

# MICHAEL ANNETTA

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## SUMMARY

A versatile interactive designer/producer who leverages cutting-edge technologies to craft immersive and award-winning experiences and games. A proven team leader who proactively manages the development and production lifecycles of diverse creative projects. Hallmarks include creative vision, communication skills, and a dedication to improving user experience through continual and iterative technological innovation.

## EXPERIENCE

### SONY PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT, Culver City, CA, 2018 – present Designer/Producer, Smart Speaker Voice Games

- Design and lead the development of voice-enabled games of major IPs (*Jeopardy!*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, *Ghostbusters*, *American Girl*) for Amazon Alexa
- Headed the redevelopment and redesign of the full *Jeopardy!* Alexa skill (Summer/Fall 2019)
- Work closely with brand stakeholders to align with defined business objectives
- Design user flows and voice interactions, script dialogue and voice prompts, write, review and edit game design documents and proposals, prototype, review and test builds, edit/process audio, plan content requirements, schedule build deliverables and product launches
- Effortlessly transition back and forth between creative responsibilities and project management, as needed, over the course of the several concurrent projects

## EDUCATION

### Master of Fine Arts

Interactive

Media & Games

USC School of

Cinematic Arts

Los Angeles, CA

Honors

Fox Fellowship Award

### Bachelor of Arts

Film & Communications

Penn State University

State College, PA

### MATTER VR, Santa Monica, CA, 2017

#### Lead VR Experience & Narrative Designer, *Wonders of the World*

- Recruited to lead the development and design of *Wonders of the World*, an interactive educational experience for GearVR and Rift, at pioneering VR studio specializing in immersive storytelling
- Crafted all characters and narratives for the story, interfacing with internal creative teams to ensure consistency in execution
- Sketched wireframes and flowcharts to define the user experience and user flow, utilized Articy:Draft 3 software to shape the game's overall interactive structure, and drafted comprehensive design document to facilitate streamlined production of future episodes
- Researched extensively to authenticate historical details and inform creative content, adapting ancient board and dice games to build engrossing in-story VR mini-games
- Played lead producer role throughout, advising on pitch documents to secure project funding, making key casting decisions, and directing voiceover talent as necessary

## SOFTWARE

Unity 3D

Unreal Engine

Oculus Rift SDK

Slack

Lucidchart

Omnigraffle

Articy:Draft

Audacity

Maya LT

### VR HARDWARE

Rift, HTC Vive, Gear VR

### CODING LANGUAGES

C#, JavaScript

### ADOBE CREATIVE SUITE

### ATLASSIAN SOFTWARE

Jira, Confluence

### FLYING MOLLUSK, Glendale, CA, 2015 – 2017

#### Lead VR Designer, Creative Producer, & Academic and Research Liaison

- Spearheaded the creative development and production of *Nevermind*, the first commercially-available, biofeedback-enhanced VR game that earned stellar user reviews for gameplay content, character performances, and real-world psychological impact
- Guided the successful adaptation from flatscreen to Unity-built VR game for Rift and HTC Vive
- Expertly tracked and managed all project milestones and deliverables, making strategic decisions to deliver the final game on time and under budget without sacrificing gameplay quality
- Interfaced with university representatives and research professionals to build collaborative relationships, share cutting-edge technologies, and pursue ongoing innovation in the XR, gestural interface, and Internet of Things spaces
- Analyzed numerous biotechnology devices to determine optimal compatibility and functionality within *Nevermind*'s existing narrative structure
- Partnered with CEO to shape corporate and creative strategy, scheduled tasks and sprints for Agile development activities, and directed the creation and maintenance of individual game and company websites
- Directed actor voiceover sessions and utilized Audacity and Adobe Audition to edit character audio files for use in-game

**AWARDS:** Received widespread recognition for VR innovation and gaming quality, earning multiple creative awards and a selection as *Indiecade* Finalist in 2015

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## EXPERIENCE (CONT'D)

### WEVR, Venice, CA, 2013 & 2014

#### VR Designer, *theBluVR*, 2014

- Architected dynamic oceanic educational experience for launch title on GearVR, translating existing PC assets into dynamic, interactive VR space
- Presided over experimental R&D efforts to bring *theBluVR* to the HTC Vive, performing numerous tests of the program on the first Vive device to be used outside of Steam headquarters

#### Level Designer, *Superfugu*, 2013

- Designed multiple game levels and puzzles in Unity 3D and wrote supplementary educational content for popular children's mobile game

**AWARDS:** 2015 Proto Awards: Best Mobile Experience, Best Educational Experience for *theBluVR*

### USC SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS, Los Angeles, CA, 2011 – 2018

#### Adjunct Professor (Part-Time), Game Design, 2016 – 2018

- Taught cornerstone game design course for the #1 Interactive Media & Game Design program in North America, imparting core game design principles, project management strategies, and production essentials to encourage students' professional development and success
- Mentored multiple student gaming projects that were selected for specialized publishing course in collaboration with USC's School of Cinematic Arts and achieved \$35,000+ in Kickstarter funding

#### Show Producer & Curator, Interactive Media Events, 2012 – 2018

- Recruited to produce the inaugural (2018) *USC Games Expo*, a campus-wide festival showcasing an assortment of games and interactive experiences created across multiple divisions of the university, coordinating with a variety of stakeholders, students, faculty, alumni, and sponsors
- Recruited to produce *Winteractive 2012* Interactive Media MFA exhibition, leveraging live theater and interactive production experience to design engaging user flows and floor plans
- Determined and coordinated all show content, logistics, and layout for two-day *First Move 2012* interactive exhibition at the Directors Guild of America that showcased MFA thesis projects to industry professionals

#### Creative Director & Lead Game Designer, *Seymour Deeply*, 2011 – 2012

- Conceptualized and produced narrative-driven interactive play experience in Unity, integrating consumer-level stereoscopic 3D projection and Microsoft Kinect gestural control
- Composed and scripted comic book transmedia extensions from the core storyworld

#### Design Specialist, USC Mobile & Environmental Media Lab, 2010 – 2012

- Collaborated with BMW on advanced Internet of Things project that leveraged the use of story, character, and sensory data to enhance the user driving experience
- Provided strategic support as part of innovative PUCK doctoral research project, which analyzed sensory data and user behavioral patterns to build characters and voices for modern buildings

### THE ALCHEMISTS, Hollywood, CA, 2012 – 2013

#### UI/UX Designer & Game Designer, *Flotsam*

- Shaped UI/UX for iPad transmedia extension of Caldecott-winning children's book, *Flotsam*, collaborating with educators and curriculum specialists to build informed design strategy
- Conceived and created an Augmented Reality-enabled trading card game that served as a transmedia story extension for the main game

### WALT DISNEY IMAGINEERING, Glendale, CA, 2011

#### Design Intern, Creative Interactive Attractions

- Designed and prototyped interactive concepts, collaborated with concept artists and budget managers, and created elaborate game design documentation to facilitate a reimagining of popular theme park experience in Orlando, FL

## EXPERTISE

Experience Design  
Virtual Reality  
Voice-Only Design  
Strategic Vision  
Interactive Media  
Storyworld Planning  
Project Management  
Game Development  
Agile Development  
Concept Development  
Team Leadership  
Team Management  
Creative Vision  
Creative Briefs  
Storyboarding  
Wireframing  
Prototyping  
Production  
Scheduling  
Budgeting  
UI / UX  
IoT

## VOLUNTEER

Game Developer  
Conference  
Conference Associate  
2012 – 2018