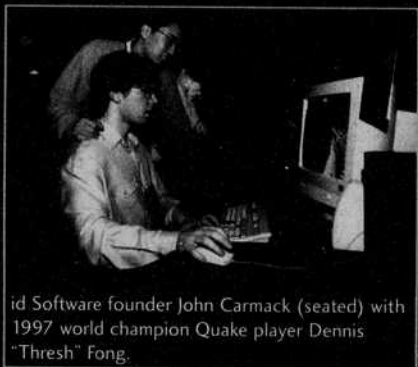


Press Time

What goes on behind the scenes in game development is as interesting as the games themselves. *By Karen Zierler*

Behind the development of every game is a story. The stress of the industry—sandwiched between devoted fans and money-focused publishers forced to guess what the next popular trend will be—is not for the faint of heart.



id Software founder John Carmack (seated) with 1997 world champion Quake player Dennis "Thresh" Fong.

It's no wonder these developers and the companies seem larger than life. Take John Romero of Ion Storm, who loves media attention even though his recent games have failed to deliver. Or the fancy car loving John Carmack of Quake fame (id Software). Or

Developers realize they need the press to reach their audience, which is both hyper-critical of new releases and staunchly loyal and devoted to their favorite games.

the heartbreak felt at Looking Glass Studios, where award-winning products like Thief 1 & 2 failed to save them from financial ruin. Or the frustration experi-

enced at brilliant strategy-maker Mindscape, after Mattel bought them and then was forced to sell off all its gaming due to ineffectual management.

Most developers have a love affair with the media. They realize they need the press to reach their audience, which is both hyper-

critical of new releases and staunchly loyal and devoted to its favorite games. Few developers are press shy; Blizzard Entertainment, makers of Diablo II, is the only one to come to mind.

The rapid expansion of the gaming industry has generated a wealth of stories about intrigues, mismanagement, betrayals, tragedies and heroics. If you've ever wanted to know how your favorite game was really made, explore sites like Gamespot's Behind the Games series by Geoffrey Keighley, Gamespy's (gamespy.com) and RPGVault's Developers' Diaries (rpgvault.ign.com),

Links

rpgheaven.de/artikel/interview.php?id=3&seite=1

Interview with Chris Avellone of Black Isle, the man behind the characters in Baldur's Gate and Planescape: Torment.

3dgameforce.com/interviews/bf1942

Interview with Niklas Persson of Sweden-based Digital Illusions, makers of the upcoming Battlefield 1942, a first-person WWII game.

gamespot.com/features/btg/index.html

Behind the Games: Index of older articles.

planetquake.com/polycount/skins/gbu/kenneth-scott/interview.shtml

Interview with Kenneth Scott, skins creator for Quake III Arena.

escapemi.com/interview110900.html

Dominic Armato, voice-actor for Guybrush Threepwood in the Monkey Island series, talks about how voice-acting is done.

fatbabies.com

Rumors and gossip

and numerous interviews found listed daily at Blue's News (bluesnews.com) and Daily Radar (dailyradar.com). These sites are must-reads for gaming enthusiasts. •

Alternative

By Michelle Silver

When someone asks, "What's your major?" did you ever wish you could say, "Hamburgers," or "Contortionism" or maybe even "Truck Maintenance"? Here's some collegiate destinations for the real "nontraditional student."

San Francisco School of Circus Arts
www.sfcircus.org

Dream about wearing a sequined bodysuit? Juggling bowling balls? Consider SFSCA, the only full-time circus school in America. Master Trainer Lu Yi used to be the star of the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe, and is considered the leading authority on Chinese acrobatics. Courses here include contortion, trapeze, trampoline, aerial hoop and



Some colleges you probably won't hear about from a guidance counselor

"Professional Clowning." SFSCA recently bought the New Pickle Circus, so graduates can go directly into the workforce.

College of the Redwoods
www.redwoods.cc.ca.us

This is the place if you fantasize about driving a rig or using lumberjack equipment. Courses are offered in Diesel Engine Performance and Truck Maintenance and Compliance. There are also classes in architectural millwork and cabinetmaking, and other construction-technology courses.

Cow College
www.ca.uky.edu

If you've ever wondered (who hasn't?) how to diagnose a cow for pregnancy, or castrate a bull, the Cow College at Kentucky University could be for you. Says Les

Anderson, beef-cattle specialist, "The thing that sets Cow College apart is the hands-on aspect." The program teaches students how to improve profits in beef construction and offers classes in herd health, cattle psychology(!) and corral design.

McDonald's Hamburger University
mcdonalds.com/corporate/careers/hambuniv/index.html

There is far more to working at Micky D's than being able to ask, "What size fries would you like with that?" This worldwide management-training center in Oak Brook, Ill., instructs personnel on various aspects of restaurant operation, from paper costs to crew scheduling and oil filtering. There are 10 international training centers as well, so you could go to England or Japan to learn the burger-flipping biz. •