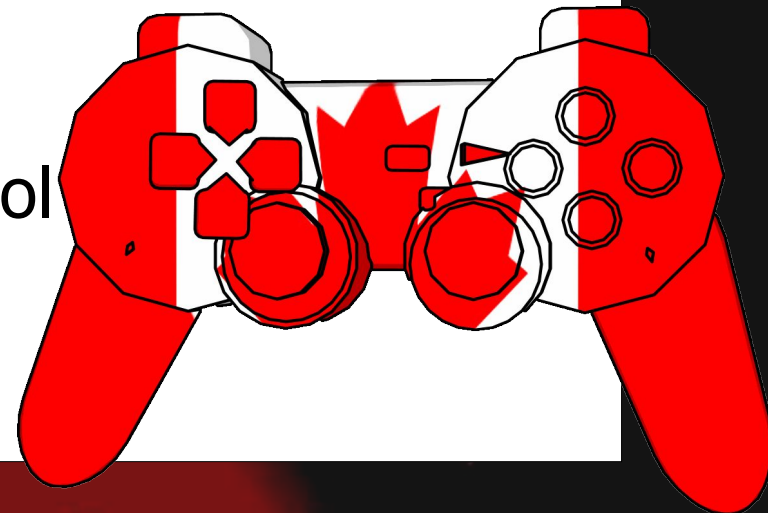


DiGRA 2005

Canadian Content in Video Games

Leonard Paul of Vancouver Film School

Vancouver, Canada



Introduction

Video Games in 2003:
\$746 CAD million

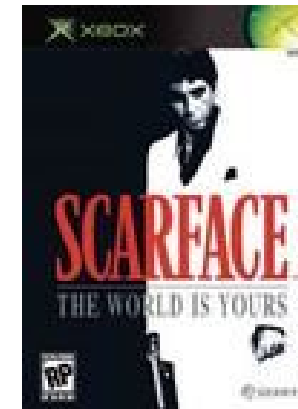
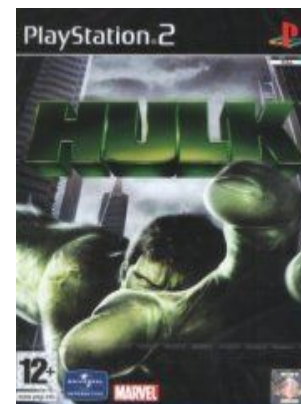
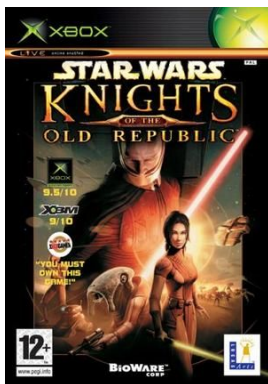
EA Canada's 1000 person studio in Burnaby:



Larger Canadian Companies



Canadian Titles




Canadian Video Game Developers

<i>Company</i>	EA Canada	BioWare	Ubisoft Montréal	Radical Entertainment
<i>Location</i>	Burnaby & Vancouver, BC	Edmonton, AB	Montréal, PQ	Vancouver, BC
<i>Employees</i>	900 + 170	180	600	200
<i>Games</i>	<i>NBA Live Def Jam Wrestling Need for Speed FIFA Soccer & UEFA Euro SSX 3 & Tricky MVP Baseball Sled Storm</i>	<i>Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic Jade Empire Neverwinter Nights Baldur's Gate</i>	<i>Myst IV Prince of Persia 1 & 2 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell & Rainbow Six 3 Batman Tarzan</i>	<i>Simpson's Road Rage & Simpson's Hit and Run Dark Summit Powerplay Hulk</i>

Table 1: Survey of Canadian Video Game Developers

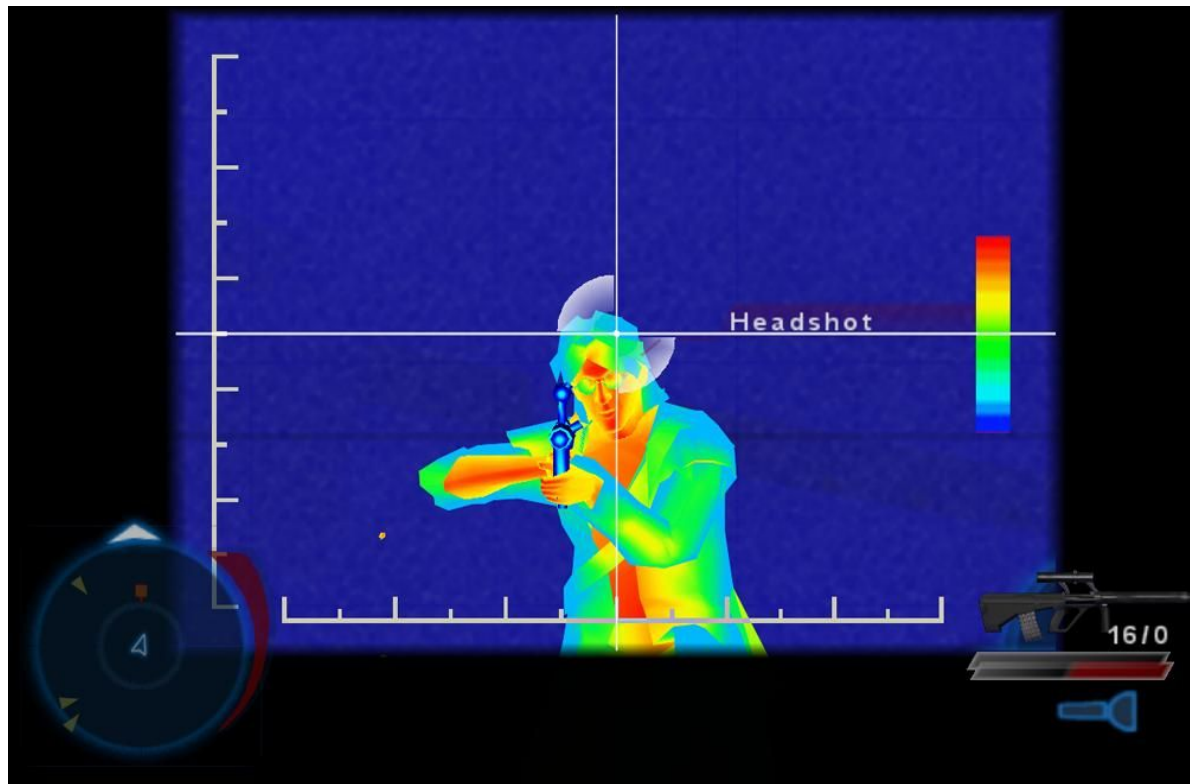
Hockey Games

Hockey Games on GameRankings.com

Title	Plat	Company	Reviews	Avg. Vote	Overall Score	Main Score
 1. NHL 99	PC	Electronic Arts	21	7.3	89.8%	89.0%
 2. NHL 2002	PS2	Electronic Arts	44	8.2	88.6%	88.9%
 3. NHL 2K3	XBOX	Sega	25	8.3	86.4%	88.6%
 4. NHL 2001	PC	EA Sports	33	7.9	88.2%	88.2%
 5. ESPN NHL Hockey	XBOX	Sega	30	7.9	85.6%	86.7%

French-Canadian Video Game Culture

Sony's *Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain*:



Government Regulation and Aid

From www.LeadingEdge.ca:

TAX

Q. Are there any tax rebates, credits or cash refunds for R&D costs?

A. Canada offers extremely attractive research and development tax credits




































For example, the Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) program:

- ▶ **35 cents on every \$1** spent on qualifying expenditures, to a maximum of \$2 million
- ▶ do not even need income to qualify for the SR&ED program because **it is a cheque not a tax deduction!**

Canada at World Cyber Games

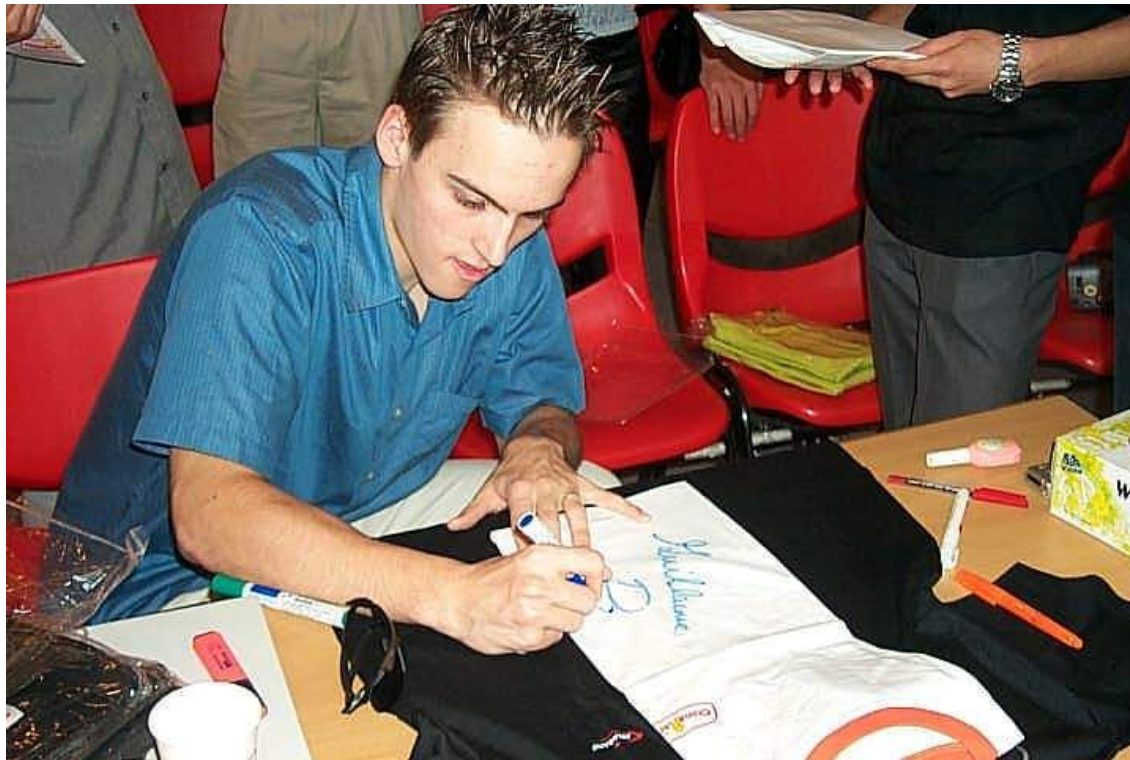
WCG 2004 Grand Final Medals

 Gold
  Silver
  Bronze

Rank by Gold	Nations	Counter-Strike	FIFA 2004	Need For Speed	Starcraft	UT2004	Warcraft 3	Halo	Project Gotham Racing2
1	 Netherlands								 
2	 Korea (South)				 				
3	 USA							 	
4	 Germany								
5	 Brazil								
6	 Austria								
6	 Canada								
6	 Denmark								
9	 Bulgaria								
9	 France								
9	 Ukraine								











Competitive Canadians

Canada's Guillaume Patry ("Grrrr_ca"):



Canadian Game Development Market Map (Detail)

BRITISH COLUMBIA			
 	Backlash Studios	 	Luna Seven Imagery
 	Air Games Wireless	 	Lunny Interactive
	Axis Interactive	 	Magnetar Games
 	Backlash Studios	 	Mainframe
 	Bardel Animation Ltd.	 	Mercury Filmworks
 	Barking Bullfrog Cartoon Company Inc.	 	Mike Jackson
 	Blazing Games	 	Mobile Operandi
 	Bluebrain Multimedia	 	MoBro
 	Broken Saints	 	Natterjack Animation
 	C4 Digital Entertainment	 	Necessary Madness
 	Clockwork Productions	 	Next Level Games Inc.
 	CYOP Systems International	 	Nintendo of Canada Ltd.
 	Dick and Rogers Sound Studio	 	No Dice Studios
	Digital Alchemy Entertainment	 	Nokia
 	Durinium Entertainment	 	Orangeview Online Productions
  	Electronic Arts Canada	 	Photon Soup
 	EOS Systems	 	Piranha Games Inc.
  	ETI Entertainment Technologies	 	Pixel Escape Studios Inc.
 	Everywhere Cell Phone Games	 	Pixels and Polygons, Inc.
  	Exile Interactive	 	Pixelweaver
  	Factory 1 Games	 	Pork and Beans Productions
  	Foundation 9 Entertainment	 	Proving Ground Media

	Developer – Platform		Mobile
	Software		Personal Computer
	Hardware		Console
	Publishing		Handheld
	Service Provider		Online/Web

Deposit Coin?

- Financial future uncertain for even large game companies such as EA and Ubisoft
- Financial funding such as SR&ED, Telefilm New Media Fund and others needed for smaller innovative game companies



Business Conclusion

From LeadingEdge.ca:

When I hear entertainment executives discuss the need for "Canadian content," I smile and think about EA's FIFA Soccer franchise. The FIFA Soccer game series -- produced right here in BC -- has generated more than CAN\$1.6 billion worldwide. In the growing cultural and economic phenomenon of videogames, Canadian content rules the world.

Don Mattrick, President
Worldwide Studios

Cultural Conclusion

Currently there is a strong argument that games made in Canada have little culturally distinct:

“Asked if made in Canada games had any distinctive traits, Canadian developers were usually ruefully nonplussed; a spaceship in a sci-fiction game might be decorated in the colours of the local hockey team; one the dozen or mercenary warriors in a shooter is described as French-Canadian and grunts his few lines in a Quebecois accent; one developer came up with a game involving 'a Mountie and a grizzly bear' but 'it isn't likely to get off the page.’”

- The Political Economy of Canada's Video and Computer Game Industry

New Possibilities for Canadian Games



Pax Warrior: Educational



Swordfish: GPS Location-Based



Code Zebra: Academic

Academic Future

- Games are now worthy of academic research
- Games being made in Universities and other institutions could be more culturally reflective due to context

Future Research

- Much more Canadian specific video game research is needed due to being combined with North American statistics, however it is often difficult as the information collected is often of a confidential nature
- Easier to detect narrative aspects in culture, but is there a certain Canadian ludology?
 - *National Game Study* by NRC & New Media BC
- *The Canadian Video and Computer Game Industry* by Nick Dyer-Witheford funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Links

BioWare Corporation:

www.BioWare.com

Electronic Arts Canada:

www.EACanada.com

Radical Entertainment:

www.Radical.ca

Ubisoft Canada:

www.Ubisoft.ca

Contact

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