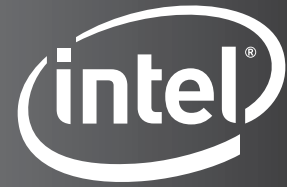




On the Rain-Slick
Precipice of Darkness
from Hothead Games



Success Story

Intel® Software Partner Program
Hothead Games



"As we built out our test lab, being able to cut system costs by almost 50 percent using program discounts was a big deal. As a start-up company with modest budgets, we certainly welcomed that helping hand."

- Joel DeYoung
Chief Operating Officer,
Hothead Games

Challenge:

Accommodate a very broad spectrum of target systems while delivering consistently high-quality gameplay and staying within modest production budgets.

Solution:

Draw on tools, expertise, and development-platform discounts available through the Intel® Software Partner Program. Streamline the ability to address engineering problems in order to devote maximum attention to making the games fun to play.

Learn more:

www.intel.com/partner

Casual Gaming for Real Gamers

Hothead Games takes advantage of its relationship with Intel to pack fun into small chunks of time for its customers. Targeting gamers who can no longer devote hours to a play session, the company builds funny, light-hearted titles meant to be played casually by people who expect serious quality from their games.

Hothead Games, located in Vancouver, British Columbia, builds titles for gamers who no longer have the time to play for hours at a stretch but who still crave an experience that goes beyond the typical game in the "casual" genre. The company relies on its relationship with Intel to help build in the high performance and quality its discerning audience expects, in a form compact enough to be distributed digitally for maximum convenience.

With a wry worldview and high production values, Hothead packs a lot of substance into 15 minutes or a half hour gaming break for its customers.

Delivering High Quality While Maintaining a Tight Budget

When Hothead started developing its episodic game series, "On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness," they knew they wanted to efficiently deliver all the performance they could for a very diverse set of hardware and operating systems. Their contacts within the Intel® Software Partner Program helped them not only to establish good practices for supporting both current and future Intel® platforms, but also pointed them to methods and techniques for using the Intel® VTune™ Performance Analyzer. With the VTune environment, Hothead engineers pinpointed bottlenecks and very efficiently met their performance goals.

Once they had optimized their code, they built in preset configurations to accommodate a broad variety of systems. This approach simplifies setup for users, who simply choose one of a few quality settings appropriate for their hardware. Setting up test labs that reflect that variety of systems was another area where the program was a great help, in the form of development system rebates. Joel DeYoung, Hothead's



chief operating officer, recalls, "As we built out our test lab, being able to cut system costs by almost 50 percent using program discounts was a big deal. As a start-up company with modest budgets, we certainly welcomed that helping hand."

The combination of entertaining, brisk narrative and well-conceived gameplay makes *On the Rain-Slick Precipice of Darkness* a rewarding way to spend a quick gaming break.



"The great thing about working with the Intel® Software Partner Program is that it streamlines our approach to solving engineering challenges. That lets us keep our focus on making games fun, which is where that focus belongs."

- Joel DeYoung
Chief Operating Officer, Hothead Games

Drawing on Intel's Expertise to Support Very Broad System Variety

In keeping with the precept of being convenient for users to play its games whenever they can spare a small chunk of time, Hothead is committed to supporting whatever machine its customers may be on. Given the variety of that spectrum, Hothead supports gameplay on Microsoft Windows*, Linux*, and Mac OS*, as well as a broad range of hardware. The company pays scrupulous attention to delivering good results whether the game is being played on a new workstation or a laptop with integrated graphics that's a few years old. That means taking advantage of current graphics and processor hardware, without assuming those resources will be available at runtime.

Developing for such a diverse system base adds significantly to the complexity of getting games ready for market. Here, too, Hothead draws on the resources of the Intel Software Partner Program to meet those challenges while staying on schedule and on budget. Support for all three operating systems with a common toolset, Intel® Software Development Products are well suited to those needs. That type of efficiency is an important contributor to game quality, as well. As Joel puts it, "The great thing about working with the Intel Software Partner Program is that it streamlines our approach to solving engineering challenges. That lets us keep our focus on making games fun, which is where that focus belongs."

Conclusion

As much benefit as Hothead has been able to get from the Intel Software Partner Program, they see a lot of room to expand the relationship. Especially as the company brings more products to market, Joel sees opportunity ahead: "We're really starting to see possibilities for marketing tools, collateral, and sales channel benefits from the program. There are still a lot of untapped options for us there."

The net result will be delivery of more games to busy people who want a quick break from their workaday lives. The fun is on its way.

About the Intel® Software Partner Program

The Intel® Software Partner Program provides a framework for collaborative solution development around Intel architecture. From business planning and product development to marketing and sales, the program drives increased business success and market opportunities. Learn more at www.intel.com/partner.

Success Story by:



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