



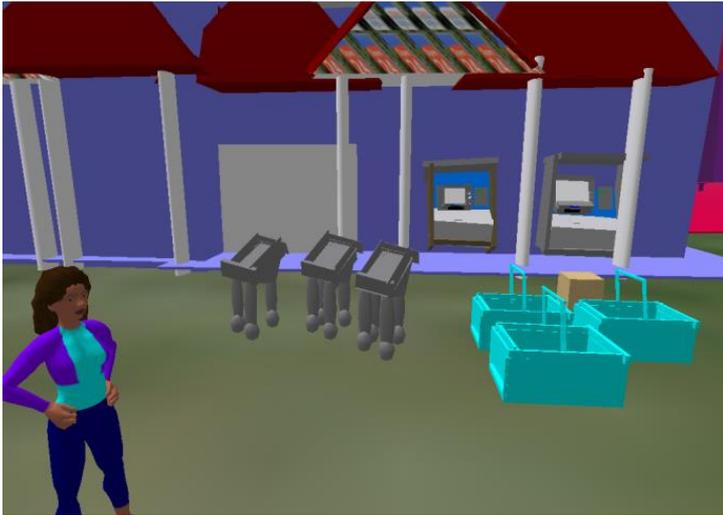
"I was trying to get into graphic design, but no one wanted to take me on as I needed experience, but how much experience they wanted I couldn't give". Steve, 29, Autistic



Steve was introduced to Hao2.eu by Prospects Islington after having completing a degree in Graphic Design in 2007 and doing various retail jobs. The Founder and CEO of Hao2.eu interviewed him for the position of design assistant following some Future Jobs Funding. He worked with Hao2 from 2011 to 2012 on a part time basis as a design assistant, learning about 3D virtual worlds, modelling, shaping, texturing, and importing media into the platform. He developed skills to create 3D models as well as the skills to provide supervision and support learners in 3D environments. Personal and professional development is very important at Hao2 and Steve says working with Hao2 "gave me the confidence to approach new courses such as Eon and now I have a basic understanding of 3DS Max and Zbrush" (professional 3D modelling packages for the industry). Steve hopes that he will be able to use his newly developed skills in 3DS Max and Zbrush working with Hao2 to enhance teaching environments.

Steve says that his relationship with Hao2 has given him a purpose in life and shown him new skills that he can build on going forward. It really has shown him a new way of working and drastically altered his outlook on things.





"I wanted to do the course so I could gain more experience and knowledge. I like facing new challenges in any environment and it helped me to improve my office skills....Life is getting better, I have been attending a lot more interviews and more employers are taking an interest." Sarah, 28

Sarah, aged 28, Learning Disability

Sarah has a Learning Disability (a processing disorder) and used to attend Remploy. She was invited to take part in a programme with Hao2 called 3DConnections and she chose to put herself up for it because it would help her to build IT skills. Sarah learned how to use a virtual environment for learning and skills development. She learned 3d modelling skills as well as how to reflect on her personal development and presentation skills which she used to deliver a presentation on the work she did at the Stratford Athletes Village at the Olympics.

Sarah cites the following as key achievements:

- Building a virtual supermarket and a house and creating her own version of the Olympics Athletes Village
- Learning how to take criticism effectively to improve her skills even more

Sarah says the programme was just what she needed and Hao2 appealed to her straight away giving her the skills that make employers think twice, especially when she attends interviews. "One of the first things they ask me is can you please tell me about Hao2.eu"



Peter, age 25, Asperger's Syndrome describes himself as **“anti-conformist”** which was part of his struggle. When asked to describe his struggles prior to Hao2, he said: **“Reconciling myself and identity and what I wanted to do with society”**.



Peter was home-educated by his mother and he felt that this was the right approach for him. As a teenager, he struggled with people whereas he has now been able to make many friends. Many of his struggles involved stress and fears as he likes life to be predictable which caused some difficulties when things did not go as expected.

He is interested in various aspects of creativity such as writing, drama and films. He has attended writing classes and is interested in becoming a published author. He has taken part in a film course with Queen Elizabeth's Foundation. His previous employment consists of short term work placements, one at a University involving IT and another which gave him some experience of video editing.



Peter discovered Hao2 as a result of his social worker helping him to find work. He met with the social worker every Wednesday and was encouraged to become involved with Hao2. He began a programme called 3D Connections for Work with Hao2 in 2012. The programme exposed him to aspects of working and development of vocational skills. About a year later he applied for a paid job with Hao2; he was successful after interview and started a paid, supported employment role where he could use his modelling skills amongst other things. His job at Hao2 involved designing buildings such as offices, banks and supermarkets. He felt “really understood” at Hao2 and “adjusted very quickly”. He has found many positives from his employment with Hao2. He has gained new skills in designing and is much more confident about his creativity and feels that he has proven that he is able to be creative. He has more confidence in real life as well as having more money. He believes Hao2 to be an “honourable company” and simply seeing that such a company exists and is able to conduct its business in such a way has made him “feel slightly better about the world”. He wants to improve his skills and continue to improve his confidence and carry on working with Hao2 for the foreseeable future as well as working on his writing and other areas of creativity.

Chris, aged 24, who has **autism, ADHD and dyslexia,** came to Hao2 having previously been in a position of uncertainty. "I wasn't doing much of anything. I was wondering around trying to find a job". He had previously done work experience at college but had never been employed. He is now on a programme with Hao2 which involves designing things in 3D virtual worlds whilst building vocational skills which will lead to a City & Guilds qualification.



In this photo, Chris is delivering his presentation and showcasing his work to colleagues online in 3D

He had some negative experiences of job interviews and described the ways in which working in an online environment was able to benefit him: Chris said "When you go for a job interview, you don't have to say anything. People only have to look at you. When you meet people online and talk to them, they get to know you mentally instead of your looks". He also describes how Hao2 have helped him mentally: "They have helped me work things out. They helped me get my head in the right direction". He describes the staff at Hao2 as "incredibly friendly people" and a "laugh to work with" highlighting the positive impact of them in what he describes as his working life with Hao2.

Chris described the effect that Hao2 was able to have on his life in general : "I can't put the amount of goodness that these people have done for me into words". He believes that working with Hao2 will help him to gain paid employment in the future. The type of work he has done in the virtual words has also helped him to understand more about the gaming franchise which he hopes will enable him to get a job in the games industry. In the future, he hopes to gain paid employment with Hao2 or with another company related to gaming. Chris says his desire for future paid employment in the games industry despite previous negative experiences with job interviews. Also, how the experience with Hao2 can help someone feel more equipped to take their first steps into paid employment.