Out of the Ordinary

This final chapter contains no source code. I’m not even going to talk much about cocos2d. Instead, I’d like to focus on where you can go after you’ve read this book—for example, to ask questions and to learn more. But you should also investigate which technologies may be useful to implement in your game, such as advertising, analytics, one of the many social networking libraries, and even server technology used in persistent world games.

Everything you ever wanted to know is probably somewhere on the Internet. It may simply be hiding. If you want to know where to find art, audio, and freelancers, I’ll provide good starting points. And I’ll continue to provide more information and links on my blog, so be sure to visit my web site, at www.learn-cocos2d.com.

I’m also giving you a glimpse into marketing and public relations in this final chapter. Those are topics that are often asked about, full of mystery and misunderstandings. They include working with a publisher and how you can benefit from such a relationship, and also how to market your game and yourself. For an independent developer it’s very important to be recognized by the community as an aspiring, enthusiastic game developer and to connect with the community. All of your social networking efforts will then help you to promote your game simply by being able to reach out to more like-minded people. If you can build a network of followers, the success of your game will follow. A lot of people get that mixed up and think it’s the other way round. It’s not.

You’ll also learn about the reference games and apps made available with cocos2d. They’ll give you a good impression of what’s possible with the cocos2d game engine, and also what you can achieve as an independent developer. One of the most exciting learning tools is other people’s source code, so I’ve included a list of commercial cocos2d source code projects that are on sale for exactly this reason.

Most of all, “out of the ordinary” should be the guiding principle for whatever you do. Create something that’s different, and don’t be afraid to be different.
Useful Technologies

Every platform has a number of peripheral technologies that are helpful if not essential, at least in some cases and for some developers. On the iOS platform, this includes the ever-growing list of social networking platforms to choose from, besides Apple’s Game Center. Then there’s server development kits that you might need for developing persistent games that ought to connect to your own server, be it to find and run matches of more than four players, or simply to save characters, progress, settings, and worlds online.

And sometimes regarded dubiously, providing ads in games can create an additional revenue stream, especially for free games and lite versions. Often in conjunction with ads you can also investigate if it would help your game to add analytics and metrics, in order to find out where players fail most often, what buttons they click the most and how frequently they play individual game modes. This can help you tweak your game to be more fun for more players.

Social Networks

Besides Apple’s Game Center technology, there are a number of different social networking platforms. All are more or less similar in that they allow players to connect, post high scores, earn achievements, and do many other things, including posting game events to Twitter and Facebook—and all of them are free for both players and developers!

Since their feature sets are constantly evolving and the market for social networks is booming, the final decision is up to you. I’ll list the big players here and mention some of their outstanding features.

NOTE: Most of the social networking SDKs already include support for connecting your users with Twitter and Facebook, so you don’t need to learn and implement the separately available Facebook and Twitter APIs. If all you need is access to Twitter, you should have a look at the excellent MGTwitterEngine API from Matt Gemmell, at http://mattgemmell.com/2008/02/22/mgtwitterengine-twitter-from-cocoa. And if you need to integrate Facebook into your app, the official Facebook iOS SDK is located on GitHub: http://github.com/facebook/facebook-ios-sdk.

OpenFeint is the perceived leader of iOS social networking SDKs. It boasts Game Center compatibility and turn-based multiplayer features to stand out from the crowd. But first and foremost it’s very popular, with an audience of players in the millions. Have a look at OpenFeint’s developer portal: www.openfeint.com/developers.

Scoreloop sets itself apart from the competition by offering additional revenue streams via downloadable content, sharing virtual goods and in-game currencies. It also includes