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Jordan Mechner
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Dear Jordan Mechner,

I recently saw the recording of your 2012 lecture at the NYU Game Center.[1] Among other things, you stated about your original *Prince of Persia* level editor:

> "And I also thought that this tool could then be included on the disk, as part of *Prince of Persia*. Like *Championship Lode Runner*, if... I figured if players had the ability to make their own *Prince of Persia* levels, then that'll become a thing and we can have contests and it can become all about that."

Through this letter I would like to put forth several suggestions that I believe would not only renew interest in the original installment of the franchise but would also allow current and future generations of gamers to easily create and exchange custom levels.

Please let me introduce myself. I'm a software developer from the Netherlands; mid-thirties. I'm a *Prince of Persia* fan and the creator of the *Prince of Persia* level editor *apoplexy*.[2] As you may have read on Slashdot, *apoplexy* recently had its 2.0 release.[3] Joe Jasko of Gamezebo reviews:[4]

> "I spent some time this morning fiddling around with the updated level editor and can happily say that it's not only super cool, but more importantly, super easy. [..T]he best part of all is that you can then actually play your brand new *Prince of Persia* levels and bask in the glory of being the next greatest new-age DOS game developer!"

My WYSIWYG level editor is free and open-source software. I'm not looking for financial gain; not via the proposal set forth in this letter either. As you know, the 25th anniversary of the original *Prince of Persia* release is in October 2014. You have said that your favorite port is the DOS version, because it's the *'most true to the original'*. I don't know whether your deal with Ubisoft includes a clause about the original trilogy. Either way, my proposal is as follows.

In my opinion it would be great if Steam users could buy a package that includes the DOS versions of *Prince of Persia* and *Prince of Persia 2: The Shadow and the Flame*, and the *apoplexy* tool. (Ubisoft

1   http://vimeo.com/41618724
2   http://www.popot.org/news.php?id=apoplexy-2.0
3   http://games.slashdot.org/story/13/12/28/2013252/prince-of-persia-level-editor-apoplexy-reaches-20
4   http://www.gamezebo.com/news/2013/12/30/create-your-own-prince-persia-levels

already has 235 games on Steam.[5]) First off, it would allow players to legally obtain (buy) and play the games. The DOSBox emulator software could be used to run these games. Valve has no objection to DOSBox usage. Some examples of other games on Steam that use DOSBox are *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream*,[6] *Wizardry 6*[7] and *Wasteland 1*.[8]

Secondly, since early 2012, Steam Workshop allows players to submit, find, rate, and download modifications for *any* Steamworks-enabled software. The *apoplexy* level editor could be the Steamworks-enabled element in the package that would juggle the various LEVELS.DAT files (and PRINCE.DAT files for *Prince of Persia 2*). The *apoplexy* level editor is written in C and uses the Simple DirectMedia Layer (SDL) library. Valve not only used that multimedia library for its own games, but helps improving SDL, and since 2012 they even employ Sam Lantinga, the creator of SDL.[9] I would be more than happy to add Steamworks support to *apoplexy*.

DOSBox is available for many platforms. While *apoplexy* is currently only available for Windows and Linux, it too is very portable. Cross-platform support for the proposed package would be easy to implement. The games themselves would only need slight modifications, like changing *Prince of Persia*'s PRINCE.EXE to allow all resources in all levels. (To place chompers in level 1, for example.) The editor *apoplexy* already uses the modified versions of these files.

Please let me know what you think.

By the way, I've created two thorough modifications of *Prince of Persia* myself, including a lot of custom graphics. In case you're curious, here are their trailers:
http://www.norbertdejonge.nl/videos/Micro_Palace.webm
http://www.norbertdejonge.nl/videos/Prince_of_Wateria.webm

Happy New Year,
Sincerely,

Norbert de Jonge
(Contact information is in the head of this letter.)

P.S.:   As a Linux user I'd like to add: it would be nice if *The Last Express* on Steam would also be available for Linux. :)

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5   http://store.steampowered.com/publisher/Ubisoft
6   http://store.steampowered.com/app/245390/
7   http://store.steampowered.com/app/245410/
8   http://store.steampowered.com/app/259130/
9   http://www.phoronix.com/scan.php?page=article&item=valve_linux_sdl&num=1