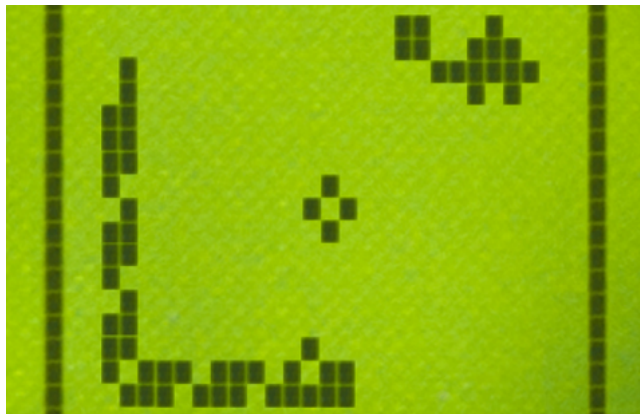# Interview with Nokia Snake remaker, Willem Middelkoop

Published by Adam Fraser on June 27, 2012

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Vind i

Back in the mid-to-late 90s, Nokia mobile phones began to hit mass-market and within no time, everybody had one in their pocket. Not only did this connect everybody with, well, everybody, it was also many people's first experience of mobile gaming when the Nokia Snake game came preloaded on people's devices.

In no time, kids spent their entire days navigating a black, pixelated snake around a tiny screen using basic controls on their phones keypad. Up, down, left and right were all made possible by using the 2, 4, 6 and 8 keys.

Nowadays, Snake is mostly a distant memory as touchscreen smartphones have soared in popularity, and high-res games are taking over. For the fans of retro gaming, though, thankfully there are some game developers keeping the memory alive.

One such developer is Willem Middelkoop, CEO of dsd 164 and we've written about his Snake games before: Snake '97 and most recently, Snake 2k – based on the 2000 version that came loaded with the Nokia 3310.

Why has Willem recreated the Nokia Snake game, and what does it take to do it? Willem was in a bar in Amsterdam when some beer went over his smartphone. This saw the end of his smartphone.

> "While awaiting for the delivery of a new one, I used one of my old Nokia phones for a few days. Suddenly I knew that the modern smartphones where missing something – Nokia Snake."

So, with that in mind and a determined focus on re-living his youth, Willem sat at his computer and began his creation, Snake '97.

> "The first version of Snake '97 took me about a week, much of which was spent on analysing how a good remake should behave. I used stopwatches and some mathematics for this. I believe it was an absolute requirement that the game would have a familiar look and feel. Only then it could bring back all those memories shared by many."

Besides the accurate gameplay being key to giving the realistic feel and movement of the snake, this was nothing without the real-looking, classic Nokia phone interface.

By using some of his large collection of Nokia legacy phones, such as the Nokia 3310 and the Nokia 5110, Willem tasked his brother to capture them in a special way using a professional DSLR and some special lenses. The resulting images became the base image and some editing was applied for the finished result we see in the game.

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As for the sound effects, these were actually recorded from the Nokia 3310 using a microphone. This adds even more realism to the game.

We wanted to know how Willem created the games for Windows Phone.

> "Developing for Windows Phone is actually quite easy. I am a big fan of Visual Studio, I think it is still the best IDE, especially due to its debug capabilities. There are lots of resources online that cover many of the basics. If you're thinking about developing mobile apps, this certainly a good point to start."

Snake '97 and Snake 2k are receiving very positive feedback around the world with 4.5 and 5 stars respectively. But what's planned for the future? What's next?

Willem tells us that there are more projects in the works, besides Snake remakes. He's currently working on a new project that brings another old-time classic into the touch screen world.

We wonder what it is. Care to take a guess?

Snake '97 and Snake 2k cost just £0.79 from the Windows Phone Marketplace and are downloadable for the Nokia Lumia 610, Nokia Lumia 710, Nokia Lumia 800 and the Nokia Lumia 900.

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I wish someone makes Bounce Tales for Windows Phone

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I've genuinely got no idea. I'm looking forward to seeing it, though.

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