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Video Game Industry Grows and Guildford Games Festival is back

Guildford Games Festival, supported by the UK's games industry trade body UKIE and age ratings advisory body AskAboutGames and sponsored by us and Enterprise M3 LEP, goes global in 2020 as it returns for a second year on Friday 13 and Saturday 14 November to mark the industry's continued success in the borough.

The Festival will be held online and expects to reach an even wider international audience through video game distribution network Steam, furthering the borough's reputation as 'the Hollywood of video games'.

The 2020 line-up features an industry expert helpline and careers guidance, plus video reports on the prestige and success of the industry in Guildford at a time when the digital games sector continues to thrive in Guildford despite the huge economic challenges being posed by the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

Both DPS Games (formerly known as Wargaming UK) and EA Games – best known for FIFA, The Sims and Madden NFL – have expanded their offices in town. DPS Games has tripled the size of its headquarters at Guildford Business Park, now taking 35,000 sq ft of office space, and is also recruiting 22 new UK staff as part of its expansion plans. This follows the recent expansion of EA Games' headquarters at Onslow House.

Some of the industry's biggest and most innovative developers are also based in Guildford, including Criterion, Hello Games, Media Molecule and Supermassive.

Full details of the Festival will be announced via the Guildford.Games website in mid-October.

Acting Leader of the Council, Cllr Joss Bigmore says:

"We are proud to be key supporters of Guildford Games Festival for a second year and to help the industry thrive in our borough, which is rightly known as the Hollywood of video games in the UK. We continue to give our full backing to this dynamic sector full of creative and talented people, which remains a growth area at a time when so many other industries are struggling.

"The video games industry is worth almost \$90 billion globally, and is expected to surpass £7 billion in the UK alone next year. We are proud of the major role that Guildford plays in that

worldwide success. Our key corporate priorities are Innovation, Place-Making and Community – and the Guildford Games Festival ticks all the boxes, putting our beautiful green and historic borough and county town on the modern cutting-edge map. Since 1987, Guildford’s games industry has created many world-first innovations and legendary titles amongst the 4000 games which have been released here. We have 70 video game companies based here, employing over 1800 people.”

Keith Anderson, Publishing Director of DPS Games says:

“As a video games studio, DPS Games is always looking for brilliant individuals to join our team. Guildford is a hot bed for industry talent with many studios and publishers already based here. There is also a deep history of game making in the Guildford area. When we looked at acquiring a studio with online experience it was a stroke of fortune that we found Edge Case Games, who were already Guildford based.

“Since the founding of DPS Games, we have had three different spaces in Guildford, each with its own charm! We had a run of bad luck but that gave us the opportunity to find the perfect space in Guildford Business Park, where we are now. Our studio is bespoke, kitted out to our specifications including a deli and balcony BBQ area. As we continue to expand and grow so does our space. We now employ over 100 people and are currently refitting the office to make room for even more people over the coming year.”

Sam Read, Games Sector Specialist at Enterprise M3 LEP says:

“Enterprise M3 LEP is delighted to support the delivery of this year’s Guildford Games Festival. I hope that the virtual event will be able to reach and engage with an enormous audience. It will also be a great opportunity for the LEP to promote the local industry as a high-growth sector critical to the area’s general economic recovery and renewal.

“The LEP is working closely with the Department for International Trade to raise awareness of Guildford’s games industry internationally. The area was recently awarded ‘High Potential Opportunity’ status in recognition of these strengths and collaboration with Guildford Borough Council to deliver Guildford Games Festival in 2020 significantly benefits this work. Jobs site Adzuna recently listed Guildford as one of the top two places in the country for jobs in digital and tech, where its job openings now outnumber jobseekers. This further proves the value that our digital economy is bringing to the region, serving as encouragement for people considering this sector as a future career opportunity.”