Convergences in Film and Games Technology

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Abstract

Film and game production have historically been on parallel yet distinct development tracks. With the advent of new technologies, video games now have the potential to create dynamically robust cinematic gameplay experiences; in turn, the adoption of real-time software has led to more artistically-driven asset creation and faster iteration cycles in film production. These convergences underlie significant paradigm shifts not only in how content is delivered and presented in film and games, but also in terms of the perspectives on how research and technology will be further developed to aid production workflow.

This panel aims to provide an open dialogue on the relevant convergences in film and game production processes and technologies. Consisting of leading minds from both industries, the panelists will debate the current state of artistically-driven production tools and resources in the context of their unique perspectives as pioneers in the field. They will provide their thoughts on what the key confluence points are, whether there are definitive differences that disallow one-to-one production convergence, and what challenges and implications there may be that are divergent from traditional mindset for both industries. Finally, the panel will look at emerging trends in the field in a lively discussion that will hopefully hone ideas and technologies both industries may invest in moving forward.

1 Presenter Bios

KIM DAVIDSON is a 3D animation and visual effects pioneer. Kim is President and CEO of Side Effects Software, a company he co-founded in 1987 that has been been honored three times with technical awards from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for innovations in their flagship product Houdini. Most recently in early 2012.

Kim is a graduate of the University of Waterloo and a recipient of the J. Wesley Graham Medal in Computing and Innovation. At Waterloo he received a Bachelor of Engineering in preprofessional architecture and a Bachelor of Mathematics in computer science. Upon completing his studies, Kim entered the nascent field of computer animation in 1985.

With a background in architecture, Kim gravitated towards working in a 3D environment - producing broadcast spots, logos and effects for television. After co-founding Side Effects Software, Kim continued to animate and program, helping to develop Side Effects first 3D software package called PRISMS. Early in the companys history, the focus shifted away from production and towards the development of the best tools possible for 3D artists and the result was Houdini. In 1992 Kim founded Catapult Productions for the purpose of creating compelling 3D character animation, including the award-winning childrens series Monster by Mistake.

Side Effects Software and Catapult Productions reflect two of Kims great passions: graphics software and character animation. Kim is a member of the Visual Effects Society and a member of the Screen Industries Research and Training Centre board at Pinewood Toronto. He lives in Toronto with his wife and three kids. He is a great enthusiast and certified coach of both baseball and basketball.

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FRANK VITZ is a digital visual effects veteran and the Creative Director for CRYENGINE at Crytek in Frankfurt Au Main. He has been working in the field of digital visual content creation and interactive media for over 30 years, working on a wide range of projects including: movies such as X-Men 1 and 2, Stargate, and Judge Dredd; game projects such as Fight Night, SSX, Dragon Age, and Battlefield; game engines such as Ignite, Frosbite, and CRYENGINE; and theme park attractions such as the Universal Studios Adventures of Spider-Man.

Frank specializes in solving visual problems to create exciting experiences across a wide range of applications. He is interested in projects that push the envelope of visual fidelity and interactivity. He foresaw and is now contributing to the convergence of technologies currently underway in the movie and gaming industries, and believes that the video game industry will continue to be an important hot bed for new developments over the next decade. To that end, he likes taking on new challenges, and has a knack for puttiing together teams to solve such complex problems.

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RICK STRINGFELLOW has been working in computer graphics for TV, Film, and Games for over 30 years. Starting in London with TV and commercials and then working at the BBC where he helped build the News 3D animation department. In 1991 he moved to work for Vertigo Animation Software, and in 1997 he helped create the opening sequence to the Sci-Fi movie 'Contact' and VFX for 'Starship Troopers' while working at Sony Imageworks. In 1998 he switched to the games industry working at Radical and EA, Art Directing Need for Speed Underground and many of EA's sports titles. He is now the Executive Art Director for EA Studios Content group and is working on a wide range of titles and initiatives.

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COLIN PENTY is a Technical Art Director for The Coalition. Colin has worked at The Coalition with a focus on rendering, content pipelines, and content creation workflows for the past four years. Most recently, Colin has focused exclusively on the Gears of War franchise at The Coalition melding proven game production techniques with film methodologies in order to achieve the highest level of real-time visual quality possible. Prior to Microsoft, Colin was a CG Supervisor at EA for seven years working on the FIFA, Skate, and Need for Speed franchises. Prior to EA Colin was a VFX/Technical Artist at Radical Entertainment.

2   Company Bios

Headquartered in Toronto, SIDE EFFECTS SOFTWARE is Canadian owned and operated with offices Los Angeles and Singapore. They are a world leader in the development of advanced 3D animation and special effects software for use in film, commercials and video games.Their list of clients includes Pixar, Digital Domain, DreamWorks, Rhythm and Hues, Weta Digital and Sony Pictures Imageworks.

Founded by brothers Avni, Cevat, and Faruk Yerli in 1999, Crytek has headquarters in Frankfurt am Main (Germany), with seven additional studios around the world.

From day one, the team at Crytek have worked hard to create innovative experiences for players, releasing multiple award-winning games that include the original Far Cry, The Crysis series, Ryse: Son of Rome and Warface. All of Crytek's games are developed using CRYENGINE, which is also the first choice of other leading developers and licensees when creating games for PC, Xbox One, PlayStation4, Wii UTM, iOS and Android.