

MEETING DATE: August 17, 2009

AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of a Cash Sponsorship Request by IndieCade (The International Festivals of Independent Games 2009.)

ATTACHMENTS

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ATTACHMENT 1



The International Festivals of Independent Games

Executive Summary

IndieCade is a three-day festival celebrating independent video games and the gamemakers and artists who make them...

When: October 1-4

Where: Downtown Culver City

Who: Approximately 2000 gamemakers, artists, industry professionals, players, scholars, and other enthusiasts attending events and exploring Culver City

Background

IndieCade supports independent game development and organizes a series of international showcases and festivals for the future of independent games. It encourages, publicizes, and cultivates innovation and artistry in interactive media, helping to create a public perception of games as rich, diverse, and culturally significant.

Like the independent video game community, IndieCade's focus is global and includes producers in Asia, Europe, Australia, and anywhere else independent games are made and played. IndieCade features games that are artistic, socially relevant, experimental, and of broad interest. IndieCade was formed in 2005 by Creative Media Collaborative, an alliance of industry producers and leaders.

Over the past four years, IndieCade has developed a strong international brand and following through nearly two dozen high-profile appearances, previews, and showcases within major events around the world. With no other independent game events open to the public in the United States, IndieCade launched its own stand-alone festival this past year. As a landmark cultural event for interactive media, IndieCade has been much lauded by media and the industry. The second-annual stand-alone IndieCade Festival will be held across downtown Culver City this October.

Focused on showing the most innovative work coming from the independent sector, IndieCade's International Festival of Independent Games is open to the public and draws a diverse audience of savvy professionals interested in cutting-edge digital media, game developers, publishers, artists, aspiring gamemakers and enthusiasts of all ages.

IndieCade 2009: Culver City

IndieCade's International Festival of Independent Games 2009, a culmination of IndieCade's annual competition and series of showcases, brings the best of this year's independent gamemakers' cutting-edge work to the community and the public. This year in Culver City, IndieCade's 2009 Festival will be held from October 1 through October 4 and will include more than 2,000 festival attendees and, 250 dedicated conference attendees. Further public programming will be planned to engage as much of the local population as possible.

IndieCade attracts a wide demographic cross-section, ranging across generations, backgrounds, and interests. IndieCade's exhibitions and programming offer previews of top game selections, salons, networking, and innovative gameplay to audiences. The opportunity

to see work not available elsewhere and to hear from key artists and game producers is designed to appeal to high-level executives, entrepreneurs, game designers, distributors, and journalists. Meantime, location-based gameplay and special programming for aspiring gamemakers is designed to reach out and draw general public, enthusiastic fans, and families/youth.

Program features include:

- Hands-on exhibition, across multiple venues, of finalist games selected by a jury of game industry professionals, academics, and curators from around the world.
- Salons, workshops, & artists' talks led by industry leaders and featured game makers.
- A robust conference with diverse sessions dedicated to industry professionals, enthusiasts, and aspiring gamemakers.
- Previews & performances of anticipated new works.
- Awards ceremony, reception, and recognition of important work.
- Ongoing citywide game play.
- Networking, VIP, and intimate social events.

IndieCade 2009 will use a traditional multi-venue festival format modeled after the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, and the South-by-Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas. Designed specifically to bring the event directly into Culver City businesses, IndieCade 2009 includes the following Culver City locations:

- Culver Hotel: Festival Headquarters, Hands-On Exhibition, Conference, Daily Happy Hours, and Keynote Sessions
- Grand Casino Café: Breakfast Salons
- Gregg Fleishman Gallery: Hands-On Exhibition
- Ivy Substation: Conference, Premieres, & Aspiring Gamemaker Sessions
- Media Park & Plaza: Outdoor Games
- Royal-T Gallery: Gala Opening
- Rush Street Café: Afternoon Salons & Closing Party
- Sony Pictures Entertainment: Award Ceremony
- Wonderful World Art Gallery: Hands-On Exhibition
- Additional downtown businesses will be integrated through a variety of scavenger hunt types of games offered daily.

Integrating into Culver City:

Strategy, approach, growth

While IndieCade has enjoyed being a traveling show, it has grown to the point where it is time to allow the festival to find a home base in order to exponentially increase its attendance. And as the show continues to expand in its scope, IndieCade is delighted to work with Culver City for its 2009 festival and to consider it the likely annual home.

IndieCade's design is to integrate within existing Culver City businesses and to work specifically with each of these business to come up with a model or plan that will most effectively support the festival and bring revenue to each venue. Examples of this are happy hour programs to drive beverage business to the hotel or restaurant; breakfast and lunch "talks" to drive business to the local restaurants; publicity of programming to bring awareness to theatrical venues; sale of original artwork to support the galleries' existing business model, etc. IndieCade has also commissioned a specific urban scavenger hunt style game to encourage and drive festival attendees into a variety of additional businesses throughout downtown.

In order to build an event that has the potential to grow in this capacity, IndieCade is committed to complimenting Culver City's business and cultural goals. In this first year, IndieCade is focused on building this solid, yet extensible foundation. To this end, IndieCade is working in dialogue with the Downtown Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and city officials. With a mutual interest in the arts, technology, and social relevance, IndieCade has found a natural synergy with Culver City's economic and cultural stakeholders.

IndieCade is a cultural event in its core, and it is truly the first of its kind in the interactive media industry. This aligns with Culver City's strong history as a media center, its exceptional recognition of the arts through cultural programming and the support of a variety of public art programs, and its living culture of theater, art, and cuisine. Culver City will form a dynamic complement for the interactive materials and a virtual playground for IndieCade's culturally sensitized audience.

IndieCade is also invested in engaging the residents of Culver City. Wherever possible, we support local artists and the overall population through such efforts as a program with the school district to support and encourage student involvement and enrichment. The school district has expressed distinct interest in the opportunities afforded by this event and some early ideas have included the participation of student volunteer "docents" to set up and support the exhibitions and the conference. Additionally, a day of the event will cater to the young population, offering special sessions and dialogues to inform students about further educational opportunities and career paths in the industry energized by young creative people.

Media and Promotions

Independent gamemakers, their games, and their art are unique and compelling stories. IndieCade works with ONE PR Studio, a leading public relations firm, to ensure the festival reaches appropriate media near and far. IndieCade uses a combination of traditional public relations and marketing such as press releases and press events, along with successful guerilla marketing and promotional techniques that strategically leverage the already existing powerful international networks that have been put into place. "Street" games are also leveraged for the best social and media impact. The goal is to draw as many people as possible to the event from the region and to create strategic visibility before, during, and after the event.

Over the year, IndieCade has had features locally, nationally, and internationally. A sampling of the most recent coverage of full features on IndieCade includes:

"...a host of independent titles are busy proving that — despite much evidence to the contrary — video games really can explore and evoke the kind of emotional experiences that movies and books do." - MSNBC

"The ability to hear about independent games is starting to catch up to the ability to distribute them." - The Washington Post

"As fine artists get more involved with the industry, as developers take more risks and the indie scheme grows, we are seeing more and more innovative games; the medium is growing up." - BBC

"The Indie Games Showcases are put together by a team from independent developer collective IndieCade and the International Game Designers' Association, and it is yet another testimony to the creative inspiration found in a garage." - Yahoo!

IndieCade has been profiled worldwide in the lead gaming magazines, periodicals, and blogs. *Xbox 360* just published a feature in its last issue, as have *Edge* magazine, *Gamasutra*, *Joystiq*, *Kotaku*, *Gamespot*, and *Game Daily*, among others.

Appendix

IndieCade event history

IndieCade's annual series of events has become increasingly influential on the independent game scene. Independent developers now consider IndieCade a target event for preparing their new projects; worldwide submissions have doubled from last year. Multiple featured independent games have obtained publishing deals as a result of IndieCade festivals and showcases. IndieCade has premiered pre-publication games for Sony, Microsoft Xbox, and Nintendo Wii.

IndieCade Festival 2008

The 2008 annual festival was held in Seattle's technologically progressive eastside neighbor, Bellevue, to critical acclaim. Gamemakers came from Asia and across Europe and North America to represent their games and join in the festivities. Local, national, and international media covered the event. Highlights included an interactive gallery exhibition of hands-on gameplay, artist talks, salons, workshops, conference sessions, live gameplay, game premieres/previews, interactive music and entertainment, receptions, an awards show, and social networking.

IndieCade Europe

Four years ago, IndieCade was invited and commissioned to curate a special exhibit of independent games at GameCity in Nottingham, UK. The following year, IndieCade's participation in this major event evolved into IndieCade Europe and has continued for the past three years. With the support of the City of Nottingham and Midlands Region, this event engages the entire city and reaches out to people from around the globe. An estimated 60,000 individuals participate in GameCity each year.

IndieCade @ E3 (The leading professional game industry event in the country)

For the past four years IndieCade has been invited and commissioned to create the independent game showcase for E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo) in Los Angeles, the largest and most significant annual event for game publishers. This honor has placed IndieCade's events and featured games in the center of the industry's eye. Attendance at this year's 2009 event reached close to 30,000 industry professionals.

IndieCade and other Events

For the past three years, IndieCade has been invited and/or commissioned to create independent game showcases for more than a dozen public-facing game events, including Penny Arcade Expo (PAX), E for All, SIGGRAPH, OAIF Canada, and more.

IndieCade Partnerships and Associations

Complementing IndieCade's Board of Advisors, who are among the top thinkers and players in the game industry, IndieCade has a number of high-level partnerships and associations that have helped build the festival's credibility and outreach.

Museums and Archives

The **American Museum of the Moving Image** in New York is IndieCade's official archiving partner. All of IndieCade's finalist games are archived at the museum in perpetuity as a snapshot of each year in independent gamemaking.

The **National Video Game Archive** (UK) is a joint project between the National Media Museum and Nottingham Trent University, which aims to celebrate that culture and preserve that history for researchers, developers, game fans, and the public. IndieCade is the official independent game advisor and contributor to this archive.

Industry Leaders

Creative Artists Agency (CAA) is the leading talent agency in the United States. CAA works with IndieCade to support the event and sponsorship.

International Game Developer's Association (IGDA) is a professional society for video and computer game developers worldwide. As partners, they work with us to connect and support gamemakers around the world.

The **Entertainment Software Association** (ESA) is the trade organization for the game industry. ESA hosts IndieCade's E3 showcase and supplies IndieCade with industry connections and support.

Electronic Entertainment Data and Research (EEDAR) is the industry's leading research firm for analytical and information services. EEDAR partners with IndieCade to bring the organization and the gamemakers the same information and advantages provided to the industry.

Outreach Partnerships

ONE PR Studio is a leading entertainment and game public relations firm. ONE PR represents IndieCade as a pro-bono client.

Young and Rubicam is a marketing and communications company specializing in advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and brand identity consulting. Y&R is working with IndieCade on branding and advertising and represents IndieCade as a pro-bono client.

International Association of Festivals. IndieCade was the only game and new media festival invited to Hangzhou, China to join an international accord and agreement of collaboration of the leading digital and animation festivals throughout the world. Other participants included, Anifest (Czech Republic), Annecy International Animation Festival (France), Bradford Animation Festival (UK), GIRAF, (Canada), Holland Animation Festival, KROK International Animation Festival (Ukraine), Ottawa International Film Festival (Canada), Platform International Animation Festival (US), Stuttgart Festival of Animation (Germany), and more.

IndieCade: Team and Board of Advisors

IndieCade is led and guided by an unprecedented assembly of leaders, influential thinkers, educators, and other storied veterans. IndieCade's expertise and networks extend across the game industry and beyond. The team includes:

- Founders of E3 Expo, the industry's pivotal annual event, The Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences, and directors of the key industry organizations and associations including the International Game Developer's Association.
- Preeminent designers/producers of award-winning games including *the Sims*, *Spore*, *Uncharted*, *Bloom Blox*, *Indiana Jones*, *Earthworm Jim*, *The Incredibles*, and *The Matrix*, *Nancy Drew*, and indie classics *Sissy Fight*, *Gearheads*, *Death, Jr.*, *Diner Dash*, *Cloud*, *fIOW*, *flower*, and *Katamari Damacy*.
- Leading experts in worldwide mobile games including the Finnish / Scandinavian "evangelist" of mobile games.
- Pioneering developers of the original Xbox and immersive 3-D Cave technology.
- Authors of seminal books on games and independent game culture.
- Thought leaders in cyberlaw and copyright, and the founder of the Creative Commons.
- Consultants to U.S., Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Scandinavian, and Malaysian governments.
- Founders of the leading independent game development studios in the United States.
- Legendary game artists and leaders in the art game movements.
- Innovators in educational and artistic use of new media and game technology representing the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the George Lucas Educational Foundation, the Education Arcade, the New Media Consortium and the Banff Center, the Museum of the Moving Image, and the register of MacArthur "genius" fellows.
- Major players in the Hollywood entertainment industry, including the game industry's premiere Hollywood agent.

IndieCade: Board of Advisors

Seamus Blackley, Creative Artists Agency

Milton Chen, Executive Director, George Lucas Educational Foundation

Jason Della Rocca, Executive Director, International Game Developer Association (IGDA)

Noah Falstein, President, The Inspiracy

Tracy Fullerton, Assistant Professor, Director, EA Game Innovation Lab, USC/IMD

Andy Gavin, Co-Founder, Naughty Dog, Co-Founder, Flektor

Carl Goodman, Deputy Director & Director of Digital Media, Museum of the Moving Image

Sam Gustman, Board, Creative Media Collaborative, CTO, Shoah Visual History Foundation

John Hight, Director of External Development, Sony Computer Entertainment

Shabril Ibrahim, President, Cinenet Communications

Henry Jenkins, Professor and Director, (MIT) Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Larry Johnson, CEO, New Media Consortium

Hal Josephson, President, MediaSense

Douglas Lowenstein, Former President, Entertainment Software Association (ESA)

Lawrence Lessig, C. Wendell and Edith M. Carlsmith Professor in Law and Professor of Communication, Stanford, Executive Director, Creative Commons

Hideo Mabuchi, Professor, MacArthur Fellow, Caltech

Frans Mayra, Research Director, Hypermedia Laboratory, University of Tampere, Finland

Janet Murray, Professor and Director Graduate Studies, School of Literature, Communication and Culture, Georgia Institute of Technology

Panu Mustonen, Evangelist, Neogames, Satama Interactive

Robert Nashak, General Manager, Yahoo! Games
Philo Northrup, Executive Producer/Business Development, Foundation 9
David Perry, Founder, Shiny Entertainment; Founder, GameConsultants.com
Josh Resnick, President Pandemic Studios
Carolyn Rauch, Vice President, Event Development IDG World Expo
Katie Salen, Executive Director, GameLab Institute of Play
Keita Takahashi, Game Director, Namco
Will Wright, Co-Founder, Chief Designer, Maxis
Eric Zimmerman, CEO and Co-Founder, GameLab

IndieCade Key Team:

Stephanie Barish

Stephanie Barish (Founder and President) is an award-winning producer and a prominent figure behind leading initiatives that are guiding the direction of the digital media, interactive arts, and multimedia community in the twenty-first century. In 1999, she founded and created the blueprint for the Annenberg Center for Communications' Institute for Multimedia Literacy (IML), urged by George Lucas. Previously, Ms. Barish worked as producer and director of multimedia publications and creative director of Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. In these positions she designed and produced the Foundation's acclaimed multimedia publications, research interface, and award-winning CD-ROMs and websites, and participated in Emmy- and Academy-Award-winning documentary films. Between her work at these two organizations, her programs attracted nearly \$20 million in support. She continues to foster innovations in multimedia expression as Founder and President of Creative Media Collaborative.

Celia Pearce, Ph.D.

Celia Pearce, Ph.D. (Festival Chair) is a game designer, artist, researcher, curator, teacher, and author of *The Interactive Book: A Guide to the Interactive Revolution* (Macmillan, 1997), and other writings on game design and culture. She has been developing interactive theme parks, attractions, and museum exhibitions since 1983. She served as creative director on the multiple-award-winning virtual reality attraction *Virtual Adventures* for Iwerks Entertainment and Evans & Sutherland. Her clients have also included Walt Disney Imagineering, the Jerde Partnership, and Purple Moon Software. From 1998-2001 she held research and teaching appointments at the University of Southern California where she was instrumental in launching the interactive media program in its film school and producing a landmark conference on game design and culture. Since 2001 she has held research and teaching appointments at the University of California, Irvine, where she co-curated two exhibitions, including "ALT+CTRL: Festival of Independent and Alternative Games," for the Beall Center for Art & Technology. She is currently an Associate Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Sam Roberts

Sam Roberts (Festival Director) is the former Director of the Slamdance Guerilla Gamemaker Competition. Roberts has unique hands-on expertise in building and operating

an independent game festival, developing guidelines, creating a structured submission and evaluation process, and working with a diverse jury, and maintains a strong relationship with the independent gamemaking community. He earned a BS degree from Northwestern University, where he studied theatre and cognitive science. He has worked in the entertainment industry as a writer, producer, director, and designer in several media. He has also served on the managing board of several production companies, including the Sight Unseen Theater Group, of which he is currently a member.

IndieCade 2009 Speakers and event schedule overview:

An overview of the schedule is as follows:

- October 1: Media Preview
Opening Party (VIP and Open to the Public)
- October 2: Hands-On Exhibitions
Gameplay open the Public
Salons & Artist Talks
Conference Day One: Emotional Depth and Challenging Topics
Evening Awards Ceremony
- October 3: Hands-On Exhibition
Gameplay open to the Public
Salons & Artist Talks
Conference Day Two: Art and Innovation,
Evening Game Previews and Performances
- October 4: Hands-On Exhibition
Gameplay open to the Public
Salons & Artist Talks
Conference Day Three: Aspiring Gamemaker Events
Evening Audience Choice Awards

Speaker and sessions include the following:

Jenova Chen (Xinghan Chen 陈星汉). One of the first-generation video game design graduates from USC School of Cinematic Arts, creator behind the multi award-winning student game *Cloud* and the top downloadable game from the PS3 network, *flow* and *flower*, co-founder of *thatgamecompany*, Jenova Chen is dedicated to expanding the emotional spectrum of video games and making them available for a much wider audience.

Born and raised in Shanghai China, Jenova ventured to the US in 2003. One of his greatest dreams is to bring the best messages to the video game world. Like what Hayao Miyazaki did to anime, Jenova wants to be one of the heroes who can turn video games into a form of art and play that can be appreciated and enjoyed by every human being.

Keita Takahashi (高橋 慶太) is a game director, his most notable titles being *Katamari Damacy*, its sequel, *We ♥ Katamari*, and the offbeat *Nobi Nobi Boy*. The original *Katamari* game was a surprise hit and was praised for its quirkiness, simplicity, and charm. Takahashi has stated in numerous interviews that he had no desire for *Katamari* to be touted as innovative or creative — he simply set out to bring the concept of simple, silly fun back into video gaming. Trained as a sculpture graduate, Takahashi brings an art school sensibility to games, unashamed to proclaim that they should have the power to change the world, or at least the people in it.

The Night Journey Design Process: collaboration between lead gamemaker Tracy Fullerton and renowned video artist Bill Viola, *The Night Journey* is a video game/art project based on the universal story of an individual mystic's journey toward enlightenment. Visual inspiration for *The Night Journey* is drawn from the prior works of Bill Viola. The game is being developed with video game technologies, but attempts to stretch the boundaries of what game experiences may communicate with its unique visual design, content, and mechanics. The team has created a set of custom post-processing techniques for the 3D environment that evoke the sense of "explorable video," integrating the imagery of Bill Viola's prior work into the game world at both a technical and creative level.

Henry Jenkins: Henry Jenkins is the former Director of the MIT Media in Transition Program, the Peter de Florez Professor of Humanities, and newly installed as the Provost's Chair at the USC Annenberg School of Communications. He is the author and/or editor of nine books on various aspects of media and popular culture, including *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*; *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*; and *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat: Gender and Computer Games*. His newest books include *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*; and *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*.

A longtime advocate of games culture, he currently co-authors a column with Kurt Squire for *Computer Games* magazine which seeks to promote innovation and diversity in game design. Jenkins recently developed a white paper on the future of media literacy education for the MacArthur Foundation, which is leading to a three-year project to develop curricular materials to help teachers and parents better prepare young people for full participation in contemporary culture. He is one of the principal investigators for The Education Arcade, a consortium of educators and business leaders working to promote the educational use of computer and video games. He was also one of the principal investigators on collaboration with Initiative Media to monitor audience response to *American Idol* with an eye toward developing new approaches to audience measurement. He is one of the leaders of the Convergence Culture Consortium, which consults with leading players in the branded entertainment sector in hopes of helping them adjust to shifts in the media environment. Jenkins also plays a significant role as a public advocate for fans, gamers, and bloggers: testifying before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee investigation into "Marketing Violence to Youth" following the Columbine shootings; advocating for media literacy education before the Federal Communications Commission; calling for a more consumer-oriented approach to intellectual property at a closed door meeting of the governing body of the World Economic Forum; signing amicus briefs in opposition to games censorship; and regularly speaking to the press and other media about aspects of media change and popular culture.

Game Industry Facts:

More than two-thirds of all American households play games. Entertainment software is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. economy at an average annual rate of 17%. The industry is creating jobs and producing revenue for communities across the nation. Game plots are now showing on big screens at movie theatres and being recognized. Additionally, the artwork that makes computer and video games so compelling is also becoming a respected artistic genre of its own.

Below is a list of top entertainment software industry facts:

- U.S. computer and videogame software sales grew 22.9 percent in 2008 to \$11.7 billion – more than quadrupling industry software sales since 1996.
- Sixty-eight percent of American households play computer or video games.
- The average game player is 35 years old and has been playing games for 12 years.
- The average age of the most frequent game purchaser is 39 years old.
- Forty percent of all game players are women. In fact, women over the age of 18 represent a significantly greater portion of the game-playing population (34 percent) than boys age 17 or younger (18 percent).
- In 2009, 25 percent of Americans over the age of 50 play video games, an increase from nine percent in 1999. This figure is sure to rise in coming years with nursing homes and senior centers across the nation now incorporating video games into their activities.

- Sixty-three percent of parents believe games are a positive part of their children's lives.
- More than 200 American colleges, universities, and technical schools currently offer programs in videogame design and development. Nearly a dozen offer advanced (masters) degrees. 450 worldwide for having videogame design and development courses available.
- Computer and video games companies posted record overall sales in 2008 with revenues of \$22 billion as entertainment software companies continue to provide jobs to state and local economies across the nation.
- According to data recently compiled by the NPD Group, in 2008 U.S. videogame console software sales reached \$8.9 billion (189.0 million units); computer games sales were \$701.4 million (29.2 million units); and there was a record \$2.1 billion (79.5 million units) in portable software sales. The most popular game genre in 2008 was "Family Entertainment," which accounted for more than 19 percent of all games sold, up from 17.2 percent in 2007.
- The videogame industry also stimulates complementary product purchases of roughly \$6.1 billion a year. For example, videogames are spurring demand for HDTV sales. Approximately \$73 million in HDTV sales can be directly attributed to the Xbox 360 game console.
- \$92,300 is the average salary for an entertainment software industry employee.

Industry Background/ History:

The game industry is a \$25 billion industry worldwide with \$10.5 billion alone exchanged in the United States. It is also a relatively young industry. As it has proven remarkably lucrative, games themselves have rapidly escalated from costing tens of thousands of dollars to approaching tens of millions as competition increases and the new consoles emerge.

According to the Entertainment Software Association, in 2004, more than 248 million video and computer games were sold to 75% of American households, generating \$7.3 billion in sales, more than double revenues in 1996. The game industry is one of the few IT sectors that remained unharmed during the IT "bust," boasting continuous growth during the rocky 1990s and remaining strong through this current recession.

Yet the success of the game industry has also led to a significant reduction in diversity of both product types and audiences. Most game publishing companies have conglomerated over the past decade, purchasing smaller studios and creating a small handful major industry giants. As a result, games are more and more focused on markets and less and less on creative innovation. Due to this phenomenon, publishers have become increasingly risk-averse, focusing resources on license-based products, sequels, and well-established "sellable" game genres. In contrast with the early 1990s, when the nascent CD-ROM and console business was "up for grabs," today's game industry is less innovative than ever. Even blockbuster title *The Sims* met initial resistance from its publisher as an unrecognizable genre with an uncertain market. It has since become the best-selling PC game in history.

Even the game industry itself decries what many have called its "creative crisis." In 2005, at his annual "State of the Industry Address," E3 expo founder Doug Lowenstein gently admonished the game industry for its narrowness of vision. He laid out, jokingly, "six easy steps for world dominance." By the 10th Anniversary of this major industry event, Lowenstein urged game companies to:

- Broaden the market by reaching out to other audiences and demographics
- Create more complete games with more original gameplay
- Make games more accessible and easier to play
- Evolve new financing models
- Exploit emerging platforms, such as the Internet and Mobile Phones
- Solidify cultural credibility

Ten years earlier, at the inaugural E3, the game industry was nothing but innovation. At this point, there were a number of "set-top" boxes vying for position in what was to become the highly lucrative console market. Meanwhile, the CD-ROM, a technology that pundits had consistently predicted

would be “dead in two years” since its introduction in 1985, was experiencing a renaissance. Games like *Myst* and *Seventh Level* were establishing the mystery and puzzle game genres; “interactive video” was still seen as viable with titles such as *Voyeur* and *Johnny Mnemonic*; and First-Person Shooter games were establishing real-time 3D as a new paradigm with games like *Doom* and *Quake*. Each new title was groundbreaking, establishing a new genre and new conventions.

In 2007, 12 years after E3’s launch, the picture is very different. The U.S. game industry, enamored of its own success, has become increasingly resistant to innovation. Most American titles produced today are sequels to successful titles or licenses for movie and television titles. The “hard-core” market is still courted, in spite of the fact that the “core market,” playing games like *The Sims* (Maxis/EA) and *Roller Coaster Tycoon* (Frontier/Atari), now outnumbers them by two to one. Mainstream game publishers continue to pay little attention to the rapidly expanding casual game scene, which now makes up about 10% of the market, but is expected to grow steadily in the coming years, fueled largely by a demographic consisting of women above the age of 40. The casual game market is expected to grow to four times its current size by the year 2011.

Even game designers themselves lament the lack of creativity and innovation in the industry. And yet the risk-averse nature of the mainstream game industry, in which games cost between \$10 and \$25 million to produce, has led to a chronic “cookie-cutter” syndrome that has even developers weary.

Signs of Life

Yet even as the game industry has become static and predictable, a rising tide of independent game development taking place around the fringes of the industry is freshening up the gaming scene. This has been fueled by two parallel trends: One is the release of such “moddable” game engines as Torque and Unreal. The second is the growth of the Internet as a development and distribution context. In short, even as budgets in the mainstream industry continue to skyrocket, in reality, games are getting progressively easier and cheaper to make. Small teams of independent “garage-band” developers have made waves with underground “mods” like *Counterstrike*, the *Half-Life* (Valve) modification that eventually distributed more units than the original. Meanwhile, small companies are leveraging ease of development and direct-to-market distribution framework of online and web-based games.

With the game industry focus on multi-million-dollar blockbusters, often overlooked are these smaller independent efforts that occur outside of the mainstream and distribution infrastructure. While many of these appeal to smaller markets, even independently produced “alternative” games can garner a significant audience without the benefit of major publishing or advertising budgets. The Finnish-based online virtual world *Habbo Hotel* boasts 12 million players worldwide, four times that of Blizzard Entertainment’s blockbuster massively multiplayer online game *World of Warcraft*. And Whyville.net, an independent game-based science learning community targeted to children 8-12 has nearly twice the subscribers of Sony Computer Entertainment’s multi-million-dollar blockbuster *EverQuest*.

An emerging number of small independent game developers have begun to challenge the status quo of game publishing. Game modification, the practice of building original content using commercial game engines, has generated numerous new independent game projects. “Game Art” is gaining attention in the art world. Games for social change, for instance, represent an increasing movement internationally, epitomized by The World Food Program’s *Food Force*, a game about fighting world hunger, which has been downloaded by approximately 4.5 million people since its release in April 2005.



\$10,000 Marketing Sponsorship

Marketing Benefits:

- Culver City Redevelopment Agency “business attraction” and other marketing materials at all IndieCade events in Culver City and at the remaining 2009 events in Canada and England.
- Premiere positioning of Culver City Redevelopment Agency’s name and logo on IndieCade website for four months.
- Webpage on IndieCade website devoted to Culver City Redevelopment Agency messaging.
- Premiere positioning of Culver City Redevelopment Agency’s name, logo and marketing information in all IndieCade digital/electronic marketing for four months.
- Premiere positioning of Culver City Redevelopment Agency’s name and logo in all IndieCade print marketing for four months.
- Premiere recognition in three national press release transmissions over four-month period.
- Launch P.R. announcement as IndieCade sponsor during August 2009.
- Full-page ad with Culver City Redevelopment Agency information in printed event program (Culver City to provide the artwork).
- Eight all-access passes to International Festival of Independent Games 2009 (includes VIP party).
- “Co-host” credit/status of a VIP party, or a component of the exhibition or conference for marketing of Culver City Redevelopment Agency projects.
- Culver City name branding across all other 2009 IndieCade events (minimum three events).
- Inclusion of demonstrations or promotional reel at all IndieCade events (minimum three events).
- Logo placement on first page of all printed programs at all IndieCade 2009 events (minimum three events).
- Premiere positioning of Culver City Redevelopment Agency name and logo in all 2009 print, broadcast, and web advertisements.

Note: We consider benefits packages to be an ongoing dialogue. It is our intension to give the most possible publicity and attention to our sponsors and partners. We will work with you to refine, extend, or reduce in any way that makes sense for Culver City.



Special Additional Benefits for Culver City:

- Extend the positioning of Culver City Redevelopment Agency's name, logo, and link on IndieCade's website and digital marketing to six months. This will include our worldwide outreach and publicity for our 2010 international announcement and call for submissions.
- Logo placement on festival t-shirt and festival map.
- Opportunities for Culver City School District Students as first choice volunteers / docents / interns / public assistants for the event.
- IndieCade will extend a 20% discount on all conference admission to all city employees.
- Invitations to Opening Gala will be extended to all recommended city officials.