

1) What's your name & title?

[Rick Knowles] Rick Knowles, Lead Level Designer

2) Can you describe your role in the development of Full Auto?

[Rick Knowles] My department is responsible for gathering all the content (art, functionality, effects, etc) and combining them together into a working level. We do a lot of the grunt work, from prototyping moments/effects to the placement of the objects within the level. We get to contribute a lot of what goes into the level and the gameplay experiences.

3) What's your favorite part about working on Full Auto?

[Rick Knowles] Working with a small team towards a large goal. We tackled a fairly ambitious project and have had to grow to meet it along the way. By being in such a small team, you know that everything you do has a large effect on the outcome of the game. It's scary, but its what every game developer hopes to work on.

4) From your perspective, what elements truly make Full Auto a next-gen title?

[Rick Knowles] With out a doubt, the destruction! We having taken a detailed look at every asset in the game and tried to make it as interactive as possible. With the latest generation of consoles we were able to reach a state were everything could be destroyed. The funny thing is, we had so much freedom we had to cull back destruction in order to preserve a gameplay experience that wasn't just a sandbox.

5) How will Full Auto change gamers' perspective on the racing genre?

[Rick Knowles] For too long racing games have been these static non interactive environments that try to provide a simulation experience but are solely focused on the car itself. We hardly ever see cars taking dents from clipping another car, or a chunk taken out of a wall when it is hit. After seeing our game, developers are going to realize that players want this level of interaction on top of the usual experiences. This is what creates a user driven experience that is more then just remembering to slow down to x speed on curve 3. You will now have random factors that will increase the longevity of the game experience and provide players with more stories to share afterwards.

6) Where do you think the racing genre is heading?

[Rick Knowles] More customization, more physical interactions and more options for how a player wishes to play their game. Everyone wants to have the freedom to customize their gaming experience for their style of play. With new possibilities it is going to be up to the developers to meet that challenge in the design of future racing games. There really is no excuse now not to.

7) If we were looking at a giant screenshot of Full Auto, what would you point out first? What's your favorite feature or element, if you could only pick one? Of what are you most proud?

[Rick Knowles] I would say I am proud of the level of interaction you can achieve in our levels. Take the screenshot we have of the boardwalk section in the entertainment district. The fact that we have more content along that strip then most first person shooters is impressive enough for a racing game. Add the fact that each element is made to fragment, bounce, explode, crumble. This is just something that is unprecedented in current game titles.

LEVEL DESIGN

-How has the destruction and freedom within Full Auto affected the concepting of gameplay, level layout, race pathing, etc.?

[Rick Knowles] From the beginning we knew we would have our hands full. Most racing games rely on static environments to help guide the player and keep the game play contained to a certain design. In our game we took the gloves off and made every piece of geometry interactive which completely destroyed the traditional racing flow. Not only do we have our boundries destroyable, but as a designer you have no control over how players are going to interact with those objects once they come into play. Chunks of a building can easily fall onto the road and create a makeshift ramp that a player can use to gain some height. While this is great for the player, it is a nightmare for a level designer. We had to be consious of every object placed and try to test it out from every angle to make sure the level was preserved. In the end we needed to add back some traditional elements (chevron walls/arrows) in order to help guide players through the environments.