



## It's About Time, Folks!

Lack of time is the resource that limits all of us in professional game development, publishing, and licensing. **We are always on deadline**, always trying to build our network of professional contacts, always jetting around the globe to do our jobs, always looking for good talent, always looking for job or project opportunities, and never feeling like we have enough time for any of it, let alone all of it.

But what if all of us professionals had one place we could go, anytime we wanted, from anywhere in the world, **that met all those needs and more?**

I can't take credit for this idea because it came from all of you ... **hundreds if not thousands of you who have shared with me over the years the challenges you face in this industry**: publishers who constantly search for new, reliable development and outsourcing partners, but are hampered by the lack of time they have to devote to these efforts; developers and outsourcing companies who are limited geographically and financially from promoting their projects and services to the full range of potential buyers worldwide; licensors who don't even know who the potential buyers of their interactive rights are, except in the very top-tier publishers. And what of all the myriad of businesses that support our industry with everything from public relations work to auditing services?

Everyone cries out that networking is the litany to live by, whether you are looking for talent, searching for the right job, or promoting your company, but no one has approached these challenges from a holistic perspective to try and create **a research and networking tool that is specifically designed to serve our industry** ... until now.

Meet <http://www.mrfogs.com>, the elite marketplace for the interactive industry.

Mr. FOGs provides the first global online marketplace for the game industry which combines business networking, a bidding platform for projects, job postings, the opportunity to exhibit your project opportunities in a showroom, and a wealth of other functionalities requested by game developers, publishers, and other professionals worldwide. It is a secure environment where you -- as the user -- determine what information is available publicly, and which information is either by invitation only, or restricted to a particular type of registered user (publishers, for example). A joint venture between FOG Studios, Inc. and MWay's GMBH, this Web 2.0 portal is not open to the general public and it is specifically restricted to existing industry professionals with verifiable history working in or supporting interactive development, publishing and licensing. **It is fully member-supported and priced below LinkedIn** and virtually all the other applications currently being used by industry members (as low as \$10 a month) without any of the restrictions of those tools on your ability to network and without the "noise" created by those portals from contacts outside your area of interest.

We chose to call it "Mr. FOGs" because it was born from the minds of some of the Old Guys and Gals in this business, and also because these folks are the ones that seem to be traveling around the world every 80 days, like Phileas Fogg, the character from the Jules Verne novel. Today, business professionals aren't limited to traveling by hot air balloon, so maybe we circumvent the globe in less time, but time is still the issue, and we gravitate to anything that saves us time. Mr. FOGs is designed to bring the world to us, not every 80 days, but every minute of any day that we want it, **a virtual trade show and job fair 24/7 without the jet lag and**

**expense.** So let's explore what Mr. FOGs can do for you ...

Let's start from the perspective of the independent developer or outsource provider. About 85% of the business done by independent game developers and 100% of the business done by outsourcing companies involves working on intellectual property that someone else controls, whether it is licensed property or an existing game franchise. The methodology for finding such work is to get tapped into a publisher's request for proposal (RFP) process. Chances are, unless you are a known commodity by that particular publisher, **you won't even be given the opportunity to bid.**

But when you register your company in Mr. FOGs, you have the ability to define your services based on a dynamic skill matrix that allows potential customers seeking those skill sets to specifically find you, something no company Web site can currently do even with paying tons to the search engines to improve your listing's ranking. So if someone posts a project which is an 85%-or-higher match for your profile, you will automatically be notified about the project or request for proposal opportunity. If it is a private search by a publisher instead of a public posting, the publisher will receive a list of qualified potential partners based on these same rankings, **and they will have the ability to invite you privately through the system to bid on a particular project.**

Every developer has a drawer full of original IP game concepts and preliminary designs that could be shopped, but they also know you can't go to a trade show with 20 such concepts and expect any kind of a positive meeting. So you pick one, dust it off, and start shopping it. If you are lucky, you find a few interested parties and guide one of them to a deal, **but what about all those folks who said "no" to your chosen one?** Would they have said "yes" instead to one of your other brain children? In the current methodology, you will never know.

But what if you could allow all the publishers the chance to "peek" inside your game design drawer any time they wanted to, regardless of the project's stage of development, and give you feedback on what they would like to see more from you? And, again, what if these same publisher users could not only browse through any developer's "hope chest," but also use search engine technology to peek in everyone's drawers at once and find only those projects that fit certain needs they are trying to fill. By listing your projects in a secure environment in Mr. FOGs, you will be able to specify genre, platform, timing of availability, even the budget range of all the projects you wish without appearing unfocused. And registered publisher members will be able to browse through developer projects, or specifically search for specific projects that might fit their needs. **Show me all PS3/X360 game pitches under \$5M in development costs which will be available in Q2 2010 or after, for example.** How much you share openly to all publishers in the system, or restrict to invited publishers only, is entirely up to you.

Each development and outsourcing company will also be able to set up their company profile using the formats and containing the information most commonly requested by publishers including, but not limited to, corporate background, key team lead biographies, a chronology of completed projects with links to the game rankings, technology and tools backgrounders, references and recommendations from prior partners, development process overviews, and virtually everything potential publishing partners need to do preliminary due diligence on your studio. Likewise, **you can use the system to find good outsourcing partners** for your projects in the same fashion that publishers will be able to find you. And when it comes to finding good individual freelancers and job candidates, the system also shines.

Virtually everyone said that they had trouble finding and recruiting good talent and that the costs of advertising open job positions were prohibitive. With membership in Mr. FOGs, regardless of the type of entity you are, **you can post an unlimited number of job listings** and do unlimited resume and potential candidate

searches (individual users and job seekers use the dynamic skill matrix system as well) free with membership. Reference verification, application, and HR paperwork can all be automated and tracked through the system as well, however you wish to do it according to your own procedures, and you can even connect via audio or video interviews through the system using Skype.

Document automation features help publishers as well. Everyone has non-disclosure documents to be processed, art outsourcing and other questionnaires to be completed by potential partners, and so forth. If you wish, you can post these internal forms in the system either openly to all potential development and outsourcing partners so they pro-actively fill out and keep your database of necessary information up to date, or selectively invite **only certain teams to complete the documents in the system.**

Licensors, you have heard me say that you cannot get interactive placements effectively by just going to the Licensing Show in NYC once a year. If you set up your profile of available interactive rights and materials in Mr. FOGs, **your opportunities will constantly be available and in play with decision makers** and potential licensees in every territory around the globe. And, publisher licensing professionals, how much simpler would it be for you to stay abreast of upcoming IP licensing opportunities through a system like this one?

OK, enough for now. I think you can see where this is going. We are really trying to build a professional community that addresses everyone's stated needs at a price that will be a "no-brainer" for everyone to participate. Like all such community portals, it is only as valuable as its level of participation. Right now, if you go on the Web site -- at <http://www.mrfogs.com> -- **you can do a preliminary registration that costs nothing and that automatically enters you into a drawing for a MacBook Pro.** Pop in, take 30 seconds to express your interest in what we are building, and we will invite you to a private beta later this year where you can help us refine the tool and make it all you would ever want it to be. Beta participation is not mandatory, but certainly appreciated, and either way we will let all registrants know as our features and opportunities begin rolling out.

**Hope to see you there and, until then, Good Hunting!**