

Skylar Kelley

Senior Combat Designer

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Orange County, CA

Skills

- FPS, 3rd Person combat systems, feedback, and feel
- Industry trend alignment & innovation
- Unreal 4, Unity, Radiant, Blizzard Proprietary Engine
- C#, C++, Java, Visual Scripting, State System Scripting
- Iteration, playtesting, player feel, player experience
- Console, PC, VR/XR Development, Mobile
- Networked Multiplayer Development
- Physics-based interactions & mechanic design
- Modular, designer-friendly system pipelines
- Perforce, Github, task tracking
- Documentation, communication, presentation
- Team collaboration & leadership
- Modeling, 3D editors, Adobe Suite (2D)
- Fast learning of new tools/languages

Professional Experience

Combat Designer: @ Blizzard Entertainment

Unannounced Survival Game (Canceled)

Nov 2022 – Apr 2024

- Partnered with directors and leads to define and elevate core combat feel.
- Engineered modular weapon pipeline; shipped 30+ weapons including advanced systems (guided rockets, recallable axe).
- Documented hundreds of consumables and partnered with engineering to build a flexible pipeline (throwables, deployables, channelables).
- Maintained combat balance sheets to track power curves and eliminate spikes.
- Led dozens of playtests with stakeholders to refine feel and ensure balance.

Combat Designer: @ Notorious Studios (Contract)

Legacy: Steel and Sorcery

May 2024 – May 2025

- Built and iterated hybrid third-person/FPS combat using Unreal GAS and Blueprints.
- Refined player feedback via camera shakes, animation tuning, and VFX/audio alignment.
- Designed and shipped 50+ AI enemies and a boss, tuned for varied skill levels.
- Directed AI/NPC development from concept to ship, ensuring responsiveness and challenge.
- Delivered weapons, abilities, and mechanics that defined combat identity in PvPvE.

Combat Designer: @ Bladework Games

Unannounced 3D Action Brawler

Mar 2021 – Nov 2022

- Developed traversal (vault, dash, climb, double jump), melee combat, projectiles, and networked states in Unreal (C++/Blueprints) and Unity (C#).
- Prototyped features for server-authoritative multiplayer environments.
- Produced functional prototypes for exec reviews, documenting cross-team needs.
- Organized and led playtests to refine gameplay and align with product goals.

Senior Game Designer: @ Off Trail Games (Contract)

Unannounced Multiplayer Puzzle Action

June 2025 – July 2025

- Prototyped hazard systems (electric, gas, fire, water) to expand gameplay variety.
- Built 10+ networked features including hazards, AI, pipelines, doors, switches, and tools for destruction.
- Integrated code on day one; drove 20+ iteration cycles to polish mechanics.
- Improved camera, movement, input, and tools (cutting, grappling, jetpack, flashlight) based on playtest feedback.

VR Game Designer: Detour Bus (Oculus/Meta Sponsored)

Apr 2020 – Mar 2021

- Designed 4 levels, 8 mini-games, and a boss encounter with puzzle language, FX, and clear goals.
- Documented loops, level design, and player feedback needs.
- Built and iterated accessible VR interaction systems based on testing insights.

Executive Producer, Developer, Artist: @ Banana Bird Studios

Maravilla Island (Nintendo Switch, Xbox, PlayStation, PC)

Aug 2019 – Sep 2020

Intern Game Designer: @ Treyarch

Call of Duty Franchise

May 2019 – Aug 2019

- Practiced AAA FPS design workflows: documentation, iteration, and development support.

CEO & Combat Designer: @ SDK Media LLC

Professional Game Design and Development Contracting

May 2024 – Present

- Delivering best-in-class gameplay experiences for contract clients.

Education

University of Southern California — Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Arts: Interactive Media and Games Design - SCA

Minor: Video Game Programming

Aug 2017 – May 2021 | GPA: 3.52 Overall, 3.93 Major

Coursework: Game Design Theory, Iteration, Documentation, Critique, Collaboration, Cinematography, Theme Park Design, C++, C#, Java, Algorithms, Physics, Data Management