

Karen Stevens

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EXPERIENCE

Technical Director, Gearbox Publishing, 11/2022 – 8/2023

- Created US Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) and European Accessibility Act compliance policies and procedures documentation for Embracer Group and subsidiaries.
- Evaluation of game milestones using a variety of criteria, such as legal compliance. Recommendations were then sent to game teams for review and implementation.

Director of Accessibility / Technical Program Manager, Electronic Arts, 10/2020 – 5/2022

- Company-wide evolution of prior Accessibility Lead position, with all prior responsibilities expanded and additional headcount for a business analyst, quality designer, and user researcher.
- Directed overall strategy, documents, schedules, and roadmaps for game accessibility at EA., creating custom implementation plans for all major game titles, with stages of accessibility team support depending on expected game revenue.
- Oversaw cost and feature analysis of potential third-party tool and service solutions, resulting in IBM Watson AI integration into all EA multiplayer games for chat transcription and screen reading.
- Top manager satisfaction survey score, leading to 2022 manager award nomination.

EA Sports Accessibility Lead / Technical Product Manager, Electronic Arts, 8/2017 – 10/2020

- Position created by self-made pitches to senior management, highlighting accessibility compliance needs. Team creation pitch included a consultant, writer, and engineer. Scope encompassed all EA Sports titles, such as Madden NFL, FIFA, and NHL. This effort established the first full time accessibility positions in the entire video game industry.
- Ran team as an agile / waterfall hybrid. The team was primarily an agile service-based team, utilizing a Jira-based ticketing system for requests. The waterfall portion included long-term efforts outside of the request model, such as road mapping. Daily stand-ups, sprint planning, and postmortems were norm, with summaries rolled into executive reports.
- Specified and analyzed game telemetry to utilize quantitative data for product improvements, for example: accessibility cross-product telemetry naming conventions, resulting in quantitative information on color blind option usage. This information was then used in press releases, and for future planning purposes.
- Collaborated with legal to ensure titles followed government regulations, such as CVAA.
- Pitched, staffed, and launched ea.com/able website to better fulfill alternate game interaction needs, while also ensuring legal documentation compliance.
- Engaged with customers directly via twitter, ea.com, email, and conference talks. Resulting feedback was then used to improve products, leading to positive press.

Madden NFL Graphics Software Engineer / Product Owner, Electronic Arts, 6/2013 – 8/2017

- Product ownership included accessibility related feature briefs, scheduling, long-term planning, personas, use cases, and design. Example feature set: making Madden NFL playable for those who are totally blind. This resulted in a 2018 company-wide recognition award.
- Augmented UI cross-team engineering effort, bringing together presentation, UI, graphics.
- Performed variety of shader work, significant support to character skin, monoliths, banner AI.
- Ownership of graphics disk space usage, graphics memory; creator of related Python-based tracking tools to automatically find malformed art assets.

Software Engineer / Project Manager, Microsoft Corporation, 5/2005 – 4/2013

- Tech Lead for multi-platform Xbox Avatar development, including web and mobile
 - Led international team to create a custom cross-platform 3D rasterizer for Microsoft Silverlight and Xbox live network support services.
 - Managed software engineer headcount, schedule, planning, cross-team collaboration.
 - Specified overall architecture, interfaces, design, user requirements.
- Tech Lead for all 11 games that shipped with Windows 7
 - Graphics engineer for all games, handling both code and artwork.
 - Created team's work/feature schedule; collaborated on requirement creation.
 - Orchestrated both cross-team and international collaboration during entire lifecycle.
 - Includes Minesweeper, Solitaire, Hearts, Spider Solitaire, FreeCell, Chess Titans, Mahjong Titans, Purple Place, Internet Spades, Internet Checkers, Internet Backgammon.
- Game Developer, Project Spark, Xbox 360, Xbox One, Windows
 - DirectX graphics developer, focusing on particle effects, materials, lighting, model rendering.
 - Content pipeline tools support, Maya, 3ds Max, Granny, Havok, C++, XML, HLSL.
 - Placeholder artist; creating meshes, characters, animations, particle systems, skyboxes, and materials.
- Miscellaneous Projects
 - Xbox platform code development for Kinect-enabled dashboard.
 - Created DirectX shipped sample, including a performance tools tutorial.
 - Created new/updated PIX for Windows DirectX Shimming detours for DirectX11 support.
 - Key contributor in Xbox Dr. PIX performance tool design, resulting in a granted patent.

EDUCATION

- Master of Engineering, Software Engineering, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University
- Bachelor of Science, Computer Science, Michigan Technological University
- Bellevue Community College Completion Certificate, Maya 3D Animation for Games and Movies
- Microsoft Azure Fundamentals, ID: AB2EF3CF59FD51CD, Cert: AZAF53-347F01, 6/24

SKILLS

Agile Methodologies, Automation, Benchmarking, Communication, Computer Graphics, CVAA, DirectX, Documentation, Executive Pitches, Game AI, People Management, Performance Management, Pitch Decks, Planning, Presentations, Problem Solving, Process Improvement, Project Management, Publishing, Risk Management, Road Mapping, Scheduling, Scripting, Scrum, Software Lifecycles, Strategic Thinking, Technical Leadership, UML, User Experience Design, User Experience Research, Video Game Development, Waterfall Model, Workflows

TOOLS

Adobe Acrobat, Adobe Photoshop, Autodesk 3DS Max, Autodesk Maya, Autodesk Maya, Confluence, G Suite, Jira, Microsoft Copilot, Microsoft Office, Microsoft Teams, PIX on Windows, PlayStation Razor Performance Analyzer, Visual Studio, Xbox PIX, Zoom, and much more

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Patent author with 6 granted patents. Graphics samples in live GLSL, details, and published articles available at <http://KarenStevens.com>
- Repeated top-rated speaker at the Game Developers' Conference, select videos are available at <http://KarenStevens.com>