



# How to make and self-publish a game in 12 months

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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®

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# 1849



*Released  
May 8, 2014*



After years of planning...

We quit our jobs.

How much time do we have?

How do we make this our first indie game, not our only indie game?



# Talk outline

1. Preparation
2. Self-marketing
3. Self-publishing



# Section One – Preparation.

**“By failing to prepare,  
you are preparing to fail.”**

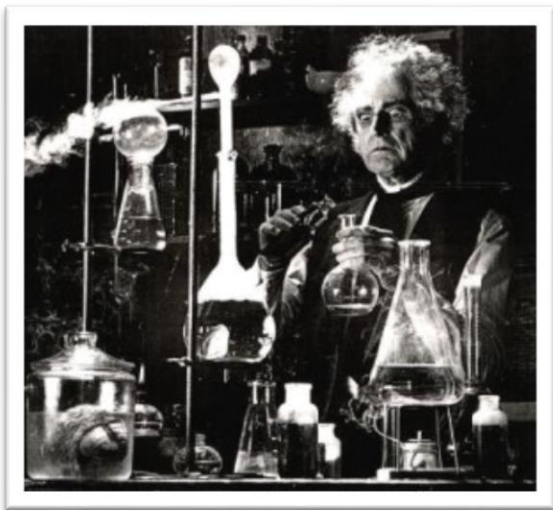
- Ben Franklin





# Design Around a Deadline

- How do you translate your (grand) vision into a game in a year (or so)?



## PLAN

Apr-13	Internal prototyping
May-13	
Jun-13	"Production" + playtesting
Jul-13	
Aug-13	
Sep-13	
Oct-13	Alpha
Nov-13	
Dec-13	Beta
Jan-14	
Feb-14	Launch
Mar-14	Demo at GDC
Apr-14	
May-14	

## REALITY

Internal prototyping
"Production" + playtesting
Alpha
Beta - EA and GL
Demo at GDC
Launch



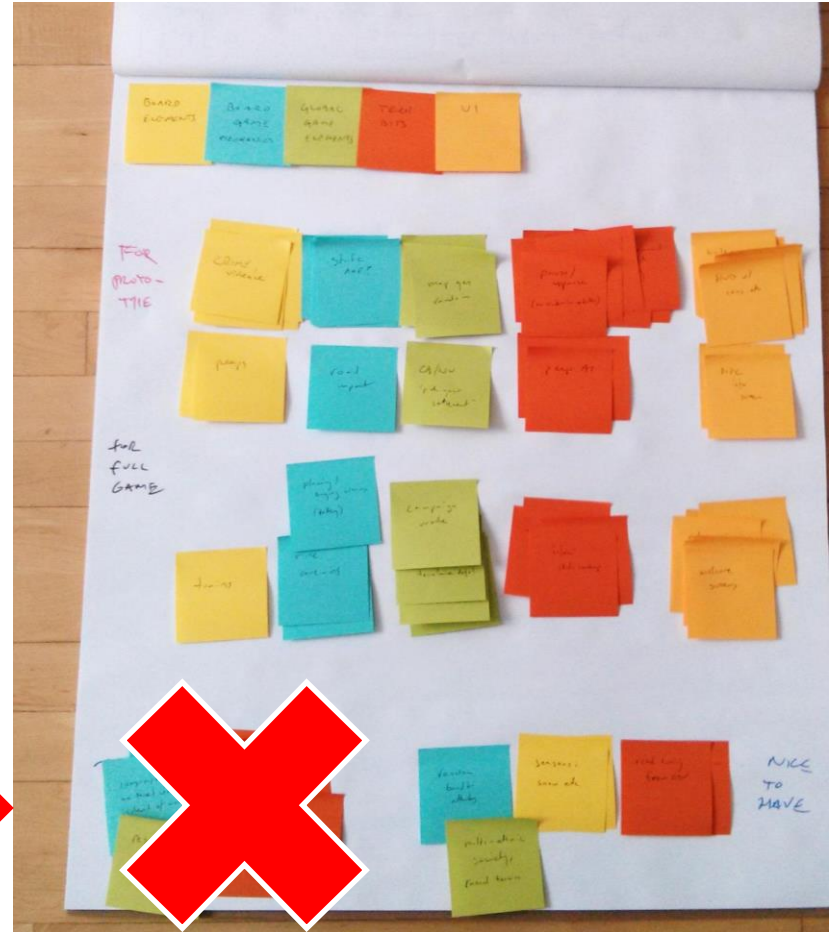
# SWAG\* Scheduling

(\*stupid wild-ass guess)

- 1-week items or larger
- Go with gut feeling, not precise
- Annotate with costs and benefits
- Multiply by relative risk



# Butchery







# Risk Management

- Have a tight schedule?  
Reduce risk.
  - But without compromising quality!
  - Tech is a good candidate.



# You'll probably have contract work done.

- Hire carefully
- Keep up with documentation
- Managing contractors is different from dealing with a co-worker



# Other things to do when you're starting out

- Incorporate ASAP!
  - [www.nationwide-incorporators.com](http://www.nationwide-incorporators.com)
- Get an accountant

*Intermission*

**Nine months later...**



## Section Two – Self Marketing

**“The art of publicity is a black art; but it has come to stay, and every year adds to its potency.”**

- Thomas Paine





# Building community from scratch

News: TIGSource has an IRC channel now!  
Server: irc.esper.net  
Room: #tigIRC

Home TIGSource Help Search Login Register

Use

MY SUBREDDITS FRONT - ALL - RANDOM | ASKREDDIT - FUNNY - HISTORY - ASKSCIENCE - PERSONALFINANCE - JOKES - VIDEOS - NOSLEEP - WC

reddit gamedev hot new rising controversial top gilded wiki promoted

Send Better Email

Sunday

Features Pricing Support Blog More

Send Better Email



# Press outreach + PR





# Early Access (and Greenlight)

The screenshot shows the IndieGameStand website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for "Game Store", "Today's Deal", and "For". Below this is a menu with categories: "Featured", "Browse", "Alphas & Betas", "Recommended", "On Sale", "Mac", and "Linux". The main featured area displays the game "1849" with a large illustration of a bearded man in a cowboy hat holding a yellow object. The title "1849" is written in a large, ornate, golden font. Below the illustration, it says "AVAILABLE PLATFORMS:" with icons for Windows and Apple. A price tag of "\$9.99" is visible. At the bottom, there are tabs for "NEW RELEASES", "TOP SELLERS", "RECOMMENDED", and "ON SALE". Under "NEW RELEASES", there is a smaller version of the "1849" game card, labeled "BETA", with the text "1849 by SomaSim" and "Simulation, Strategy". A price tag of "\$9.99" is also present for this version.







# Shows and expos

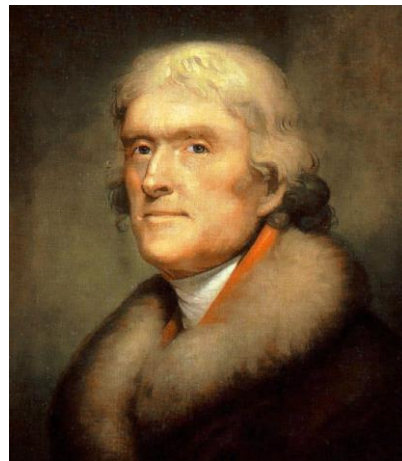




# Section Three – Self-Publishing

**“Never trouble another  
for what you can do for  
yourself.”**

- Thomas Jefferson





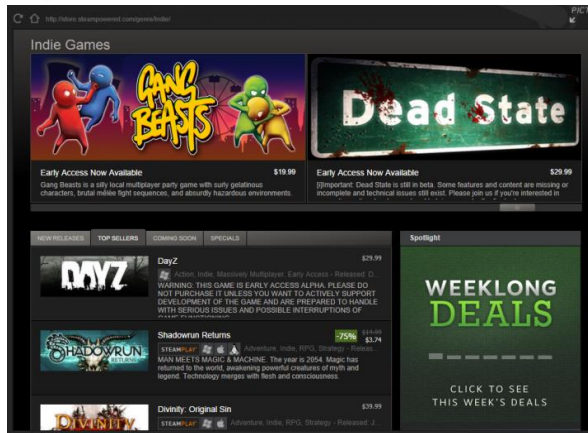
# Multiplatform + Audience Differences





# Picking a price point

\$19.99    \$9.99    \$29.99



\$29.99

\$14.99

\$39.99

\$2.99 Free    \$6.99 Free    \$0.99



Free

\$0.99

Free

\$2.99

\$1.99

\$1.99



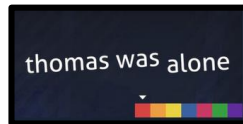
# Kobayashi Maru: The No-Win Scenario



PC \$29.99



PC \$9.99



PC \$9.99



PC \$14.99



iOS \$9.99



iOS \$9.99



iOS \$4.99

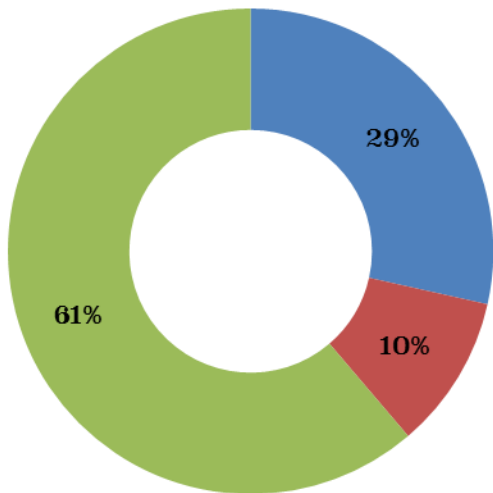


iOS \$4.99

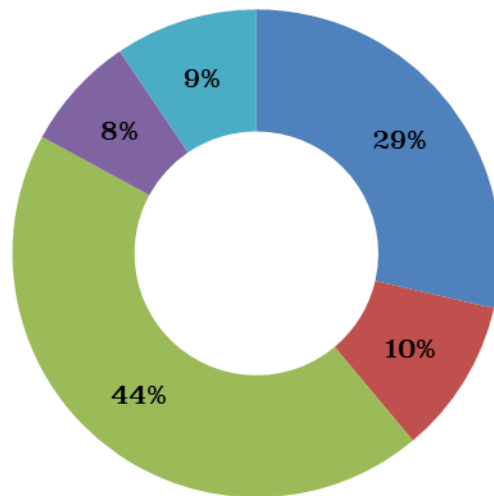


# Go on all the stores you can

■ iOS ■ Android ■ PC

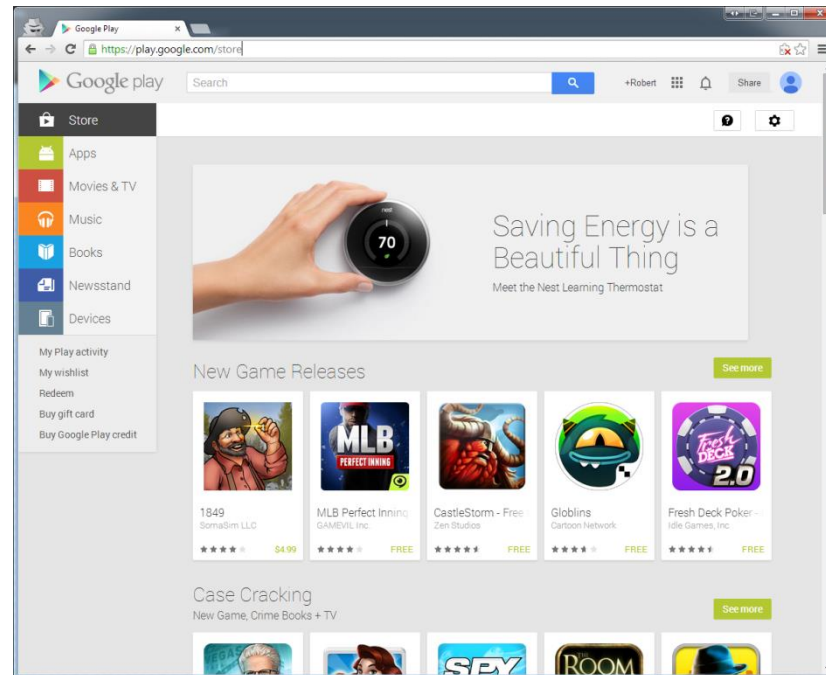
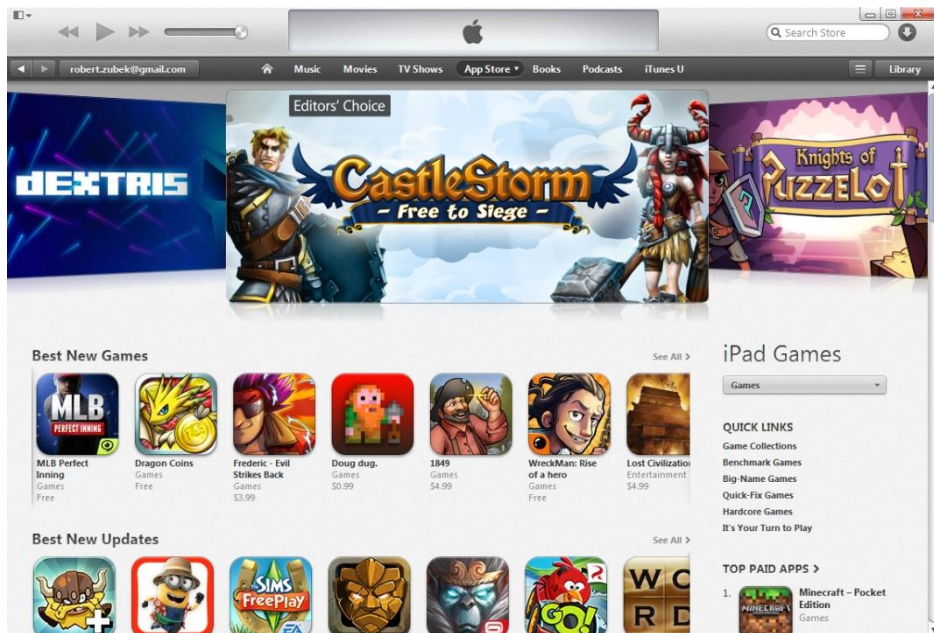


■ iOS ■ Android  
■ Steam ■ IndieGameStand  
■ PC (other)





# Mobile: Getting Featured



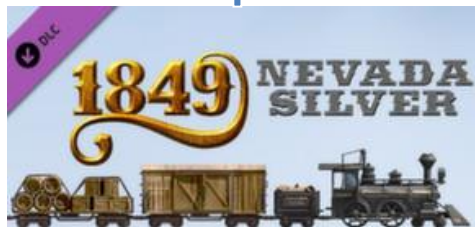


# After Release: The Tale of the Tail



Release The Kraken

Summer sale



Holiday sales

Out-of-band  
Week-long sale





# Flogging the tail: Ads





# Keep at it!



User reviews **Mostly Positive** (97 reviews)



1849 ist ein Städtemanagementspiel während des Kalifornischen Goldrausches. Deine Aufgabe besteht darin, Städte zu bauen, sie mit Arbeitern zu besiedeln und sicherzustellen, dass sie untergebracht, versorgt und unterhalten werden. Du

1849 est un jeu de développement de ville se déroulant en Californie au moment de la ruée vers l'or. Construisez vos villes afin d'y attirer des travailleurs et assurez-vous qu'ils disposent de suffisamment de maisons, de nourriture et de distractions.



# Epilogue: What's Next

[www.somasim.com/highrise](http://www.somasim.com/highrise)



**Project  
Highrise**



# Q&A?

- Check us out at:
- @somasim\_games
- [www.somasim.com](http://www.somasim.com)

