

**Scott Lim**

Bachelor of Science in  
Computer Science in  
Real-Time Interactive  
Simulation, DigiPen Institute  
of Technology Singapore

Diploma in Games Design  
and Development, Singapore  
Polytechnic

DIGIPEN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SINGAPORE

# Where Games Are Made

As the premier institution for higher education and research in digital media, simulation and interactive computer technologies, DigiPen Institute of Technology prides itself on producing industry-ready graduates who are set to become key contributors in the rapidly developing digital interactive media industry.

by Desiree Yang

Video game developers and publishers Electronic Arts, Ubisoft and the much-vaunted Lucasfilm have already set up offices on our sunny shores. The tides are changing for the digital interactive media industry in Singapore, and DigiPen is set to attract and groom the brightest minds to propel the local game industry forward.

For Gabriel Tay, who graduated from DigiPen with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Game Design, game development has always been his passion. Gabriel tinkered with video games from a young age, and eventually went on to pursue a Diploma in Game Development and Technology (formerly Diploma in Digital Entertainment Technology (Games)) at Nanyang Polytechnic. A degree at DigiPen was an obvious next step for him.

He says, "Growing up, I always enjoyed playing and modifying games. In fact, I remember modifying my games using the map editor in real-time strategy game Command & Conquer and saw it as a way to express my creativity.

"DigiPen had successfully established a name for itself in the industry back then and I had my heart set on travelling halfway across the world to pursue my passion for game development at the DigiPen flagship campus in Redmond, Washington. Thus, when I found out that DigiPen was setting up a campus in Singapore, I knew I had to enrol. Everything just seemed to fall into place," he recalls with a smile.

## INDUSTRY-READY GRADUATES

Now a Level Designer at Ubisoft Singapore, Gabriel was actually approached by Ubisoft shortly after graduating. He credits DigiPen's rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for preparing him for his career, saying, "DigiPen does its best to emulate the working environment at school and prepares us to work at the highest standards in the digital interactive media industry. Its courses equip students with strong fundamentals in various disciplines and place strong emphasis on a hands-on approach, where we are strongly encouraged to take ownership of our work.

"The heavy workload and strict grading system push us to our limits, but we emerge more than prepared for the working world and are only set to excel. As a Level Designer, I am involved in

**Gabriel Tay**

Bachelor of Science in  
Computer Science and Game  
Design, DigiPen Institute of  
Technology Singapore

Diploma in Digital  
Entertainment Technology,  
Nanyang Polytechnic

**Lim Wei Ning**

Bachelor of Fine Arts in  
Digital Art and Animation,  
DigiPen Institute of  
Technology Singapore

Diploma in Digital Visual  
Effects, Ngee Ann  
Polytechnic

designing the layout and mission structure of Assassin's Creed: Unity, the seventh instalment in the hugely successful Assassin's Creed series. DigiPen has really equipped me well to handle the demands of my job!"

Fellow DigiPen graduate Scott Lim, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science in Real-Time Interactive Simulation, shares Gabriel's sentiments. He explains, "The thoroughness of a DigiPen curriculum not only allows us greater depth in understanding our specialisation, but greater breadth in our understanding across disciplines. We start from the basics, and there is no assumption that students have prior knowledge of the various disciplines. As a result, almost anyone with a strong interest in this industry can prepare themselves to get on board."

Scott is a firm advocate of the effectiveness of DigiPen's rigorous course structure. He enthuses, "I am able to tap on knowledge I have acquired from different disciplines – this breadth of knowledge is proving extremely useful in my career now!"

"For example, I'm able to apply my knowledge on artificial intelligence in my job as a Planning Analyst at PSA Singapore, where I deal with algorithms and automation to try to improve the efficiency of processes there." A job at PSA might not appear an obvious choice for a DigiPen graduate, and Scott is clear testament to the versatility of a DigiPen qualification.

**UNMATCHED OPPORTUNITIES**

At DigiPen, students take on a project every semester which sees them working either individually or collaboratively with students from other courses. These projects often act

as a launching platform for students to enter into international game competitions and festivals, with promising projects stretching over two or more semesters to give students the freedom to explore their project's potential.

Another DigiPen graduate, Lim Wei Ning, who graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Art and Animation, says, "I served as Art Director in my final semester on a project titled Cat Fight, which was entered into the Thurrock International Film Festival held in the UK as an official selection in the animation category. The film took seven months (two semesters) of commitment, hard work and perseverance to create, and to have it selected for the film festival was definitely the best reward we could have asked for."

Wei Ning enjoys bringing her characters to life on screen. She is now living out her passion as a 3D animator with Gumi Asia, where she is responsible for 3D rendering, concept illustration and other processes involved in bringing characters from the drawing board to the screen. She shares, "DigiPen helped me build a strong foundation in a wide range of art and animation styles and develop a solid understanding of the different stages in animation."

On his end, Gabriel's three-semester long game project, Chrono Disfunglement, was entered into the 16th Independent Games Festival in San Francisco last year where it received an Honourable Mention in the student showcase category. "Nothing beats seeing your game grow from a series of codes to a fully-working game," he enthuses.

For Scott, the opportunity to showcase his projects at the DigiPen Career Fair led to him being approached by his current employer, PSA. "My exhibit consisted of a game trailer

and demo for my projects A Promised Sword and A House of Lanterns. Having spent four semesters on these projects, it was extremely gratifying to see it catch the attention of PSA," he shares.

**PUSHING STUDENTS TO THE LIMITS**

Dubbed the Harvard for game developers and animators alike, DigiPen challenges students to undergo a gruelling education that ensures they will fit right into the fast-paced working world. Scott explains, "All of us wanted to produce work that we were proud of, and that meant giving our 110 per cent, no matter how tired or stressed out we were. It was challenging, but a keen focus on the end goal and my peers' support kept me going. Furthermore, the sense of accomplishment that I experienced whenever I looked at the finished product was simply indescribable."

**FOLLOW YOUR PASSION**

Evidently, students at DigiPen are in for the ride of their lives, and Gabriel encourages all who are passionate about a career in the digital interactive media industry to consider an education at DigiPen. "Students at DigiPen know what they want and really focus on picking up as many skills as they can. This is necessary to produce quality work and is what drives the recognition and reputation that DigiPen is known for," he explains.

Wei Ning agrees, adding, "Even as a young girl, I loved to draw and watch animated films and knew that this was what I wanted to do when I grew up. I certainly had my time at DigiPen, which taught me about hard work and being open to learning and new experiences, to thank for enabling me to go to work every day with the chance to do what I love." 🎮