

What I like about LAIKA

"LAIKA is growing. There's a future here." – Martin Pelham

"At LAIKA, we have the opportunity to not only make a difference in the industry, we have the opportunity to do things differently." – Alan Keith

"The ability to pick your path and have input on what you really want to do is greater here than at other places." – Dave Schmitz

"The chance to build a studio from the ground up is something you won't get anywhere else." – Greg Smith

Meet Some of our crew



Martin Pelham

Digital Systems Supervisor

Martin came to LAIKA on a one-month consultancy. That was September 2006. Since then, he's been exploring every nook and cranny of the company, developing clever solutions that keep the production department humming. As the digital systems supervisor, he looks after anything that plugs into the wall, brokering the best deals between production requests and technology answers.

[Learn more](#)

Dave Schmitz (aka, Smitty)

Software Engineer

Smitty's path to animated feature films started in the fourth grade. That was the year he and his posse of neighborhood rascals spent their summer vacation remaking the entire Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back film. Fast-forward to today: As LAIKA's lead software engineer, he can still be found pioneering homegrown masterpieces, much to the delight of his audiences here.



[Learn more](#)



Chris Carignan

Pipeline Technical Director

Since joining LAIKA in January 2007, Chris has been living large. And, it's not just because of the cookies and cake at weekly project meetings. As one of LAIKA's pipeline engineers, he's become the resident Ginsu, capable of slicing, dicing and juggling four or five different projects on a given day. Whether it's building animation and effects tools or setting up dailies, he applies a sharp focus to each phase of the pipeline.

[Learn more](#)

Greg Smith

Technical Director

It's not easy being the new kid on the block—unless you're Greg Smith. Fresh from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Greg was snapped up by LAIKA to work as a technical director. That was October 2006, and he's been adding to his bag of tricks ever since.



[Learn more](#)

Enough about us

What about you?

Now, and in the future, LAIKA will be a place where you have the freedom to enjoy what you do—on the job and off the job. It's a work in progress, where you'll mold your own career and still have time to ingest all that one of the most livable cities in the U.S. has to offer. Tell us you're ready to think 'out of the box' (or the cubicle). That you want to collaborate, innovate and make your mark on LAIKA. Tell us you're fearless and that you don't mind a little rain—and you'll soon be on the Oregon Trail to a new filmmaking frontier.

Apply Today

Martin Pelham
Digital Systems Supervisor

Martin came to LAIKA on a one-month consultancy. That was September 2006. Since then, he's been exploring every nook and cranny of the company, developing clever solutions that keep the production department humming. As the digital systems supervisor, he looks after anything that plugs into the wall, brokering the best deals between production requests and technology answers.

Martin's proved himself an unflappable diplomat. Sure, the charming English accent gets him in the door. But, it's his appetite and aptitude for problem solving that really separate him. With a degree in multimedia and time spent at companies like Digital Stream, Cirro Lite and Projected Image, Martin built a foundation in media and its link to technology—from graphic design and motion capture to lighting and gobos. Then he went to work for 3 Mills Studio, honing his talent on *Corpse Bride*. It was then that he learned the importance of talking the talk and walking the walk, understanding his *customers'* lingo and solving their problems in those terms.

Before hopping the Atlantic, Martin found the time to reenergize with a trip around the world. Ask him to recount a tale or two—like the one about the Pakistani sewer rat—and you'll wonder if screenplays might be in his future. Martin's accomplished a lot in a short amount of time and there's no doubt he's going places. We're just glad we got him en route.

Dave Schmitz (aka, Smitty)
Lead Software Engineer

Smitty's path to animated feature films started in the fourth grade. That was the year he and his posse of neighborhood rascals spent their summer vacation remaking the entire *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* film. Fast-forward to today: As LAIKA's lead software engineer, he can still be found pioneering homegrown masterpieces, much to the delight of his audiences here.

After graduating with a degree in computer science from the University of Colorado, Smitty zig-zagged across the West—developing everything from a 3D, distributed, multi-threaded particle tracing module for NASA to special effects plug-ins for ABC, Fox and Bloomberg TV networks. In November 2006, he gave up the good life and a thriving consulting business in Colorado to put his talent to work for LAIKA. Granted, Portland's proximity to endless bike trails and whitecap windsurfing in the Gorge didn't hurt.

With Smitty's guidance, LAIKA's flipbook is destined for dual-purpose greatness—to be used as a playback application for CG projects, like *Jack & Ben*, and a primary capture tool for stop-motion films, like *Coraline*. Prone to bouts of boredom, Smitty confesses LAIKA seems to have delivered the cure: daily doses of challenging project work and open-ended opportunity.

Chris Carignan
Pipeline Engineer

Since joining LAIKA in January 2007, Chris has been living large. And, it's not just because of the cookies and cake at weekly project meetings. As one of LAIKA's pipeline engineers, he's become the resident *Ginsu*, capable of slicing, dicing and juggling four or five different projects on a given day. Whether it's building animation and effects tools or setting up dailies, he applies a sharp focus to each phase of the pipeline.

Chris' degree in animation took him across the country—from commercials and video games to animated films. He did time in L.A., dodging crime and working on *Beowulf*, *Monster House* and *The Polar Express* at Sony Pictures. It was there that he came to appreciate the sense of pride associated with putting out a really good animated film. Next stop: LAIKA.

Chris and his wife gladly traded the bars on their apartment windows for a tree-lined street, in a city he says is his all-time favorite. Now, he rides his bike to work, walks the dog at all hours and gets a good night sleep, every night—things he has time for, even after a day's work slicing, dicing and juggling whatever lands in his lap. But, wait ... there's more! He still finds time to get in on LAIKA's basketball league, ultimate Frisbee games and movie nights. The question remains however: Does he come with a lifetime guarantee?

Greg Smith
TD 1

It's not easy being the new kid on the block—unless you're Greg Smith. Fresh from the Rochester Institute of Technology, Greg was snapped up by LAIKA to work as a technical director. That was October 2006, and he's been adding to his bag of tricks ever since.

By day, Greg may be found writing tools for the modeling department or dynamic web documentation for the education group. His enthusiasm peaks when he speaks of the rigging system he's building—an opportunity he knows most newbies at other studios might not get. Then again, they're not Greg. He's making his mark on tools that will endure as LAIKA continues to grow. Not bad for a new kid on the block.

By night, Greg's found Portland has more up its sleeve than might meet the eye. Rivaling places like L.A. in innumerable ways, he says there's plenty to do if you only scratch the surface. With an outlook like that and talent beyond his years, there's no telling what Greg will set his sights on next.

Jon Dobson Workflow TD

Armed with a degree in architecture from Clemson University, Jon began his career at a commercial studio in North Carolina. At the time, his 30-second flying logo animations seemed pretty fly. But then along came *Toy Story*, the industry's first all-cg feature film. It wasn't long before he packed his bags and set off in pursuit of the next big thing in animation. He jet-setted near and far, from coast to coast and across oceans—dabbling in everything from compositing, modeling, editing, rigging and pipeline development. He owned his own animation studio and even mastered “Ich bin ein Berliner” while working for the Berlin Film Company.

Along the way, domestic bliss became bigger and better than acquiring stamps in his passport and filling the U-haul. Enter LAIKA, offering a two-birds-with-one-stone kind of opportunity: a chance to work for a big studio on world-class films, in a city known for its family-friendly vibe.

These days, Jon takes his cue from fatherhood, knowing how to walk softly, but carry a big stick. Since joining LAIKA in January 2007, he's developed a battery of tools and processes flexible enough to meet the software department's right-now needs and to endure for LAIKA's future films. And he's only just begun.