



Jam Sessions as Knowledge Transfer and Creation Tool

Interreg
Baltic Sea Region



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RESILIENT ECONOMIES AND COMMUNITIES

BSG-Go

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“BSG Go! Scaling-up Baltic Sea Game Support”
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BSG GO! explores and pilots promising solutions to shape a resilient support environment for the young and growing game developer studios and as a result minimise the threat they face in times of crisis.

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/projects/bsg-go>

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Executive Summary

This Playbook for Game Jams is targeted to prospective or future organizers of the type of game jam we have piloted as part of a strategic solution for “resilient peer2peer environments” in the game industry.¹ Game jams have been a popular format since 2002 as a means of informal skill building and testing innovative paths through game design in combination with socializing and to a large extent to just having fun. Following the distress caused by contact and travel restrictions during the pandemic and the loss of a community and network, mass events such as international conferences and community engagement such as regional game weeks or meetups need to undergo a thorough re-assessment regarding their value for the time spent in groups, not to mention the rising costs of travelling.

Our strategic solution was to dissect what can and what cannot be replaced by remote methods of communication, and to ensure the highest quality, intensity and impact of physical events.

What can be done online, streamed or hybrid:

- Keynotes, workshops, panel discussions, presentations, lectures
- Pitching, presenting your game²

What cannot be replaced:

- Socializing, bonding
- Networking
- Fun
- Peer2peer exchange and learning

Nobody would admit that they are going to conferences mainly because of the latter four points but asking in particular young talents what they missed most during the pandemic, shows the importance of community and peer2peer exchange for their work.

Game jams have always combined the fun and hobnobbing with exploring new skills and ideas – and, most importantly, in a “safe and non-threatening” environment, as opposed to hackathon with a stronger competitive edge to it. Using, therefore game jams, as a format that salvages what really imports in these mass or regional community events, seems logical. We have explored how we can use this format, highly popular with game designers, to increase the impact and value for time.

This playbook means to be a guide based on the experiences made in our pilot, the first edition of the “XR Game Jam” carried out 30-31 May 2024 in Helsinki, Malmö, Poznan and Berlin. For a comprehensive guide on how to organize game jams in general, but with a strong focus on students, see the commendable publication by Sara Cornish, Matthew Farber, Alex Fleming, & Kevin Miklasz.³

Our playbook here is specifically targeted to organizers of game jams for both early stage and experienced game developers.

¹ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/O2.2-Toolbox-for-resilient-peer2peer-environments.pdf>

² For example: online pitching as described in our “Hybrid Collaboration Handbook” <https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HYBRID-HANDBOOK-byGameHabitat-BSG-Go-pilot14.pdf> or the online platform presenting games of teams recommended by regional hubs: Spotlight <https://www.spotlightgames.eu/>

³ The game jam guide, published as e-book 2017: <https://press.etc.cmu.edu/books/game-jam-guide>

Introduction

Game Jams are events where several people come together to create something from scratch with their skills. Jams are usually collaborative and participants can be already established game teams or individuals and within the jam the goal is to create a fully functional game within a named theme and a strict time frame and deadline by when the game needs to be finished. The model is quite similar to that of a hackathon, where participants have a limited amount of time to work on a project.¹ Hackathons tend to be more competitive than jams.

With the game industry growing, game jams have gained in popularity and now there are a whole variety of different jams; some being global, some local, with very different themes, with on-site or hybrid participation. It is safe to say that game jams have become an integral part of game design culture providing special environments for creativity, collaboration, and learning. The earliest known game jam: 0th Indie Game Jam, was held in March 2002⁴ - two decades ago! The jams are often also a good opportunity for game developers to get feedback from their peers and also possibly from the mentors or game jam hosts which already might serve as a valuable reward for participating in a jam. Encouraging innovation and experimentation are the guiding principles why to organize or participate in a game jam. Game jams also have a long history in the Nordics, as the Nordic Game Jam that began 2006, has grown to be one of the largest single-site game jams in the world.⁵

Naturally, when planning a game jam, the first consideration is the incentive for participants. In light of increased travel costs, growing workloads and less flexibility in time management, also young talents and start-ups will have to choose their attendance at events wisely.

Our approach which is outlined in the following chapters and which we are recommending as an alternative to large conferences or pure fun events and as an opportunity for local actors to provide an international ambience and community environment without having to travel far, is based on combining and strengthening salient aspects of conferences, meet-ups and jams:

- converging different levels of professional experiences and different types of expertise
- ensuring a “safe environment” for asking questions and trying out something new
- allowing for a large space for fun and bonding experience
- peer2peer exchange as skill building method
- eye-opener for discovering new opportunities without the competitive aspirations

The XR game jam is a perfect example of a very conscious mix to ensure an intensive, gratifying and impactful, yet a fun and socially enjoyable experience.

⁴ <https://press.etc.cmu.edu/books/game-jam-guide>

⁵ <https://nordicgamejam.com/>

Key Considerations for Organizing a Game Jam

Basis organization parameters

As an event, game jams don't differ that much from any other events when it comes to production and planning. The key event production components such as finding a venue, planning marketing, and hosting participants are as for any other events. The difference comes from the event program and conceptual approach: a game jam needs a theme around the games that are going to be developed and also time constraints, as well as a platform to host the jam where participants can submit their game jam entries.

The XR Game Jam:

The BSG-Go! project piloted a hybrid game jam around XR (Extended Realities) on May 30-31, 2024. The event was organized as a joint venture between partners from the BSG-Go! consortium: from Finland, Poland, Sweden and Germany: Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and Helsinki XR Center (Finland), Game Industry Conference in collaboration with Poznan University Science Club (Poland),⁶ the game design institute De:Hive from the HTW Berlin (University of Applied Sciences; Germany), Game Habitat and Arctic Game (both Sweden). We also received support with communication and marketing from EEVR (Estonia). The event marketing was done locally by the organizers: Each organizing party marketed the jam to their relevant networks with the mutual goal of getting developers to participate in each location and further, that the each location would have "ready-made" teams, but also individual participants to be teams up between the location to work remotely/hybrid to pilot the hybrid collaboration for the game jams.

Discord announcement

<https://itch.io/jam/baltic-sea-region-xr-game-jam>

⁶ A mood capture can be found on Youtube: https://youtu.be/_9fB2SQGoPo

Social aspect

Another key consideration is the social aspect of the jam: do you want to create an event on-site to enable more social interaction within the participants working with their games at the shared space, or should the jam be hybrid or fully online? This also affects the sensible time constraints for the jam, as shorter jams can be held on-site, but for longer jams that might not be a reasonable solution.

The XR Game Jam:

The partners provided the venues with XR Center as the nexus location, and the other locations as satellite venues. All connected live online in conjunction with remote attendance by individual developers or teams.

The idea behind this set-up was to allow an international flair, give the opportunity to travel to the closest (or most interesting) venue, or join a local satellite to avoid travelling, yet experiencing a transnational community and thus providing a mix of in-person and online jams and at the same time adding to the social aspects.

Participants were themselves responsible for accommodation during the Jam and every location hosted the catering etc., as seemed the best locally, but the common theme about this was the dinner at the locations where all participants came together emphasizing the social aspect of the jam.



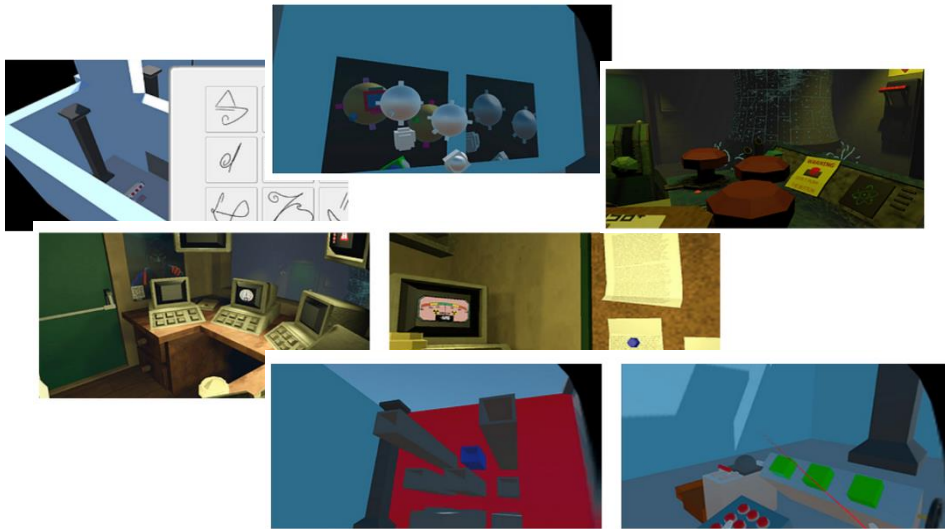
Rules

Another topic are the game jam rules. As the submitted entries are digital products, the jams usually enforce rules for the participants and the entries (submitted games). The rules might include topics such as intellectual property ownership or whether the game jam hosts can somehow use the submitted entries with their marketing for the next year or otherwise showcase the results or who actually owns (within the game jam team) the results and has rights to use them.

You should be very transparent and clear about the rules of the jam and ensure that everyone understands and agrees to them, in particular with regards to what happens to the game entries after the jam and how the results can be used afterwards.

The XR Game Jam:

Please find the Rules for the XR Jam in the Appendix. We published the pdf on Discord for download.



The results from the jam were uploaded to:

<https://itch.io/jam/baltic-sea-region-xr-game-jam/entries>

Technical aspects

Technical aspects also come into play: how the games should be developed during that specific jam, for example could ready-made assets be used or does everything need to be created from scratch? And there might be rules for entries and how they need to be submitted or showcased.

In the end, the rules need to be clearly communicated to all the participants well in advance for everyone to be well prepared and to understand what participating in the jam and submitting a game entry actually means.

The XR Game Jam:

The locations provided VR headsets to the participants: We recommended Meta Quest 3 Mixed Reality VR Headsets, as those are the most common and widely available. Helsinki XR Center already had a few and purchased six more for the participants, Poznan University Science Club rented the headsets and De:Hive, Berlin, already had them at the location. Helsinki XR Center had also purchased Apple Vision Pro VR Headset that was available for the participants to test during the event, as well as Helsinki XR Center's showroom had almost any commercial VR headset available to try out during the event.



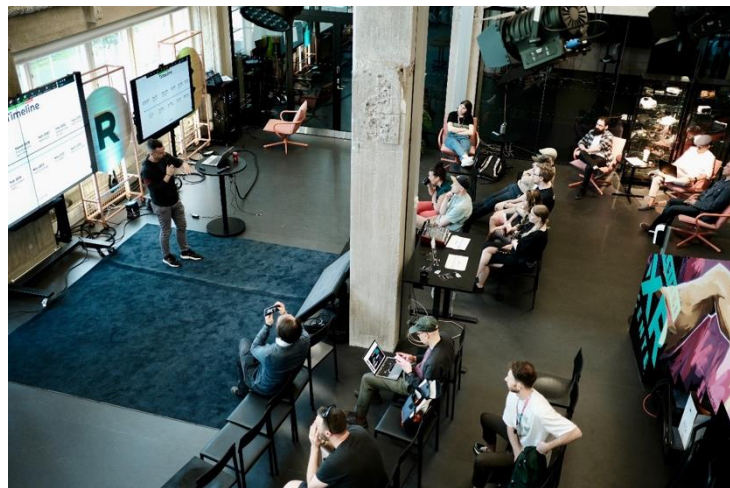
The theme

Game Jams are usually events known for a time constraint and theme - the jam participants join the jam (depending on the jam either at location or online) with the purpose of developing a playable game within the chosen theme. Apart from wanting to have fun and get the belonging-to-a-community feel, the motivation is developing or creating something together and learning from each other. The jam theme can also be a decisive factor of joining the jam, as understandable different themes can interest different people.

The theme is also a marketing component for the event producers as some themes might resonate better with different potential participants (e.g. Retro Game Jam) and so on. The theme also contributes to the fun factor of the jam and in the best possible scenarios can help participants to innovate and truly try their skills to create something new to them around the chosen theme. The theme can also mean some new aspect to game development such as a technical solution or perspective.

The XR Game Jam:

We chose the topic of XR (extended realities) – which includes virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR) – because it will drive a lot of future business and provide a plethora of both sectoral and cross-sectoral business opportunities. Using a game jam as a means to offer a hands-on dipping into the realm of XR from a game-making perspective has proven a great format, as it is deeper than what is being offered as knowledge transfer on conferences (mostly keynotes), but less committing than paid-for training courses.



Vladimir Rannik giving a keynote talk during XR Game Jam in Helsinki. Photo Credit: Heikki Laaninen, Metropolia UAS

The theme determined the program and the composition of attending mentors and experts to answer questions and support the teams during their game creation. We invited two experts to kick-off the jam: Vladimir Rannik, CEO of CM Games Estonia, one of the pioneers of XR game development with some of the globally most successful XR games developed by them, and Anthony Vitillo who is considered as one of the key experts and opinion leaders of XR related themes in Europe. Anthony also served as a main mentor during the Jam mentoring participants locally at Helsinki XR Center and also online via Discord. The kick-off watch party attracted around 40 people outside those joining the jam, both in the XR center Helsinki and in the other locations.

Communication platform

The need for a special platform to host the jam or to communicate between participants depends on the type of the jam whether fully on-site, hybrid, or only online. All of the jams probably need a platform to submit the games and this can be a simple google-drive folder or a website actually

designed for this purpose such as itch.io that not only allows to host game jam submissions, but also to host the whole jam itself and offers a free platform where the event producers can create an event with participant sign-ups, a landing space, timers, and to host the game submissions. Itch.io can also be used by participants interested in game jams to browse what type of jams are available to join. Another consideration is if there is a need for another platform for communication such as a separate discord server for the game jam. Discord has become a norm for game developers, so it's probably one of the easiest and recommended platforms to use where anything jam related can be communicated and the participating teams can have their own text and voice channels to work together.

For the event production we first researched the most common methods and tools how the game jams are often assembled, as the game jam needs at least one of the following platforms to function:

1. A platform to get the information about the jam and also to show the development time, preferably in a timer format, as well as to submit the final developed game.
2. A platform to communicate within the team especially if the team is working remotely or in a hybrid model.
3. A platform for jam organizers to communicate with the jam participants and in our case also offer mentoring during the Jam for XR related themes or issues.

The same platform should also be able to be used for local communication within the different jam locations and enable at least a certain level of feel for community building between the on-site locations, and remote participants.

The XR Game Jam:

For #1 we decided to use itch.io, as it is a globally recognized platform for game jam productions and allows to create a landing page with general information about the jam as well as offers a timer for the development time and a place to submit and store the developed games. For #2 and #3 We used Discord, as it's already a familiar platform among the game developers and offers us as organizers a chance to create a dedicated server for the event and tools for different levels of communication.

The Game Jam Experience

Game jams offer a unique and dynamic environment that fosters creativity, learning, and community-building, making them invaluable for aspiring and experienced developers alike. The following key motivation points for participating in a jam will help formulate the incentive and shape the program for a jam:⁷



© Heikki Laaninen



1. Fostering creativity

Game jams are a playground for innovation, encouraging rapid ideation, problem-solving, and experimentation. Participants get the chance to explore new game mechanics, tools, and technologies without the pressure of perfection. The time constraints force creative thinking, pushing teams to turn wild ideas into playable experiences.

2. Learning through collaboration

Game jams thrive on teamwork. Participants engage in peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and collective problem-solving, which enhances both technical skills (like programming and design) and essential soft skills (like communication and collaboration). Whether you're learning from peers or guiding newcomers, every jam is an opportunity for growth.

3. Inclusivity and accessibility

Game jams welcome everyone—regardless of experience level, background, or role. From first-timers and students to established teams and mentors, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, or ability the inclusive nature of jams fosters diversity and allows anyone with a passion for games to participate and contribute.

4. Knowledge building and skill development

Game jams provide a hands-on environment for learning and skill-building. Participants improve their abilities in programming, design, storytelling, and project management through active participation. The iterative nature of jams—where playtesting and feedback are key—helps teams refine their work and develop better games.

5. Community and networking

⁷ <https://www.gamedeveloper.com/programming/why-should-you-participate-in-game-jams>

Game jams are an excellent platform for building connections and strengthening the game development community. Participants can collaborate with like-minded creators, form lasting relationships, and network with industry professionals. This sense of community inspires and motivates developers to continue their creative journeys.

6. Playtesting and iteration

The quick, iterative cycle of game jams emphasizes the importance of testing ideas and refining them based on feedback. This process mirrors real-world game development, teaching participants to be adaptable and responsive to player input.

7. Fun and exploration

Game jams prioritize fun, creativity, and exploration. Without the pressure of commercial success, participants have the freedom to experiment with out-of-the-box ideas, try new tools, and enjoy the pure joy of creating something innovative.

Below two tables to answer the question of why anyone should participate a game jam. We have divided the two key aspects into learning and networking/community building. On the left side, the impact has been divided between different skill levels from first-timers into well-established senior teams with successfully published games.

Experience Matrix

Learning Aspects: Focuses on technical growth, iterative learning, and creativity enhancement.

Community Aspects: Emphasizes interpersonal relationships, recruitment, mentorship, and showcasing work.

Learning aspects						
Skill Level	Peer-to-Peer Learning	Skills Development	Knowledge Building	New Tech Intro/Testing	Feedback/Iteration	Creativity
First-timer	High	Basic	Medium	Low	High	High
Student	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
Startup	Medium	High	High	High	High	Very High
Established Team	Medium	Very High	Very High	High	Very High	High
Senior Team	Low	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Medium

Community aspects						
Skill Level	Fun	Recruitment	Networking	Community-Building	Mentorship	Showcase Work
First-timer	Very High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low
Student	High	Medium	High	High	Medium	Medium
Startup	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
Established Team	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High	Very High
Senior Team	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Very High	Very High

Itch.io, the webpage and platform for hosting game jams,⁸ have almost four hundred thousand hosted game jams over the timespan the platform has been available. This is a huge amount of game jams that have been hosted on that platform only and tells a story of how popular game jams actually are, and this is not counting the larger global jams with their own webpages and platforms.

In this sense participating in a game jam is actually quite easy, as there are jams happening all the time somewhere in the world.⁹ The main question for anyone interested in participating is that what is

⁸ Launched in 2013, and an open revenue sharing model in place since 2015: <https://itch.io/docs/general/about>; another popular platform is Indie Game Jams: <https://indiegamejams.com/>

⁹ The largest jams are : Global Game Jam: <https://globalgamejam.org/>; Ludum Dare: <https://ludumdare.com/>; Nordic Game Jam: <https://nordicgamejam.com/>;

anyone looking for a jam? On-site experience at the shared space with other participants over a shorter duration of time? A special theme to create games around? Or perhaps an online jam to test their skills against other people from all around the world? Sometimes having too many choices can seem overwhelming, and one could wonder whether there are even perhaps too many.

An important factor for repeat jams is the word-by-mouth (or social network) recommendation by the participants. To foster recommendation via their social channels, it can help to have them provide feedback after the jam to you (mentimeter, slido, aha-slides or a proper survey, on the spot interviews etc.), thus making them formulate and keep fresh the experience they made. For the feedback on our XR Game Jam, see the Appendix.

XR Game Jam as Knowledge Transfer Opportunity

Learning how to use XR for making games

XR Game Jam, with XR standing for extended realities combining virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR), served as a test-ground for pilots considering a jam as a peer learning environment to transfer knowledge. We combined this format with a topic that we deem relevant for future and forward-looking business development. A mentor helps a studio with developing both their game and their business, and will provide guidance and consultation in design, marketing and entrepreneurial skills. Introducing, however, new topics for the game development and ensuing business modelling strategies, is not within the usual scope of mentoring – unless the mentor happens to be an expert in the respective field, as in our case XR technologies.

If a studio wanted thus to acquire such types of skills, they would either search for such offers e.g. at open universities or workshops and training offered (often quite expensive). For our example: VR in games, there are many offers on VR as such, but not dedicated to game development. These are more difficult to get hold of. The most usual avenue to come across new topics are conference or hub events with keynotes and workshops. But for VR in games, even these are rare occurrences.

A jam can offer a hands-on “testing the waters” of such new knowledge areas, not only for teams but also for mentors. The jam is a more focused format for the transfer of knowledge than conferences can offer, and thus again a valid alternative to mass and expensive events, in particular in times of travel restrictions or increased expenses.

In the case of the XR Game jam, spread over 4 locations (Helsinki, Malmö, Poznan and Berlin), with additional online participants and a delegation from the Arctic Game cluster in North Sweden, the reach-out and promotion of the jam covered the organizers’ local game development hubs, educational institutions, and communities with the target group of game development students, young or early-stage game companies, mentors as well as more traditional industry partners (especially with Arctic Game) interested in the potential of combining XR and game development.

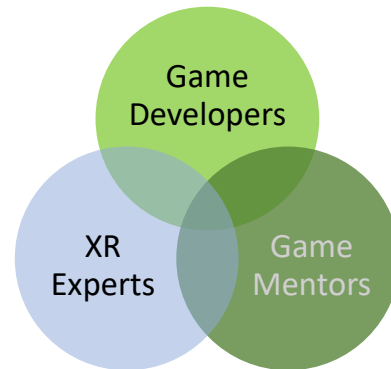
With XR Game Jam, the chosen theme was two-fold: It was partly about XR, as the Jam offered many participants a chance to try developing games for XR for a very first time or even try the VR equipment and headsets themselves, and partly on the subject of “Cooperation” as we wanted to encourage collaboration between the jam locations within the Baltic Sea Region.

As an additional part to the XR Game Jam event we had a visiting group at Helsinki XR Center from Skellefteå, Sweden, led by our a BSG-Go! project partner Arctic Game. The group consisted of visitors from two non-game related companies: Northvolt and Autotech, and two game developers from a local Skellefteå-based game company¹⁰ specializing in VR technology and games. The group participated in the Game Jam using it as an opportunity to explore possibilities of XR and games for more traditional industries. The reason to visit and participate at Helsinki XR Center was to get an overview of the current technological trends of XR and then try to develop useful concepts or ideas how to use XR and game thinking for Northvolt’s and Autotech’s respected industries.

¹⁰ See brief video interview with [XXX MISSING LINK](#)

Peer-to-peer learning environment

One of the reasons to participate in game jam is to work alongside other game developers and learn while doing so. Especially if someone joins a game jam as an individual participant, it requires the person to team up with other participants or join an existing team. With either case, the person will be working alongside with developers they might not have known beforehand and that might have very different skill sets or ways of working - both situations greatly increasing the chances that the game jam might end up being a good learning environment for the participants.



With our XR Game Jam event we had planned the learning to happen in three-fold manner: 1) by having the kick-off seminar with keynotes on XR related to games, 2) by offering mentoring for participants, and 3) by trying to facilitate peer-2-peer learning within the team scenarios.

Our pre-jam thoughts on the subject being that since many participants would join the jam that had never used VR equipment before nor developed games for XR platforms, we wanted to give them experts insights for XR via keynotes, offer mentoring to trouble-shoot any issues they might have during the development process and also team up the individual participants with either existing teams or between each other offering peer to peer learning environment.

We brought together three groups that not only constitute three peer groups but display different layers of “peer group”:

- Game developers and mentors are peers in terms of both groups being familiar with game development and belonging to the same “family” (industry) as opposed to the XR group
- Game mentors and XR experts are peers in terms of their seniority and experience, their capacity for guiding and initiating young talents to new skills, competences and knowledge.
- Game developers and mentors experienced in XR share a peer level with the XR experts.

The anticipated learning effect was thus threefold:

- Both game developers and mentors learn hands-on about XR
- XR experience live how game developers use XR with their game design expertise
- XR experts and mentors learn to act in a group (while they usually act solo)
- Game developers, inexperienced with working with a mentor, experience hands-on the benefits of a mentor support.

Looking at the participant feedback and interviews, all of our planned learning situations happened during the jam. Participants seemed generally like the keynotes and already the chance to try out and develop games for XR was the learning experience most of the participants joined the jam in the first place.

This varied a bit between the locations: Participants in Helsinki XR Center and De:Hive Berlin had more experience on developing for XR than the participants in Poznan, but on the other hand we found out that the participants at Poznan were more experienced game developers than the participants at the other locations, so this evened out the experience really well and offered all the locations a similar learning experience from different competence perspectives.

Peer-to-peer learning also seemed to happen quite nicely at the teams but especially within the hybrid teams built with participants that were not familiar with each other previously. Of course, two days is a very short duration from the learning perspective and the most meaningful learning experiences for participants were to either be able to experience XR/VR equipment and game development or to actually participate in Game Jam and try to develop a game within a set theme and time constraints. The latter was especially true for many participants at the Helsinki XR Center as over half of the participants at that location had never participated in a game jam before.

Hybrid collaboration and mentoring

Hybrid collaboration and matchmaking

XR Game Jam was organized as a hybrid event to allow participation in different locations and also remotely. We also wanted to encourage hybrid collaboration and team building with the event, but at the same time wanted the team building and matchmaking happen as organically as possible without forcing anyone to team up with people they did not want to or would have been uncomfortable working with.

In retrospect, the team building and matchmaking proved to be the biggest challenge as a game development team required different talents and skill sets; programming, game design, visual design, and with our jam also XR design. Therefore, the individual participants joining the jam without a ready-made team had to find people with complementing skill sets to team up with. We used Discord as a platform for matchmaking and team building and ended up having two teams working as hybrid teams between the locations and remote participants. We also had to facilitate this quite heavily by suggesting people with different talents to team up even if they didn't really know each other at all. Also, with participants joining from different locations we faced minor communication challenges due to different proficiency levels in spoken English but since Discord can very well be used also for text-based communication on the dedicated team channels, this proved to be sufficient for collaboration.

The feedback received from the hybrid teams concerned mostly early-stage communication issues as compared to existing teams, they took a long time in the beginning of the jam to get to know each other and then to come up with a joint plan for the game they wanted to develop during the jam. Admittedly, this placed them at a disadvantage regarding the jam time constraint versus the teams that entered the jam with a notion of what they want to do and then modify per announced theme (Cooperation).

This possible disadvantage problem was raised within our production work group meetings and we tried to encourage participants to be active on discord before the jam began to find suitable teams, but as not everyone joined the jam discord before the jam actually began even if they were looking for a team to join, this prior the jam team building wasn't any successful at all and as one of the learning we would recommend to have suitable time at the beginning of the jam for match-making and team building.

In terms of programme, the hybrid event organization for the XR Game Jam can be considered a success. As the jam consisted of two parts; kick-off seminar with the keynote talks and then actual hybrid jam, we needed mostly two tools for the production: Zoom for streaming the seminar part and Discord to organize and facilitate the hybrid jam. Both tools proved to be more than suitable for these purposes.

Mentoring at the hybrid event

As the jam focused on XR which is still relatively new and unknown game development genre and many of the jam participants were developing games for the XR in the first time or had never used a VR-headsets or other equipment before the jam, we wanted to offer them XR related mentoring during the jam to make sure any XR related issues could be solved and would not be hindering the game development process too much. Our keynote speaker Anthony Vitillo served in this mentoring role during the jam at Helsinki XR Center and remotely at the Discord for the participants from the other locations.



Anthony Vitillo served as a mentor and keynote speaker at the event. Photo Credit: Heikki Laaninen, Metropolia UAS.

Overall, the mentoring was highly appreciated, especially locally at Helsinki XR Center since walking up to Anthony was a very low barrier and easy even with quick questions or to ask his opinion on anything XR and game development related. For remote mentoring via Discord Anthony had to encourage participants to reach out to him and not many did, or we think that even more participants from the other locations could have used his mentoring more and probably would have in case he would have been in person at the other locations, like he was at XR Center in Helsinki. Bottomline being that we found that mentoring services were needed and valued, however face-to-face mentoring proved to be less of an obstacle than online mentoring. Seeing however, as many incubators and accelerators offer online mentoring, it is possibly a question of better introduction of the mentors and on encouraging a communication flow before the jam.

Based on this we would suggest offering mentoring services during the game jams especially if the jam is about a certain technology not too well known by the participants. The jam duration might also affect this as having a mentor ready can be easier for shorter times and as our jam was only two days long, it was easy to have the same mentor onsite during the whole jam.

Production cost-sharing models

With Interreg BSG-Go! XR Game Jam event the cost sharing was made as efficient as possible between the event locations by deciding that every location manages their location based-costs when it comes to facilitating an event location and attracting local participants, catering, and VR equipment, as well as having technical systems available and in place for streaming the kick-off seminar and the show-off at the end of the event where the teams share their jam results and showcase the developed games.

Metropolia / Helsinki XR Center as a leading event producer and the main venue organizer took care of any costs related to keynote speakers and mentoring.

The main piloted issue with this event was to make it as lean as possible; in the other words try to use platforms and tools that are widely available and do not cost much or are completely free to use and then have the event production team to rather share the workload of how to implement these tools efficiently. With this event, Metropolia led the work group producing the event and created a framework that all the event elements were based on and other event partners participated by creating or implementing the needed building blocks for the event such as itch.io page created by De:Hive, Discord server created by GIC, and hybrid event guidelines¹¹ created by Game Habitat. In addition to these, Metropolia created event rules documentation (see appendix), marketing materials, recruited the keynote speakers and mentors, but in the end the most meaningful cost sharing element was dividing the workload between the organizers and having all the organizers facilitate their own event locations as per their own ways as long as the event platforms, communication and marketing and overall content remained the same between everyone to have all aligned look and feel for the event between the locations.

This way, we were able to create a much larger event overall with very low costs. Also streaming the seminar kick-off keynotes from Helsinki to other locations provided a relevant content for all the other locations and participants also joining the event remotely with the purpose of creating an event that would feel the same no matter which location or remotely the event was participated. In our opinion this way of event production can work well for this kind of event if the goal is to create a larger event that is at the same time reasonably affordable to all the organizers. We, therefore, recommend to have basic equipment for a hybrid event, use the mentioned guideline on hybrid collaboration, and if possible use as Nexus location an institution that is experienced and has the best hybrid equipment.

<i>The XR Game Jam: Cost Example for the Nexus venue, XR Center Helsinki</i>	
<i>Cost for room location: 0 Euro</i>	<i>Cost for six (6) pcs Meta Quest 3 Mixed Reality VR Headsets: 3,500 Euro</i>
<i>Cost for catering for approx. 60 persons over 2 days: 2,000 Euro</i>	<i>Total cost w/o staff time: 7,500 Euro</i>
<i>Cost for remunerations, accommodation and travel of 2 experts: 2,000 Euro</i>	<i>Estimated <u>preparation staff time</u>: 60 hours</i> <i>(<u>first-time</u> experience in organizing a jam)</i>

¹¹ <https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HYBRID-HANDBOOK-byGameHabitat-BSG-Go-pilot14.pdf>

APPENDIX

BSG Go! XR Game Jam Rules

1 General Rules

- 1.1 The "XR Game Jam" event (hereinafter "Game Jam") is organized by: Interreg BSG-Go! project (<https://interreg-baltic.eu/projects/bsg-go>) hereinafter referred to as the organizer.
- 1.2 Game Jam is an event for game developers to demonstrate and prove their skills. It is aimed at both professional game developers and amateur game developers.
- 1.3 As part of the Game Jam, participants are to create a game consistent with the theme set by the Organizer, hereinafter referred to as the Game (Game).
- 1.4 The Participants work on the games at the time specified by the Organizers, from May 30 to 31, 2024.
- 1.5 Game Jam takes place on the physical and online locations designated by the organizer.
- 1.6 The official Game Jam website will be a designated ITCH.IO page by the Organizer.
- 1.7 The Game Jam is not a competition.

2 Conditions of participation

- 2.1 Participation to the Game Jam is voluntary and free of charge.
- 2.2 Only adults can participate in the Game Jam.
- 2.3 By joining the Game Jam, the Participant accepts these Regulations and all their provisions.
- 2.4 Games can be created by teams of participants. The organizer does not impose any limits on the number of teams or the number of team members.
- 2.5 To take part in the Game Jam, you must register using the form on the website indicated by the Organizer.
- 2.6 The administrator of your data is the Organizer.

3 Rules of participation and course of the Game Jam

- 3.1 Participants are not entitled to reimbursement of costs or other expenses incurred by participating in the Game Jam.
- 3.2 Participants are obliged to organize their own computer equipment, peripherals and software for the purpose of participating in the Game Jam.
- 3.3 Game Jam organizers are not obliged to provide participants with hardware or software.
- 3.4 The organizer is not responsible for technical problems occurring during the Game Jam.

4 Works in the event

- 4.1 The Organizers introduce the following reservations regarding the implementation of the Game:
 - a. The game must be entirely created during the Game Jam.
 - b. The game cannot be plagiarized or contain plagiarized elements.

- c. The game should be at least loosely related to the announced topic.
- d. The game must be interactive, which means a situation in which the player must be able to control it and influence its course.
- e. e. Games cannot be prepared before the official start of the Game Jam. It is also not possible to submit Games that are ready and available at the start of the competition.
- f. f. When creating their Games, Participants may use any game engine, programming language, graphic materials, etc., provided that they have copyrights to them or have purchased the necessary licenses on the terms specified by the licensor or they use free licenses. We encourage use of AI generated content.
- g. g. Teams may create one or more games during the Game Jam.
- h. h. It is prohibited to implement any code or algorithm that is potentially harmful to other computer users.

4.2 The organizer does not check and is not responsible for the legality of the materials used in the productions or the software used by users/teams to create them.

4.3 The organizer is not responsible for any damage resulting from the use of illegal software or materials by participants during the competition.

4.4 It is strictly forbidden to include illegal, controversial or other content in the created Games that could be negatively received. In particular, such content includes:

- a. pornographic content,
- b. content calling for racial, religious or other hatred,
- c. content promoting violence, this means content that is more brutal than generally accepted in games of this type,
- d. content promoting drugs.

4.5 The Organizer has the right to disqualify the Game, especially if the content presented in it violates the law, decency or is inconsistent with the topic of the Game Jam.

4.6 Before the end of the Game Jam, participants are obliged to send links to their Game Jam entry via the form on the website indicated by the Organizer.

5 Intellectual property

5.1 Participants forming a team in Game Jam certify that the works created (co-created) by them do not infringe any rights of third parties and that they are their authorship (co-authorship), i.e. all copyrights belong to them.

5.2 Participants declare that they assume full and unlimited liability for any third-party claims against the Organizer that would arise in connection with their participation in the competition.

5.3 Participants allow their image recorded in the form of photos and videos to be recorded and used without time and territorial restrictions and without remuneration, for marketing, promotional and information purposes.

5.4 Participants allow the Organizer to use materials related to the presentation of the created work (in particular: screenshots, presentations or fragments thereof) for internal and promotional purposes without time and territorial limits and without remuneration.

6 Processing of personal data

6.1 Participation in the Game Jam means the consent of the participants to the processing of their personal data by the Organizer for the purposes of this competition.

6.2 Information on the processing of personal data pursuant to the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46 /EC (hereinafter referred to as "GDPR")

6.3 Personal data administrator: The personal data administrator is the Interreg BSG-Go! project.

7 Other Rules

7.1 The organizer reserves the right to interrupt or cancel the Game Jam and change these regulations.

7.2 The organizer is not liable for any cancellation or change of the date of the Game Jam, and any claims of participants or third parties in this respect are excluded.

7.3 Any violation of these Regulations, in particular providing false personal data, decency or violation of applicable law, entitles the Organizer to exclude the participant from participation in the Game Jam.

Additional resources:

Participant interviews and quotes By GIC/Poznan:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/106mMmnV8yFmW5H4KqsaJx-9MOsUsbeEu?hl=pl>.

A participant game company's blogpost:

https://storkstudios.github.io/blog/the_xr_gamejam_substory/

XR Game Jam entries:

<https://itch.io/jam/baltic-sea-region-xr-game-jam/entries>

Event report and news:

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/project-posts/bsg-go/xr-game-jam-a-great-success-2/>

Media publications from Poland

- Article published on the Radio Eska website (<https://bgz-berlin.city-web.biz:8443/d/f/ympHwaPh7JdH88VyoHEntK3ScWps0XG>)
- Transcription of an interview for Radio Afera:
(<https://bgz-berlin.city-web.biz:8443/d/f/ymzs458CN3jkLY3jTvX3c0BCezKGL1XK>)
- -TV report from TVK Winogrady - Poznan's local TV station (<https://bgz-berlin.city-web.biz:8443/d/f/ymlyv5lgr4h0Di9LxUOvKCuSo7HfouqU>)