

Background

Gamecity:Hamburg – Hamburg’s Strong Cluster for Computer Games

The gaming industry has shown fast-paced, worldwide growth for a number of years. Within the entertainment sector, games have already overtaken neighbouring segments such as the cinema box office business. The German market for computer games has also been expanding steadily for years.

With its excellent infrastructure, Hamburg is the gaming industry hotspot in Germany. The Free and Hanseatic City is the first federal state to provide targeted support for the games industry through a cluster initiative set up in 2003. Today, gamecity:Hamburg is an internationally recognized brand in the business. The initiative has been an enduring force behind Hamburg’s rise to become the No.1 games industry location in Germany. And there are figures to prove it:

Number/type of companies in 2010

- Approx. 150 enterprises active in “games value chain”
- Of these approx. 63 are publishers or developers, i.e. are part of the core target group

Employment figures, July 2010

- Permanent/salaried employees: approx. 2,150
- Freelancers: 425

Vacancies, July 2010

- Currently approx. 300 vacancies

Growth since 2003

- Since the cluster initiative gamecity:Hamburg began its work in 2003 the number of jobs in the “games value chain” in Hamburg has increased from 850 to nearly 2,150, amounting to an annual growth of 15-20 percent.

The diversified structure of Hamburg's media sector provides an environment unmatched by other locations in Germany, in which the computer games industry can achieve valuable synergies with the relevant companies from the "TIMES" industries (Telecommunications, IT/Internet, Media, Electronics, Services). This is all the more significant in that the games sector – already, and to an even greater degree in the future – combines virtually all media disciplines in its products. Whether it is music, film, advertising or PR, Internet, mobile phones or television – the increasing multimediality of games spans all platforms. And this is where Hamburg's 20,000-plus media and IT enterprises contribute their specific know-how, helping to activate the media convergence potential for the games industry. Specific examples include:

- Daedalic, developer of the tie-in game to the movie "1½ Knights"
- Fishlabs, producer of successful game-based ad campaigns for mobile devices
- Twintime, creator of a manga comic based on a game plot

A decisive factor for the impressive growth of the games industry in Hamburg has been the consistency of support given to the games sector, starting in 2003. Using the descriptive name, gamecity:Hamburg, the Hanseatic city became the sole media centre in Germany to develop a comprehensive package of measures to support the local games industry:

Networking

The gamecity:Hamburg project led to the creation of the **most extensive network** of the games industry in Germany. It has some **1,800 members** (1,000 from Hamburg, 800 from the other federal states and Europe) from approx. 1,000 companies.

Service & Support

The gamecity:Hamburg is managed by digital gaming entrepreneurs and city representatives. The latter have been connected with the games industry and its development in Hamburg for more than ten years and thus bring to the table in-depth knowledge as well as close ties with all the relevant exponents of the convergence industries. Games enterprises can thus count on a team that delivers **one-stop solutions**.

A particularly valuable aspect for companies is continuous press work: The marketing activities specifically focus on showcasing the productivity of Hamburg's games companies. Consequently, since the inception of the

project the industry and the location have benefited from the numerous **articles published** in online media as well as the daily and trade press.

Gamecity:Hamburg gives companies the opportunity to participate in **joint appearances** at major domestic and international trade shows, such as gamescom in Cologne, to enable them to establish new contacts and break into new markets.

Infrastructure

In March 2008, **Gamecity Port**, Germany's first commercial building dedicated specifically to gaming industry companies opened its doors in Hamburg. A convenient location, affordable rents, and first and foremost, flexible lease conditions make it an ideal environment for fledgling digital games companies to successfully launch their business.

Qualification

Fostering qualified junior staff is one of gamecity:Hamburg's primary interests. The initiative has successfully developed unique selling propositions for Hamburg in this area.

GamecityLab Hamburg was created at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg) as a joint project of the departments of Technology and Computer Science with start-up funding from the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. It is designed as a place where local companies that are involved, in the widest sense, in the production of computer-based or -supported games, can get in touch with students and faculty.

The **Games master's degree programme** kicked off in the 2010 summer term at the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences as part of the consecutive graduate programme in "Sound, Vision, Games". Again the City of Hamburg provided initial funding. 20 students who have completed a BA or "Diplom" in Design, Computer Science, or Media & IT can be admitted to the programme, which is unique in that it has an **international focus** and ties in with the classic fields of sound and moving pictures.

Financial Support

Another element that is unique to the games business environment in Hamburg, and a central component of gamecity:Hamburg's activities, is the **Prototype Funding Programme** which enables companies to produce the all-important product prototype. Small and medium-sized companies based or locating in Hamburg are eligible to apply for financing of up to 100,000 euros, granted as an interest-free loan. A panel of experienced games industry professionals evaluates the plan and advises the representatives of the City of Hamburg on the allocation of the support funds.

Thus far 14 projects have received support, and the following effects have been achieved:

- Founding of new companies that today employ a total salaried, permanent staff of 75
- Various indirect effects, e.g. by cooperating with more than 30 Hamburg-based companies on projects, raising venture capital and securing follow-up capital for further company growth

About gamecity:Hamburg

gamecity:Hamburg has approximately 1,800 members and is Germany's largest regional network of the games industry. As a division of the Hamburg@work initiative for media, IT and telecommunication, gamecity:Hamburg is concerned with creating optimal local conditions for the digital entertainment industry. Its target groups are computer, console and mobile game developers and producers, as well as related industries such as advertising, technical service providers, online agencies, and music and film production companies from Hamburg and Europe. The network helps companies to establish cooperation agreements and to break into new markets. In addition, gamecity:Hamburg supports local businesses by providing a broad range of services including workshops, industry meetings, joint trade show appearances in Germany and abroad, affordable office space, start-up consulting, qualification programmes and funding for prototype production. To provide demand-oriented training of junior staff, a Games master's degree programme was created in cooperation with the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (HAW Hamburg) which began in the 2010 summer term. Gamecity:Hamburg is a public-private partnership headed by Stefan Klein (Hamburg@work) and Achim Quinke (Quinke Networks). Detailed information is available at www.gamecity-hamburg.de.

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