DigiPen Highlights Gaming Education at the World Cyber Games

World Cyber Games is the premiere, blue-chip, global tournament and cultural cyber festival in gaming. Well over one million players from more than 70 countries participate annually. Founded in 2000 and credited with launching the professional careers of many of the planet’s top video game players, World Cyber Games uses a year-long tournament format, which begins with online, regional, and national competitions in each country. National finalists then compete in the ultimate international tournament in e-sports, the World Cyber Games Grand Final, where each country’s best players compete for the largest and most prestigious prize in competitive gaming. This year’s Grand Final was held at Qwest Field in Seattle, Washington, October 3 – 7, and DigiPen proudly sponsored the educational track of this show.

The educational track featured over 30 different speakers from 12 local companies who covered topics on production, programming, level design, and art/sound. DigiPen’s own Adam Crespi and Jazno Francouer presented on digital cinematography and classical effects animation, respectively. Along with this, the Institute hosted a series of scavenger hunts for high school students. Local news stations like King, Komo, and Fox highlighted DigiPen’s involvement, as did international press from as far away as Norway and the Philippines. Additionally, SpikeTV clips featured DigiPen representatives. Overall, it was an opportunity for the Institute to demonstrate how significant education is to the continuing advancement of game development.

One of the key events that DigiPen hosted was the Women in Gaming symposium. This two-hour event explored the variety of career options available for women in game development. A wide range of speakers, including DigiPen’s Suzanne Kaufman, spoke about career opportunities and what life is like for women in the game industry. This was one of the most popular parts of the show, and it allowed the Institute to showcase how this is a future that is of interest to anyone who is passionate about gaming. All told, an estimated 5,000 people from over 22 countries learned more about DigiPen and gaming education by attending these events and seeing the press coverage.

- Chris Erhardt
Headline: 7th Annual DigiPen Halloween Pageant
Read on, If You Dare!

On October 26, the Student Association held its 7th Annual Halloween Pageant. Students from both campuses came to show off their costumes in front of an all-star panel of judges, including Suzanne Tremblay (Receptionist), Karen Wheeler (Librarian), Dmitri Volper (CS), Jason Hanson (CS), Alecia Rossano (Art), and Rob Kmiec (Art). Although the costumes showed a wide variety of creativity, many came to see the skits. The Gauss-Jordan skit, a returning favorite from last year, drew much attention from the audience and judges.

Winners were announced for a variety of categories:
- Video Game – Cara Priebe, as a Night Elf
- Movie/TV – Chelsea Thurman, as Sally from A Nightmare Before Christmas
- Group Costume – Matt Craver, Casey Mathews, Ben Russell, Ian Good, and Becky Taylor, as Scooby Do and Company
- Individual Performance – Brittany Aubert, as Claude Comair
- Group Performance – “Gauss the Eliminator Jordan” Group
- Homemade – Willie Wight – Plus and Minus, from Pokémon, Honorable Mention: Ari Kleinberg, as a person teleporting from Portal
- Judge’s Choice – Jesse Dunne, as the Queen of Hearts; Chanel Chadwick, as Alice; and Jamie Moravetz, as the Rabbit from Alice in Wonderland
- Audience Choice – BJ Becker, Jaron Ditommaso, James Morrison, Nathan Ross, Laura Frankie, and Jacob Hinds, as the Art Campus Pirates

Overall winners from the list above included Cara Priebe, B.F.A. student, as a night elf, Brittany Aubert, R.T.I.S. student, as Claude Comair, and BJ Becker with a group of B.F.A. students as pirates. All of the winners of the Halloween Pageant have won a trip to the Nintendo store.

- Lindsay Jones
Lake Watkins wrote “Never Evergreens,” this month’s contribution from the Literature Club. He is a junior in the R.T.I.S. program. Although he has always been interested in creative writing—and he loves to read alternative history, dark fantasy, and science fiction—he has had neither the time nor inclination to pursue these interests thoroughly. “Mostly, I was drawn to this school and this industry,” he says, “because I feel that I express myself accurately in game design.” However, as “Never Evergreens” demonstrates, he is certainly capable of other ways of expressing himself.

Never Evergreens

Snow brazen evergreen forests,
Who stand under the shadow of the icicle peaks,
Gazing toward that true beauty manifest,
Forever,
Locked in marvel for eternity.

Is it a blessing or a curse,
To witness something so beyond your reach,
At its foot and lowest dive,
For all infinity,
Frozen with wonder?

There are so many trees,
Perhaps, it is a greater thing.
For even I might prefer that fate,
When I am no longer amazed,
At the wonders of this life.

But isn’t it true, oh, Evergreens,
That we all find ourselves lost,
In the shadows of untouchable things,
From eternal times to times,
Because we wander where we do not belong.

For us anyway—
You cannot wander,
Where you do not belong.

When you grow weary of your visage,
Since you are locked to the Earth.

Your roots are there,
Relishing the soil
Of the shadow of something greater,
For as long as that mountain stands,
Never knowing that you are something more.

See to the Soil, the Sea, and the Sky!
You, tree that grows from the Mountain;
- The mountain that grows from the Sea,
Soon, you shall Discover,
The lengths of your Legacy.

You are greater than the mountain and than Us,
The Wanderers,
With no place or Home,
In step with your blissful Eternity;
- We marvel at You:
Your Purity,
Your Content,
At a place where you have roots,
Where we will never have our own,
For jealous wandering keeps us at bay.

We shall never be you evergreens,
Never Evergreens.

On October 19, esteemed illustrator Jeffrey Smith visited DigiPen’s Art Campus. A professor at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, Mr. Smith is a two-time gold medal winner from the New York Society of Illustrators. He is known for his noir style and incredible drawing skill. His artwork has been featured in numerous magazines, including *Sports Illustrated*, *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, *The New York Times*, and *Newsweek*, to name a few. While at DigiPen, he gave two presentations, explaining how he draws an illustration of several figures in full color without any “laying in.” He also described the use of visual metaphor to deepen the meaning of the art.

For many students, the highlight of Mr. Smith’s visit was his critique of their work for a “guerilla assignment,” so named because of the quick turn-around time. He asked students to find a narrative, factual, and dark article in the local paper that they could connect to a story from the Bible or from mythology. Then they had to go to a real location in Seattle to create a drawing from life. He asked them to consider using this drawing as a background stage for a confrontation or a situation involving a figure or several figures. Finally, students had to combine all three inspirations, which were research ideas, to make a narrative illustration about a moment in time. Geraldine Kovats, the ART 401 instructor, reminded students to keep the element of mystery in their artwork, since this quality is “almost intrinsic to great art.”

The students enjoyed the challenge posed to them. For example, B.F.A. student John Thacker, drew his inspiration from the Biblical story of Jezebel, Ahab, and Naboth, which he connected to a murder committed thirty-two years ago. He then went to the Pike Place Market and took some photos of Post Alley. As Mr. Smith had instructed, John assembled these three inspirations to create his narrative illustration. The results from the students were quite stunning. Both Mr. Smith and Ms. Kovats were highly impressed with the results, and DigiPen looks forward to future opportunities to work with accomplished artists from the larger art community beyond the Institute.

Jeffrey Smith’s “Guerilla Assignment” to ART 401 Students
Fall Preview Day

This year’s Fall Preview Day was held on Saturday, October 13. We had a very good turnout, with approximately 180 participants visiting DigiPen. The majority of visitors came from the Pacific Northwest, but some came from as far away as Florida, Connecticut, and Maryland. The day consisted of a variety of events, including information sessions about admissions, student services, and financial aid; student panels; and tours of the facilities.

DigiPen faculty introduced visitors to many of our degree programs. Tony White began the B.F.A. presentation with a thirty-minute overview of the DigiPen art program, putting special emphasis on the fact that no matter how good a school’s reputation is, it is the faculty that guarantees a great education. Tony showed some of his own professional work, plus the “Fire Gods” film that both DigiPen students and faculty contributed to for the Museum of Glass in Tacoma. He spoke about our top-draw faculty and then presented Geraldine Kovats, Chuck Wood, Peter Moehrle, Jim Johnson, and Adam Crespi, who each did a presentation of their own, which introduced themselves, their work, and the work of their students. Charles Duba and Erik Mohrman provided information for the R.T.I.S. and C.E. programs. Christopher Erhardt and Mike Moore presented for the Game Department, and Matt Klassen discussed the Math Department. President Claude Comair presented briefly to both the art and programming sessions. In addition to the mini lectures, the Institute had rooms prepared by staff and faculty that displayed R.T.I.S., C.E. and B.F.A. projects for participants to view and demo.

Visitors also had the opportunity to listen to several student panels. For the programming degree programs, students Joseph Vasquez, Cassie Boykin, Stephen Niedzielski, and Marco de Masi spoke. Forrest Soderling and Jami Lukins discussed the B.F.A program. Both panels answered many questions from participants regarding subjects like student life, work load, housing, getting into the industry, and why they chose DigiPen in the first place.

The feedback from our guests was very positive, and they left DigiPen with a clear understanding of what is required in order to have a reasonable chance of success in our programs. Some parents mentioned that they have gone to other colleges for similar events, but that they have never received such an in-depth look into a school’s programs. They felt like this event was the best they have ever attended. The high presence of faculty and staff enabled them to ask questions, and the project rooms gave them some tangible samples of student work. Overall, they were able to gather substantial information on what is required for acceptance into DigiPen, what the philosophy and curriculum of the programs are, and what is expected of students who attend the Institute. The combined efforts of students, faculty, and staff helped make Preview Day a success this year.

- Tony Keim

Rumble Box Is Invited to More Industry Events

Created by DigiPen students Patrick Hackett and Joe Bourrie, Rumble Box has done well in previous industry events and competitions. In 2006, the game was a finalist at the Independent Games Festival and a finalist and award winner at the Slamdance Guerilla Gamemaker Competition. Rumble Box continues to gain national attention. In October, it was a featured game in the Indiecade Showcase at E3, and it has been invited to be a part of the Best of Slamdance this winter in Los Angeles.

Rumble Box is a claustrophobic, three-dimensional beat-em-up game that takes place in a box. The player’s enemies break apart into blocks and other simple objects when they are defeated. These objects fall to the floor of the box and change the playing field itself. As the player defeats more enemies, objects pile up. The goal of the game is to defeat enough opponents to create a pile so that you can get out of the box-shaped fighting arena. Rumble Box continues a growing tradition of DigiPen student games placing well in national competitions and industry events.

Storyboarding

From an artistic perspective, they are often not very refined, nor should they be; instead, they are a malleable baseline that allows everyone involved to see how the story should proceed. Storyboards can be in either color or grayscale, born digital or on paper. They may not even show final character or environment designs.

In this storyboard cell for the animated short “Wishful Thinking,” the protagonist Timothy is hauling a ladder so he can climb up to catch a star. Art by Ray Ocampo.

This storyboard depicts a robot girl discovering life and death as she makes the ultimate sacrifice. Art by Crystal Quimby.

This screenshot from the award-winning Rumble Box shows the player defeating his enemies while creating a pile from their remains in order to climb out of the fighting arena.
DigiPen held the second annual Parents and Family Weekend from Friday through Sunday, October 19-21. There were a variety of events showcasing our community, our students, and the Redmond area. On Friday night, students, faculty, and staff took their loved ones to the Seattle Thunderbirds hockey game at Key Arena, where they cheered the home team until the Thunderbirds lost in overtime. Several others enjoyed getting outdoors and helping the Redmond community by "popping" the invasive Scotch Broom bushes off of the Sammamish River Trail on Saturday morning.

While these events were well attended, our most popular events were those on campus. More than 60 people attended the Ice Cream and Root Beer Float Social at the Art Campus on Saturday afternoon, and many participated in the special Family Art Project. The collective masterpiece now hangs in the Matisse Student Lounge at the Art Campus. The Main Campus Continental Breakfast on Sunday also had a great turnout with upwards of 40 students and family members. Several upperclassmen spent time demonstrating their talents by allowing family members to play a game they had created. This was a great, relaxing way for people to sit down and enjoy their last few hours together before the weekend was over.

This year’s Parents/Family Weekend was a big success and, hopefully, each year more students and family members will get to enjoy spending time together and with DigiPen.

- Kati Von Lehman

Announcements

DigiPen FRC Pre-Season Workshop
On Nov. 17, from 9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., DigiPen will host a robotics competition workshop in partnership with For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST), an organization that sponsors events for middle school and high school students. The object of this pre-season workshop is to give new teams and new team members in Washington State the opportunity to learn some of the skills necessary to compete in the upcoming national robotics challenge. Short seminars offered will include drive trains, pneumatics, programming, 3D Studio Max, fundraising, and electronics. DigiPen is excited to collaborate with FIRST in this unique educational program. For more information on the robotics challenge, visit www.usfirst.org.

Game Developer Scholarship
The IGDA has just launched the Student Scholarship Program for the 2008 Game Developers Conference (GDC). Twenty-five college students will be awarded complimentary Main Conference passes to the conference. The deadline to enter is Friday, December 7, and recipients will be announced in mid-January. Applicants are required to be full-time college students (or equivalent) and to be IGDA student members. Scholarship applications will be judged by a panel of professional game developers. Students can get more information and apply online at www.igda.org/scholarships.

November’s Women’s Association Meeting
This month’s meeting on Nov. 19, from 5:00 to 6:00 (Art Building – Gibran), will feature two women from ArenaNet: Tami Foote and Stacie Magelssen. Tami has been working in the game industry for over seven years as a 3D artist, level designer, environment artist, and background artist. She has also worked at Snowblind Studios, Surreal Software, and the former Humongous Entertainment. Staci is a working mother and is the lead of the ArenaNet writing team. She oversees the creation of all in-game dialogue, marketing copy, website articles, game manuals, and more. Anyone and everyone are invited to attend. Please join us if you can.

Budget Survey
For the entire month of November, the Financial Aid Office will be conducting a Budget Survey for the 2008-2009 award year. Student budgets are intended to serve as “benchmarks” for assessing student costs within DigiPen and are not intended to replace or supplant studies of student costs. We ask that all of you participate as this will affect the total amount of Financial Aid/Loans that you will be able to receive for the next award year. The survey should take no longer than three minutes to complete. You will receive an email at your DigiPen address, and this will direct you to the survey. If you should have any questions regarding this survey, please stop by the Financial Aid Office.

New Scholarships to Consider
DigiPen’s Financial Aid Office researches and posts information about numerous scholarships. Below is a list of some of the newest ones that the Financial Aid Office has found for DigiPen students.

- Alpha Omicron Boule’ Scholarship: This is a renewable $1,000.00 scholarship for African-American males who are high school seniors from King County. For more information, go to www.seattlefoundation.org/scholarships.
- Nora Stone Smith Scholarship: This is a renewable scholarship for $2,500.00 for graduating high school seniors or graduates of the past year who are current or former ESL/ELL (English as a second language/English language learners) students. For more information, go to www.seattlefoundation.org/scholarships.
- The Car of My Future: The Washington State Auto Dealers Association offers five scholarships with awards ranging from $1,500.00 – $3,000.00. High school seniors from Washington State are eligible, and applicants need to submit an essay and artwork that envisions their personal vehicle of the future. For more information, go to www.collegeplan.org/cpnow/pnwguide/guideupdates.htm.
- American Indians Endowed Scholarship: This scholarship helps financially needy students with close social and cultural ties to a Native American community to pursue undergraduate and graduate studies. For more information, go to www.hecct.wa.gov/paying/ waaidprgm/aries.asp.
- Free Scholarship Searches Web Page: This page links to more than 40 free online scholarship search sites. For more information, go to www.college-scholarships.com/free_scholarship_searches.htm.
- The Sallie Mae Fund: This organization administers its own programs and initiatives to help students finance their college education needs. For more information, go to www.salliemaefund.org.
While growing up in Pasadena, California, Joseph Tkach began playing video games as soon as he was old enough to hold a controller. For his eleventh birthday, his uncle gave him a copy of Kirkighan’s and Ritchie’s *C Programming Language*, and he has been hooked on programming ever since. As a teenager, he lacked the patience for classes and formal education, so he dropped out of high school. But this did not mean that he shunned learning. He passed the California high school proficiency exam and attended a community college. More importantly, this different educational path did not prevent him from pursuing what he wanted to do – making video games.

Prior to coming to DigiPen, Joseph developed his programming chops. He gained experience in VB and C++, but most of his experience is in PHP. He first heard about DigiPen in a *GamePro* article. DigiPen’s R.T.I.S. program was the only four-year degree program to which he applied, and Joseph has been pleased with his experience here. “The coolest thing about DigiPen, by far,” he believes, “has been the opportunity to work with other people to make real games.” Being able to form development teams and to get practical experience making games with people who are passionate about what they do has been an invaluable experience.” He firmly believes in the value of working with a strong development team. “If you don’t have a solid team,” he asks, “how can you hope to produce a solid product?” He firmly believes in the value of working with a strong development team. “If you don’t have a solid team,” he asks, “how can you hope to produce a solid product?”

Aside from his love for games, Joseph is an avid reader. He loves science fiction, fantasy, and nonfiction about games. “I love stories that are vast and rich,” he states. “The scope and nature of simply being is so vast and rich that I could never hope to comprehend even one one millionth of it.” Part of his basic existence, of course, includes his passion for making and playing games. “When your hobby is also your career,” he states, “the line dividing spare time from work time tends to blur a little bit.” Another component of his “vast and rich” existence is the enjoyment of fine food and drink.

Aside from work, Joseph enjoys spending his time with his friends and family. He is an avid hiker, and especially likes backpacking in the Pacific Northwest. He also enjoys playing video games, and especially loves the *Half-Life* series. He has also been known to enjoy a good book or two.

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His philosophical perspective also shapes his plans for the future. After he graduates, Joseph would like to work on casual games and smaller, independent projects. “I really like the freedom and flexibility that smaller projects allow,” he admits. However, he is also interested in working for Blizzard or Flagship. “Someday I dream of working with Tetsuya Mizuguchi, the maker of *Rez, Lumines*, and *Every Extend Extra Extreme*, among others,” he declares. But Joseph admits that this is “probably just a pipe dream.” He also sees himself coming back to DigiPen to teach a games course. If he ever gets tired of the industry, he would pursue a career as a sushi chef. Joseph has taken an interesting and unconventional path so far, and his experiences should continue in this vein.