

Login

Register

Basket

About Us

Online

exertis

Digital

News

UK Retail

UK Release Dates

Games

Data

MCV Directory

Events

Jobs

TRADE BUZZ

Interviews

International

Opinion

Market Data

VR

MCV Awards 2016

eSports Pro

PACIFIC

Square Enix will reveal the 'future of ...

INTERVIEW: Vitek Goyel, PixelTek and Phoenix Online



by Sameer Desai
Tuesday, October 23rd 2012 at 8:08AM BST



Vitek Goyel has been a busy man. He helms successful 3D game art outsourcing company PixelTek; he's the vice president of a truly global game development studio in Phoenix Online; and he's also the frontman for folk/punk rock band Slow Down Clown.

Phoenix Online's first commercial release – Cognition, is set for release later this month, so we took the opportunity to catch up with Goyel to find out more about the new game and his journey through the Indian and international game development industries.

MCV: What made you start PixelTek in 2004? What sort of experience did you have with gaming prior to that, either in the industry or as a gamer?

Vitek Goyel: I studied electronic media, arts and communications at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY (USA), and while there I was fascinated with interactive arts of all disciplines. Upon returning to India after graduation, I was looking for something artsy and interactive to sink my teeth into. I have always been a gaming fan since as long as I can remember! At the time, in 2004, things were really hitting the roof in the Indian IT sector and it made sense to me at the time to try to investigate and see how we could push the game development side of things in India. Gaming seemed to make the most sense to me as a business model, and I was eager to dive right into it.

When I started PixelTek, I had just turned 22 and I didn't really know what I was doing, but I learned as much as I could about what was going on in the industry, familiarised myself with the environment and talent available in India, and visited as many gaming conferences as I could to see what the demand was. I finally decided that PixelTek should focus on 3D art outsourcing, specifically in the areas of 3D modelling and texturing. It was very tough to get going initially because of limited funds (virtually none) and limited experience, but we ploughed ahead steadily and things got much easier after we got our first contract.

MCV: What sort of work does PixelTek do and what's the team size?

Goyel: PixelTek is purely a 3D graphics outsourcing company that focuses on 3D modelling and texturing. We've stayed away from animation work and decided to carve out a niche in the modelling/texturing space. The team size has pretty much hovered around the 20-person mark for the last few years, and I actually like it that way. It's easier to manage and get more personal with the team. But it looks like we might have to scale up due to high demand for our work!

MCV: Can you name some of your clients and some recent games you have worked on?

Goyel: Since we started, we've worked on several games. To name just a few, we worked on Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines (PSP), Assassin's Creed 2: Discovery (NDS), Ghostbusters (PS3), TimeShift (PS3), World in Conflict (PC), Marvel Super Hero Squad (NDS), Anno 2070 (PC), SpellForce 2: Dragon Storm (PC), among many others. We're currently working on a fantastic project called iRacing, which is an online racing simulation.



Cognition is a cinematic point-and-click adventure game

MCV: How did your association with Phoenix Online come about?

Goyel: While we were busy working on outsourcing projects, deep down inside, I was itching to be able to make my own games. I am a totally creative person, so I wanted to see what we could do from a creative stand point - writing, development, etc. I had decided early on that if I was to make a game of my own, it would most likely be an adventure game. I am a huge fan of the genre, and I'm drawn into the storytelling aspects of it, and also the puzzle solving. Mostly, the fondness with which I remembered all the adventure games I grew up playing, like Fate of Atlantis, Monkey Island, The Dig, Full Throttle, etc.

Phoenix Online existed before I came on board as a group of fans of King's Quest, an old school adventure game. They were working on a fan project called The Silver Lining that I found fascinating. TSL was in development for a few years already, and I was keen to help them see it through to a final release. I got to know the team and I felt that my industry experience and PixelTek's talent, combined with Phoenix Online's game development skills would make for a great combination. I came on board as a partner in Phoenix Online a couple of years ago. Since I joined the company, we saw the release of TSL to great fanfare. It was on the front page of CNN, Joystiq and Kotaku, to name a few! I also used some of my connections to try and get more meetings for Phoenix Online and to push its development services. Through those contacts, we ended up working on Cognition, our latest project.

MCV: What role do you play at Phoenix and how does it work with you located in India while the rest of the team is in the US?

Goyel: I basically play two roles at Phoenix Online. I am the vice president of the company, so I handle all the business stuff, both internal and external. I also handle the production side of things on the Indian front. Phoenix Online is a truly global company, and we usually have meetings with people from all over the world on a single call! We don't have a physical office, so everyone works from home, which makes it pretty unique! So I spend my day at the PixelTek office, and then I am up till usually 2 or 3 am on conference calls with Phoenix Online folk. A few weeks ago, I was on a conference call which included people from about six different states in the US, Canada, Finland, Italy, Hungary and myself in India! I thought that was very cool.

MCV: What made you (Phoenix) decide to make a point-and-click adventure as your first commercial

release?

Goyel: For Phoenix Online, point-and-click adventure games are deeply embedded in our DNA. It's simply what we do best. We have some amazing writers, who really bring these characters to life and create emotional bonds with the characters and their situations. We also like our games to be very cinematic, and the genre lends itself extremely well to that. What I personally like about them is that pretty much anyone can play them. You don't need to be an expert button masher to play a point-and-click adventure. Another thing I love about it is that it appeals to a wide demographic. You might find a 13 year-old male who plays these games alongside his forty-something mom!

MCV: You've gone the episodic route with Cognition. Why so?

Goyel: We made it episodic for a few reasons. One was that we believe in the episodic model that was popularised by Telltale Games. It keeps people involved in the game over a long period of time and keeps them coming back for more. From a development standpoint, it also made sense to do it in chunks as opposed to putting out one single full length game. That being said, Episode 1 of Cognition is a good 6-8 hours of solid gameplay and each episode is self-contained while at the same time having an overarching theme and storyline that extends throughout all four episodes.

MCV: Cognition has so far been announced for PC and Mac. Are you planning to release it on other platforms?

Goyel: We're also going to be releasing an iPad version in the near future. Point-and-clicks lend themselves really well to tablets, and I think it will be a great platform for Cognition. After that, we will investigate other platforms that we can release on.



Cognition will be spread across four episodes, the first of which includes 6-8 hours of gameplay

MCV: How do PixelTek and Phoenix collaborate, and do you make a conscious effort to keep both companies separate?

Goyel: PixelTek helped out with a lot of the artwork and 3D characters/environments/props. We're working to integrate both teams, but for now, both companies will remain separate. We dedicate a portion of the PixelTek team to work on Phoenix Online's projects and the rest on our other projects. We treat Phoenix Online like any of our other clients, and we focus on creating quality artwork for all of them.

MCV: Despite having been in the industry for a while, at the helm of a successful company, you've kept a low profile. Why is that?

Goyel: I'm not sure why. I guess I'm not big on self-promotion, although maybe I should be more proactive on that front. Honestly, I've just been so busy with managing and running the company, I never got around to it.

MCV: As someone who's based in India but is involved with a game development studio abroad, how do you view India as a market for games, both developed by you and in general?

Goyel: Well, ever since I got into the industry, I've been hearing about how the gaming market in India is waiting to explode, but we haven't seen it yet. I think there's a few reasons for that. Firstly, there's cultural reasons that will work themselves out in time. As more people are exposed to gaming, hopefully people will think more creatively in terms of development. Hopefully it will become a viable career option that parents can encourage their kids to pursue. Secondly, there just haven't been any quality games to come out of India. I personally like games that are edgy, and I feel Indian developers need to take more risks. It seems like they find it very difficult to get out of their comfort zones with development. I'm not sure if that's for financial reasons or not, but it's a shame. Developers should focus on hitting a global market and not just the Indian one. I really believe that if you make a game that resonates throughout the world, it will automatically be a success in India as well. Whether I am right or wrong on remains to be seen.

MCV: You're also the frontman for the rock band Slow Down Clown. How do you manage to run two companies and still manage to find time for music? What takes precedence – gaming or music?

Goyel: That's a very interesting question. Sometimes it is very difficult to manage both, mainly due to scheduling conflicts. I travel abroad quite often, and I am in meetings almost 3 or 4 nights every week. That makes it difficult to coordinate with my band mates sometimes. But when it comes to music, we are very disciplined. We practice diligently before gigs, and we work hard at crafting the music. For me, music has always been a creative outlet and gaming was more a recreational outlet. But, truth be told, as time goes on, I find that the lines between what's creative and what's recreational start to blur. At the end of the day, I feel incredibly blessed that I can make a living doing

the two things I love. I only hope I can continue to do both for a long time to come.

Phoenix Online's episodic point-and-click adventure game Cognition is now [available for preorder](#).

Sign up for the free MCV India newsletter [here](#).

Advertisement



TAGS:

[Interviews](#) , [Development](#) , [MCV India](#)

Follow us on



0 Comments

MCV UK

 Login ▾

 Recommend

 Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

 [Subscribe](#)

 [Add Disqus to your site](#) [Add Disqus](#) [Add](#)

 [Privacy](#)

Related Stories

[Five Nights at Freddy's dev apologises for missing launch features](#) 3 days ago

[Jonathan Blow is most definitely working hard on The Witness](#) Jan 22nd 2016 at 9:56AM

[Developer interest in VR doubles, while Nintendo is in decline](#) Jan 21st 2016 at 10:56AM

[Shelf Life: Insane Games Wells](#) Jan 20th 2016 at 3:26PM

[Dev accused of spying released from Iranian prison](#) Jan 18th 2016 at 3:15PM

[How I learned to love the Bomb](#) Jan 15th 2016 at 9:55AM

[Flappy Bird creator returns with new game](#) Jan 13th 2016 at 2:55PM

[Japan's Agatsuma Entertainment closes down](#) Dec 16th 2015 at 10:50AM

[Apple TV game development revenue is struggling](#) Dec 9th 2015 at 4:21PM

[Bethesda opens its own Montreal development studio](#) Dec 9th 2015 at 3:25PM

CONTACT CONOR TALON
FOR SPONSORSHIP

CTALLON@NBMEDIA.COM
020 7354 6000

Get the latest news sent to your inbox

Sign up to receive MCV's email news updates and access to other online products and services.

[Sign Me Up](#)

**Compare 8 Top
Endpoint Backup Systems**

2015 Gartner Report on Enterprise
Endpoint Backup

[Access Report](#)



**MCV
<DIRECTORY>
2016**

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT
AGENCIES AND SERVICE COMPANIES

PROGRAMMERS ARTISTS DESIGNERS GRADUATES
COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT HR MONETIZATION
HUNDREDS OF GAMES JOBS ONLINE NOW
LICENSING PRODUCERS VFX MARKETING SALES
LOCALISATION PR PUBLISHING QA ANALYSTS

AardvarkSwift ASWIFT.COM
Games and Digital Recruitment

eSPORTSpro
All the eSports news...

We are everywhere. Follow us on

[Follow @MCVonline](#)

UK Retail Sponsored by PDP

FEATURED RETAIL PREVIEWS



Shelf Life: Insane Games Wells

Steve Walker shares his expectations for VR and talks about developing more business lines

[Charts](#)

[UK Release Dates](#)

Events

11

FEB



MCV/UKIE Market Valuation Presentation

London

25

FEB



The UK video games industry: technology, policy priorities and new avenues for growth
London

03

MAR

**MCV Awards 2016**

London, UK

[More Events](#)

develop

Saints Row dev Volition releases unfinished PSP spin-off for free

BAFTA opens call for 2016 Young Game Designers competition

GOG launches Early Access-style venture

Licensing.biz

Rainbow and Simba partner to launch toy line for My American Friend

eOne's Hannah Mungo on the company's retail plans for Roald Dahl's The BFG

Paddington gains traction in nursery with new licensing partners

PCR

In the hot seat: Charlotte Waterworth, telecoms marketing manager, Sennheiser

Could we see 'VR arcades' on the High Street in the near future?

Ingram Micro UK unveils B2B sales, vendor management and mobility appointments

MCV is the leading trade news and community site for all professionals working within the UK and international video games market. It reaches everyone from store manager to CEO, covering the entire industry. MCV is published by NewBay Media, which specialises in entertainment, leisure and technology markets.

[Audio Media International](#)

[MCV Pacific](#)

[PCR](#)

[BikeBiz](#)

[MCV UK](#)

[PSNEurope](#)

[Develop](#)

[MI Pro](#)

[Sourcebook](#)

[Installation](#)

[ToyNews](#)

[Licensing.biz](#)

[Music Week](#)

[TVBEurope](#)

Copyright © Newbay Media 2016. [Privacy](#) | [Terms](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site Map](#)