Stanford eCorner

The Pieces to Build a Startup

24-01-2024

URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/the-pieces-to-build-a-startup

Adrian Rodriguez, co-founder and CEO of Dreamlinks, explains how his experience creating more accessible websites for blind and visually impaired people and his time teaching kids to code led to the creation of Dreamlinks. He shares how his frustration playing with Lego as a child emphasizes an important lesson about startups.

Transcript

- Group theory created some technology.. 00:00:04,890 And this technology we never brought to market.. But my goal was how do we get blind people to go beyond the template? So the problem with interpreting a computer through synthetic speech is it does not tell you the relative size and position of elements on screen.. The only way around that is tactility.. It's just a different form of media.. And so at the time I was working on IOT systems, right? Ampere works with IOT cameras.. There's a whole nother.... Guys, there's startups that I just didn't even put up here today that were like arcs in themself.. But suffice to say, I spent a lot of time working with web sockets, and I knew what could be done.. I knew what could be done with QR codes, I knew what could be done with web sockets..

And I thought, you can pretty much entangle anything with a browser, why not just make websites? And so we did this, and then I went to Street Code and I started teaching Roblox, and I saw the value of 3D.. And I thought, okay, how do I get my kids to make 3D worlds? Because this is a phenomenon.. It's over half of kids, four to 12 play Minecraft.. It's really a cultural phenomenon, crucial for development.. Parents believe that it helps with spatial reasoning, something that's key for blind people, collaborative problem solving, et cetera.. Minecraft is great.. Kids love to build things.. But how do we get blind kids to create 3D worlds when even creating 2D layouts is really prohibitive, given the current paradigm of synthetic speech.. (objects clicking) So what you're seeing here is my co-founder Gabe, built a simple 3D platformer.. This is actually the official Roblox curriculum that we teach as Free Code Academy..

Game design one is you basically build Super Mario 64, an obstacle course with a spawn point, a checkpoint, some hazards and a wind point.. And even in Roblox studio, which is a hyper simple way to do it, you still need to dive into a file directory.. You still need to move assets around to do such simple things.. And I find that most kids just end up fighting with Roblox Studio and they spend just a fraction of their time actually designing a fun game, trying to think about what would be a fun jump.. And we have not tuned the physics, so pardon us for not being good at our own game.. But, so the reality is that you can actually just map these move sets.. And so it is augmented reality.. It works on your phone as well.. And so, again, simple move set emerges to a really wide range of creations.. And so that's what these are..

We call them Dream Links and they're quite strong.. We've been working on them for a long time.. They have these magical magnets that attach in any direction.. And guys, people always talk about startups.. What is a truth that you believe

that everyone else disagrees with? I think Legos suck.. For real.. I struggled so hard with Legos as a kid.. They're small.. If you put a bunch of two by fours, you can't add anything to the side.. I know they have cubes..

I actually currently running a study interviewing a lot of blind kids on creativity, and we all struggle with Lego.. And so next.. So this is Dream Links, and we are launching later this year.. We're basically have a variety of fun things in store.. We're excited to show you more when we can...