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Indie Interface Project: Many indie game developers struggle to make ends meet. Game audiences are fragmented and difficult to pin down, and ongoing marginalization of women and other under-represented groups is endemic in gaming culture. The Indie Interface project is a partnership with the Indie MEGABOOTH and the hundreds of game developers they work with, examining how indie game communities are addressing these issues. It represents a unique opportunity to better understand what we call “indie interface” organizations: how they provide support and stability for economically vulnerable developers, curate indie games for mainstream gaming audiences, and make gaming culture more open and inclusive. Using mixed qualitative/quantitative methods, we have conducted surveys, interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork with developers in the wild (e.g. at their work and where they showcase their games), and since 2016 we have been examining different models for more sustainable and creative game development.

Interesting fact: Most game developer interviews for this project are at massively popular game conventions such as PAX (Penny Arcade Expo). Dr. Whitson's most memorable interview was in a fortune-telling booth designed to promote the game Barkley 2.