PRESS RELEASE

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UNIQUE UNIVERSITY SPIN-OFF COMPANY CHARLES GAMES S.R.O. IS BEING FOUND. ITS GOAL IS TO DEVELOP AND SELL COMPUTER GAMES AND TO SUPPORT GIFTED STUDENTS.

Prague, 28 January 2020 – Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o., subsidiary of the Charles University established with a goal to transfer knowledge and technology into practice, is founding its first spin-off company called Charles Games s.r.o., which is going to develop and sell computer games and also serve as an incubator for students of videogame development. Charles Games s.r.o. was founded on 24 January 2020 in Prague to accelerate commercialisation activities of the pre-existing Charles Games workgroup and to provide wider support for students of the Charles University.

The Charles University is the first and only Czech university to found a private company in order to transfer knowledge and technology. Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o. (CUIP) is fulfilling its goal above all expectations and, beside a number of other accomplishments, it is now founding its first university spin-off company Charles Games s.r.o. (CG). Originally, Charles Games was an interdisciplinary workgroup consisting of members of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the Charles University and the cooperation of experts coming from different fields was the basis of success of this group.

“It is another important step in fulfilling the third role of universities and bringing results of our excellent scientific work into the real life. It is being confirmed that the decision to found CUIP was a correct one. The first spin-off company Charles Games s.r.o. is going to focus on development of educational computer games and support of experimental creations of our students. I personally consider application of multimedia in education to be one of the important ways to bring the education system in our country up to date,” said Prof. Tomáš Zima, Rector of the Charles University. This way, the Charles University also fulfils the Innovation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2019–2030 presented by the Government, which directly supports founding university spin-off companies.

In the year and a half of its existence, CUIP managed to establish a cooperation with more than 20 domestic and foreign subjects, sell 2 patents, and close licensing contracts for almost 10 technologies. “By founding Charles Games s.r.o. as a private legal entity, we are accelerating the commercialisation potential of published games, increasing the reputation of the original workgroup, and creating a safe ecosystem for young development teams that will be able to utilise the offered incubation services,” says Otomar Slama, director of CUIP. “I consider the creation of Charles Games s.r.o. to be a major accomplishment and I’m glad that despite all obstacles, we have managed to found the company,” adds Dr. Daniela Králiková, project manager of CUIP responsible for the creation of CG.

According to its business plan, Charles Games s.r.o. is going to focus on three spheres of business. The first one is a commercialisation of computer games, one of which being the internationally renowned game Attentat 1942 with more than 7,000 copies sold. The second one is a development of new computer games itself. For example, Svoboda 1945, a follow-up game to Attentat, is almost finished and is expected to be yet another success. Finally, the third sphere is a support of young development teams that will be able to utilise the incubation services of CG. “Let me unveil that you can look forward to an action game with a robot theme or an adventure game telling a story about a mysterious forest,” says Dr. Jakub Gemrot, CEO and head programmer of CG, and adds: “We are grateful to historians of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Games like Attentat 1942 and Svoboda 1945 would have never been created without them. Also, financial support for the proof-of-concept phase from the GAMA project of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic was extremely helpful.”
Charles University Innovations Prague s.r.o.

CUiP is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Charles University founded in June 2018. It is a research and knowledge dissemination organisation, whose primary goal is to widely disseminate results created at the Charles University and to secure utilisation of intellectual property of the Charles University in the field of research and development and its use for business, industrial, and other similar purposes, i.e., their commercialisation. CUiP can establish or buy shares in spin-off companies in order to commercially utilise intellectual property of the Charles University. Within this field, CUiP closely cooperates with the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer of the Charles University, which is a standalone part of the Charles University and provides services and information supporting the transfer of knowledge and technology.

Spin-off Company

Spin-off company is a legal entity utilising tangible and intangible property of a university to start or expand its business. Usually, it is an innovative trading company run by students, graduates, or academic fellows of a university who hold positions in statutory bodies or invest in the company. Also, it can be a company without a direct participation of any university, specifically in cases where its founding or expansion depends on licensing or assignment of intellectual property rights created at a university. In the case of Charles Games s.r.o., the Charles University is going to own it via its subsidiary CUiP. In such cases, companies in question are called university, or academic, spin-off companies. Goal of said companies is to ensure more efficient transfer of scientific and research results onto market, i.e., transform university knowledge and research results into products or services that can be monetized.

Charles University

The Charles University, founded in 1348, is one of the oldest universities in the world. Currently, it consists of 17 faculties (14 in Prague, 2 in Hradec Králové, and 1 in Pilsen), 4 university institutes, 5 other centres for educational, scientific, research, development, and other creative activities, a centre for providing information services, 5 supporting facilities, and the Rectorate as an executive management body. Numerous analyses, e.g., the evaluation of scientific output conducted by the Research, Development and Innovation Council of the Czech Republic, show that the Charles University is the best-performing research institution in the Czech Republic. The University has over 8,000 employees, more than 4,600 of which are academic and research staff. The Charles University has more than 48,000 students, which is roughly one-sixth of all students in the Czech Republic, studying in more than 300 accredited degree programmes that offer over 600 different courses. Every year, approximately 8,000 students complete their studies. The Charles University is one of Europe's five most favourite universities among foreign students in the Erasmus Programme. According to the Reflex 2013–2014 survey conducted by the Faculty of Education of the Charles University, graduates of the Charles University steadily have the lowest unemployment rate among all public universities. Financial evaluation of graduates of the Charles University on the job market ranks among the highest.

Development of Computer Games at the Charles University

Currently, research and development of computer games is conducted at two faculties of the Charles University – the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University and the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics of the Charles University. The Faculty of Arts focuses on research and studies of games in its “New Media Studies” course. The Faculty of Mathematics and Physics primarily concentrates on technological aspects of the computer-game development. Within its “Computer Graphics” Master programme, specifically its specialisation called “Computer Game Development”, interdisciplinary teams are formed creating video games and educational applications. Hundreds of students from different faculties and universities have passed the game-development programme at the Charles University. Within its short history, 92 game prototypes have been created (19 last year) and 9 game jams (48-hour hackathons in computer-game development) have been organised, during which 119 small games have been created (61 last year).

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