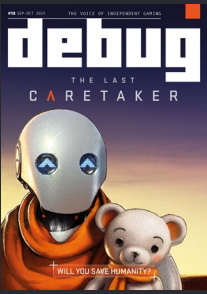


DEAD END

THE LAST
CARETAKER



WILL YOU SAVE HUMANITY?



#12

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The Last Caretaker avoids the grim clichés of ruined wastelands. Instead, it presents a clean, dormant Earth waiting to be reawakened – a place of hope, not decay.

GUARDIAN OF EARTH

Sometimes, you know right away when a game is special. *The Last Caretaker* is one of those. A first-person survival-crafting game with a striking premise: you are the last robot left to protect humanity on a drowned Earth.

We flew to Helsinki, Finland, to spend the day with Channel37, the seven-person studio behind the game, to get hands-on with a world that feels both hauntingly empty and quietly alive.



road trip

When we're stuck indoors for too long then we get decidedly cranky, so thankfully there are regular gaming events we can attend. From packed showcases, to industry conferences and sweaty game jams. We'll go, take pictures and report back.

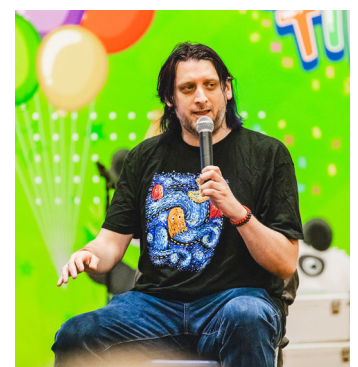
This time: NottsVGE, devcom, gamescom

What: Nottingham Video Games Expo

Where: Nottingham, UK

When: 26-27 July 2025

What is it? Nottingham Video Games Expo is a buzzing celebration of gaming culture in the heart of the city. From retro classics to fresh indie creations, the show floor was packed with things to play and people to meet. We dived in for the 4th time this year and loved the mix of nostalgia and discovery. Local studios and student developers showed off their work, giving a real sense of the talent growing in the region. Once again it was our pleasure to run the bustling Indie Showcase, giving smaller teams the spotlight they deserved. Keep a close eye out for the VGE team's Bristol event next February!



Photography: NottsVGE - Laurence Photography // devcom, gamescom - Daniel Crocker





This was our first time at devcom, and we're hooked. Consider us converts to the developer side of gamescom!

What: devcom

Where: Cologne, Germany

When: 17-19 August 2025

What is it? A sprawling developer conference held alongside gamescom, and true to its name, it was all about development. Spread across several halls just before the main show floor opened, this industry-focused gathering gave studios and creators a stage to connect without the noise of the consumer crowds.

From in-depth talks to behind-the-scenes panels, the breadth of topics was impressive. We heard from veteran designers, ambitious indies, and major studios alike, covering everything from narrative design and production pipelines to cutting-edge tech. It was also a rare chance to network directly with developers, who spoke candidly about their workflows, challenges, and the inspirations driving their projects.

There was a genuine sense of openness and collaboration in the air. No bombastic marketing, just meaningful conversations and knowledge being shared. For anyone in development, it was a reminder of how vibrant and supportive this industry can be and proves that making games isn't just about the end product.

Honestly? Our favourite part of gamescom week.



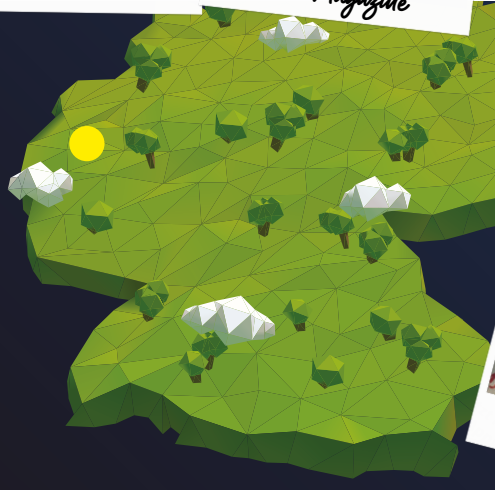
The Cloud



Nice Magazine



Catch This Train



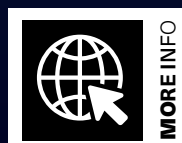
SPOTTED IN THE WILD

REGGIE, HIS COUSIN...

DEVELOPER DEGOMA

PUBLISHER DEGOMA

Spotted at devcom, *Reggie, His Cousin*, *Two Scientists* and *Most Likely the End of the World* (yes, that ludicrously long name did have to be truncated above) is a gravity-bending 2D platformer with a wonderfully absurd streak. Armed with a Multi-Gravity Switch, you flip the world at will, chaining clever jumps through mind-twisting levels. Gravity's rarely this quirky, or this fun!





DISCO'S BACK, BABY!

GET READY TO BRING THE FUNK IN DEAD AS DISCO

Whoever said disco was dead was completely and utterly wrong. Well, technically they *were* right, but now they're wrong again. In *Dead as Disco*, you play as Charlie Disco (or CD for short, coincidentally), back from the dead for one night only to get his revenge.

After mysterious circumstances surround his death, Charlie Disco has one night to plan the ultimate reunion show and get revenge.

In this rhythm game turned beat-'em-up, you'll quite literally beat 'em to the beat as you unleash a glittery disco inferno. Fight through waves of baddies and confront your former bandmates in flamboyant boss battles à la *Scott Pilgrim*, each themed around a different music genre, with wild abilities like explosive guitar riffs, speaker-shattering soundwaves, and dazzling laser light shows.

Set in a neon-soaked, cyberpunk-dystopian future where music icons

rule with style and swagger, each level unfolds like a high-octane, interactive

“ Use timed dodges, takedowns and combos to keep stayin' alive. ”

music video. With seamless transitions between dynamic scenes, you'll start in a subway station brawl, leap onto a moving train in a side-scrolling sequence straight out of *Streets of Rage*, and face a boss fight crescendo. Each segment is visually distinct and

INFO

Developer
Brain Jar
Games

Publisher
Brain Jar
Games

On
PC, Mac

Demo
Yes

Released
Coming Soon

musically synced, turning every level into a rhythm-fuelled rollercoaster of combat and choreography.

Naturally, there's a killer soundtrack featuring original tracks and licensed bangers from Monstercat, but that's not all. Infinite Disco mode lets you upload your own songs and bust moves (and skulls) to your personal playlist.

Combat is both flashy and groovy. Use timed dodges, takedowns and unlockable combos to keep stayin' alive and the vibes immaculate. Hitting perfect timing isn't strictly required, but it's the key to higher scores, and feels ridiculously satisfying.

Expect over-the-top dramatisations of genre stereotypes, from hardcore metal gatekeepers to K-pop idols, plus playful nods to classic dance game tropes, including an opening dance sequence with a silhouetted dancer. This game embraces its clichés with humour and heart, because disco, after all, is about having fun.

And yes, there's co-op, so grab a friend and prove who the real Dancing Queen (or King) is. [👉](#)

Q&A DEAD AS DISCO TEAM

From cinematic inspirations to a unique music-sync system, the *Dead as Disco* team shares how they turn every punch and move into a rhythmic, high-energy dance of combat and style.

When we spoke briefly at Gamescom, we touched on the game's bold aesthetic, reminding us of franchises such as *Scott Pilgrim*, *Cowboy Bebop*, and *No More Heroes*. Could you elaborate on the visual and narrative influences behind *Dead as Disco*?

From the beginning we had a goal to deliver on the fantasy of playing a music-synced action sequence from a movie. That allowed us to take inspiration from a wide variety of sources. In addition to the ones you already mentioned, media like *John Wick*, *Baby Driver*, Sturgill Simpson's *Sound & Fury* music video, and a plethora of Kung Fu action movies served as touchpoints for us.

Importantly, however, we wanted to make sure the world of *Dead as Disco* is ultimately its own. Charlie's ex-bandmates are their own set of over-the-top Idols, each representing their own musical genres. We've basically just told the team to go wild and have fun – and their passion really shows in the game.

***Dead as Disco* feels less like a traditional game and more like you're starring in an energetic music video. How did you choreograph combat, camera work and level design to achieve that vivid and deeply satisfying beat-driven flow?**

We start with the music and setting and build from there. This allows us to experiment a lot and find camera setups and level transitions that fit the music without interrupting the flow of combat. The song itself ends up driving a lot of the decisions, as it's important to have visuals that match the feeling of the song.

We also play our own game, a lot. Constantly listening to feedback and iterating keeps us sharp and keeps the game refined. That energetic music video feel is as much about the things we've removed as it is the things we've added.

Given how central music is to the game, the sound design feels incredibly deliberate – it doesn't just support the action, it drives it. Could

you talk about your approach to building the game's sonic landscape?

Music is central to our experience. We want players to immerse themselves in the fantasy of being a rock star in a music video. So our goal with the sonic landscape is to make the player feel like they are 'playing' that song, even if Charlie isn't actually holding an instrument.

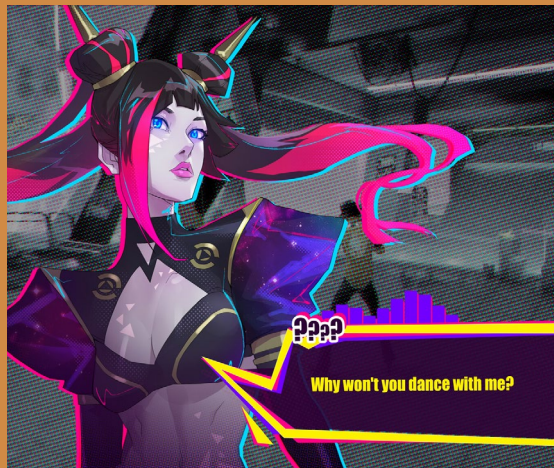
One of our earliest realisations in development on *Dead as Disco* was that punches can sound like drums, so we pushed Charlie's sound design to fall somewhere in between a drum kit and a punching sound effect. Our amazing audio design team was able to record sources from both natural and synthesizer elements to achieve the illusion of throwing punches and playing drums at the same time.

Letting players fight to their own tracks adds a ton of replayability. How does the system process and adapt to imported music? And looking more broadly at user-generated content, how deep and customisable is this system, and what kinds of community creations are you hoping to see?

In our demo you can play your own music by just specifying a BPM for the song. The game does the rest of the work to make sure the action lines up with the music. It's super easy and works with most songs right out of the box.

That's just the tip of the iceberg though, as we have a lot more currently in development for the system. We are actively developing tools that allow creating your own beat map, allowing support for variable BPMs within a song, and giving a visual of the audio to make editing much easier.

After that we are working on tools to allow you to truly create your own unique experiences. Specifying enemy spawns, choosing when arenas swap in and out, stitching songs together, and some other surprises are all on our road map. This includes the ability to share your beatmaps with others. [\[\]](#)



BACK CATALOGUE

Terrorrhythm – A rhythm-based beat-'em-up syncing combat to music, featuring intense action in a 2D side-scrolling style. It's darker and grittier compared to flashy 3D disco battles.

BITE-SIZED GREATNESS

These indie gems, as chosen by NICK CROCKER, prove that powerful stories, unforgettable moments, and clever design can all unfold in a single sitting, fully completed in two to three hours or less.

THE STANLEY PARABLE

2013

Galactic Cafe



A clever, meta-narrative exploration that questions the nature of choice in video games. Wander an office space guided, or misled, by a witty narrator whose commentary adapts to your decisions. With sharp humour and philosophical twists, it's a thought-provoking ride that wraps up well within two hours. Re-released in 2022.

WHAT REMAINS OF EDITH FINCH

2017

Giant Sparrow

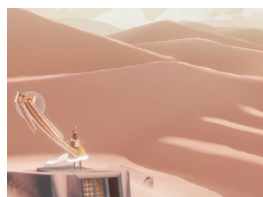


Step inside a sprawling family home filled with haunting stories told through unique, interactive vignettes. This award-winning narrative experience uses inventive gameplay to explore themes of memory, loss, and legacy, creating a rich, emotional journey that feels like a living, breathing storybook.

JOURNEY

2012

thatgamecompany

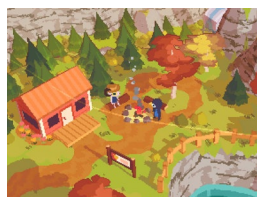


A serene, wordless, and utterly captivating adventure through vast deserts and ancient ruins, *Journey* focuses on connection and discovery. Its stunning art and music combine with seamless multiplayer interaction, crafting a meditative and emotional experience that can be savoured in a single, uninterrupted session.

A SHORT HIKE

2019

adamgryu



Explore a charming, colourful island at your leisure in this laid-back exploration game. In *A Short Hike*, you meet quirky characters, uncover hidden gems, and climb a mountain at your own pace. It's a thoroughly heartwarming adventure that proves you don't need hours and hours in a game to feel fully immersed.

SUPERHOT

2016

SUPERHOT Team



A strikingly original FPS where time only moves when you do, turning the combat into a strategic dance of dodges and shots. Minimalist in style but intense in execution, *Superhot* offers a compact, thrilling challenge that demands total focus and rewards quick thinking, and all within just a few hours of play.

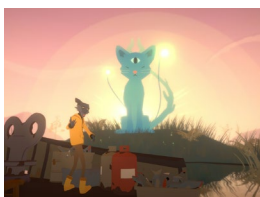
TEN OF THE BEST

In a gaming world where “just one more quest” means three more hours, short-form indie games are like a perfect espresso shot; quick, concentrated, and surprisingly satisfying. These little gems pack story, gameplay, and charm into bite-sized adventures, usually under two hours. Sure, there might be some sneaky side content for completionists, but the main journey wraps up neatly within an approachable timeframe. Whether it’s clever mechanics or touching tales, these games prove you don’t need a saga to make an impact. Sometimes, less really is more.

BEFORE YOUR EYES

2021

GoodbyeWorld Games

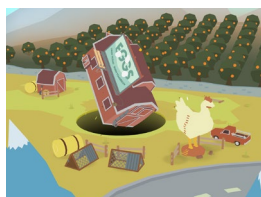


An emotionally powerful narrative where your real-life blinks - tracked via webcam - move the story forward. *Before Your Eyes* combines this unique mechanic with strong voice acting to create a deeply personal journey through memory, love, and loss, forging an intimate bond between the player and the in-game character.

DONUT COUNTY

2018

Ben Esposito



Take control of a growing hole that’s swallowing up a quirky town in this whimsical, physics-based puzzle game. With a playful narrative and bright, colourful visuals, *Donut County* is a light-hearted romp that delivers clever puzzles and bucketfuls of charm in a concise and highly satisfying package.

BROTHERS: A TALE OF TWO SONS

2013

Starbreeze Studios



A touching adventure that sees you guide two brothers on a mythical journey to save their father. Played solo with dual controls, it delivers emotional depth through gameplay alone. In just a few hours, *Brothers* tells a moving, wordless story of love, sacrifice, and growing up; simple, elegant, and utterly unforgettable.

UNTITLED GOOSE GAME

2019

House House



Be the mischievous goose that disrupts a sleepy village in this quirky stealth puzzler. Filled with slapstick humour and clever challenges, the main story of *Untitled Goose Game* wraps up in about three hours, although those seeking extra goose-led havoc can partake in some optional antics to extend the fun.

MINIT

2018

JW, Kitty, Jukio, Dom



This unique 2D top-down adventure condenses exploration into short, 60-second bursts, creating a fast-paced time-loop puzzle game. Its retro aesthetics and inventive design make *Minit* a refreshing and concise experience, which proves absolutely ideal for those short on time but craving some creativity.



AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, **HOLLOW KNIGHT: SILKSONG** IS REAL. AND IT'S REAL GOOD

It's difficult to think of an indie game with more weight of expectation behind it than Team Cherry's long-awaited sequel to their Metroidvania mega-hit *Hollow Knight*.

Initially announced as downloadable content for the original, *Hollow Knight: Silksong* evolved across its eight-year (!) period of development into not just a full sequel, but an even bigger, better game than its beloved predecessor.

Yes - better than *Hollow Knight*. *Silksong* is nothing less than a triumph, an unprecedented second masterpiece from the most exciting developers on the scene. But what's really remarkable about this belated follow-up is how differently it plays. By the end of the first *Hollow Knight*, you were a leaping, dashing little killing machine. In *Silksong*, you're significantly more mobile within the first hour, with the skill ceiling only increasing from there as the thirty-hour adventure proceeds to tax your ever-growing abilities.

Taking control of the first game's breakout character, Hornet, you'll be moving at great speed through an enormous number of **diverse, interesting and beautifully atmospheric environments [1]**, each populated with their own clutch of baddie bugs to slash, skewer and... well, be horribly murdered by. Equipping different Crests

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Blasphemous
Offers players a *Hollow Knight*-inspired journey into utter despair.

INFO

Developer
Team Cherry

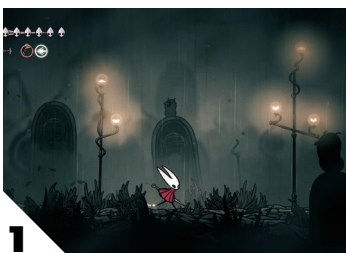
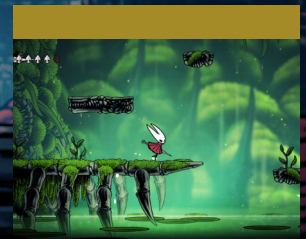
Publisher
Team Cherry

Price
£16.75

Released
Out now

On
PC, PS5/4, Xbox
Series/One, Switch/2

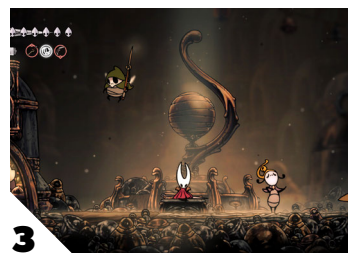
" *Silksong* is nothing less than a triumph, an unprecedented second masterpiece. "



1



2



3

allows you to change up your suite of attacks in order to suit any given situation, with further customisation available thanks to the Tools you'll be able to purchase around the enormous world.

Boss battles? Why, yes. Almost 50, **all superbly designed [2]** to test you to the very limits of your abilities. To discuss them in any detail would be to spoil them, but rest assured that you will die. Thankfully things have been made less punishing in *Silksong*, **with many more "Benches" serving as checkpoints [3]**, though you will lose your collected currency (Rosaries) on death and will need to reach your point of expiration in order to reclaim them. Worry not - Rosaries are plentiful and reaching a state of acceptance that you will lose everything is part and parcel with getting better at the game.

Difficulty is worth discussing in a little more depth,

as much has been written about *Silksong's* level of challenge. It bears repeating that yes, it is difficult, but - once again - you have plenty of choice in how you approach the game, plenty of access to upgrades and incremental improvement. You're expected to take some losses; every death is an opportunity to learn and a little more of the game seen, committed to memory. That doesn't mean anything here is a memorisation test - getting out of danger is a squeeze of the right trigger away.

In short - yes, it's well worth the wait. You won't have an easy time, but you will get better, you will get stronger, and you will succeed. Just like Team Cherry. [u](#)



Stuart Gipp



MORE INFO

BEAUTY IN BRUTALITY

Silksong will break you. Hornet's fights are precise, beautiful, and brutal - and every death is a lesson in patience and skill. Team Cherry has steadfastly refused to make this easy, daring you to earn every victory. It's bold - even defiant - in an age of accessibility and difficulty patches.

But when it finally clicks, the thrill is unmatched: a rush of triumph that only a game this uncompromising can deliver. Frustration and elation, pain and glory - *Hollow Knight: Silksong* serves them all, and then some. And it's precisely what made the eight-year wait for this sequel worth it.

Nine Sols

Wears its influence on its sleeve, pushing players even further.

Salt and Sanctuary

Pre-dates *Hollow Knight* but offers a similar test.



THE BACK CATALOGUE

Team Cherry's debut, *Hollow Knight*, took the indie world by storm in 2017 - and with good reason. It remains the very best.

debug

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

BACK ISSUES

Think you missed an issue? Yeah, not on our watch. We've got everything from the scrappy debut that smelt of fresh ink and chaos to the latest 116-page beast. No bidding wars, no dusty racks, no collector's guilt. Just pure, uncut **Debug**. Order your missing fix, complete the set, and pretend you've been here since day one



#01 Viewfinder



#02 COCOON



#03 Headbangers



#04 Snufkin



#05 Broken Sword



#06 Blue Prince



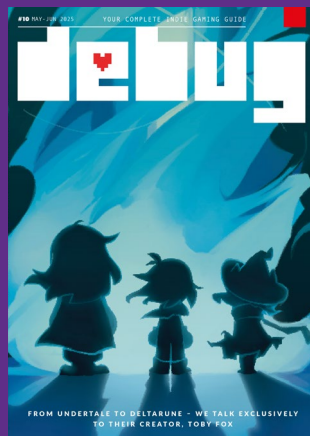
#07 Mewgenics



#08 OFF



#09 to a T



#10 DELTARUNE

Everything you love. All killer, no bin filler. Every Debug back issue is still in stock from Debug #1's scrappy debut to the issue where we let DELTATUNE melt our collective brains. You've seen the covers. You know what to do

Fast shipping? Yeah. Worldwide? Obviously. And no surprise customs fees either. We're too classy for that. You get the digital version free with every print copy, because it's 2025 and we're not total dinosaurs, and we wrap your mag like it's sacred, because honestly, it kind of is

So fill the gaps in your collection, stack them proudly, and pretend you've been here since the beginning. We'll back you up

