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27 Opinion: Five Ingredients to Become a Scener

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Opinion: Five Ingredients to
Become a Scener

Written by Adok

In the past, most computer freaks used to discover the demoscene at some stage in their lives. Have you wondered why some of them have become active sceners (demo creators), while others have remained pure consumers? You will perhaps say that what distinguishes an active scener from a consumer is that the scener is skilled, but IMHO that's only a part of what's required.

To become an active demo creator, you need the following five ingredients:

Skills

Motivation

Budget

Creativity

Conscientiousness



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Skills are not something you have or you do not have, skills can develop. But the most important thing for developing one's skills is the motivation to do so. I learned programming because I had various ideas for computer games and wanted to implement some of them. That's how I started, and I learned a lot in the course of the years. Exactly by facing challenges and overcoming them (i.e.: solving problems), people learn.

In many or maybe even most cases, the motivation to initially start drawing, composing or programming is probably unrelated to demo coding. You don't start out as a graphics artist because you want to contribute to a demo, you start out as a graphics artist because you like to draw, and the idea that your artwork could be used in a demo only comes up after many years of practice.

But what's the motivation to create demos? Most likely, the answer is not money; the prize money you can win for a high ranking demo is not worth the effort. Making demos as a step in your career, making demos to include the fact that you made demos (and possibly had some successes at compos) in your professional CV is also quite nonsensical, except if you are planning to venture into the CG industry. Still I believe that it's just a byproduct of demomaking that you can mention it in your CV, and most people make demos for other purposes. Some of them may be the enjoyment of the creative process, the recognition by scoring high at compos, the proof that you're really skilled... There are several possibilities. At least one can conclude that people who are really in need of money and desperate about that probably won't waste their time making demos; so demo sceners are either young people living of their parents' income or at least well-established middle-class employees who have enough spare time at their hands.

This leads to the third point: budget. With this term I want to denote the availability of time and the required equipment. Only people who have these opportunities can become sceners.

Fourthly, creativity is needed. People who don't have good ideas won't make good demos. If you work in a team, of course there may be somebody telling the others what to do, but if you are just a follower of orders the results probably won't be too awesome.

Finally, conscientiousness. That's important. A lot of people have good ideas, but don't implement them, or they start projects but never finish them. The combination of creativity and a decent amount of conscientiousness is rare. And that may be the main point why there are so few people making demos, compared to the number of computer users in the world.

Adok