

Dream games job for Oliver the 7ft Goth

by Mike Byrne

mbyrne@expressandecho.co.uk

A SEVEN foot three inch tall Exeter man could be on his way to Texas to work with one of the world's top electronic games studios.

Oliver Smith, 19, say many people, particularly the elderly, were "a bit prejudiced" when they saw the way he dressed in leather and eyeliner with his coat held together with safety pins. He describes himself as a Goth, a sub-culture, with roots in 1980s rock music influenced by 19th century Gothic literature.

He said: "I was born with heart and respiratory problems, which almost killed me when I was younger. I think that made me feel a bit alienated and, after all, I'm seven feet three inches tall and look different. I guess I fitted into the Goth world pretty easily after all that."

Then Oliver discovered computer games and took a course to learn how to create them, discovering he had an empathy with isolated, vulnerable and elderly people.

Now his business, helping such people get to grips with computer software, is advertised on the thisissexeter website,

and has attracted some interest. Oliver, who lives in Newport Road, Countess Wear, said: "I want to do something to help elderly people communicate with young members of their families."

"Youngsters spend a lot of time playing computer games, and their grandparents can become isolated for health reasons, and can end up in care homes."

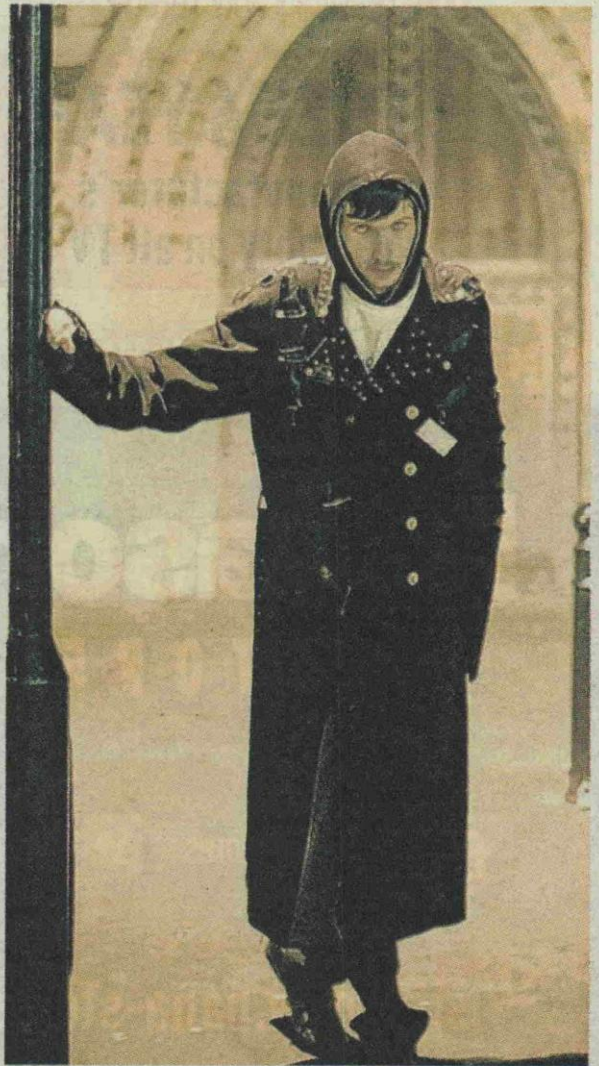
"If they know how to use computers, and internet phone and video call software like Skype, it can bring families together."

Mike Head, spokesman for Train2Game, the distant learning college where Oliver did his course, said: "When Oliver first came to us it was a bit of a shock – he was festooned with safety pins and dressed in black leather. The fact he's used his course in such a brilliant way, to help families keep in touch with elderly relatives, is heartwarming."

Now Oliver, who lives with his parents, has been offered a job as a quality tester for one of the world's best-known games studios, Forsaken, based in Texas and who created Embers of Caerus.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard from them," he said. "I have to check their new games to make sure everything works properly and there are no bugs and glitches. I can do it alongside with my work with the elderly, although ultimately I could be asked to move to America to work full-time with Forsaken."

"I can't believe how taking this course has turned my life around."



Man in black: Oliver Smith has been offered work with a leading computers games firm

Helping the elderly:
Oliver Smith

