



Heidi Erwin Game Designer & Developer

heidierwin.com | linkedin.com/in/heidierwin | heidianneerwin@gmail.com

Experience

The New York Times Senior Game Designer

March 2024 - Present

Designing and developing new puzzle game prototypes. Collaborating with research, brand identity, product design, and editorial teams to run public beta tests for new games in front of an audience of millions.

Creating [Strands](#) puzzles. Writing Brain Ticklers, variety riddles that run in the [NYT Gameplay Newsletter](#).

The New York Times Digital Puzzle Designer

May 2021 - March 2024

Built mobile and desktop-friendly web (JavaScript) games each year as part of a highly iterative, fast-paced production process.

Led game design on daily puzzle games including [Connections](#), [Digits](#), and [Strands](#).

Designed and built [Chess Replay](#), an interactive historical chess puzzle article series.

Activision Game Design Intern

Summer 2020

Designed and implemented core interactions, enemy AI + PvE engagement for new online mobile game prototype.

Created and pitched gamified mobile experience centered on social connection and meaningful engagement.

Critiqued UI/UX decisions of existing games and analyzed the success of recent releases.

Brown University Computer Science Head Teaching Assistant, User Interfaces and User Experience

Fall 2019

Developed assignments, labs, and course policies to integrate ethics program, improve accessibility, and decrease grading subjectivity. Led team of 13 TAs in supporting class of ~300 Brown and RISD students.

Course material included: JS, React, HTML/CSS, Figma, AdobeXD, Balsamiq, InVision, Sketch, A/B Testing.

PBS KIDS Accessibility in Game Design Intern

Summer 2019

Designed and developed an accessible, educational children's puzzle video game from scratch.

Integrated Universal Design for Learning principles and the Ready to Learn Engineering curriculum in the game.

Play-tested project with kids in the DC Metro Area and iterated on puzzle designs based on feedback.

Brown RISD Game Developers Executive Board Design Lead, Software Engineer, Project Manager

2017 - 2021

Project manager, game designer, and programmer (Java, C#, Unity).

Facilitated creation of semester-long game projects by smaller teams within the 70-person organization.

Coordinated meetings, led Unity workshops, planned playtesting events and industry panels.

Education

Brown University Game Design and Development A.B., Computer Science A.B. (4.0 GPA)

Class of 2021

Relevant Coursework: User Interfaces & User Experience, Functional & Object-Oriented Programming, Visualizing Information, Human Factors, Digital 2D & 3D Illustration (RISD), Psychology of Creativity, Computer Animation.

Projects

Strands Game Designer, Engineer (JavaScript)

2023 - 2024

Led game design on The New York Times word search logic puzzle. Built prototype in JS. Constructing daily puzzles.

Mixer (Puzzle Game) Game Designer, Unity Engineer, Illustrator

Spring 2023

Designed and developed logic puzzle video game, with a twist, for web and Android. Half of a 2-person team.

Connections Game Designer, Engineer (JavaScript)

2023

Led game design on The New York Times daily puzzle game. Built prototype in JS. Game played by millions.

Leaflet UX Designer, User Researcher, 3D Artist

Fall 2020

Designed a mobile navigation application from ideation to high-fidelity prototype (Figma).

Conducted user research, created wireframes + personas, constructed affinity maps, and built the final prototype.

Created 3D assets in Blender and 2D assets in Photoshop. Half of a 2-person team.

Turnin' Tail Producer, Designer, Programmer (C#, Unity)

Spring 2020

Managed team of 12 to create a perspective-play 2.5D puzzle game over 4 months.

Designed physics-based and logic-based puzzles. Implemented game flow, UI, 'Help' feature.

Writer's Block Project Lead, C#, Unity Programmer, Game Designer

Fall 2018

Designed and developed accessible puzzle game (wordplay puzzles, UI, narrative). Managed 13-person team.

Skills

Technical: Java, C#, Unity, HTML/CSS, JS, React.

Design: Figma, Adobe XD, Illustrator, Photoshop, Procreate, Blender.