

## Vega School introduces gaming degree

South Africa is believed to have a gaming industry worth R2.5 billion, with a growth projection of R3.3 billion in 2017. Vega School is to be one of the first tertiary institutions to introduce a gaming degree to support this industry in South Africa, with its Bachelor degree in Computer and Information Sciences in Game Design and Development launching in 2017.



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Business is increasingly looking to gamification strategies to bring brands to life. On an international scale, gamification has become a core principle in business with companies such as Microsoft using gamification to motivate employees to do bug testing and improve language translations in their software.

While it is evident that games and interactive applications are coming to the fore, however in South Africa there is a great need for improvement, as a major obstacle to meeting this need has been the lack of formal training and development of existing and incoming developers.

Vega's response to introducing this degree clearly shows its commitment as leaders in the design, brand and business sectors. The degree will provide students with the necessary knowledge and expertise to pursue a career in game design and development, allowing them to create gaming content for everything, from home consoles and computers and other platforms such as mobile phones and other hand held devices.

The three-year degree is industry focused and on completion, graduates will be well prepared and qualified with all the knowledge necessary to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional games. Students will have the ability to be employed in business as a developer for gamification applications, business applications and mobile apps, or to consider an entrepreneurial route in designing and developing their own games.

“Making games is a ‘fun’ science which requires lots of dedication while dealing with complex mathematics, real-time coding, cutting-edge digital art and high fidelity sound,” says Vega national marketing manager, Nicky Stanley.

“Our programme thus facilitates the development of a well-rounded game designer and developer; with a balance of graphic and visual design for games combined with significant programming and database skills, knowledge and insight that will enable our students to find employment in business enterprises as well as further studies in IT or design.”

This new degree promises to offer the perfect platform to unleash great talent, which will deliver industry-ready game designers and developers. Seasoned lecturers, who will provide exercises that afford the students with opportunities to integrate their game development with a brand-building slant, contextualise its offering within brand building.

## **Industry professionals endorse degree**

Industry professionals are rallying behind the degree. Megan Hughes, brand manager at RetroEpic Software, says, “This is only the second degree I’ve seen being offered in South Africa where the students are being equipped with the range of skills that will prepare them for working in the industry.”

While Edward Dennekamp and Neil Jones from Lighthouse Games believe that the degree offered will be a game changer for future developers. “If only this degree was available when we were students; it has a unique approach providing a balance between the design and development of games, with a strong real-world application ensuring industry ready students. The programme supports the possibility for a student to launch their own game, and make money from it, even before they graduate, which is significant.”

As the electronic games industry continues to be one of the fastest growing industries worldwide with no signs of slowing down and video games becoming a primary form of entertainment, it is reassuring to know that South Africa is well on its way to producing ‘game-changers’ that meet the demand for complex and superior games.

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