

Darren Smith | Experienced Product Manager

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SUMMARY

I bring a broad set of experiences, ranging from work with industry-leading corporations to startups, developing both the business and the underlying technology for consumer-facing products, and managing local and international teams.

- Senior-level Product Manager with more than 20 years of experience designing, launching, and operating successful consumer-facing digital products.
- 20 years of experience at Nintendo, leading North American development, partner negotiation, and operations of its internet-powered products including the Nintendo eShop, Netflix, Facebook, Nintendo WiFi Connection multiplayer gaming service, and free WiFi at McDonald's.
- Deep technical expertise coupled with user experience insight and a strong business instinct.
- Able to convey technical details in a clear and concise manner to technical and non-technical stakeholders from executive level to entry level.
- Startup mindset and entrepreneurial spirit with ability to navigate and maximize big company strategies.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Darren Smith Consulting, Seattle, WA

Apr 2012 to Present

Product Management and Software Industry Consultant

Client: Enterplay LLC, creator of Hasbro's My Little Pony collectible card game

- Created first web-based collectible card tournament management system.
- Captured business requirements to fulfill client's vision. Developed functional specifications, wireframes and prototypes for end-to-end user experience.
- Developed critical algorithm for pairing players in a variety of complex tournament styles in PHP.
- Sourced and managed an India-based development team to develop the site and integrate tournament logic, utilizing PHP with the Yii framework and MySQL.

Amperdex, Seattle, WA

Aug 2013 to Present

CEO & Founder

- Created vision and developed prototype for a new and engaging user experience designed to help users to discover new products through profile-based predictive analytics.
- Developed recommendation engine powered by a unique collaborative filtering algorithm, based on Pearson correlation between graph network surfaces and nodes.
- Paired predictive engine with a novel game mechanic to elicit consumer preferences, using PHP, MySQL, and HBase.

Nintendo of America, Redmond, WA

Dec 2000 to Apr 2011

Director

Led North American product management of all online experiences through Nintendo platforms with a team of eight. Championed the adoption of internet technologies within games and platforms, spurred development, and fostered the transition from physical to digital distribution. Promoted to Director in July 2007 and contributed as an independent consultant from December 2000 through August 2003.

Key Projects:

Nintendo eShop: Nintendo's online marketplace for digital games, applications, and add-on content.

- Collaborated with software development partner, IT, UI, legal, finance, and marketing teams to develop and launch the front end, back end, and stored-value eCommerce system for the marketplace, starting the company's transformation from physical to digital distribution.
- Invented system for downloading games to Wii that were developed for other game platforms, and to play them on Wii, enabling Nintendo to add more than 650 classic game titles to the catalog.
- Analyzed customer feedback and conducted usability studies to improve the experience.
- Operated and grew each platform's store, improving scores on key performance metrics over a four-year period of publishing weekly content.

Netflix Streaming Video on Wii: Identified opportunity to increase the number of internet-connected Wiis by offering streaming video services and sold the concept to senior executives. Negotiated deal with Netflix, bridged efforts of Netflix and Nintendo engineers, and managed test and launch. Result exceeded goals for connectivity, and led to a significant increase in digital sales and of Wii hardware itself.

Facebook Feature on Nintendo's Mobile Platform: Identified opportunity to impact engagement and awareness of Nintendo's mobile gaming platform through the ability to share photos taken with the system's camera on Facebook. Developed specifications and wireframes for experience, and led Japan-based development team to implement and launch.

Nintendo WiFi Connection Multiplayer Gaming Service: Created vision for online services for Nintendo's platforms.

- Championed the development of a multiplayer gaming service to support the WiFi feature of Nintendo's mobile gaming platform. Evaluated build/buy scenarios, proposed solution to executives, and negotiated contract with 3rd party solution provider. Developed functional specifications, and bridged the efforts of internal and external development teams. Worked with marketing teams to develop messaging to launch the brand, and with third-party game developers to incorporate the technology.
- Developed vision and functional specifications for consumer website to provide customer support for the service and promote the brand. Collaborated with site developer using Agile methodologies, serving as Product Owner.

McDonald's / Wayport (AT&T) WiFi Connectivity: At a time when WiFi was still relatively new, I proposed making WiFi access free for the users of Nintendo's mobile platform at retail locations. Requested proposals from providers, evaluated technical feasibility with each, and negotiated agreement for this service with Wayport (now AT&T), offering service at McDonald's. Invented a means for background authentication at these locations, making getting online as simple as starting up a WiFi-enabled game at a McDonald's, and worked with IT to implement and deploy it. Results exceeded Nintendo's goals for WiFi connectivity on its mobile platform.

Neutron Games, Sammamish, WA

Jul 2000 to Apr 2001

CEO & Co-Founder

- Established business relationships with video game publishers for porting games from Sony's PlayStation 2 platform to Nintendo GameCube.
- Developed vision and game concept for original karaoke game to leverage company's speech recognition software, worked with engineers to develop a Minimum Viable Product, and pitched to publishers.

Adoto.com, Seattle, WA

Mar 2000 to Jul 2000

CTO

- Led the development of a unique, fashion-focused product recommendation engine that helped consumers find products that fit.
- Created the technical vision, sourced a software development team, and guided the development to launch of a Minimum Viable Product.
- Pitched concept to angel investors.

Nintendo of America, Redmond, WA

Aug 1990 to Aug 1991 & Apr 1992 to Mar 2000

Manager 1996-2000, Project Manager 1993-1996, Engineer 1990-1993

Key Projects:

Nintendo 64: Product owner for North America, and key collaborator with development team in Japan.

- Bridged engineering efforts at Silicon Graphics with Nintendo in Japan, developer support, testing, PR, marketing, and senior executives in North America to launch product.
- Evaluated game software developers and proposals to assess capabilities and feasibility, and advised senior management on selection of licensee products to support.
- Collaborated with Mr. Miyamoto and his team in Japan to conceptualize and coordinate the development of Pilot Wings 64, a Nintendo 64 launch title, using a Texas-based development team.

Nintendo Entertainment System Online: Developed prototype for online service in a game-like environment on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 6502 assembly language. Service included user-drawn avatars, text chat, message boards, and physical and digital eCommerce with game downloads.

TECHNOLOGY

- **Recent, hands-on experience:** PHP (Yii and CodeIgniter frameworks), MySQL, JavaScript, JQuery, Java, HTML5, CSS3, Linux, Apache, HBase
- **Previous experience:** Perl, C/C++, assembly (ARM 9/7, MIPS, Z80, 65816, 6502)

PATENTS

- 8,896,112 System and method for downloading video game programs
- 8,298,087 Recommendation engine for electronic game shopping channel
- 6,599,194 Video game system with hard disk drive and internet access
- 7,056,217 Video game messaging service with buddy list displays game being played
- 8,839,117 Internet Browser
- 5,581,270 Hotel-based video game and communication system
- 5,959,596 Airline-based video game and communications system
- 7,491,123 Video game voice chat with amplitude-based virtual ranging
- 7,785,197 Voice-to-text chat conversion for remote video game play
- 7,793,164 Error codes for products
- 7,068,239 Data processing method and system
- 8,500,558 Enhanced method for selecting and rendering game ghost data

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering

Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania