



Oregon Game Project Challenge 1:
Oregon's First Annual High School Game Programming Competition

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Challenge Information & Instructions for the 2008 Season April 3, 2008

Energy Theme

The 2008 season of the Oregon Game Project Challenge will feature an energy theme. Team members should research energy issues and use what they learn to design a game. Teams should seek out resources on one or more of the following

- The cost and availability of energy sources like oil, natural gas, and coal.
- The environmental impact of these and other energy sources.
- Possible alternate sources of energy that today or in the future may
 - Cost less
 - Be more available
 - Have less environmental impact

Teams do not have to research all aspects of these issues. They should, however, gain a general familiarity with the issues and opportunities before they begin designing their game. The goals of the game should be to be engaging, challenging and fun while encouraging the player to think about energy issues and their possible solutions.

As discussed in chapter 5 of *The Game Maker's Apprentice* by Habgood and Overmars, there are approximately five general genres of computer games:

- Action games
- Simulator games
- Strategy games
- Adventure games
- Role-playing games

While not all of these genres are equally supported by Game Maker, there are many possibilities for applying the energy theme to these general computer game genres.

Submission Requirements

Concept Document

Based on their research, teams should brainstorm different ways to incorporate what they learned about energy and energy issues into the design of a game that is challenging and fun. After discussion among the team members, the team should identify a specific concept that they plan to use as the basis for their game. This concept should be written up using the Design Concept Template available at www.techstart.org/docs/GameConceptTemplate.rtf

Your Design Concept Document should be used as a reference as your game design proceeds forward. You will find guidelines on how to create a Game Concept Document at

http://www.gamasutra.com/features/19991019/ryan_02.htm

The team's concept document should be updated as the design of the game evolves during the season. On or before May 3, 2008, the team should email the current copy of their design document to john.ossowski@techstart.org. If the concept changes after the document is submitted it should be updated. In any case, the latest version of the document should be brought to the tournament on May 17, 2008.

Development Platform

The software platform used for the challenge, Game Maker, is a freely available¹, PC-based game development tool. Game Maker's drag-and-drop interface allows novice designers to create interesting games almost immediately. For more advanced users, Game Maker's built-in programming language provides flexibility and customization. Development on Game Maker is supported by online documentation, tutorials, and lots of game examples. Teams can use the Lite Edition (free) or the Pro Edition (\$20), which provides more functionality. Teams cannot use third-party upgrades to Game Maker like Ultimate 3D.

Submission at the Tournament

On the morning of the tournament, the team should check in at the registration table and turn in three things:

1. A printed final version of the Concept Document.
2. A copy of your completed OGPC Resources Journal (see the OGPC Code of Ethics).
3. A USB memory stick (thumb drive) containing an EXE version² of the team's game, your final Concept Document and your OGPC Resources Journal.
4. A CD-ROM containing a second copy of the EXE version of the game, your final Concept Document and your OGPC Resources Journal.

Please note: You retain any rights to ownership in any materials submitted to OGPC by you; OGPC will not gain ownership rights to this material.

Meeting with Judging Panel

During the tournament on May 17, 2008, the team will be given a time slot for a private meeting with a judging panel. This panel will include professional game designers, industry professionals and university professors.. Obviously they won't expect the games submitted at the tournament to be up to professional or commercial standards. Instead they will be there to assess what each team learned and accomplished, and assign awards in several different categories. To help them accomplish this, each team will be asked to make a short presentation that covers the following:

- What aspect of energy and energy issues the team researched.
- What the team learned about energy and energy issues during the research.
- How the team worked together on the project (research and game development)
- What went into the design of the game including how the energy theme was used.
- A demonstration of the actual game.
- A behind-the-scenes tour of the Game Maker objects used in the game.

During and after the team's presentation the judges will ask questions to better understand what the team learned and accomplished.

Awards

To honor the variety of accomplishments made by teams during the spring season, the judging panel will assign awards in several award categories. No team will win more than one award. We expect to award trophies in most of the categories listed below. If enough teams register, we may award second or third in some of the categories.

Here is our tentative list of trophy categories:

- Best Research
- Best Game Design
- Best Programming
- Best Presentation
- Best Teamwork
- Best Game Experience
- Best Overall

We expect about half the teams to go home with a trophy and all teams to go home with

- a strong sense of accomplishment;
- ideas for how their game could be improved; and
- ideas about possible improvements for the next OGPC season.

¹ See <http://www.yoyogames.com/gamemaker> or the CD-ROM included with *The Game Maker's Apprentice* by Jacob Habgood and Mark Overmars or *Basic Game Design & Creation for Fun & Learning* by Nanu Swamy.

² Use the Create Executable option in the File menu of Game Maker.