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Cultures of the Digital Economy



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COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT



## Brains Eden 2010

5th July

Ruskin Lecture Theatre, Anglia Ruskin University, Collier Road Entrance,  
Cambridge, CB1 1PT

Games Eden has organised an exhibition of student work and a series of talks designed to bring the Education and Developer communities closer together. How we can improve the symbiosis between the Games Industry and Education/Training institutions? We're asking Games companies and education/training providers and former Games students to give short presentations and discuss new ways to supply the right kind of talent at the right time. There's been more heat than light recently regarding training and education standards so we thought the time was right for both sides to meet up, explain and show what we do, and talk through key issues.

- How might the Industry help regional games education?
- How might Education tap into industry expertise better?
- What new tactics could be put in place for improving talent?
- How might Industry and Education address skills shortages?

Building on the success of last year's event, Brains Eden 2010 will look at best practise and the barriers that stop Games Developers, Tutors and Students getting together more. In addition to the seminar, this year's event includes the following events

### GAMES JAM

Teams of talented students from universities across the region have 24 hours to design and develop their own game, using Unity Games Development Software. Teams will be multi-disciplinary, covering all areas of gaming including design, engineering and audio. The completed games will be exhibited at the end of the seminar.

### THE BRAINS EDEN EXHIBITION

The Exhibition will features a mix of work from Games Jam and other relevant courses across the region, with work from leading developers sprinkled in too. The exhibition will be available to view directly after the seminar over a networking drinks reception.

We asked the main education providers in our region to present three students that they think represent their best practice- two from Games courses, if appropriate, and one from another (arts or science based) course, since the Games industry doesn't just recruit from Games courses. Come and see what the region has to offer.

A careers workshop will also be run as part of the exhibition, offering students on Games courses the opportunity to talk with industry professionals and get advice on building a CV and graduate career paths into the games industry.

### AGENDA

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16:00 **Registration over Tea & Coffee**

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16:30 **Introduction: Jeremy Cooke, Chair, Games Eden**

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16:40 **Dr Jussi Parrika, Director of ARU's Research Institute CoDE**

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16:50 **Keynote Talk: David Braben, Frontier Developments**

Hugely successful games designer David Braben will talk about the challenges facing graduates seeking to make it in the industry, giving his opinions on the skills students need to develop successful games

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17.05 **"Design in the Games Industry"**

**James Shepherd, Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios (SCEE), Cambridge Studio**

After suffering decades of under-qualified graduates who think they know everything but can barely tie their own shoelaces, James Shepherd returns to express his views of what skills a new graduate needs to gain employment in the video games industry.

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17:20 **"Academia and the Games Industry"**

**Solomon Rogers, University of Hertfordshire**

Live projects: what education and the games industry can learn from post production.

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17.35 **“Unsung heroes”**

**Matt Power, SCEE, Cambridge Studio and Cristian León, Codemasters**

Former Anglia Ruskin University Students

Examples/case studies of games industry professionals that have gone ‘through the ranks’ of higher education. They will also look at possible post-graduate qualifications relevant to the games industry.

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17:50 **“Giving Games Education a Power-Up”**

**Saint John Walker, Skillset**

In this talk Saint will describe how educators can better meet the changing requirements of the games industry, and explaining the role of Skillset in helping this.

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18:05 **Panel Discussion and Output from the Games Jam**

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18.30 **Networking Drinks Reception at the Brains Eden Exhibition and announcement of award winners from the Brains Eden exhibition.**

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21.00 **Event Closes**

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*With the permission of the speakers, presentations will be loaded to the Cambridge Wireless website on the day following the event*

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## **Event Organiser Profiles**

### **Games Eden**

Games Eden is the regional digital creative networking organisation, chaired by Jeremy Cooke of Gameware Development Ltd. Games Eden support is delivered in partnership between: EEDA, East of England International (EEI), Screen East, Cambridge Wireless, EMMA, TIGA and FDMX. For further information, please visit: [www.gameseden.org](http://www.gameseden.org)

### **Anglia Ruskin University**

With over 25,000 students, Anglia Ruskin is one of the largest providers of higher education in the East of England, and a large provider of part time education. Our students are on courses leading to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, as well as to a range of professional qualifications. Our main campuses at Cambridge and Chelmsford attract students not only from the East of England but in increasing numbers from mainland Europe and from further afield. Anglia Ruskin offers a range of courses relevant to the gaming industry. These include Computer Games Development, Computer Gaming and Animation Technology, and Computer Games and Visual Effects. Our courses have been designed in consultation with the games industry in order to address its current shortage of skilled technical directors, and many of our students have since gone on to forge successful careers in the games industry. For further information, please visit: [www.anglia.ac.uk](http://www.anglia.ac.uk)

### **Cambridge Wireless**

Cambridge Wireless is a leading and vibrant wireless community with a rapidly expanding network of companies interested in the application of wireless technologies. In addition to VIP networking activities and business development support, we run a number of Special Interest Groups focussed on specific technology and/or market areas, providing opportunities for member organisations to meet, form partnerships and exploit opportunities for new business. Cambridge Wireless has a number of partnerships with like-minded organisations around the world, and we endeavour to keep members fully up to date with the latest developments, and assist in exploring new business opportunities with local and international companies. For further information, please visit: [www.cambridgewireless.co.uk](http://www.cambridgewireless.co.uk)

## **Sponsor Profile**

### **Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios (SCEE), Cambridge Studio**

Sony Computer Entertainment's Cambridge Studio recently collected their second BAFTA Award, for Best Handheld Game for LittleBigPlanet on PSP. The Studio's back catalogue is rich with games across all PlayStation hardware. They are currently at work on PlayTV2 - turning your PS3 into a PVR for your TV - and TV Superstars - a riotous satire of modern celebrity television, designed for use with the new PlayStation Move controller. SCE Cambridge has a history of working closely with local universities and is keen to further those ties with the hope of inspiring the next generation of graduates.

For further information please visit: [www.worldwidestudios.net](http://www.worldwidestudios.net)

## **Speaker Profiles**

### **David Braben**

David Braben is the founder of independent game development studios Frontier. In his 23 years in the industry, Braben's contributions include early successes like Elite, Zarch, Virus, Frontier; more recently extending the RollerCoaster Tycoon series with Chris Sawyer (also a shareholder in Frontier); creating Dog's Life on PS2 and forming a collaborative partnership with the UK animation studio Aardman Animations to bring the characters of Wallace & Gromit to life in videogames, both in their 2003 outing in Project Zoo, and Curse of the Were-Rabbit (Konami). Braben has already announced plans for the forthcoming next generation consoles, i.e. Xbox 360, PS3 and Revolution.

On September 5th, 2005, he was awarded the *Development Legend Award* at the Develop Industry Excellence Awards in Cambridge, UK.

### **James Shepherd, Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios (SCEE), Cambridge Studio**

"James Shepherd is the Development Director at SCEE's Cambridge Studio where he strives for perfection in design. Whether it be in a non-game project like PlayTV for PS3, or the ultimate create-on-the-move game, LittleBigPlanet for PSP, James' insistence on attention to detail is evident. This is most readily demonstrated by the studio's BAFTA Awards for Best Game for MediEvil 2 and more recently Best Handheld Game for LittleBigPlanetPSP.

With a background in Art, James came to the games industry via Bournemouth University's excellent MA Computer Animation course. It was his experiences at Bournemouth which led him to develop strong links between that University and SCEE Cambridge and stoked his passion for building ties between universities and the games industry."

### **Solomon Rogers - Senior lecturer in digital animation and visual effects course leader at the University of Hertfordshire.**

Before moving into lecturing Sol worked for Sony Computer Entertainment Europe as 3D Artist. In 2008 he started his own consultancy and visual effects company One Dead Pixel alongside his lecturing at the university, this has helped guide the digital animation courses own digital visual effects degree strand.

### **Saint John Walker, Computer Games, Animation and Facilities Manager at Skillset**

Saint John Walker is the Computer Games, Animation and Facilities manager at Skillset, the sector skills council for the creative media industries. Skillset aims to raise the standard of Games Education, and broker new relationships between industry and HE. Main recent projects include the acceleration of Skillset's Computer Games accreditation programme, with recent assessors from SCEE, Monumental, Crytek, Zoe Mode, Ninja Theory, Jagex. Another major initiative is a new VFX skills programme.

Saint has been brokering new animation and computer games talent at the interface of education and industry for over twelve years, and joined Skillset from FDMX, the Film and Digital Media Exchange, where he was based at Anglia Ruskin University, and was a founding member of 'Games Eden' ([www.gameseden.org](http://www.gameseden.org)) the East of England's games business networking organisation.

Saint was nominated for the Times Higher Education Awards in the Widening Participation category for 2007 and has been an external examiner for MA courses at two Skillset academies, the University of Wales (MA Animation) and University of Hertfordshire (MA Film and Media).

Prior to his involvement in FDMX Saint designed the innovative curriculum for the London Animation Studio at Central Saint Martin's, London, in partnership with the Guild of British Animation and went on to become its first director. In 1999 he went on to set up the Finishing School, a 3D and VFX training centre in Shoreditch London for the National Film and Television School. For further information please visit: [www.skillset.org](http://www.skillset.org)

### **Cristian Leon, Codemasters**

Cristian graduated in 2009 from Anglia Ruskin University with a degree in Computer Games and Visual Effects. He previously studied illustration in Spain. During his second year at Anglia, he took part in a competition organised by FDMX Skillset and won the Sony special prize and with this the opportunity to carry out work experience at Sony Studios Cambridge. During this work placement he worked with the lead artist and was given the task of designing and creating a shield for the main character in a future platform game.

After graduation, he decided to specialise in environment art and was offered a job in November as an environment artist at Codemasters in Guildford. He is currently working on AAA title "BODYCOUNT" (first person shooter game). The skills he learnt on his course at Anglia Ruskin University have helped him to succeed in his current job. For further information please visit: [www.codemasters.co.uk](http://www.codemasters.co.uk)

**Matt Power, SCEE, Cambridge Studio**

Matt graduated from Anglia Ruskin University in 2006 having studied Graphic Design under Jon Melton and Will Hill. Whilst exhibiting at the D&AD New Blood exhibition in London with the 2006 Graphic Design graduates, he was approached by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) Graphic Design manager Oliver Wright and invited to interview for the position of Junior Graphic Designer. Within a few months he joined the Creative Services Group, the internal creative department within SCEE Worldwide Studios and was subsequently promoted to Graphic Designer in 2008. Primarily based in the Cambridge Studio and more recently also working from their London Studio, Matt takes on a wide range of tasks from logo and packfront design, in-game interface design and typography, right through to the organisation and direction of Motion Graphic specialists.

Titles Matt has worked on include Heavenly Sword, PlayTV as well as the BAFTA award winning LittleBigPlanet. Most recently he has been spearheading the Graphic Design of SCEE's current project TV Superstars. For further information please visit: [www.worldwidestudios.net](http://www.worldwidestudios.net)