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Subject: Re: How to FAIL to make a Game on the Apple IIgs

Posted by [blondie7575](#) on Sun, 05 Oct 2014 17:24:33 GMT

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This is good advice, which also applies to modern indie platforms such as mobile and Steam. Perhaps even more so, because the fidelity is higher and the market more crowded, so the need for good art and design is even higher.

I think a lot of programmers don't realize that there are LOTS of artists out there who would be happy to work on your game. Many will even do it for free. There are also great free (as in beer) sprite libraries you can use, no strings attached. Much like programmers, artists love what they do and crank out great work even when nobody is paying them. You can get great custom work for a small fee, as well. I've done this for a few of my games. Just go into the indie game forums ([tigsources.com](#) or [indiegamer.com](#) are good ones) and ask for help. Describe your game, and ask for an artist to make assets. If you can offer a small stipend, like \$100, you'll get a ton of responses. You'll even get responses if you can't offer any money, but be prepared for the fact that they have no obligation to see the project through, and may move on at some point.

I will play a bit of Devil's Advocate here and say there are some times when it's okay to get started with no assets. If you have a radical idea for a gameplay mechanic or engine architecture, I think it's worth prototyping that first. If your idea is crap, better to find out as soon as possible.

Something I have done a number of times is to build the whole game with placeholder assets (little boxes or font characters, for example). This does two things for you:

1) Forces you to refine your design. The best games are fun even if the artwork is just colored boxes. Think about the running and jumping in Mario. That has a feel that is separate from the art, and is fun to play even without sprites.

2) It defines the scope of art you need. It's a lot easier to get help from an artist if you can hand them a list of exactly what sprites you need, and in what sizes and formats. If you have to go back and request changes 100 times because you didn't think about how video memory layout was going to affect your collision box alignment or something, you're going to lose their interest in a hurry.

But overall, I agree with Olivier. I'll add that it's easier to maintain your motivation to finish when you can see real art in there. Seeing the game "come together" is huge. It's more difficult to keep going when you're staring at plain boxes for weeks on end. On a few projects, I started down the path of "make it fun with colored boxes", but halfway through went and got some artwork to put in because it was too depressing without it. Doing that really motivated me again, because it felt like a game all of a sudden, instead of a complicated geometry problem.