Let's release a game!

Can't be that hard, can it?

Little bit of background

Programming since I was 12 (and that was a long time ago)

   Started in basic, then assembly, then C/C++ and now C#

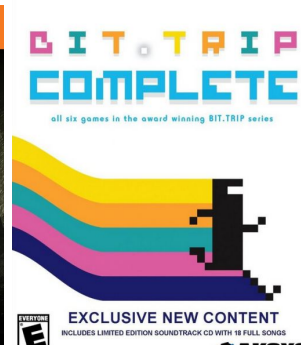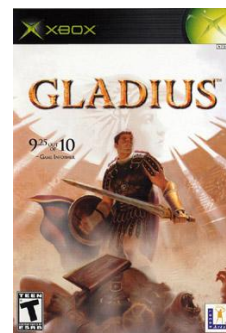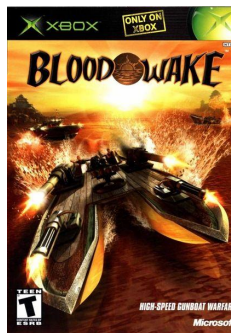Been in the games industry for last 22 years

Worked in-house and remotely (as a contractor)

Worked on over 30 titles for many platforms

   Amiga CD32, PS1, Xbox, PC, PS2, PS3, Xbox360, Kinect, DS, Wii, XboxOne

Some of the games I've worked on

(quality cannot be assured)

Total Monkery

Started in 2012

I got tired of contract work

We make manageable indie games

We're not too ambitious (at least not yet)

Focus on interesting game ideas / innovation

Six employees + part time MD + collaborators

Three programmers and three artists (but we also share a lot of extra roles)

Total Monkery

We also do client work (games, technology and apps)

But we prefer making our own games

My employees were trained from no industry experience

We believe in effective on the job training

So where do we start

What sort of game do we want to make?

We'll need a design

But how much do we need to start with

Who's going to make it

Do we need to pay them

Also - **Why are we making it?**

Why make a game

- **Experimentation**, to learn
- **Vanity**, because we want to make it
- **For fun**, because we like it and might want to work with others
- **Client work**, because we've been paid to make it
- **To raise your profile**, which can be useful
- **To make money**, which again can be useful

Know your reason, it will guide how to make it

Don't expect "Vanity" or "Fun" games to make money

So let's make this thing

Use Unity, Unreal, Marmalade etc. (do you have all the skills?)

If you write your own engine, good luck to you

Build your team (or go it alone)

Make some assets (or buy in the Asset Store)

Put it together

Done (with development)

So that's it then?

If you don't want to make money, then you're mostly done

If you do want to make money, your journey is just beginning

So what else do we need to do… (take deep breath)

What else do we need

- **Language translations** (increases market and can be required)
- **QA Testing** (you don't want bad reviews)
- **Compatibility testing** (how many mobile phones!)
- **Ratings** (required by some markets and needed for big shows)
- **Insurances** (required by the console markets)
- **Publishers** (required to go into certain regions)
- **PR** (do it yourself or pay someone)
- **PR materials** (promo videos, required for console)
- **Social media support** (for news, updates, user feedback etc.)
- **Post release support** (there will be bugs to fix)

What else do we need

- **App Store Submissions** (lots of paperwork)
- **Registered company** (required by some stores)
- **Company bank account** (required by some stores)
- **Features** (getting your game on the front page)
- **Back end support** (are you collecting data or hosting games)
- **Porting** (let's get it on more platforms)
- **Trademarks** (not required, but if the game is a hit...)
- **Development status** (working on console requires this)

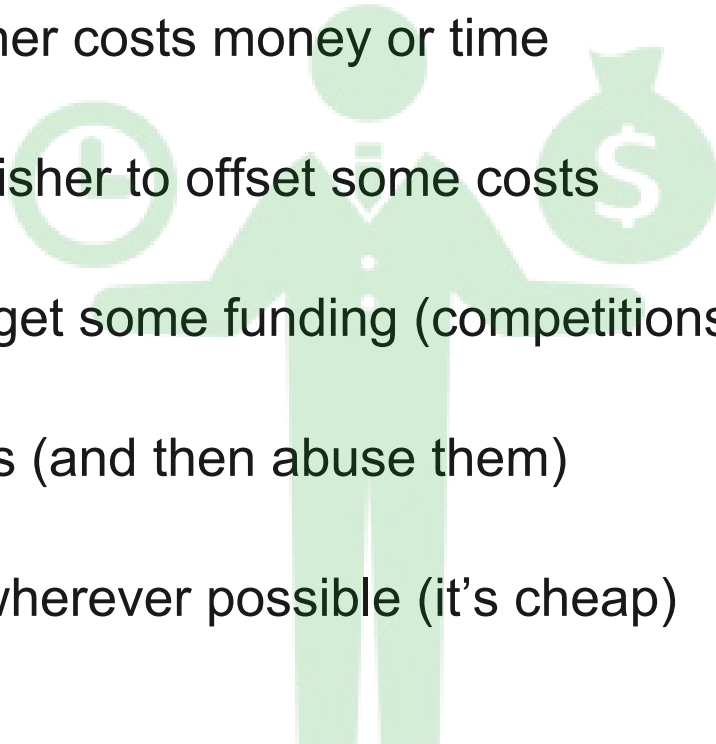That's not the whole list, you'll find more things

Those costs

Each of the steps either costs money or time

You could use a publisher to offset some costs

Try and find ways to get some funding (competitions, grants etc.)

Find friends with skills (and then abuse them)

Use Guerilla tactics wherever possible (it's cheap)

You don't have to do it all

It's all based on what you want to release on

Make something manageable

Make something that needs less support

Target cheaper hardware platforms first

Target cheaper sales platforms first

KEEP CALM AND BE SENSIBLE

The game market landscape

PC / Mac / Linux

Steam, GOG, Greenman, Humble Bundle, Origin, Itch.IO + many more

Mobile

iOS Store, Google Store, Amazon + many more

Console

XboxOne, Xbox 360, PS4, PS Vita, PS3, WiiU, 3DS

The game market landscape

Set Top Boxes and smart TVs

G Cluster, Fuse, Samsung + many more

Web

Kongregate, Chrome + many more

That's just touching the surface, there's a big market out there

Generally they take 30% of revenue to host your game

Premium or Freemium

Premium

Up-front payments are the classic and easiest way to sell

Has been around for forty years and it's not going away

However, it's market share is dropping on mobile

Freemium

Free to start, then pay to unlock features or buy virtual goods

Has also been around since the 80s (shareware)

Most of the big money now is in this arena

Let's think budget

Do you know how much your project will cost?

How do you know?

Do you have the budget when you start? If not, where (and when) will you find the rest?

How will you handle cost overruns?

What's "Plan B" when things go wrong? (or "Plan C" or "Plan D")

Don't think game, think product

We now live in an era where it's easy to make a game.

If you want to make money, you need a product (not a game).

The markets are saturated with games, how will you stand out?
Maybe less saturated markets can be better?

Leaving thoughts

We really are in a Golden Age for self publishing

but

The gravy train has left the station, it's hard out there

"Fail to prepare, prepare to fail"

Know exactly what you are getting into

Don't let me put you off