



## Avoid an Identity Crisis as a Technical Designer

**Alan Blaine** | Staff Technical Designer @ Bungie

**Alisha Thayer** | Lead Technical Designer @ Crystal Dynamics

**Anne Chilton** | Senior Technical Designer @ Volition

**Jerome Parent** | Advanced Technical Level Designer @ WB Games Montreal

**Rusty Sempstrott** | Lead Technical Designer @ Arkane Austin

Moderated by: **John R. Diaz** | Senior Technical Game Designer @ Electronic Arts

# Overview

- 1 **Define The Role & Responsibility**
- 2 **Typical Day On The Job**
- 3 **Key Differences From Other Design Families**
- 4 **Tech Designer != Glorified Generalist**
- 5 **Protect From Lottery Test & Other Hazards**
- 6 **Start / Become / Grow In This Role**



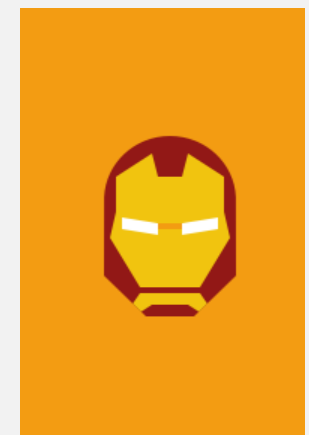
# Get to Know: John R. Diaz

- Senior Technical Game Designer
- FF: Produces the Out of Play Area Podcast

2007



FROSTBITE™





# Get to Know: Alan Blaine

- Staff Technical Designer
- FF: Expert Board Gaming & Puzzle Technician

1996



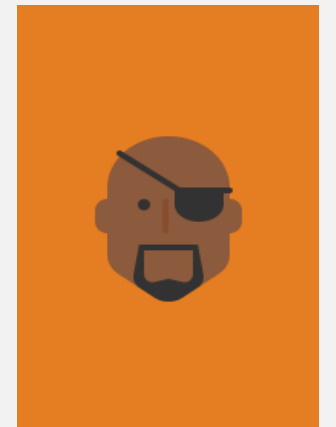


# Get to Know: Alisha Thayer

- Lead Technical Designer
- FF: Gave birth the day California closed at the start of the pandemic!

**CRYSTAL  
DYNAMICS**  
— a SQUARE ENIX company —

2009



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE | July 19-23, 2021 | #GDC21



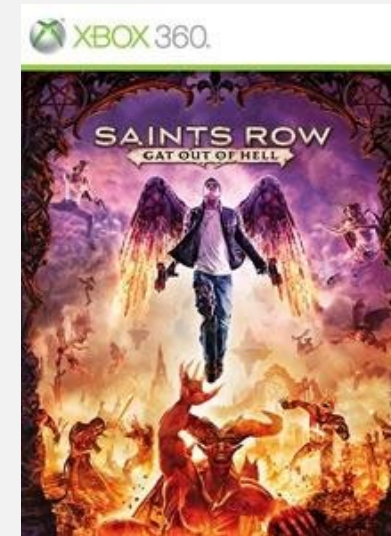
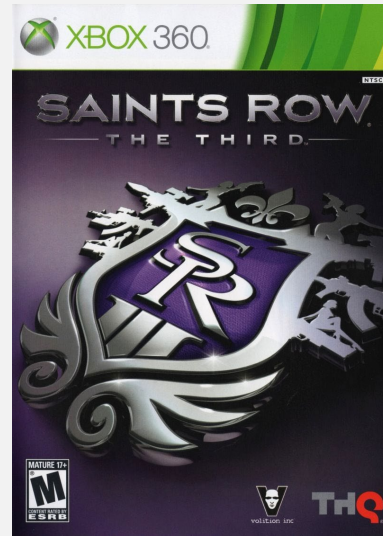
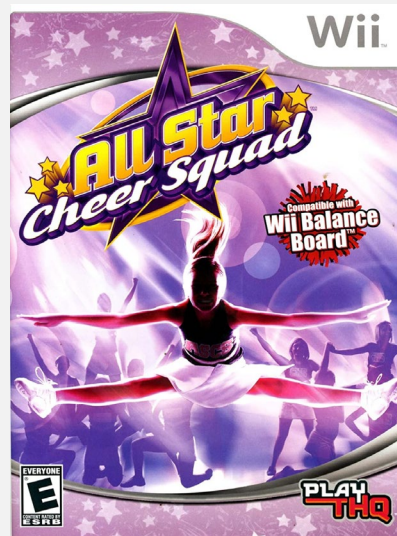
# Get to Know: Anne Chilton

- Senior Technical Designer
- FF: Lives Life Inverted Doing Aerials



volition

2006



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE | July 19-23, 2021 | #GDC21

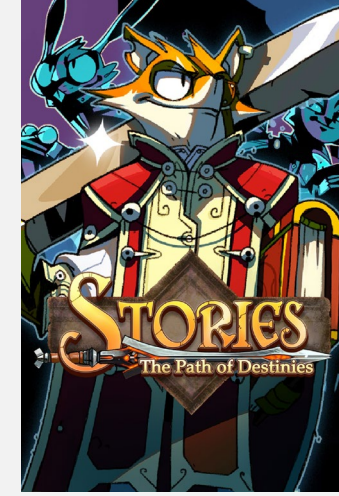
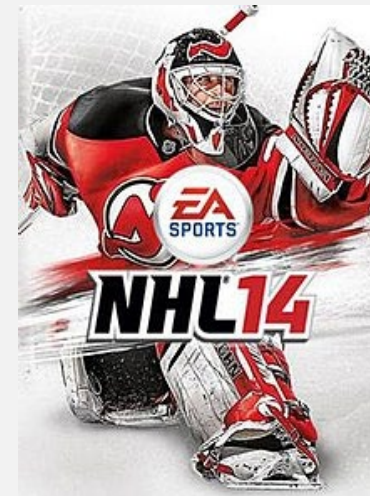
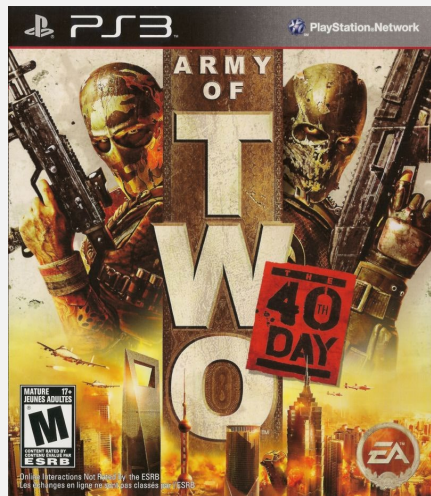
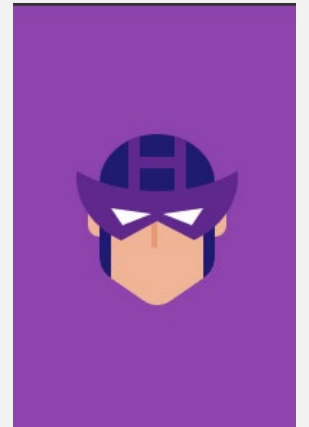


# Get to Know: Jerome Parent

- Advanced Technical Level Designer
- FF: Official cake baker of the dev team



2007



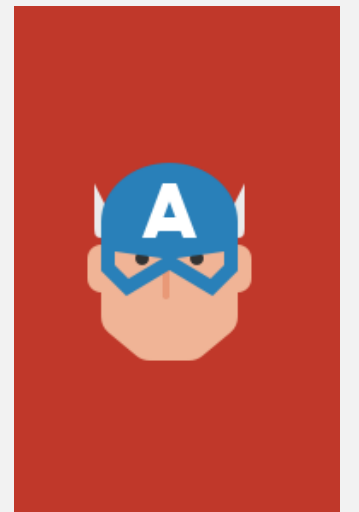
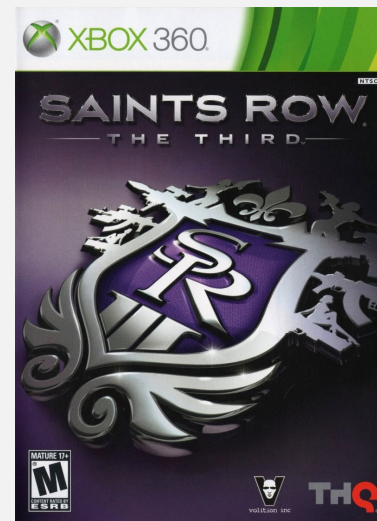


# Get to Know: Rusty Sempstrott

- Lead Technical Designer
- FF: Played in a Ramones cover band



2006



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE | July 19-23, 2021 | #GDC21



# ① What is a Tech Designer?

*Defining what a Technical Designer does seems to **vary** from studio to studio.*

*Let's start by talking about what we do.*



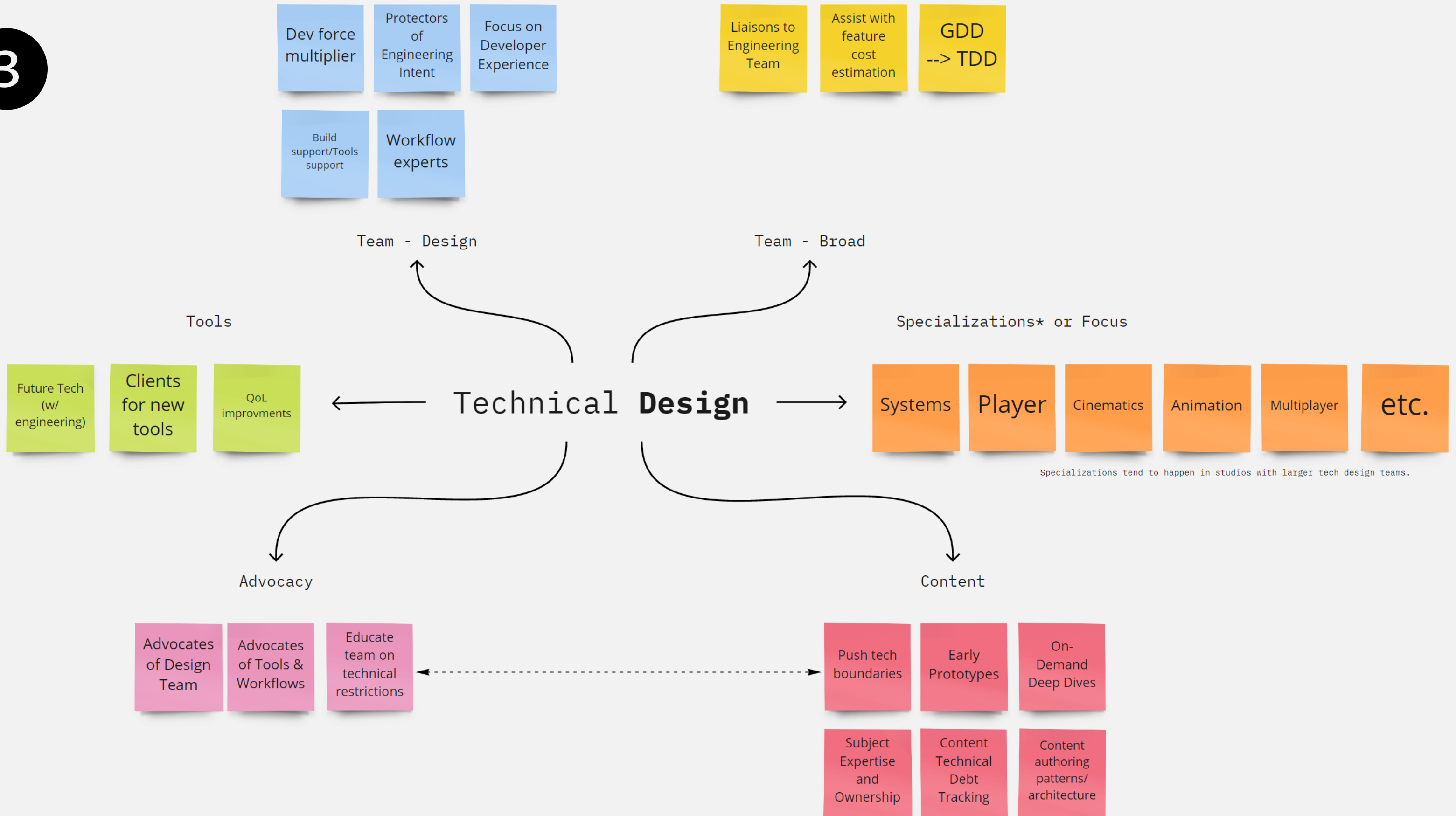
## ② Day To Day Life of a Tech Designer

*Can you **plan your day** as a  
Technical Designer?*

*How can you work **predictably** when  
responding to team demands?*



3





# ④ So, Technical Designers are Generalists?

*Technical Designers are often generalists, but this doesn't mean a Tech Designer is a "jack of all trades, master of none."*



GDC<sup>®</sup>

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE | July 19-23, 2021 | #GDC21



## 5 Surviving the Lottery Test

*Technical Designers often end up being **key knowledge holders** on a team.*

*How do you **protect** against skill/brain drain?*

# ⑥ Become / Growing as a Tech Designer

*Interested in pursuing/growing a career in Technical Design?  
Here are some paths you can take.*



# Identity Crisis Averted, Right?

- 1 Defined the role & responsibilities
- 2 Ways to **best utilize** for your team
- 3 Tips for **sustaining & scaling**
- 4 Advice on **becoming / growing** tech design

# Let's Keep the Conversation Going!



## Slack Community

Join at  
[bit.ly/  
gamedevtechdesign](https://bit.ly/gamedevtechdesign)

## Podcast

Follow for 1:1 episodes  
coming soon

## Live Q&A

Speak directly with us  
at our upcoming Q&A  
session