Finding Aid to the
Toys for Bob Collection, 2011-2017

Summary Information
Title: Toys for Bob collection
Creator: Toys for Bob, Activision (primary); The Strong (secondary)
ID: 117.11504
Date: 2011-2017 (inclusive)
Extent: 1.75 linear feet (physical); 111 GB (digital)
Language: This collection is in English.
Abstract: The Toys for Bob collection is a compilation of original materials from the production of character figures for *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure* (a toys-to-life action video game published by Activision) and video oral histories recorded in 2017.
Repository:
>   Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
>   One Manhattan Square
>   Rochester, New York 14607
>   585.263.2700
>   library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information
Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, they have given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.
Conditions Governing Access: At this time, digital files in this collection (video oral history interviews) are limited to on-site researchers only. Please see The Strong's Digital Games Files Access Policy.
Custodial History: The Toys for Bob collection was donated to The Strong in July 2017 as a gift from Activision. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object ID 117.11504. The papers were received from Activision in 4 boxes, along with various boxes of *Skylanders*-related objects. The video oral histories were recorded by staff at The Strong in July 2017.
Preferred citation for publication: Toys for Bob collection, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
Processed by: Julia Novakovic, January 2019

Controlled Access Terms
Personal Names
- Dyson, Jon-Paul
- Ford, Robert ("Fred")
- Gerstein, Daniel
- Huang, I-Wei
- Kee, Ron
- Leyland, Robert

- Loh, Nat
- Long, Amber
- Ludlam, Michael
- Neil, Daniel
- Ness, Alex
- Reiche, Paul III
- Saucier, Jeremy
- Schadt, Toby
- Yan, Paul

Corporate Names
- Activision (Firm)
- Toys for Bob (Firm)

Subjects
- Computer adventure games
- Fantasy games
- Figurines
- Game design and development
- Skylanders (Game)
- Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure (Game)
- Video games
- Video games industry

Historical Note

Toys for Bob is a California-based video game developer founded in 1989 by Paul Reiche III, Fred Ford, and Terry Falls.

During the 1990s, Toys for Bob released several popular games, including the *Star Control* series. (Activision purchased the company in 2005, making Toys for Bob a wholly-owned subsidiary of Activision.) In 2011, Toys for Bob developed the first installment of *Skylanders*—a "toys-to-life" action video game series. The games occur in a world called Skylands, where a group of heroes use their abilities and technology to defend their realm from forces of evil. Physical toys are incorporated into the *Skylanders* video games when players place their plastic character figure onto their "Portal of Power," a device which reads the radio frequency identification (RFID) chip and contains key stats earned by the character during gameplay. *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure* debuted in 2011 with great fanfare, and within a year it was the top selling console and handheld video game worldwide for 2012. The game and its sequels single-handedly created the "toys-to-life" electronic game category, selling more than 250 million toys and generating more than $3 billion in sales.

As of 2019, Toys for Bob continues to develop video games for Activision, including their most recent release, *Spyro Reignited Trilogy* (2018).

Collection Scope and Content Note
The Toys for Bob collection contains original documentation related to the development and production of character figures for *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure* (2011). Materials include timelines, schedules, design guidelines, digital sculpt mockups, notes, correspondence, artwork, concept drawings, presentation images, and more. Also part of this collection are video oral history interviews of Toys for Bob staff members, conducted in 2017 by staff members at The Strong. Additional scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The Toys for Bob collection has been arranged into two series, both of which have been further divided into subseries. The physical materials are housed in three archival document boxes and one oversized folder. The digital materials can be accessed on-site at The Strong.

Related Materials
Along with these records, The Strong received more than 200 pre-production figures and portals, including hand-sculpted and hand-painted prototypes, 3D-printed models, and the first working prototype portal created for *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure*. The Strong also houses examples of *Skylanders* in-house figure molds, tooling, prototype packaging, and more than 175 games and figures in their original packaging.

System of Arrangement
Series I: *Skylanders* project, 2011-2016
   Subseries A: Project management, 2011-2014 and n.d.
   Subseries B: Character figure and related designs, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
   Subseries C: *Skylanders* ephemera, 2012 and n.d. [c. 2015-2016]
Series II: Video oral histories, 2017
   Subseries A: Collections packing, 2017
   Subseries B: Interviews, 2017

Contents List

Series I: *Skylanders* **project, 2011-2016**

> **Scope and Content Note:** This series houses original documentation from Toys for Bob staff members on the development of *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure*. Materials include project management information, artwork, design concepts, and related ephemera.

> **Subseries A: Project management, 2011-2014 and n.d.**
> **Scope and Content Note:** Within this subseries are records relating to the production and development of the character figures and related materials for *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure*. Documents include flow charts, timelines, schedules, design guidelines, digital sculpt mockups, notes, emails, graphics, and more.

Box 1

Folder 1	*Skylanders* – Production flow charts, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
Folder 2	*Skylanders* – Partial timelines, schedules, and status updates, 2011-2012
Folder 3	*Skylanders* – Project calendar schedule, 2011-2012
Folder 4	*Skylanders* – "Spyro's Kingdom Toys" document, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
Folder 5	"Skylanders Character Design Bible" guidelines, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
Folder 6	*Skylanders* figures – Digital sculpt mockups with notes, 2011-2012
Folder 7	*Skylanders* figures – Digital mockups with toy prototype photographs and notes, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
Folder 8	*Skylanders* figures – Emails with detailed feedback, 2011-2012 and n.d.
Folder 9	*Skylanders* figures – Exploded view example, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]
Folder 10	*Skylanders* Spyro's Adventure packaging design mockups, 2012
Folder 11	Toys for Bob "New Character Models" wiki pages, 2014

> **Subseries B: Character figure and related designs, n.d. [c. 2011-2012]**
> **Scope and Content Note:** This subseries contains concept drawings, presentation images, and other artwork related to the development of character figures for *Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure*. When possible, characters have been arranged into specific types, or elements under which they fall (e.g., Air, Dark, Earth, etc.), with other secondary characters or creatures labeled by a topic (e.g., dragons, fairies, knights, etc.). Presentation images are a sample of the final presentations developed by Toys for Bob staff. While many of the drawings are undated, they are likely from 2011-2012, based on supporting documentation from Series I, Subseries A.

Box 1

Folder 12	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – line drawings, n.d.
Folder 13	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – character type icons and patterns, n.d.
Folder 14	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Air type, n.d.
Folder 15	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Dark type, n.d.
Folder 16	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Earth type, n.d.
Folder 17	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Fire type, n.d.
Folder 18	*Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Life type, n.d.

Folder 19   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Light type, n.d.
Folder 20   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Magic type, n.d.
Folder 21   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Tech type, n.d.
Folder 22   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Undead type, n.d.
Folder 23   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Water type, n.d.

Box 2
Folder 1   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – dragons, n.d.
Folder 2   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – fairies, n.d.
Folder 3   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – forest creatures, n.d.
Folder 4   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – knights, n.d.
Folder 5   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – robots, n.d.
Folder 6   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – trolls and ogres, n.d.
Folder 7   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – warriors, n.d.
Folder 8   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – wizards and magicians, n.d.
Folder 9   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – other creatures, n.d.
Folder 10   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – locations/scenery, n.d.
Folder 11   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – magic items, n.d.
Folder 12   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – plants, n.d.
Folder 13   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – sheep, n.d.
Folder 14   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – transportation and weapons, n.d.
Folder 15   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – miscellaneous graphics, n.d.
Folder 16   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – portals, n.d.
Folder 17   *Skylanders* – "Portal of Power Apparatus" drawing, n.d.
Folder 18   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Creation Crystals, n.d.
Folder 19   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – Mount and mech exploration graphics, n.d.
Folder 20   "Spyro's Kingdom" Wii game cover mock-up, n.d.

Box 3
Folder 1   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Air type, n.d.
Folder 2   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Dark type, n.d.
Folder 3   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Earth type, n.d.
Folder 4   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Fire type, n.d.
Folder 5   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Life type, n.d.
Folder 6   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Light type, n.d.
Folder 7   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Magic type, n.d.
Folder 8   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Tech type, n.d.
Folder 9   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Undead type, n.d.
Folder 10   *Skylanders* – Presentation images of figures – Water type, n.d.

Oversized
Folder 1   *Skylanders* – Concept drawings – figures by type chart, n.d.

Subseries C: *Skylanders* ephemera, 2012 and n.d. [c. 2015-2016]
Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses ephemera and templates for materials supporting subsequent *Skylanders* games, including *Skylanders Giants*, *Skylanders Battlecast*, and *Skylanders Imaginators*.

Box 3
Folder 11   *Skylanders* Giants dog tag designs, 2012
Folder 12   *Skylanders* Battlecast template letter with character cards, n.d. [c. 2015-2016?]
Folder 13   "*Skylanders* Imagineers" Portal Master template letters and Imagineers cards, n.d. [*Skylanders* Imaginators, c. 2015-2016?]

Series II: Video oral histories, 2017
Scope and Content Note: This series contains digital files recording the donation of the Toys for Bob *Skylanders* materials to The Strong in July 2017. Materials in this series include digital photographs, audio, and video files.

Subseries A: Collections packing, 2017
Scope and Content Note: This subseries houses digital photographs and videos captured by JP Dyson and Jeremy Saucier from The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic Games while packing up the donation of *Skylanders* objects from the Toys for Bob offices in July 2017.

File types and lengths (if applicable) are denoted in the folder descriptions for this subseries.

Digital - IIA
Folder 1   Folder 01_Photos [5 files]
- "01. Reiche_WIN_20170712_20_16_16_Pro" - .JPG [Paul Reiche with *Skylanders* figures], 2017
- "02. Saucier_WIN_20170712_12_38_30_Pro" - .JPG [Jeremy Saucier with *Skylanders* figures], 2017
- "03. Saucier_WIN_20170712_12_38_32_Pro" - .JPG [Jeremy Saucier with *Skylanders* figures], 2017
- "04. WIN_20170712_12_40_18_Pro" - .JPG [*Skylanders* figures and accessories], 2017
- "05. WIN_20170712_12_40_22_Pro" - .JPG [*Skylanders* figures and accessories], 2017

Folder 2   Folder 02_Videos [4 files]
- "01. Reiche_MAH00001" - .MP4 [Paul Reiche with collections (29:50)], 2017
- "02. Reiche_MAH00002" - .MP4 [Paul Reiche with collections (29:50)], 2017
- "03. Reiche_MAH00003" - .MP4 [Paul Reiche with collections (27:07)], 2017
- "04. Reiche_WIN_20170712_20_09_32_Pro" - .MP4 [Paul Reiche with collections (06:36)], 2017

Subseries B: Interviews, 2017

Scope and Content Note: This subseries contains digital videos captured by and about staff members from Toys for Bob during the donation of *Skylanders* materials to The Strong in July 2017. Toys for Bob staff interviewed here include studio heads Paul Reiche III and Robert ("Fred") Ford, art manager Amber Long, lead technical software engineer Dan Gerstein, audio director Dan Neil, principal concept artist I-Wei Huang, senior technical artist Mike Ludlam, principal engineer Robert Leyland, lead concept artist Ron Kee, design director Toby Schadt, associate creative director Paul Yan, and character lead designer Nat Loh. Also part of this subseries is a video interview with Alex Ness, who worked as a producer, narrative director, and chief of staff at Toys for Bob.

Video interviews were conducted by JP Dyson, Director of the International Center for the History of Electronic Games at The Strong. Audio was recorded separately for posterity and two video cameras were set up to record each interview at the Toys for Bob offices, resulting in one audio file and two video files for each interview segment. File types and lengths are denoted in the folder descriptions.

Digital - IIB

Folder 1   Folder 01_Fred Ford and Paul Reiche

- Audio [4 files]
  - "01. Paul Reiche and Fred Ford 01_WAV" - .WAV (19:31), 2017
  - "02. Paul Reiche and Fred Ford 02_WAV" - .WAV (19:34), 2017
  - "03. Paul Reiche and Fred Ford 03_WAV" - .WAV (15:43), 2017
  - "04. Paul Reiche and Fred Ford 04_WAV" - .WAV (18:38), 2017
- Videos [8 files]
  - MOV
    - "01. PaulReiche_and_FredFord_1of4_MOV" - .MOV (19:28), 2017
    - "02. PaulReiche_and_FredFord_2of4_MOV" - .MOV (16:57), 2017
    - "03. PaulReiche_and_FredFord_3of4_MOV" - .MOV (15:38), 2017
    - "04. PaulReiche_and_FredFord_4of4_MOV" - .MOV (18:36), 2017
  - MTS
    - "01. 00138 -FredFord_and_PaulReiche_MTS" - .MTS (19:23), 2017
    - "02. 00139 -FredFord_and_PaulReiche_MTS" - .MTS (16:59), 2017
    - "03. 00140 -FredFord_and_PaulReiche_MTS" - .MTS (15:37), 2017

- ▪ "04. 00141 -FredFord_and_PaulReiche_MTS" - .MTS (18:37), 2017

Folder 2   Folder 02_Dan Gerstein
- Audio [2 files]
  - ▪ "01. DanGerstein 01_WAV" - .WAV (18:51), 2017
  - ▪ "02. DanGerstein 02_WAV" - .WAV (11:19), 2017
- Videos [4 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. DanGerstein_1of2_MOV" - .MOV (18:47), 2017
    - ▪ "02. DanGerstein_2of2_MOV" - .MOV (11:15), 2017
  - o MTS
    - ▪ "01. 00128_DanGerstein_MTS" - .MTS (18:45), 2017
    - ▪ "02. 00129_DanGerstein_MTS" - .MTS (11:13), 2017

Folder 3   Folder 03_I-Wei Huang
- Audio [2 files]
  - ▪ "01. DR0000_0053-I-Wei-Huang_WAV" - .WAV (01:52), 2017
  - ▪ "02. DR0000_0054-I-Wei-Huang_WAV" - .WAV (10:45), 2017
- Videos [2 files]
  - o MTS
    - ▪ "01. 00136-I-Wei-Huang_MTS" - .MTS (02:11), 2017
    - ▪ "02. 00137-I-Wei-Huang_MTS" - .MTS (10:52), 2017

Folder 4   Folder 04_I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland
- Audio [8 files]
  - ▪ "01. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 01_WAV" - .WAV (14:36), 2017
  - ▪ "02. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 02_WAV" - .WAV (16:21), 2017
  - ▪ "03. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 03_WAV" - .WAV (19:26), 2017
  - ▪ "04. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 04_WAV" - .WAV (18:06), 2017
  - ▪ "05. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 05_WAV" - .WAV (10:44), 2017
  - ▪ "06. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 06_WAV" - .WAV (02:10), 2017
  - ▪ "07. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 07_WAV" - .WAV (16:18), 2017
  - ▪ "08. I-Wei Huang and Robert Leyland 08_WAV" - .WAV (12:45), 2017
- Videos [16 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. I-WeiHuang_and_RobertLeyland_1of8_MOV" - .MOV (14:30), 2017

- "02. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_2of8_MOV" - .MOV (16:09), 2017
- "03. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_3of8_MOV" - .MOV (19:15), 2017
- "04. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_4of8_MOV" - .MOV (17:54), 2017
- "05. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_5of8_MOV" - .MOV (10:38), 2017
- "06. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_6of8_MOV" - .MOV (02:05), 2017
- "07. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_7of8_MOV" - .MOV (16:13), 2017
- "08. I-WeiHuang _and_RobertLeyland_8of8_MOV" - .MOV (12:43), 2017
  - o MTS
    - "01. 00113-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (14:28), 2017
    - "02. 00114-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (16:11), 2017
    - "03. 00115-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (19:12), 2017
    - "04. 00116-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (17:55), 2017
    - "05. 00117-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (10:37), 2017
    - "06. 00118-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (02:05), 2017
    - "07. 00119-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (16:15), 2017
    - "08. 00120-I-Wei-Huang_RobertLeyland_MTS" - .MTS (12:43), 2017

Folder 5   Folder 05_Amber Long and Ron Kee
- Audio [1 file]
  - "01. AmberLong_and_RonKee_01_WAV" - .WAV (17:12), 2017
- Videos [2 files]
  - o MOV
    - "01. AmberLong-and-RonKee_1of1_MOV" - .MOV (17:06), 2017
  - o MTS
    - "01. 00125_AmberLong_and_RonKee_MTS" - .MTS (17:07), 2017

Folder 6   Folder 06_Mike Ludlam
- Audio [1 file]
  - "01. Mike Ludlam 01_WAV" - .WAV (18:23), 2017
- Videos [2 files]

- o MOV
  - ▪ "01. MikeLudlam_1of1_MOV" - .MOV (18:18), 2017
- o MTS
  - ▪ "01. 00127-Mike_Ludlam_MTS" - .MTS (18:17), 2017

Folder 7   Folder 07_Dan Neil
- Audio [2 files]
  - ▪ "01. Dan Neil 01_WAV" - .WAV (15:59), 2017
  - ▪ "02. Dan Neil 02_WAV" - .WAV (10:50), 2017
- Videos [4 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. DanNeil_1of2_MOV" - .MOV (15:55), 2017
    - ▪ "02. DanNeil_2of2_MOV" - .MOV (10:45), 2017
  - o MTS
    - ▪ "01. 00123_DanNeil_MTS" - .MTS (15:52), 2017
    - ▪ "02. 00124_DanNeil_MTS" - .MTS (10:42), 2017

Folder 8   Folder 08_Alex Ness
- Videos [3 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. Alex Ness *Skylanders* Interview_07-2017_MOV" - .MOV (41:59), 2017
  - o MP4
    - ▪ "01. MAH00006-AlexNess_MP4" - .MP4 (19:11), 2017
    - ▪ "02. MAH00007-AlexNess_MP4" - .MP4 (07:25), 2017

Folder 9   Folder 09_Paul Reiche
- Audio [1 file]
  - ▪ "01. Paul Reiche and JP Dyson 01_WAV" - .WAV (06:40), 2017
- Videos [3 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. PaulReiche-and-JPDyson_MuseumPlug_MOV" - .MOV (06:36), 2017
    - ▪ "02. IMG_6135_PaulReiche_MOV" - .MOV (21:53), 2017
  - o MTS
    - ▪ "01. 00142-PaulReiche-and-JPDyson_MTS" - .MTS (06:36), 2017

Folder 10   Folder 10_Toby Schadt and Nat Loh
- Audio [1 file]
  - ▪ "01. TobySchadt_and_NatLoh_01_WAV" - .WAV (18:04), 2017
- Videos [2 files]
  - o MOV
    - ▪ "01. TobySchadt_and_NatLoh_1of1_MOV" - .MOV (17:56), 2017
  - o MTS
    - ▪ "01. 00126-TobySchadt_and_NatLoh_MTS" - .MTS (17:53), 2017

Folder 11   Folder 11_Paul Yan
- Audio [2 files]
  - "01. Paul Yan_01_WAV" - .WAV (14:48), 2017
  - "02. Paul Yan_02_WAV" - .WAV (01:54), 2017
- Videos [4 files]
  - MOV
    - "01. PaulYan_1of2_MOV" - .MOV (14:45), 2017
    - "02. PaulYan_2of2_MOV" - .MOV (01:51), 2017
  - MTS
    - "01. 00121-PaulYan_MTS" - .MTS (14:43), 2017
    - "02. 00122-PaulYan_MTS" - .MTS (01:50), 2017

Folder 12   Folder 12_Release forms [2 files]
- "01. Strong_InterviewReleaseForms_2017" - .PDF, 2017
- "02. StrongMuseum_ToysforBob_Interviews_July2017" - .XLS, 2017