

ANDREW GRANT: My name's Andrew Grant. I'm the technical director for the MIT Game Lab and sometime lecturer. I've been playing games pretty much all my life. That's what my family does when they get together. And then when computers started doing it too, that's what I do with computers.

I went to the games industry in 1994 working for Looking Glass Technologies and then I moved out to California to work for Dreamworks Interactive. And actually, all told, that didn't last terribly long. I burned out after about five or six years in the games industry. And then I went to be a solo programmer, doing random contracts and work-for-hire, kind of like a gunslinger from the Wild West for awhile. But no matter what I do, I keep getting dragged back into the games industry. I like making games. It's what I want to do.

Right now I'm playing a lot of things I'm playing a lot of the cooperative LEGO games with my son. He's four and we're playing through LEGO Batman, that sort of thing. And we recently started LEGO Lord of the Rings, which has been a bit of a challenge for him. It's a much darker LEGO game, oddly enough.

And so he'll say things like is Boromir a bad guy? And I'm like, well, that's hard. Let me explain to you, you're four. He's confused. Is Gollum a bad guy? No, he's definitely a bad guy, yeah. But why is he going with the hobbits? Right, he's kind of a good guy, too. I don't know. Anyway, it's a complicated story for a four-year old. And it's kind of fun.

I'm working on a number things right now. I'm working on a side project with the astronomy department on some software for them. I'm working on an IOS port of a game called Yomi. And I'm also working on a fractal tangram independent game. And with Rick, also, at the lab, I'm working on a massively cooperative strategy game.

This semester we're trying a couple new game engines. We always try a couple of new game engines. But I always like to let the students sink their teeth into a couple

of them and then come back and tell us what they found out. There's a degree to which I can do that myself, but it really is more useful, I think, to get some people with fresh eyes to come in and try them out. Usually they come back and tell us the old standbys are the ones they want to go with.

We usually end up going with Unity and Flixel as our reliable ones. But this year we're trying out a new language hacks, which also has a Flixel implementation. And we're also trying a game called Phaser, which is used by the Education Arcade. So we really want to get our teeth into that and see how we like it.

I've always been interested in artificial intelligence. When I have a chance to sit down and play with stuff, I want to my computer figure out how do things that it couldn't do before. That's a lot of fun.

We are in a really interesting place, I think, in games right now. It used to be the case that when I first started playing, that there would be two or three interesting games a year. And you could play them, and then you waited very impatiently for the next ones to come out. And now we're in a place where you cannot play all the interesting games. In fact, I can't even play all the really interesting games. There's just too many of them.

But in spite of that, I still kind of want more. One of the neat things about games is that there's a whole bunch of different games you can make. I feel like, a lot of times, we get stuck on a couple types. We don't necessarily need another first-person shooter that's super realistic modern combat.

There are some good games there. Don't get me wrong, but we don't need five of them a year. But what I'm really looking forward is seeing all the weird stuff, the stuff that no one expects. The new, crazy things, and the more games get made, the more crazy stuff gets made. And I love that stuff.