



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **New Casual Game *LAYOFF* Released**

The Tiltfactor Lab (<http://www.tiltfactor.org>) and the collaborative Values at Play project (<http://www.valuesatplay.org>) are proud to announce the release of the new casual computer game, *LAYOFF*.

Developed by members of the Tiltfactor Lab and the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Game Design and Development program, *LAYOFF* is an examination of the current financial scandal. In the game, players play from the side of management needing to cut jobs, and match types of workers in groups in order to lay the workers off and increase workforce efficiency. During the game play, players eliminating many workers in a row find financiers and bankers taking the place of working class jobs. The financiers in this game cannot face layoffs. Play the game at <http://www.tiltfactor.org/layoff>.

*LAYOFF* was designed using the Values At Play curriculum materials, which can be used to design activist games or simply novel games with unusual mechanics. The key to the project is a focus on human values in games. "The game has an unsettling feeling," said Mary Flanagan, the developer of the game as the Director of the Tiltfactor Lab. "It is cute and fun to play, but when you realize how frightening the situation is, the game in fact functions as a very dark portent."

One of the principal challenges during game development was addressing a social issue team members felt strongly about without being didactic. *LAYOFF* was designed by Tiltfactor and the initial art is by Grace Ching-Yun, Peng, with art and animation by Jennifer Jacobs. Music is by NYC composer Paul Orbell. The RIT team was supervised by Dr. Chris Egert and coded by Greg Kohl.

The Tiltfactor Laboratory is active internationally, and is based at Dartmouth College. Values at Play is a collaborative research project led by Dr. Mary Flanagan of Tiltfactor and Dr. Helen Nissenbaum of NYU.

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