

**Max Holechek is a designer and producer of award-winning video games.** From 2001 to 2004, Max gained industry attention as creative director of the popular Nancy Drew series, the first game titles to smash conventional misconceptions about female gamer habits while pioneering "casual" game design years before the term was coined.

To date, Max has shipped 16 major titles for the likes of Oberon Media, PopCap Games, PlayFirst and Her Interactive. He has also served as producer and design consultant to THQ, Nick Jr., Cranium, Codemasters and Humongous Entertainment.

## Experience and Shipped Games-

### Creative Director

iWin • 04/09 – 01/10

Reason for leaving - Seattle studio closed

Hired specifically to design innovative new storytelling methods and play experiences for iWin's game catalog. Designed and produced "casual" PC download games, while mentoring 2nd party devs to achieve iWin's high product standards.

- ★ Designed and produced a breakout game that expanded the boundaries of storytelling possibilities in the mystery/thriller genre. Penned original story that opened new levels of character empathy and narrative immersion in the casual game space. (Under NDA.)
- Researched and designed social networking games.

### Game Designer & Producer

Oberon Media • 07/07 – 04/09

Reason for leaving - Recruited by iWin

Designed and produced "casual" PC download games, while acting as a senior producer for Oberon's Eastern European development teams. Authored and maintained all game documentation, including GDDs and project schedules.

- ★★ Salvaged runaway project headed for chopping block; redesigned and shipped in 8 weeks, saving company an excess of \$200,000.
- Improved design of original game when inheriting "Turbo" franchise and sequels, as supported by numerous industry reviews.
- Met company challenge of designing and producing innovative new game genre, tailored to resonate with women. (Under NDA.)

Shipped games: [Turbo Subs](#) [Turbo Fiesta](#) [Go-Go- Gourmet](#) [Go-Go- Gourmet: Chef of the Year](#)

### Game Designer & Producer

Say Design • 06/06 – 6/07

Reason for leaving - Studio closed

Hired specifically to advance the level and scope of company's game development. Designed and produced multiple console, "casual" PC, and web games. Ensured all game projects met documentation, schedule, budgetary, and publisher requirements.

- ★★ Solely responsible for securing first WiiWare development deal offered to a third party dev, within the first two months of employment.
- Designed *Sushiya - Ultimate Master*, Simulation/Puzzle IP for Nintendo WiiWare. (Approved by Nintendo, unreleased by developer.)
- Designed *Teppanyaki*, an original Rhythm/Simulation IP for Nintendo DS. (Approved/funded by THQ, unreleased by developer.)

Shipped game: [Solitaire Pop](#)

### Project Manager

PopCap Games • 03/05 – 03/06

Reason for leaving - Position dissolved after internal restructuring

Managed PopCap's celebrated, award-winning casual video game projects. Ensured all concurrent projects met schedule, brand, and release requirements through the continuous supervision of interdepartmental team resources and third-party relationships.

- ★★ Served as unaccredited producer on Chuzzle, earning two major industry awards and over 3 million in sales across all platforms.
- Instituted new processes and practices that boosted 80% efficiency of interdepartmental communication, approvals, and compliance with PopCap's numerous, top-tier partner requirements. (AOL Games, Yahoo! Games, RealArcade, etc.)
- Was direct contact for PopCap's partners; managed product releases, press kits, game builds, and customized marketing assets.

Shipped games: [Chuzzle](#) [Feeding Frenzy 2](#) [Bonnie's Bookstore](#)

### Marketing Producer

Cranium • 06/04 – 03/05

Reason for leaving - Recruited by PopCap

Directed the development of world-class marketing promotions that captured the play-experience of Cranium's best-selling and internationally award-winning board games. Supervised all promotional projects so that they met schedule, budgetary, and brand requirements, while concurrently managing all internal, cross-team resources and third-party relationships.

- ★★ Produced innovative Burger King, Toys 'R Us, and Pizza Hut marketing premiums that doubled product sales in one year.
- Established production infrastructure and marketing promotions deployment best business practices within first four months of hire.
- Maintained detailed project schedules and resource allocation. Identified and resolved potential conflicts.

Work samples: [www.maxarama.com](http://www.maxarama.com)

### Creative Director

Her Interactive • 03/01 – 06/04

Reason for leaving - Desire to explore new IP, platforms, and technologies

Responsible for the overall vision and development of the Nancy Drew series, the #1 top-selling PC adventure game franchise. Served as lead designer in game and information architecture: storylines, play pathways, puzzles and activities, UI, and special feature sets. Was reporting manager for Art Director, 3D Team, 2D Team, Character Design Team, Animators, Scriptwriter, and Music Composer. Responsible for creative resource hiring and annual performance evaluations, half-year reviews, and performance monitoring.

- ★★ Increased company's annual production and revenue by 100% within one year, with minimal increase in resources.
- Promoted from art director to creative director within first six months of employment.
- Shipped eight large-scope adventure games in less than four years.

Shipped games: [Nancy Drew: Treasure in the Royal Tower](#) [Nancy Drew: The Final Scene](#) [Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Scarlet Hand](#) [Nancy Drew: Ghost Dogs of Moon Lake](#) [Nancy Drew: The Haunted Carousel](#) [Nancy Drew: Danger on Deception Island](#) [Nancy Drew: The Secret of Shadow Ranch](#) [Nancy Drew: Curse of Blackmoore Manor](#)

### Online Producer

Humongous Entertainment • 07/98 – 11/99

Reason for leaving - Studio closed after corporate merger

Responsible for the creation and direction of Humongous.com's global vision and planning: information architecture, content and layout, development, community features, budget, micro/macro-level scheduling, and management of all Online Team members and projects.

- ★★ Promoted twice within one year of employment: From web designer, to art director, to online producer.
- Spearheaded site-wide redesign of from a placeholder website to a graphic-rich, family-friendly entertainment destination.
- Instituted new levels of communication and collaboration between the Online, Software Development, and Marketing Teams to promote strategic initiatives that benefited all departments.

Work samples: [www.maxarama.com](http://www.maxarama.com)

## Software Proficiency (*Partial Listing*)-

Photoshop  
ImageReady  
Illustrator  
Flash  
Dreamweaver  
Sound Forge  
Poser

Project  
Visio  
Office Suite  
Open Office Suite  
Basecamp and other wiki-based PM systems  
Online bug tracking systems  
Final Cut Express

## Game Awards-

### PopCap Games

#### Chuzzle Deluxe

- Billboard Magazine's Digital Entertainment & Media Excellence Awards - 2005 Casual Game of the Year
- WSA Industry Achievement Award - 2005 Entertainment Product of the Year

### Her Interactive

#### Nancy Drew: Curse of Blackmoore Manor

- Parent's Choice 2004 Gold Honor - Software, ages 10-Up
- i-Parenting Media - 2004 Best Software Award

#### Nancy Drew: Ghost Dogs of Moon Lake

- Children's Software Revue - 2003 All Star Software Award
- Choosing Children's Software - Best Pick 2001, 5 out of 5 Stars
- Parent's Choice Gold Award - Best Software, ages 10-18

#### Nancy Drew: The Secret of the Scarlet Hand

- Parent's Choice Gold Award 2002 - Best Software, ages 10-18
- National Parenting Center - Seal of Approval 2002

#### Nancy Drew: Treasure in the Royal Tower

- Parents' Choice - 2001 Software Gold Award
- National Parenting Center - Seal of Approval 2001
- Parent's Guide to Children's Media - 2001 Outstanding Achievement
- Amazon.com - Editor's Choice
- Amazon.com - Best Children's Software of 2001

#### Nancy Drew: The Secret of Shadow Ranch

- Parent's Choice 2004 Silver Honor - Software, ages 10-16
- i-Parenting Media - 2004 Best Software Award
- Museum of Science, Boston - 2004 Top Choice Software Award

#### Nancy Drew: Danger on Deception Island

- i-Parenting Media - 2004 Best Software Award
- Parent's Choice 2003 Gold Award - Best Software, ages 10-18
- Museum of Science, Boston - 2003 Top Choice Software Award

#### Nancy Drew: The Haunted Carousel

- Museum of Science, Boston - 2003 Top Choice Software Award
- Parent's Choice 2003 Gold Award, Best Software
- i-Parenting Media - 2003 Best Software Award

#### Nancy Drew: The Final Scene

- Children's Software Revue - All Star Software 2002
- Amazon.com - Best Children's Software of 2001

## Cited in Publications-

#### Writing for Multimedia and the Web:

A Practical Guide to Content Development for  
Interactive Media

*by Timothy Garrand*

Focal Press, July 21, 2006

#### Digital Storytelling:

A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment

*by Carolyn Handler Miller*

Focal Press, August 5, 2004