Introductory Essay

Capstone Subject Background and Motives

The original idea that led to the formation of this Capstone project originated out of a Fall 2012 research essay in Dr. Laura McGrath’s “Understanding Writing as a Process” class in which I analyzed the cognitive process of composition and how I believed, as a result of my research, that simulating video game exercises could aid composition writers. I argued in my research paper that, if a composition student were to be trained to examine a literary subject through several different viewpoints by having feedback to guide him or her, then certainly would the cognitive process of writing assist in developing new and richer arguments. Actively making choices based on practicing a process several times with little risk, which is a tenet of cognitive learning, aids writers in their ability to cultivate feedback from their writing processes.

In the process of developing such an argument, I became familiar with James Paul Gee’s work. Gee is the Mary Lou Fulton Presidential Professor of Literacy Studies and Regents' Professor at Arizona State University. His research focus centers on the application of linguistics and new literacies in the classroom. He believes that, with the advent of digital literacies and new semiotic designs created from them, educators should consider the use of educating students through video games. A reason that Gee holds the opinion of introducing emerging literacies into the classroom is that a rift between technologies that students use in their everyday lives should not deviate much from the technology that educators use for their curriculum. If students feel that classroom exercises feel archaic compared to their day-to-day methods of absorbing knowledge, student engagement suffers.
Video games, Gee explains, is a type of new literacy that should be acknowledged; when he was watching his son play video games, he noted in his book, *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy*, that the “theory of learning in good video games is close to what… are the best theories of learning in cognitive science” (4). At its core, a video game is a system that presents a problem and allows a player to solve the problem. Such an idea, I discovered, seemed very similar to the tenets of improving composition through cognitive learning.

At the time, I also focused on the concept of active and passive learning. Alecia Magnifico writes that learning through actions and practice yields better retention in writers than passive exercises. Magnifico states that not only is passive learning an ineffective way to view media because of retention issues, she also states, just as Gee stated, that audiences also are more engaged and willing to learn if the difference between the technological level that audiences use for their daily lives is not different than that of their academic studies (168).

When I then looked back at the educational video games that I played as a child, such as *The Oregon Trail*, *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego*, and *Super Solvers: Midnight Rescue!*, I recognized that the games did have plenty of educational value for young students. *The Oregon Trail* educated children about asset management, budget, risk, and geography; *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego* educated children about geography, world culture, and history; and *Super Solvers: Midnight Rescue!* educated children about reading comprehension. All of these games bolstered my knowledge in subjects that I later would learn in school. I developed mastery of those skills from previously playing educational video games before a teacher taught those skills to me in the classroom.
I felt that playing educational video games benefitted children like myself when deploying them for my academic studies, so I began to question why educational games were mainly applied to young children and not high school or college students if researchers of digital media suggest that games enhance learning. If active media improves retention in students and video gaming offers opportunities for cognitive learning, then I would have expected the educational gaming market to grow. But the educational gaming market did not grow. Instead, the current state of educational games are generally low-budget projects and are still mainly targeted to young children. I hypothesize that the value of educational gaming is not limited by any age or academic level, and that educational video games should be developed and marketed for people of all ages, not just for children.

Looking into the state of the educational video game studios that produced the games I listed above, I acknowledge that *The Oregon Trail* and *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* were games developed by Brøderbund Software, Inc., which was acquired by The Learning Company before the Learning Company purchased Brøderbund Software, Inc in 1998 and then terminated much of its workforce. The Learning Company, which was responsible for the development of *Super Solvers: Midnight Rescue!*, reformed its name as Mattel Interactive in 1999 and then was sold to Gores Technology Group in 2000. Gores does not seem to have ever used Mattel Interactive as a means of developing educational games, and so as a result, very few educational video games were released after 2000.

A few *Carmen Sandiego* games have released since then such as *Carmen Sandiego: Adventures in Math* in 2011, but the game was exclusive to the WiiWare platform which limited the audience and accessibility of the game for potential learners. As far as I can tell, the multiple acquisitions of educational game studios between 1998 and 2000 along with the low priority...
Gores Technology Group put in its acquisition of Mattel Interactive quickly deteriorated the educational gaming genre. My impression, upon realizing the history of educational game studios in the late 1990’s, is that educational games currently remain as low-budget titles with very little innovation following the games developed in that era because no well-funded video game studio following the Gores acquisition prioritized developing educational games rather than developing purely entertainment games.

As a former game developer, I understand the issue with cost and risk in developing a video game. Between 2012 and 2015, I was employed by a video game publishing company called Phoenix Online Studios, which produces and publishes video games generally in the point-and-click adventure genre. From the beginning to end of development at Phoenix Online Studios, a video game generally lasts eighteen to twenty-four months of development with up to fifteen to twenty people working on it, with each game sold to customers containing twelve to fifteen hours of content. The amount of funds needed to support development on such a project is very costly compared to many other forms of media that would contain a similar amount of hours of content, which necessitates that the project’s sales meet or exceed its budgets. Not every game that sold while I was employed at Phoenix Online Studios sold enough to make up for its budget, and considering the relatively high cost to develop the games, failing to meet projected sales led to financial trouble for project directors.

In many video game studios even smaller than Phoenix Online Studios, a video game might be developed by one or two people with meager budgets; very often, those games cost so much to produce that the amount of funding available for marketing is thin enough that many video games that release go unnoticed and do not make back its budget. Large studios that produce games with the highest amounts of resources for budget (otherwise known as “AAA
titles”) are more likely to profit from its games as a result of a higher marketing budget yet stand to lose much more money on a game that underperforms compared to the losses that a small studio may incur. Regardless, as David Mullich, designer of 1999’s Heroes of Might and Magic III says, “only 10%-30% of all games break even -- it is the relatively few successes that pay for all the failures.” Since so many video games do underperform with a lot of funding potentially lost, very few video game studios would agree to experiment with a high-budget educational game rather than an entertainment game considering the history of what happened with Brøderbund Software, Inc. and The Learning Company.

While I do have a positive opinion toward using educational games in the classroom based on my studies showing increased mastery over academic subjects using educational video games, I understand the financial risk that comes with developing a video game that would not focus solely on entertainment value. Furthermore, developing a video game for the use of educational mastery requires that the educational video game be developed, in part, alongside the proficiency of a subject matter expert in the field that the educational video game intends to educate students with. Another issue about developing educational video games is that, since the timeline to develop a video game often takes years, relevant knowledge of a subject may potentially be dated by the time the game releases.

Regardless, I feel that video game studios should consider the idea of developing educational video games if members of the studio have the expertise to design the product. Video games as educational tools are generally looked favorably upon by college educators and students, but deploying educational video games in the classroom suffers many issues: educational games are either difficult or impossible for educators to customize to fit their particular lesson plans, educators may not have means to offer computers for student use, games
may not be developed to accommodate for a student’s disabilities, games may not be accessible to students who are generally unfamiliar with video games, or an educational video game may be developed on an assumption that non-video game players find an interest in a genre that students do not share. Without preset formats or general guidelines as to how to successfully develop an educational video game for the classroom, then the possibility of a video game studio developing educational games remains a risky venture despite any beneficial aspects games add to the classroom.

With all of this information and knowledge in mind, I decided that I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to encourage educational video games to be developed again. And I felt that I was in a unique position to help: I had experience as a game developer, I highly valued good educational opportunity for students, and I had experience as a graduate school student who could read and understand research articles. So I decided that I wanted to devote my Capstone project and professional career in supporting educational video games for students of all ages.

History and Issues of Developing Capstone Project

In the Fall of 2015, I approached Dr. McGrath and Dr. Sergio Figueiredo about a plan for a Capstone project beginning the Spring of 2016. I chose these professors because Dr. McGrath’s course was the spark that led to my decision to develop a Capstone involving video games. I had not had a class with Dr. Figueiredo before, but he had been recommended to me for this project and he was willing to work with me. Because I had a history with video games as a player, a developer, and a researcher, I chose to suggest writing a GDD (game development document) for my Capstone that I would use as a tool to one day develop an educational video game. In order to keep the focus of the project as an English project and a Professional Writing project, I came up
with the idea of a game called “Grammar Detective.” The basic concept would be that the game would includes a 20-minute mystery game where the player, a “detective,” would visit a town of characters and talk to them trying to solve some sort of crime. The twist here was that the “criminal” could be determined by who spoke with the most grammatical errors, because in this weird town, that’s how lies are detected. Players would also need to use logical reasoning alongside of grammar mastery to infer who the criminal was. The game, in my mind, was a mix of *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego* and *Mafia*.

The problem with this idea, as Dr. McGrath and Dr. Figueiredo pointed out, was that the concept of determining that a person’s grammar is “correct” or “incorrect” came off as dangerous. What makes one person’s dialect “correct” and another person’s “incorrect”? I relented; perhaps the idea was problematic at its core. But I was running out of time to get a project agreed upon before the end of the Fall 2015 semester.

So we discussed what type of project I could work on and we agreed that I would write about presenting the significance of digital media and educational video games in the college classroom based on theoretical research from scholarly articles. I would then present guidelines showing effective strategies for how to design an educational video game for a college-level audience based on my research on how to aid teacher/student audiences to appropriately use educational video games in the classroom. The project required an introductory essay, literature review, and guidelines that I would write about several topics of educational video games (how to immerse players in a game, how to help people retain information in a game, how to pace a video game, and several other factors).

So I started this project in Spring of 2016. But I very soon learned that I was in trouble. During my studies in the Professional Writing program, I had never learned how to write in the
way that this particular project required. I had never seen or written a literature review. I had never written heuristic guidelines before. I had gathered over 50 sources on a spreadsheet which showed the arguments of the articles, its citations, and how to categorize the arguments.

But the major issue I had was synthesizing those arguments into a professional, academic writing project. The Professional Writing program had not offered any classes or preparation in academic research paper writing, yet here I was mired in this particular project. The second I started writing the literature review, all progress on project stopped. I would spend days just looking at my research notes, trying to synthesize them into writing the literature review, and ending up with nothing written in return. I really have no idea why I kept having this problem. Was it a feeling of pressure to make the work perfect, and I didn’t know how to make it “perfect”? That was possible. I had a similar experience in a Grant Writing course I had with Dr. Elizabeth Giddens in the MAPW program; I had experience in grant writing through an internship I had, but I had a lot of trouble with the grant proposal project that I did in that class because I didn’t feel that I had authority in my work.

In any case, my inability to progress on this Capstone project never got resolved. I didn’t finish writing a literature review or finish writing heuristic guidelines before the end of the Spring 2016 semester. But I did want to graduate, so I asked and got permission to continue working with Dr. McGrath and Dr. Figueiredo in Fall 2016 and then in Spring 2017.

By the end of the Spring 2017 semester, I had abandoned hope for the project. I had written some sets of guidelines, but the format continued to not seem to conform with proper heuristic guideline standards I was asked to adhere to. I was still having trouble making any headway in the literature review despite having the sources I needed to properly argue my points. My arguments often had shaky logic or formatting when I sent deliverables to my committee. At the
beginning of April 2017, it was clear to me that it was time to discontinue the Capstone project. I had been spending so much money and time on this project with nothing to show for it, and it was negatively affecting my life and the lives of the family members around me. I didn’t know what to do, but I knew that this project wasn’t going anywhere.

Setting Up New Committee and Beginning New Project

Months later, in September of 2017, I was encouraged by my sister to try and finish the Capstone again. Since months had passed, maybe I could approach this project with a new perspective. But I wanted to make sure that when I did the Capstone this time, I would finish. I scheduled an appointment with Dr. Tony Grooms so I could ask him about what I could do differently compared to what I was doing before so help maximize my success with a new project.

Dr. Grooms then told me about Professor Jeffrey Greene who Dr. Grooms related to me had relevant knowledge and interest in the kind of project that I would like to develop as a video-game related Capstone project. Dr. Grooms contacted Professor Greene and that was the beginning of a new Capstone committee and a new project. For this new project, I wanted to lower the stakes and requirements to produce and finish the Capstone project. I would not deal with developing heuristic guidelines which I had no knowledge about again. What we agreed to do for my Capstone project was to make an extension of the 2012 research paper that I did with Dr. McGrath that sparked my whole interest in video gaming for my Capstone project. I asked by Dr. McGrath and Dr. Figueiredo whether or not they could be available as a second member of my committee and while they both said that they couldn’t, they both recommended Dr. Jeanne Bohannon to serve on my committee. I contacted Dr. Bohannon at the end of October, the three
of us had a meeting about the project, and she agreed to come on to the project. At the time, we decided to work on focusing on extending my 2012 research paper and seeking related interesting ways of arguing my point by discussing Web 2.0, its importance and value, and the expectations of future trends. By early of November, we were all ready to go. I enrolled for Spring 2018 to finally graduate from the MAPW program.

Starting the New Project and Finishing the Capstone

Right from the outset, I wanted to be absolutely sure that, this time, I would graduate with my Capstone. In early January, I scheduled for a short meeting again with Dr. Grooms so I could ask some questions about what types of services might be available to me that I wasn’t aware of, and also asked what types of cases he might know of where MAPW students had used the Student Disabilities Services to help them, so that maybe I could get some ideas as to how to get in contact with SDS to help accommodate me; I had been using the SDS services since I was an undergraduate as a result of an injury several years ago. My mom also attended that meeting; I would’ve preferred that she didn’t because it seemed very inappropriate for a meeting with Dr. Grooms, but she insisted to give some other perspectives on what kind of help I might want to look into.

That wasn’t even the weirdest part of that meeting. We had been discussing the idea of having weekly meetings with my committee so that I would keep on track, and Dr. Grooms stood up and informed me that Dr. Bohannon was in her office down the hall to grab her and see if she could commit to weekly meetings with me. I kept mostly silent during that part of the meeting; I was very uncomfortable with the idea of Dr. Bohannon being asked whether or not she could commit to meetings with me in the presence of both Dr. Grooms and my mom. It seemed very
unfair for her; were I in her shoes, I wouldn’t have appreciated being asked to spend extra meeting times with a student with the dean and the student’s parent in the room.

In any case, both Dr. Bohannon and Professor Greene agreed to regular meetings so that we could make sure the project was on track. I also got in contact with a member of the graduate writing center to help review my work. Everything was set to go forward. The only thing that could stop me was myself, frankly.

And that started to come to a head in early February. I was told that I would need to complete a literature review. To me, this was the worst news possible. Again, I was looking into the face of a literature review, and I hadn’t gotten any better at writing them. I started to cancel meetings with my professors and the graduate writing center because I was missing my deadlines over the literature review. I thought I might fail to finish my Capstone project again over the literature review.

On a tangent, I want to add that, at the time, I was sometimes a guest host on a podcast called *The Polycast*. This podcast was almost exclusively related to a video game series named *Civilization*. The host of *The Polycast* would tell the co-hosts and guest hosts what the topics for discussion would be a few days in advance to prepare. For Episode #299 for that podcast where I was invited as a guest, there was a lot of content to go through, and I actually was able to write 2500 words worth of notes so that I would ready and on top of the discussion for that podcast episode. I wrote all 2500 words of those notes in a single evening.

I bring that up because I was having a meeting with Dr. Bohannon in the middle of February about the Capstone project and I was getting frustrated that I kept falling behind schedule and I said something to the effect that I didn’t understand why I couldn’t write a literature review over the span of two years while I could write 2500 words of notes for a podcast.
in a single evening. This wasn’t really my intention to change the direction of the capstone’s focus. I was just frustrated at the time. But Dr. Bohannon started asking me serious questions about the podcast, its format, and whether or not I would like to do a podcast as a project. I honestly wasn’t sure if she was serious about that question; that wasn’t an approved type of project on the MAPW guidelines and I didn’t immediately know what I would do for a podcast to satisfy the Capstone project requirements.

But there was something that she said that stuck with me: it was clear that I wasn’t going to use the project I was working on once I graduated. In my heart, I knew that was true. Writing an extension of my 2012 research essay wasn’t the project I really wanted to do. I just wanted to graduate. The guidelines project was a concession that I agreed to after the Grammar Detective GDD project was turned down, and the guidelines project was frankly out of my league for now. The 2012 research paper extension project didn’t interest me much because I was just retreading information that had learned about 6 years ago. Podcasts? That was actually something I intended to do after graduation. Since all the way back in 2015, I had always intended to use the research topics I learned from my Capstone project research to discuss my dream of combining educational video games with peer-reviewed research. That was my passion: to bring back educational video games from the grave.

Even then, I still wasn’t sure whether or not Dr. Bohannon was serious about this change of direction. But she informed me a couple days later that she had spoken with Dr. Grooms and said he’d happy for me to do a podcast project. I didn’t expect that Dr. Bohannon would speak to Dr. Grooms about it, and frankly I should’ve had the idea to ask him first but I hadn’t thought about it, so I appreciated that out of Dr. Bohannon.
So at the end of February, Dr. Bohannon and Professor Greene met with me about podcasts, how they should be formatted, what types of guidelines I should keep in mind, recommended me a few podcasts to listen to as examples of what they’d expect in the podcast, and set me off all ready to make a develop a podcast project for the Capstone. This would fit well in the format of a “non-fiction Capstone project.”

This was a turning point for me. I believe I only had one more meeting with my committee between then and my podcast submission, and that was with Dr. Bohannon at the end of March that she requested because, I think, she was worried about the progress of the project since I wasn’t talking with my committee about it.

At this point, I felt that I was in control of the project finally. I wasn’t beholden to a literature review that I never studied in the MAPW program. I wasn’t beholden to writing heuristic guidelines that I never studied in the MAPW program. This project was just me doing what I planned to do after I graduated: doing my best to bring research articles and video games together to try and encourage people to think about video games once again as a way to educate people. Just like how video games affected my own cognitive learning process when I played them as a child.

I had a few topics on my mind to work with, but the one I wanted to work on first was about player-generated messages in Demons’s Souls. I had read a lot of articles about the Souls games, but mostly the content was about summoning players, or invading players, or fighting boss fights, or arguing how good the level design in the games were. I had never seen an article focused on the messages that players were able to write into the game’s world to speak to other players as a kind of cooperator or mentor. I realized that I had plenty of research notes that supported the value of active media and active collaboration in video games. So I set off to work
on the new podcast project for that topic. I now called the project “The Edugametional Podcast.” The name was intended to combine both “education” and “gaming” so that I could argue that these subjects were not mutually exclusive. I intended to make two podcasts under the assumption that this podcast about player-written messages would run about 35 minutes. However, this podcast, which I read off of a 7000 word document I wrote as a script, actually ran slightly over 50 minutes, which satisfied the requirements of the Capstone.

Background on the Technology Used to Create the Podcast

Of course, it’s one thing to say that I would make a podcast, but it was another thing to make one. How would I record? How would I edit my audio? Well thankfully, I did have experience editing digital media such as audio recordings and video recordings from all the way back in 2003. Back then, I was playing a MMO (massively-multiplayer online game, like World of Warcraft) called Dark Age of Camelot. Dark Age of Camelot was a game primarily focused on players of three different factions having massively large battles against each other in order to take valuable artifacts from other factions (or defending your own artifacts). Since it was very focused on players fighting other players, some people took to recording their battles and uploading the fights for people to watch, enjoy, learn strategies from, and frankly, to boast. At the time, I was playing that game competitively and I learned how to make and edit videos of my own. So I had a background of media editing more than a decade ago.

I had also used that video and audio editing experience in a couple of my undergraduate projects between 2007-2009, along with some other video projects from when I was working with Phoenix Online Studios. I was also making “Let’s Play” videos on YouTube between 2011-2014 or so; these types of videos generally include a player recording a video game and
commentating about the game as they play. The main reason I wanted to make those kinds of videos was that I was actively practicing the types of digital literacies that James Paul Gee been arguing existed within video games over a decade before YouTube even existed. Because of active media, a video game can have a different personal narrative than that of someone using passive media like reading a book or watching a movie. I would record a “Let’s Play” of a video game, then watch someone else’s “Let’s Play” video as my way of researching how I was feeling at certain points of the game depending on my choices and how other people were feeling depending on their different choices. I was able to see full footage of how people could react differently to how I would as a direct result of active media offering different types of personal narratives.

In order to record those “Let’s Play” videos, I used the same video editing software that I used all the way back in 2003 when I was recording videos for *Dark Age of Camelot* called *Sony Vegas*. This was also the editing software that I used to record the episode of “The Edugametional Podcast” that I submitted for the Capstone. I recorded the episode using a somewhat expensive desk stand microphone called a “Blue Nessie” that I had from when I was making “Let’s Play” videos. If I were to be very professional about podcasts, though, I would’ve used a “Blue Yeti,” which offers better audio quality but was also a little out of my price range.

A good microphone alone isn’t enough to give a professional level of audio quality. If you’ve ever listened to an amateur webcam video on YouTube or something that, you’ll notice that you might hear a lot of ambient background noise. You’ll hear some sort of hissing or buzzing or humming from background noise just because, well, ambient noise is pretty much everywhere you go unless you’re in a soundproof room. When I was recording my “Let’s Plays,” I became curious about why my good and expensive microphone had background noise and
other people making videos didn’t. I then learned about Audacity, which is a free program that lets you use various functions to insert an audio file and the program then spits out better audio, essentially. In this case, I learned about an Audacity filter called “Noise Removal” (which now seems to be called “Noise Reduction” in later updates). The way “Noise Reduction” works is that you first record about 30 seconds of nothing but the ambient noise from the room where you plan to record. Then you import that 30 second audio clip of ambient noise into Audacity. Audacity then recognizes the frequencies that you’re trying to remove from any future audio recordings. So what you do then is add the audio file that you want to remove the noise from, and Audacity will magically remove all of the noise frequencies that you don’t want in your audio file. This drastically improves audio quality and largely removes any background noise from your audio file.

But I wanted the audio to be even cleaner than that since this podcast was so important. I contacted the host of *The Polycast*, the podcast that I mentioned above I sometimes joined as a guest, and asked what he did to smooth out his podcast recordings. Aside from Noise Removal, he told me about two other Audacity filters along with a free program called “Levelator.” The filters he told me about for Audacity were called High Pass Filter and Low Pass Filter. High Pass Filter essentially removes extremely high frequencies (higher than a human voice could make), while Low Pass Filter removes extremely low frequencies. This helps to make sure that the only audio that an audience hears is the voice, not background noise.

“Levelator” is a free program that helps to normalize voices. It essentially works to minimize variance between loud voices and soft voices. People who make podcasts would use “Levelator” so that if one person is talking very loudly and another person is talking very softly, the program tries to normalize the voices. Even though I wasn’t speaking with another person, I
still used “Levelator” to make sure that my voice had a consistent volume volume. My voice’s pitch would rise and fall, but the volume would remain consistent.

The first step in the entire process was for me to record my voice and create an audio file out of that. I downloaded a free audio recording software program. The program was literally called “Free Audio Recorder” because I wasn’t picky about the recorder software. All that was important was the format in which the file was recorded. You can record audio as MP3s, WAVs, OGGs, etc. When you record audio, you want to pick a format that is lossless (instead of lossy). Lossless audio files end up to be much larger files than lossy audio files, but not all of the audio content will be recorded. Small bits and pieces of a lossy audio recording would get removed while recording, and I didn’t want that. So I recorded my voice audio as a WAV file, which is a lossless format. Once I finished recording the podcast’s voice audio, I ran the audio file in Audacity and used the Noise Removal filter, High Pass Filter, and Low Pass Filter before I then ran the file through Levelator to get a clean recording of my voice.

I’m not very good at reading from a script, so while the podcast had a runtime of 53 minutes, the audio file I ended up with from reading the script aloud ran close to four hours. For many sentences, I had to make multiple takes because I kept tripping up on my own words. Other times I’d notice while reading aloud that I made a sentence way too long, so I’d have to edit the script to shorten the sentence before going back to reading the script. Other times I’d just find that I wasn’t happy with my enunciation of a sentence, so I’d have to read the sentence again.

So to edit the audio down from the four hour file, I meticulously edited every second of the audio in Sony Vegas. Sony Vegas is technically video editing software, but as I wrote above, I was familiar with Vegas and it could edit audio files just as well as video files, so that’s what
software that I stuck with. The process of editing was basically just cutting out the audio I didn’t want and keeping the audio I did want. *Sony Vegas* has a hotkey “s” for “split,” and when you split a file, you essentially mark specific regions of the file to be changed in some way. In this case I would mark parts of audio I didn’t want with the “split” function and delete that audio, similarly to how you would use scissors to cut out an unwanted part of paper and remove it.

Finally, I needed to add music to the introduction, the beginning of each section podcast chapter, and my conclusion. All I need to do to accommodate this was to add a second layer to my *Sony Vegas* project that could include music clips (by creating one track for my voice audio and one track for the music audio, you can listen to both music and voice at the same time).

Years ago, I had discovered a YouTube channel called “Adrian Von Ziegler” which had several hours of music that Adrian composed and uploaded to his YouTube channel. I knew way back then that if I was to make some sort of podcast series or video series after graduation, I would use Ziegler’s music to accommodate it. According to his disclaimer on people using his music for their own projects, his stipulations were that I credit him (which I did), that I would only need to buy a license from him if the project was commercial (it isn’t), and that he didn’t want his work used in anything political, discriminatory, or pornographic (I’m pretty certain the podcast isn’t any of those things).

Once the project was finished, I exported it as an OGG file. While it’s important to record your voice as a WAV file, you don’t need export your project as a WAV as well. A lossy audio format like an OGG or MP3 works just fine, and most importantly takes up a lot less disk space than a WAV file. I then uploaded the file to Soundcloud. I chose Soundcloud because Soundcloud allows you to upload up to three hours worth of audio content for free (you can pay to use Soundcloud for more than three hours if you choose). I don’t really know at this moment
what would be the best place to host future podcasts if I continue to develop podcasts at this moment outside of Soundcloud. I’m wary about uploading them on YouTube because Google seems pretty fickle on what kind of content on YouTube decides to shut down and what YouTube doesn’t; I could use YouTube as one way to offer people to listen to the podcasts, but it certainly wouldn’t be the only place I would post it.
