Maksim Gavrilin

Senior Game Designer

Auckland, New Zealand · Open to remote work
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LinkedIn · Portfolio

SKILLS

Design: Gameplay & combat design, Systems design, Enemy AI scripting, Level & event design, Procedural generation, Balance & math modelling, Prototyping, Design documentation, Economy design.

Leadership: Leading design teams, Project management, Mentoring, Cross-team communication.

TOOLS

Unity (C#, Visual Scripting), Visual Studio, GitLab, Perforce, Jira, Confluence, Asana, Codecks, Miro, Excel / Google Sheets (VBA)

Senior Game Designer focused on gameplay and systems design, with 11+ years in mobile games (tactics RPG, match-3, strategy and puzzle), from preproduction to live operations. What I enjoy most is solving design problems. Sometimes that means making combat and gameplay feel fun and engaging for players; sometimes it means making features faster and more predictable for the team to produce. Both start the same way: finding what's really causing the problem, then designing a solution the team can build. At Outerdawn I own gameplay and balance on a live tactics RPG, including a redesign of its core gameplay systems. I prototype my own ideas in Unity (C#, Visual Scripting), and earlier in my career I led a team of 6 designers and project-managed a 15-person team.

Senior Game Designer | Outerdawn | May 2023 - Present | Auckland, New Zealand

***Grimguard Tactics**: turn-based tactics RPG for mobile; soft launch, global release, live operations.*

- Proposed and own a restructure of the hero system. Identified the cause of slow hero releases and power creep in how heroes and subclasses were structured, and redesigned it so heroes can be released monthly instead of every 3 months, with a migration that keeps all existing players' progress.
- Redesigned campaign enemy spawning and challenge rating. Any level can now be reused with any enemies set in config, and its difficulty follows from what is spawned. Level production is about 3× faster, designers can set difficulty curves directly, balance data is reliable, and much of the balancing works without extra calculation.
- Designed and shipped 4 heroes, 2 dungeon events and clan fight bosses, from concept to implementation: built combat around synergies and the enemies that counter them, then iterated on feel and AI until it was fun to play.
- Own gameplay and balance across the game: all subclasses, combat effects, and hero and campaign progression, with documentation built to stay maintainable as content grows.
- Script enemy and boss AI in Unity Visual Scripting; prototype and tune new combat features in-engine.

Mar 2022 - Apr 2023: Relocated to New Zealand.

Game Designer & Developer | Verzilla Games | Feb 2020 - Feb 2022 | Moscow, Russia

***Greenwood Lines**: link-style puzzle game for Android.*

- Ran the whole project alongside one artist: design, development, production, documentation and content delivery.
- Designed and programmed the game in Unity (C#): core mechanics, tutorials and project architecture.
- Built level design tools and used them to create and balance 120+ levels with smooth progression.
- Released the game on Google Play and found a publisher. Market tests showed 17% D1 retention, and the publisher decided not to scale it.

Game Designer | G5 | Jul 2019 - Nov 2019 | Moscow, Russia

***Hawaii Match-3 Mania**: match-3; pre-release.*

- Scripted story locations and character behaviour in cutscenes; balanced match-3 levels.

Lead Economy Designer | Lightmap | Feb 2019 - Jun 2019 | Moscow, Russia

***Pixel Gun 3D**: mobile shooter; live operations.*

- Brought in to redesign the economy of a large live shooter, moving it from pay-to-win to a fair F2P model. The existing economy had gone stale, with too few places for players to spend.
- Designed the new economy model (currency flows, spending points and weapon distribution) based on analysis of the existing systems and live data, encouraging players to explore and acquire new weapons.
- Shipped it quickly with the team, then ran several post-launch iterations to fix issues and tune the model for long-term health.
- Worked with the team on a new weaponry system, removing or rebalancing underused and imbalanced weapons.
- Mentored a junior designer.

Technical → Lead Game Designer | Game Garden | Apr 2017 - Feb 2019 | Moscow, Russia

Lead Game Designer | Jan 2018 - Feb 2019

***Rescue Sparkle**: match-3; preproduction to release.*

- Led a team of 6 designers and was project manager for the ~15-person team, running sprints, task reviews and milestone planning.
- Kept the project vision aligned with the producer and communication clear across the design team.
- Sole designer through preproduction (prototype and documentation); every milestone met with minimal feature cuts.

Technical Game Designer | Apr 2017 - Jan 2018

***Pet Heroes**: match-3 / farm / battler RPG; reboot.*

- Redesigned hero progression, farm economy and core game loops, improving tutorials, FTUE and retention.
- Built the math models and automated balance scripts behind progression and balance, making heroes, buildings and regions much faster to produce.
- Found and removed balance issues and features that caused churn.

Technical Game Designer | Rocket Jump (RJ Games) | May 2014 - Feb 2017 | Moscow, Russia

- **Dreamland** (roguelite puzzle, Android): designed the procedural level generation algorithms and balanced their output; streamlined location production. Managed production for the 7-person team, prototype through soft launch.
- **Dakota: Farm Adventures** (social farm sim): built and scripted story locations and character behaviour from narrative scenarios; wrote VBA tools for designers' economy calculations.
- **Under Fire: Invasion** (strategy, mobile): designed ~20 campaign levels and their scenarios; owned the recurring event system. Also worked on the original **Under Fire** (social).
- Across projects: implemented new mechanics and configured progression.

Junior Web Developer (PHP) | Computer Service Center | Apr 2012 - Jan 2013 | Moscow, Russia

- Built a tool that imports customer accounting data from Excel into a database, validating it to prevent duplicates.

Junior Programmer (Java) | International IT Distribution Group | Nov 2011 - Apr 2012 | Moscow, Russia

- Developed security scenarios in Java for Alfa-Bank and Raiffeisen Bank, in a 4-person team that delivered three projects.

GAME JAMS: verzilla.itch.io (Unity prototypes) | LANGUAGES: **English**: Fluent (IELTS 8.0) **Russian**: Native

EDUCATION: National University of Science and Technology "MISIS"
2010 | Moscow, Russia | **Master, Applied Mathematics**