

CAREER PROFILE

Fran Denton

Freelance Illustrator

FRAN'S JOB: Self employed

WHAT SHE DOES: Takes on contracts to illustrate books and other publications.



"I really enjoy drawing what other people are thinking," says Fran Denton. Fran's challenge is to listen to clients and turn their ideas into pictures that connect with a specific audience.

The work is diverse. She had made portraits, done the artwork for educational resources, and illustrated a book on career advice.

"I work with people who are writers or content creators, so I'm making things with them. I enjoy that collaboration," she says.

The audience for her work can vary from children to adults. She needs to keep that in mind, while also talking to the writer about their aims.

"The challenge can come when I think I have got it right and the other person has a different idea of things to me," says Fran.

"It's that grinding of gears in your head when you realise you need to change direction and it's time to back up the truck. But that reversal and then going forwards again is always worth it. You might find yourself doing something you wouldn't normally have done. And I always end up happy with how it's turned out. That's all part of working with other people."

She works part-time, with projects on top of her life as a parent. She says her career pathway – studying fine arts at university – is only one way to become an illustrator.

"I really love the creativity. I studied art in university and that wasn't because I saw a career outcome but because I loved drawing and I couldn't think of anything else I would rather do."

When living in the UK, she drew cartoons chronicling her young family's life, as a way to share personal stories with friends and relatives. Now she's looking into the potential to publish this work – reworking her ideas for a wider audience.

FRAN'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- Studied science and art subjects at high school
- Bachelor of Fine Arts, Massey University, Wellington
- Master of Fine Arts, Massey
- Freelance illustrator for the past six years

'You have to make sure you investigate by looking, actually going and seeing.'

MORE INFO

[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz



CAREER PROFILE

Hamish Kingsbury

Geographic Information Systems Consultant



HAMISH'S JOB: Consultant at Interpret Geospatial Solutions, Christchurch

WHAT HE DOES: Presents transport and other data visually, often on web-based maps.

After three years at uni, an internship switched Hamish onto a career in Geographic Information Systems. It was hands-on computer work creating a prototype map that lets users select driving routes based on real data about the safety of New Zealand streets.

He gave it his best shot, and won awards, including Undergraduate of the Year at the 2015 New Zealand Spatial Excellence Awards.

"That internship was very much my stepping stone into GIS and it helped me decide that GIS was the career I wanted to pursue," says Hamish, aged 23.

GIS is a broad and fast-evolving discipline. It's about processing spatial data and presenting it visually.

"For example, if you depict crash sites on a map, you can instantly see hotspots. That's not something you can see in a table," he says.

"What really brought that home was when a client in Australia asked for results in a spreadsheet. We did that but presented it on a map as well. The client said the map let them see things in the data they couldn't see before."

He works in a team of transport, GIS and web design specialists. They deal with millions of entries of data, so having an analytical mindset helps.

Hamish says the move toward cars transmitting data via the internet will open a huge range of opportunities for the GIS sector's future.

"Driving data such as position and speed will be invaluable and could be used to improve our road network. You'd know where vehicles accelerate or brake heavily, or how cars behave around corners. The more data the better."

HAMISH'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- Diverse subjects at high school: geography, ICT, calculus, statistics, physics
- University of Canterbury science degree in geography, with some computer science and geology
- Internship at current employer
- Postgraduate diploma in GIS
- Full-time job

'I've just been in the industry full-time for a year. Already I've seen it take off. Every month or so there's new tools, new ways of doing things.'

MORE INFO

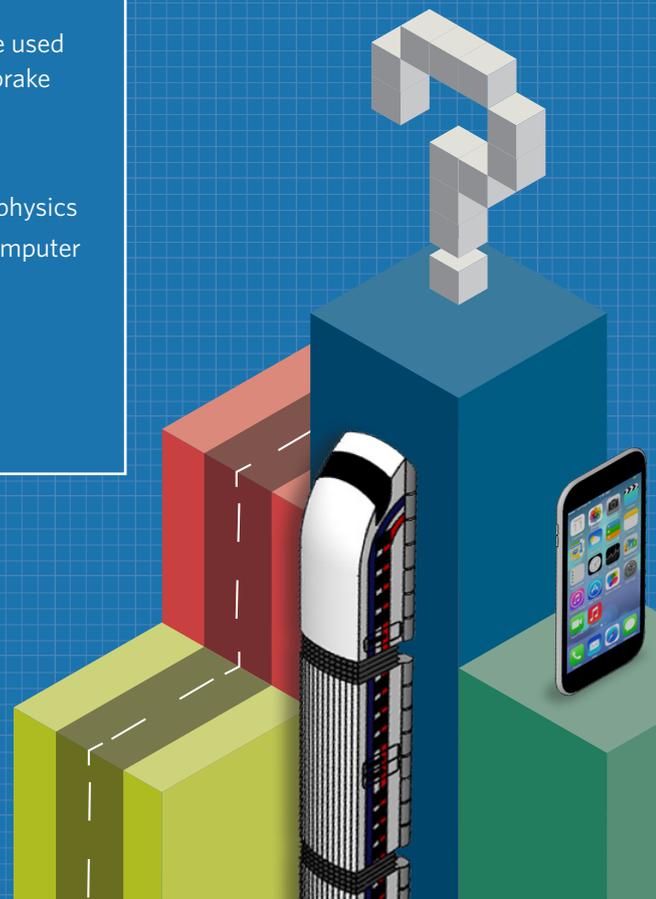
[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz



CAREER PROFILE

Aimee Cairns

Game artist

AIMEE'S JOB: Art lead at Ninja Kiwi

WHAT SHE DOES: Draws concept art (characters and maps) for digital games.

In her Auckland workplace, Aimee has a drawing tablet hooked up to her computer so she can sketch up concepts, rework her ideas and add finishing touches.

"The work's pretty much all digital. You can work on paper but you can't iterate on it fast enough," she says.

Aimee's been in the job nearly four years. She's worked on 2D and 3D games. Now a big part of her role is creating concept art throughout a project's production to help guide the rest of the team.

"I'll often brainstorm quickly and initially treat every idea as good enough so I can just draw them out. I tell myself to treat my own ideas with respect. That keeps you motivated especially when you have a deadline to meet."

In helping create the style of a game, she shares ideas back and forth with the company co-founders, and the game's producer, lead programmer, and other artists.

"We're trying to get the feeling for the game. It's valuable to have the artist involved from the beginning - they can offer a lot in terms of growing the idea."

Aimee was 14 when she decided to aim for an artistic career, gaining her mum's support.

"I took all the art classes at school. And I took an interest in IT; we had an opportunity to get good at Photoshop and Illustrator. One thing I've learned is that regardless of which classes you take, what's important is that you find your own voice with art."

She later tried her hand at Fine Arts but wanted to focus more on commercial art, so completed a diploma in animation. She worked hard on her portfolio, and won the job. She's now 25.

AIMEE'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- Excelled in art subjects in secondary school
- Two years studying Fine Arts at university
- Changed course to Applied Animation, gained diploma
- Hired by Ninja Kiwi

MORE INFO

[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz



'Trust your own ideas. I know artists can feel like their ideas are not good enough. But you've just got to trust it and finish it.'



CAREER PROFILE

Jordan Carlton Game Developer



JORDAN'S JOB: Associate Gameplay Programmer at Magic Leap/Weta Workshop

WHAT SHE DOES: Coding games for a developing augmented reality technology

"It's tremendous to be working in such an innovative field with a bunch of immensely creative people," says Jordan.

She's in Wellington, aged 22, and loving her work. But although Jordan's job primarily covers programming, "I have," she says, "too much of an opinion to not also be considered a designer."

"I help breathe life into some of the elements that make up the user experience. Programmers need to make sure a game has a good foundation from a system perspective while also collaborating with designers to create enjoyable experiences for the player."

Studying psychology at university gave her insights into working with people – both users and developers – in order to create better user experiences.

Jordan also studied computer science and design, and spent her summer months in the IT sector thanks to internships gained through Wellington's Summer of Tech programme.

"The learning curves were huge. I'd often be tackling new problems with business applications in peer programming environments. I still encounter similar-sized learning curves, but spending those summers building up those skills was invaluable."

While still a student, Jordan kept herself busy, tackling physically oriented jobs like trampoline coaching and dog caring, while maintaining her software development job and finishing her degree.

She says that varied mix helped keep her sane and moving forward while she chased down contacts, attended game dev meetups and participated in local game jams.

"Getting into games can be an exhausting process at times, as is staying in games, but the pay-off is unmatched. The people you meet and the work you do – you won't be the same afterwards."

JORDAN'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- Secondary school: enjoyed biology and psychology
- Victoria University: Bachelor of Science, psychology major
- Multiple IT internships through Summer of Tech
- Her current role at Magic Leap/Weta Workshop

'Try not to over-complicate as a programmer. If you explain the problem as simply as possible, you will often find the solution in your question.'

MORE INFO

**[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)**



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz



CAREER PROFILE

Laura Brookes

Journalist



LAURA'S JOB: Reporter, Times Newspapers Ltd

WHAT SHE DOES: Write news articles for two local newspapers in Auckland's eastern suburbs

Part of Laura's job is finding leads – information that might lead to a news story. She hears from readers who phone or email with ideas, she talks to her contacts in local organisations and she keeps her eyes open.

"Stories can come from what you see and hear. You have your journalist's eye on when you are out around the area, and you question what you see," says Laura.

"Every story I do has to have a local angle because that is our audience."

She then does more research, interviews people and writes her articles to deadline.

"The job is different every day. You never know who you'll be talking to. For example, I did a feature about a man and his motorbike. I don't know anything about motorbikes. So, you have to do your research before you go."

She says students investigating future transport could brainstorm what they know about a local problem or opportunity.

"Try to process the problem in your head first, and then figure out who to interview and what to ask them. And then have fun – talk to heaps of people."

After two years of tertiary study, Laura took a year out, working at a Canadian ski resort. She honed her people skills and returned with confidence, ready to finish her journalism degree.

"In that third year, we had to find our own stories, write them, take pictures, get them published in a local newspaper – all on top of assignments. I love people, I love issues, and I love digging into things in the best possible way."

LAURA'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- High school subjects: English, history, classics, geography, media studies
- Bachelor of Communication Studies, journalism major, AUT
- Gap years for overseas work experience, leadership course
- Got the reporter job in 2016

'Showing respect for the person makes a big difference during interviews. Don't assume you know what the situation is like for them – get them to explain it themselves.'

MORE INFO

[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz



Tom O'Brien

Game Designer

TOM'S JOB: Game Designer at Aurora44, a games studio in the Hutt Valley

WHAT HE DOES: Detailed planning on Ashen, an RPG game for the Xbox One



Working in a student team over a summer break was a defining experience for Tom. His team took their prototype puzzle game Split through to release on distribution platform Steam.

"Having a commercial title under your belt as you're leaving uni is a huge step forward. It gives you a polished piece of work to demonstrate your skills to employers," he says.

The team frequently found people to play-test the game during development.

"Good feedback can come from watching people play. Keep an eye on what is happening in the game and how they are responding to it," says Tom. He recalls seeing a young girl and then her mum becoming engrossed in the game – confirmation it could have a wide audience.

Tom also attended game development meet-ups and events – getting to know industry people.

"It boiled down to being present in the community. Everyone at these events has a shared interest, a passion about games, and realising that makes it easier to interact."

Now Tom has made the "surreal" shift up to full-time game design for Xbox One title Ashen.

"It's thinking about what the game is and planning player experiences and interactions. I am writing things down. I'm sketching out diagrams, maps and charts, and sometimes coding quick prototypes."

"We use agile planning and production cycles. We do things in sprints – short bursts of workflow aiming towards a larger milestone. My ideas come from looking at user stories and asking questions. As a player, how can I make choices with minimal interruption to my experience?"

TOM'S CAREER PATHWAY:

- NCEA subjects included English, physics, calculus, media studies and drama
- Took a gap year to focus his interests around game development
- Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming), Media Design School
- Contracted to work on Ashen

'Don't be afraid to fail. Not every game idea will be a million-dollar success story. But if you take creative risks and mess around with ideas, you'll always walk away having learned something.'

MORE INFO

[education.nzta.govt.nz/
competition](http://education.nzta.govt.nz/competition)



New Zealand Government



netsafe.org.nz

