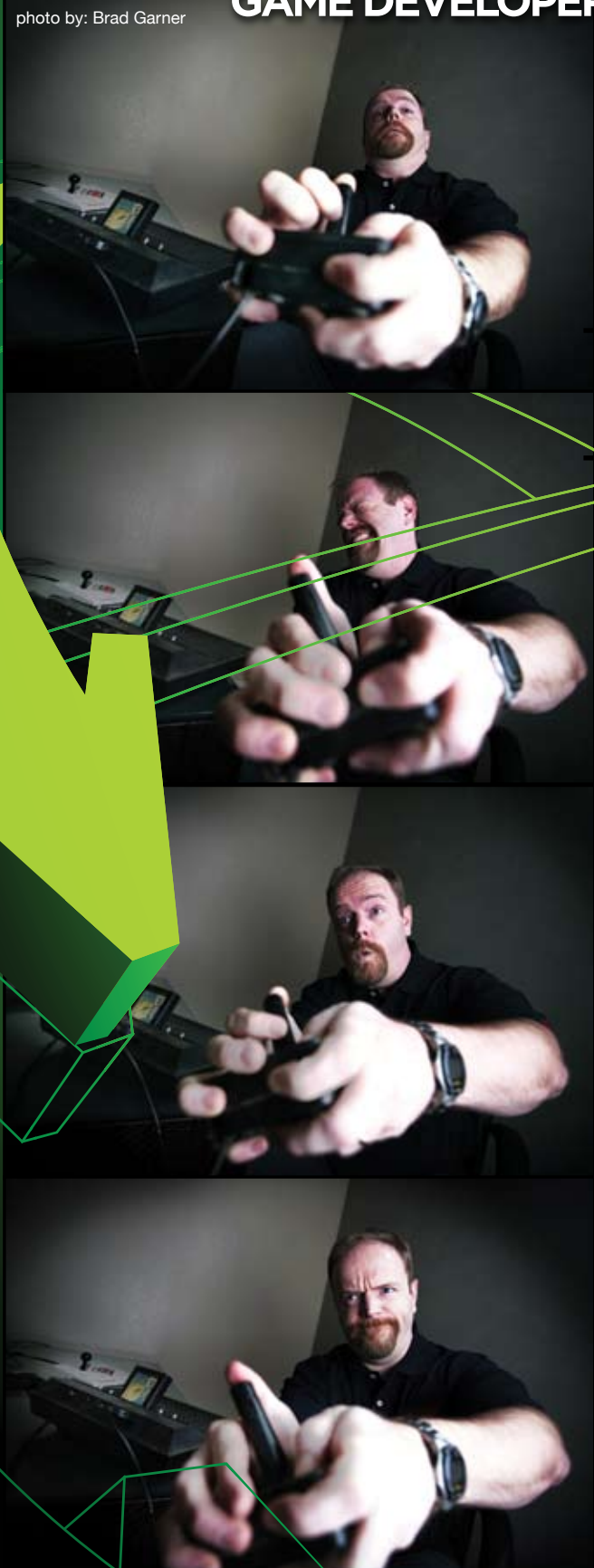


## PROVOCATIVE PERSON

# BILL SLEASE

## GAME DEVELOPER

photo by: Brad Garner



Pretend you have a degree in Electrical Engineering. You'd love to create art for a living, but instead you're writing code for Carnegie Mellon University's Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging. One afternoon in 1997, some college students introduce you to the video games *SimCity* and *MYST*. You're so inspired by the storytelling possibilities that you take a running leap at Cyan Worlds, developers of the highly successful *MYST* franchise.

### CAN YOU MAKE THE JUMP?

If you're Bill Slease - Lead Programmer on *Stargate Worlds* MMORPG - you remember your day job writing code at Carnegie and the drawing, 3D modeling and texturing classes you took at night. "I wanted to work at Cyan someday," said Bill, "but I didn't think I'd be working there anytime soon. I thought I'd have to build up my experience, make my own game, then formally approach Cyan for a job."

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**"If you change directions, it's not failure and it's not another word for 'quitting'."**

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About that time, Bill stumbled into an online game forum frequented by some of the *MYST* developers at Cyan. He eventually showed one of the artists, Steve Ogden, his best work to date: a high-quality, 3D rendering of a tape measure. "This is really great stuff," Steve told him, "now, you make something else." This surprised Bill, "when you're a student, you can revel in the process of creating your art. When you get on the floor of the game industry, there are deadlines."

When Cyan learned Bill that was a programmer by day, "they were really excited about my unique combination of talents. They flew my wife and I to Cyan's headquarters, gave us a tour, then handed me a list of apartments in the area. I felt like they hired me even before they interviewed me."

### THE REALITY OF GAMING

Bill flew through multiple levels on his seven-year run at Cyan Worlds: Technical Artist, Art Manager, Production Lead, Lead Technical Artist, Gameplay Director, Live Content Director and Producer. "I wasn't prepared for how many people you need to impress and keep happy during a game development project: yourself, your boss, his boss, different departments, fans and potential customers, investors and publishers. You can go for a few days without anyone looking over your shoulder, but there's always this sense that there's an army behind you brandishing sharp objects and thumping their shields."

### HOW'S YOUR GAMEPLAY

"It takes talent and discipline to achieve anything personally satisfying," said Bill. "On the other hand, I'm not one of these people who was born knowing what I wanted to do. It's more a matter of buckling down and doing the hard work to make it happen. If you change directions, it's not failure and it's not another word for 'quitting'. On the road to figuring it all out, be prepared to abort some experiments and try on different hats."

For Bill Slease, sharing his talents in an online forum led to *Cyan Worlds* and *Stargate Worlds*™. What talents are you not sharing with your world? ▶

— Provoked by Joey Robert Parks

### SEEK HIM OUT

You can view Bill's progress on *Stargate Worlds* at the frequently updated [www.stargateworlds.com](http://www.stargateworlds.com)