

**ALUMNI NOTES**

# Graduate develops app to help others find the right words

**Bubble Scramble was created as a class project.**

Cal State Fullerton alumnus Maksim Surguy created an iPhone application to help others learn to spell correctly in a fun yet challenging way.

"I am an immigrant, and while I am good at spelling, I know there are people who are not," said Surguy, who moved from Ukraine to the United States with



**JESSICA RUBIO**  
STAFF WRITER

his parents and younger brother when he was 17.

Life in Ukraine was difficult for Surguy's family because of the corruption and remnants of the Soviet regime, he said.

"Those who don't have ties with the corrupt government have a very small chance of success, despite of the many talents or hard work," said Surguy. "While the cost of living is close to that of USA, the pay that people get is a lot less."

Before coming to the States, Surguy was a break-dancer with an unfinished college degree in programming.

With an invitation from Surguy's uncle, who lived in America, Surguy's father decided to relocate the family.

"My father felt like we can always go back if we don't like the life here, but the chance to come here is probably only one in a lifetime," said Surguy. "This is the land of many opportunities, and those who are working hard get their reward."

Before earning his bachelor's degree in computer science in 2011, Surguy spent three days creating a prototype for Bubble Scramble, his final project for an iOS development class at Cal State Fullerton.

"I presented the game to the class, and everybody loved playing it," said Surguy, the game's sole creator. "When I finished the semester, I continued working on Bubble Scramble and within two weeks of polishing the game, it was ready to be submitted to (the) App Store."

The game was approved for distribution after Surguy's first submission to the App Store, and within one week consumers were downloading and playing Bubble Scramble.

"I got a few hundred downloads in the first month," he said.



VOLODYMYR BYCHKOVYAK

**Maksim Surguy**

Surguy said his game was approved quickly because he had "an original idea that was nicely executed, with great graphics, sound and clean code behind the scenes."

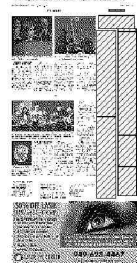
Bubble Scramble involves arranging letters to unscramble a word. The player is presented with sets of three to six random letters that must be unscrambled to compose a word by tapping the letters in the right order.

The quicker players unscramble the letters, the more points they get. Incorrect words earn no points.

"The game is geared towards people of all ages, from elementary school kids learning new words, to adults wanting to flex their brain muscle a bit," said Surguy.

About six months after Bubble Scramble's release, Surguy listed the game on a software auction platform so he could focus on another project. The game quickly sold for \$500.

Surguy is writing a web development book with Manning Publications Co. called "Laravel in Action," and is in the process of



building a few of his own websites.

His most successful website is **Bootsnipp.com**, he said. It's a gallery of free HTML snippets for web developers and designers. It has more than 2,500 registered users and gets about 6,000 visitors from roughly 150 countries per day, Surguy said.

Other projects Surguy designed and built include **mymaplist.com**, **filegr.am**, **cheatsheetr.com**, **built-withlaravel.com** and

**missingpetflyer.com.**

Surguy credits his success to the computer science courses and professors at CSUE noting game design and iOS programming classes he took that were taught by associate professor Michael Shafae, as well as a web development course with Kenytt Avery.

"These and other teachers were my mentors and always happy to help me," said Surguy.