

Graduate Profile

Stephen Howes

Stephen Howes graduated from the university's MediaLab Arts course in 1999 gaining a 2:1 and now, with the support of European funding through a programme called the Teaching Company Scheme, is part of Goss Interactive Ltd.

During his time at university, Stephen became supervisor to the events manager (Mark Witherall at the time, now Nick Ingle) at the students union. "It was here that I probably had the most fun. I got to meet a lot of bands and met some good friends over the course of my time spent doing this; obviously I had to finish my course and get the degree that I came here for, so I made sure that I never fell behind in my course/project work. More so, I had to lay off the supervisor work in order to finish my dissertation and final year project."

The course gave Stephen a good start in the Interactive media industry and skills learned while studying were invaluable in his current position. "I thought the course was brilliant; it has a lot to offer someone who may be looking for a degree in a heavily media related subject."

Teamwork is paramount in Stephen's work, and together with Clare Drew, a media-studies and public relations graduate from Marjons, these skills are essential.

"[Teamwork] showed how a dynamic group could communicate, work and pull together. If a team can be unified in its approach to problem solving, even with disagreement, then they have achieved something; they all communicated. I feel that one cannot stand in the background and offer nothing. Everything is valid and a valuable asset when it boils down to it."

The same is true of working for Goss Interactive,

Stephen working one of the latest projects, 'The Raceviewer'



The Team Philips website

the combined talents of individuals coming together to create something special.

"Everyone in the team has a valid interest in what is going on and the results show that this is so. No one person stands out as far as projects go, they are all built and nursed by all. It is quite pleasing that something is going out live, in the case of website building, we all had a part in its creation, there is a piece of us all out there on the web."

The progression from Stephens' graduation to his employment was backed by the University's Business School and School of Computing through the 'Teaching Company Scheme', an innovative programme that helps graduates into businesses. Once he was accepted for the position Stephen became part of the 'Unlocking Plymouth Potential'.

"The scheme adds a business and marketing side to your knowledge base. It guides its students, via seminars, on how to approach, apply and finalise a project."

Goss Interactive appointed Stephen with a challenging project called 'The Raceviewer', a project that Stephen calls "A window trip around the world." This gives live information, crew diaries, videos and soundbites delivered in realtime. In addition, there will be live telemetry from the boat, sailplans, wave height information; as much as was called for in the initial brief. This is now finished, however it will not go out live yet

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due to the catamaran having a broken leg as it were." All this technology allows the public to follow the progress of Team Philips during the Jules Verne Trophy and then in the Race, a non-stop, global, no rules drag race for which Pete Goss created his catamaran.

Stephens typical day depends on what contracts are running at the time.

"There is a lot going on at this moment, we have numerous website design contracts for some pretty big players out there...So, there will be a lot of graphic design work to start with. This entails negotiation with clients, getting the artwork agreed upon and signed off."

As always, teamwork is essential and Stephen works closely with the other members of staff.

"The day can be quite varied, I have to manage my project input carefully and in parallel with the rest of team so one day will be spent doing one thing and the next day another, its as simple or as complicated as you make it - I prefer the simple approach...KEEP ON TOP OF IT...and if at all possible ahead of the game."

I asked Stephen if there was a piece of work that he was particularly proud of.

"If we were to say a project or piece of work then it would be the 'Raceviewer' for TeamPhilips and the screensaver.

Working with Alexis Godschalk from Philips, Holland. We both designed the Teamphilips

website which got hits of over 2.5 million at the launch of the catamaran. Knowing that someone has the same aesthetical view of your work is very pleasing."

Stephen obviously enjoys his work immensely and offers this advice for anyone wishing to go into a similar area of work. "A website or any kind of communications design is important when you need to get the message over to your audience. Having the knowledge in how to achieve that is very important also - "the medium is the message" as Marshall McLuhan put it. And most of all...enjoy it!"



Are you interested in furthering your links with the University of Plymouth and at the same time helping your career to progress? Then why not consider one of the graduate opportunities available at the University?

Two year programme: The Teaching Company Scheme (TCS) is now the largest UK employer of graduates, offering you the opportunity to "kick start" your career. While earning a competitive salary, graduates can gain from two years of valuable commercial experience, with the possibility of a permanent contract with the host company at the end of the Programme. The TCS Scheme is a highly cost-effective way for a company to run a research and development project, employing a graduate to work on a specific project, within their business, supervised and supported by academics and facilities of the University of Plymouth.

TCS Programmes vary according to the scope and technical complexity of the work required, but all are designed to enhance business capabilities, improve performance and lead to increased profitability for companies.

Past TCS Programmes have included: Product Design & Development, Food Technology, Production Control, Manufacturing Systems, Biological Sciences, Marketing & Business Systems, Multimedia Design and Production.

If you don't feel that TCS meets your requirements or background, the

following programmes may be of interest:

One year programme: Employing Graduates for Growth (EGG) provides recent (Honours) Degree graduates with the exciting opportunity of gaining valuable commercial and project management skills, through a managed project designed to lead to business growth. You will also receive postgraduate training.

Six month programmes: The Unlocking Cornish/Plymouth Potential Programmes (UCP/UPP) are based in Plymouth and Cornwall for local graduates or those who have strong links with the area. Likely projects include database implementation, market research and feasibility studies. You will acquire commercial experience and project management skills and will benefit from a continuing professional development course during the 26 week project.

Also, are you thinking of starting your own business?

The Graduates into Business Programme is targeted specifically at those considering starting a new high tech business venture. The programme offers detailed training in all the core skills required to run a new company successfully, and help with the development of feasibility studies and business plans.

For more information on these courses please contact Louise Oldham or Penny Wheatley on (01752) 233500.