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# On top of his game

## Teen takes dream to another level

**MILLIONS of teens would love to have Dan McCabe's job. As a 3D Environment Artist he spends his waking hours in front of a computer creating the imaginary worlds used in top notch video games.**

Dan, 19, and his teammates at game developer Codemasters in Birmingham are celebrating the launch of F1 2017. **What are you doing in this crazy world?**

I started work full-time in January and I still can't quite believe I'm here. My colleagues are legendary in the industry. To be working alongside them is a dream.

I spend my days working on software to make game designers' vision a virtual reality. I never actually feel like I am at work as the days speed past.

**How did you even dare to think you could do this?**

When I finished school after GCSEs I intended to study IT at West Cheshire College. I was about to sign up when my mate said he had spotted a BTEC game development course.

I'd always loved playing video games and mucked around with animation. It was a match made in heaven.

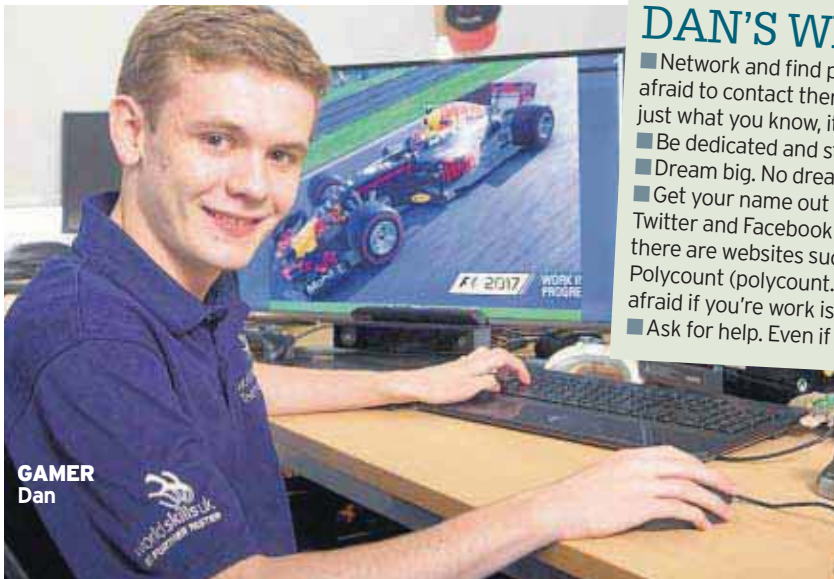
I was worried I couldn't draw but the tutor convinced me it didn't matter. My

mum thought it was a bit lightweight compared to A Levels, but told me to work hard and has been really supportive.

**Sounds good but how did you turn that into a job?**

Through college we were given the chance to enter WorldSkills UK competitions. I saw them as a chance to boost my skills and get noticed. I won regional and





## DAN'S WINNING TIPS

- Network and find people in the job you want and don't be afraid to contact them. Ask them how they did it. It's not just what you know, it's who you know, and who knows you.
- Be dedicated and stay motivated.
- Dream big. No dream is too ambitious.
- Get your name out there and show people what you do. Twitter and Facebook are brilliant for this. For game artists there are websites such as Artstation (artstation.com) and Polycount (polycount.com) where we share work. Don't be afraid if you're work isn't perfect, because no one's ever is.
- Ask for help. Even if your question seems silly, ask.

## THE CONTACT

- Codemasters, codemasters.com
- Worldskills, worldskillsuk.org
- Dan's portfolio, artstation.com/artist/dannymac

## THE IT JOBS

While there are only a handful of jobs like Dan's out there, we found 26,991 IT jobs which use many of his skills. At fish4jobs.co.uk there are 2,676, from an IT applications support technician in Coventry (£30k) to a games tester in Manchester (£23k to £25k).

There are another 4,762 jobs at gov.uk/jobsearch jobs including junior IT support in Manchester (£25k to £26k) and IT help desk officer in Keighley, West Yorks, (£19,409 to £22,683).

We found 8,367 tech jobs at uk.dice.com and another 9,968 of all types from software engineers to web developers at cwjobs.co.uk. There are 1,218 apprenticeship opportunities at gettingofar.gov.uk.

national contests up against trainees and apprentices and was named best young games designer in Europe at [EuroSkills 2016](#). I met industry experts including Codemasters and decided I needed to impress them. I had a three-month window to make something before the next competition in Birmingham. I put every spare minute into designing an F1 car.

Instead of advertising the usual stuff on the car, I used elements from my CV. I also made sure the Codemasters' logo featured too. They seemed impressed and the next week I got an email saying they needed a CV that day and then I got an interview. They hired me on the spot.

## Do you still do contests?

Absolutely. They are the reason I have the best job in the world. I am part of Team UK and will be competing for WorldSkills UK in Abu Dhabi this October and am aiming to be named the best young games designer in the world.

## Does Mum still regret you not doing A Levels?

Far from it. She's really proud of what I've achieved. My experience with competitions and my college course has changed my entire family's outlook on BTECs—and also the fact you don't need a degree if you can show you can do the job without one.

**I aim to be world's best young games designer**

## What does the future hold for a 19-year-old who has it all?

I just keep doing what I am doing. I love it beyond words and want to keep on creating wonderful imaginary worlds. I go home at night and do the same thing as a hobby – if I am in the mood I can create a wonderful spaceship or a car – just like that.

I also love sharing my skills. On one or two occasions, I've even been able to show my expert colleagues new techniques. That feels really special.