily implemented requests as they came up. His daily support and outstanding attitude and mentorship improved the work of everyone around him, and his contributions to the team and game were unmatched. I look forward to working with Conan again!"

— **Sasha Dunfee**, *Mission Designer, United Front Games*, worked indirectly for Conan at United Front Games

"I have worked with Conan very closely at UFG as my area works closely between scripting and game systems. Conan thinks problems through thoroughly, and is not afraid to work on complex problems. He also provided a voice in meetings and is able to point out potential problems across disciplines. As a heavy user of his scripting engine, I find the language to be quite powerful, and he is supportive of change requests and is quick to make bug fixes. I hope he continues to improve on the IDE and the language, and make Skookum blossom."

— **Eric Tong**, *Gameplay Lead Programmer, United Front Games*, worked directly with Conan at United Front Games

"Conan is a very passionate person, constantly looking for ways to support his team members and improve their experience with his systems. It is rare to find someone as eager to receive feedback and make improvements as Conan. Conan was constantly coming to me and other scripters to find out what was holding us up and how he could help. His support for his scripting language was second to none. I believe Conan's knowledge, teamwork, and positive attitude make Conan a must hire for any team."

— **Aaron Cox**, *Technical Designer, United Front Games*, worked directly with Conan at United Front Games

"Conan was responsible for creating the scripting language and the editor we used on True Crime, and I'm not sure that I've worked with a scripting language that gives as much power to scripters as his does. Not only that, but Conan was super attentive to the needs of scripters, whether that meant

spending one on one time with a mission scripter, or ensuring that the scripting documentation was up to date, or answering (the sometimes dumb) questions that I might have for him. I shudder to think of how difficult it would've been to get the same results with another scripting language."

— **Mark Lewis**, *Mission Scripter, United Front Games*, worked with Conan at United Front Games

"Conan writes very robust and clean code and is very capable of handling the most complex challenges. He is very knowledgeable regarding scripting languages and game AI."

— **David Roberts**, *Technical Director, United Front Games*, managed Conan at United Front Games

"While it's been many years since I've worked with Conan, he is still one of the standards against which I measure the skill, talent, and professionalism of my engineering colleagues. While on Sam and Max Conan was my go-to engineer for all tools and scripting engine requests. I found him to always go above and beyond the simple requests to really find out what was needed and often provide a far more comprehensive and useful solution. In my experience this is a rare trait for an engineer, to be truly curious and try to understand the nature of problems instead of simply delivering on a specification. Professionally Conan was great to work with. As a technically inclined designer I learned a great deal from working with Conan and he always took the time out to explain things and help. I've had the privilege of working with many talented engineers in my 13 years of game development and felt that the Sam and Max engineering team was one of the best. Conan was an integral part of that team and I would gladly work with him again."

— **Steve Chen**, *Lead Game Designer: Sam and Max Freelance Police, Lucasarts*, worked directly with Conan at LucasArts

"Conan and I worked together at LucasArts on various projects, most notably Star Wars Bounty Hunter. I experienced Conan as an innovative, organized, meticulous, detail oriented programmer who genuinely loves his work. He is very friendly and positive person and was a real pleasure to work with. He is a treasure trove of ideas and took ownership of his work beyond requirements, showed genuine interest in high-level project goals and vital architectural issues, never shy to speak out when he thought things should be done a different way, yet always in a positive and constructive way. Conan also took genuine interest in the spirit of the team, at one point even distributing gifts to everybody. Unfortunately our careers took us different ways a couple years ago which is sad as I sincerely miss working with Conan."

— **Markus Breyer**, *Senior Software Engineer, LucasArts*, worked directly with Conan at LucasArts

"Conan has a brilliant mind and is a pleasure to work with. I recommend him without hesitation."

— **Glen Callender**, *Creative Director / Designer / Writer, Sensible Toast Inc.*, worked directly with Conan at Sensible Toast Inc.

[Contact Conan on LinkedIn](#)